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THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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If we had done as the kings told us, we would all have been slaves. If we had done as the priests told us, we would all have been idiots. If we had done as the doctors told us, we would all have been dead.

—R. G. INGERSOLL.

Who Made God?

WHATEVER "blasphemy" there is in this question does not belong to us. It belongs to Mr. Booth-Clibborn, one of the great Booth family, though only by marriage. We once saw it at the top of one of his lecture posters.

When the good Christians hear that explanation their anger will cool down. The Blasphemy Laws were intended to prevent "infidels" from making Christianity ridiculous; Christians may make it as ridiculous as they please—and it must be allowed that their efforts are crowned with considerable success.

We remember what happened at our trial for "blasphemy" before Mr. Justice North, at the Old Bailey, more than thirty years ago. (Lord, how the time flies!) We made a long list, which was published in the report of our trial, of the vituperative epithets that Christians applied to each other during the controversy between Catholics and Protestants at the time of what is called the Reformation. It was a tremendous list in every way, and would really be useful to political opponents in the approaching elections. Nothing was omitted that Christian charity could prompt or pious ingenuity suggest. It constituted a perfect debater's slang dictionary. No wonder the judge looked half-mad when we presented those flowers of religious courtesy to the jury; especially when we suggested that anything complained of in the pages of the *Freethinker* was but a poor and feeble imitation of orthodox achievements. But the judge lost his temper entirely when we proceeded to show that the "blasphemy" in our indictment was pale and vapid in comparison with the red and pungent samples we culled from recent numbers of the *War Cry*.

Mr. Booth-Clibborn, having been a Salvationist, and being now "on his own" in the same line of business, is a licensed "blasphemer." If he were an "infidel" the authorities would soon be down upon him. The question at the top of his poster caused a terrible rumpus at Birmingham some years ago. The Secularists were holding Sunday evening meetings in the Bristol-street Board School, and one of their lecturers dealt with the question, "Did God make Man, or did Man make God?" This awful query stirred Birmingham to the very depths. The School Board turned the Secularists out of the building they had profaned. Letters and articles appeared in the local newspapers. There was Hades to pay. Yet the pious Mr. Booth-Clibborn puts "Who Made God?" on a poster in a little strait-laced, clergy-ridden town, and not a dog barks at it. The policeman looks at it and passes on as if it were "Aladdin" or the "Forty Thieves."

We do not deny that Mr. Booth-Clibborn's question is a very sensible one. We are also prepared to say that it admits of an answer.

There is a text in the Bible story of Creation which runs thus:—

> "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."

The grammar is mixed, but the meaning is clear. God made mankind male and female. That was the ancient idea. But a great deal has been learnt since then, and the modern idea is very different. The declaration of primitive ignorance has to be read upside down in the light of present knowledge. Man thought that God made him. He could not think otherwise. It was the only way of explaining how he came here. And the guess of ignorance satisfied him while he remained ignorant. But he is better instructed now; having investigated and discovered, he has no more use for guesses; he accepts the teachings of Evolution; he knows that the world came, and all that is in it, including himself, in a perfectly natural way; and the more he studies Evolution the more he suspects, or actually perceives, that God did not make him, but that he made God. The old text, therefore, will eventually read in the true Revised Version of the Bible:—

> "So man created God in his own image, in the image of man created he him; male and female created he them."

Yes, *them*. For the world has been populous with gods. Down in Egypt, which Shaftesbury so finely called the motherland of superstition, a Greek wit said that it was often easier to find a god than a man. There were gods of every aspect of nature; gods of the sky, gods of the stars, gods of the mountains, gods of the woods, gods of the rivers, and gods of the seas. Lastly, there were gods of every aspect of human nature; as in the splendid Greek pantheon, with its Mars, the god of war—Apollo, the god of light and song—Juno, the goddess of marriage—Venus, the goddess of beauty—and Cupid, the god of love, who is blind because love is blind, and winged because love is swift, and eternally young because love is always young; for time touches all else, but love it cannot touch, and the fragrance of youthful days still linger in old hearts, and when the passions have burnt themselves out the light of affection gleams in aged eyes, whose possessors are tottering down the hill they once climbed together, and will soon be sleeping together at its foot. Yes, love is youth; we are young to the extent that it remains with us; and without it we are dead, though we are not buried.

The one God of monotheism is no more an actual existence than whiteness or virtue is an actual existence. Whiteness and virtue are general terms, denoting qualities common to many objects and actions. God is also a general term, denoting certain qualities common to the multitudes of deities of all ages and climes. We may change the illustration, and say that it is crude supernaturalism refined to the last degree. Supernatural beings have disappeared, and left behind them the conception of supernatural personality. Nature is no longer mapped out in separate provinces; man recognises that it is one and indivisible; consequently the mob of rival gods become incredible; man drops them out of his mind, and accepts one great God in their place. Religion teaches him nothing; his religion is always modified by his growing knowledge, and purified by his growing morality.

G. W. FOOTE.

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Christmas Cant.

FOR publishing reasons this article is written before Christmas, although it will not be in the reader's hands until the holiday is over. It is not, however, necessary for one to wait until the Christmas holiday is done in order to find out what kind of sermon will be delivered in thousands of Christian pulpits concerning the meaning and influence of Christmas. There will be all the customary verbiage about "glad tidings of great joy," of the wonderful Christmas dawn at Bethlehem, of the profound moral influence exerted by Christianity upon the world, and of the degree to which it has fostered love and brotherhood among men. All these things will be looked for much as children used to look for the clown's "Here we are again!" and will be accepted without question because they are just part and parcel of the religious entertainment. Everything will be dwelt on except the one pregnant fact that Christmas was a Pagan festival long before it was a heathen one, that it is part of a very widespread nature-worship, and that it has no more to do with the birth of a Jewish child at Bethlehem than it has to do with the cultivation of cabbages.

Christmas—to use the name of this ancient festival—was always a season of rejoicing; it was left for Christianity to convert it into a saturnalia of cant. Disregarding historic fact and present circumstances, the familiar shibboleths are repeated just as though their veracity were beyond question. And, with senses dulled by the narcotising influence of tradition, people hear them with only here and there a faint feeling that the history and influence of Christianity may be open to a different interpretation from that usually given. The cant of the pew re-echoes the cant of the pulpit. From the church it is carried into the outside world; and the church, far from being a centre of enlightenment and good fellowship thus becomes one of the chief centres from which radiates ill-feeling, misrepresentation, and opposition to genuine enlightenment.

The charge is sweeping, but not difficult to substantiate. Christianity has had an official existence of over fifteen hundred years. During that time it has wielded tremendous power, enjoyed unique social influence, had at its command almost fabulous wealth. No other system has ever had such opportunities for moulding the world to its desires, and with what result? Comparing the Christian world of to-day with the Pagan world of antiquity, what do we see? It is claimed that the world of to-day is the better of the two. Let it pass as such, although a great deal might be said on the other side. Fifteen hundred years is a long while; and as progress is not a Christian invention, is there not reason for assuming that the world would have grown better had Christianity never appeared? Instead of talking like an ignorant pulpiteer, let us apply another test. Taking the art, the science, the literature, the social life of antiquity, with the capacity for development latent in human nature, allowing for all these factors, are we so much more advanced than the peoples of antiquity that normal human forces cannot account for the difference? Not what we are, but what we might have been; not whether we have improved, but how much have we improved, are the questions by which the influence of Christianity must be tested.

Tried by that test, Christianity stands fairly condemned. Christmas Day, instead of the anniversary of a beneficent event, becomes that of the greatest disaster that ever overtook the civilised world. For a thousand years Christianity rode roughshod over the learning, the science, the culture of the ancient world. This might have been forgiven had it possessed an art or culture of its own. But it had none. Literature was replaced by monkish legends, social activities by religious exercises, medical science by miracle cures, the conception of this life as an end in itself by that of the world as a halting-place on a long pilgrimage, during which man showed his greatness by ignoring its beauties and trampling on its pleasures. The period of Christianity's unquestioned rule represents so much time lost to the world's progress. It is a blank over which the progressive tendencies of the Renaissance reached to affiliate with the suppressed life of pre-Christian times. For the last five hundred years the story of European progress has largely been the story of an attempt, more or less successful, to throw off the cramping clutch of the Christian Church. First directed against the Catholic Church, then against this or that section of the Protestant Church, then against the general influence of Christianity itself. But always there has been the recognition—more or less conscious as enlightenment was more or less complete—that organised Christianity must be kept firmly in check if progress was to be permanent and its results conserved.

What amount of goodwill did Christianity bring into the world? It talked much about love and brotherhood; it still talks much about them. Parsons slobber about love in the pulpit, and journalists write columns on the same topic in the religious press. Again, what are the facts? In the very earliest notices we get of Christian communities, we find the qualities of slander, ill-feeling, and hatred to the front. It is found even in the pages of the New Testament. It accompanies Christianity right through the ages; it is strong in current Christianity. Listen to the members of one denomination attacking another, and then reflect how much encouragement is given to good-fellowship by Christian belief. Why, it is chronicled as a great achievement when members of different denominations stand on the same platform on behalf of some common purpose. The mere sight of Christians belonging to different sects fraternising arouses astonishment—and more cant about the power of Christian love.

More than this, the rancor awakened by religious feelings is the bitterest of all. People will sink their differences on all other topics sooner than they will on religion. In every other direction a man will minimise his dislike, and take it as something of which he ought to feel ashamed. In religion alone he counts his hatred as a virtue, and feeds it diligently. In all civilised society there is no force so divisive and so disruptive as religion. In Ireland this remains true, whether we take the side of the Catholic or that of the Protestant. In either case, we see how it is religion, and religon alone, that prevents two bodies working amicably together, and each confesses that it is the religion of the other which is the cause of their separateness. And both talk with equal glibness about the religion of love.

The cant of it all! And the strangest fact of all is that the failure of Christianity is admitted by Christians even in the very act of glorifying their creed. When preaching their "purity crusade," the Bishop of London and his colleagues draw pictures of Christian London such as few other cities in the world's history could produce. If one were to be guided by these pornographic moralists, one would have to believe that every girl who ventures abroad without a sturdy male relative runs the greatest possible risk of abuse, and that sexual immorality in all its worst forms flourishes with us almost unchecked. Of course, these clerical diatribes are full of gross exaggeration, but things are bad enough in all truth. And, being bad enough, what becomes of the boasted influence of the Christian faith? Surely, by this time, a religion such as it is claimed Christianity is, and controlling, as it has done, whole generations from the cradle to the grave, ought to have completely moralised the social medium. And now they are crying out for the policeman to step in and save our women folk from disaster. Could any other system, after so many centuries of rule, chronicle a more disastrous failure?

Not only good will, but peace. Christian peace, when all over the civilised world it is the Christian Powers, Christian greed, and Christian bad faith that provides the occasion for nine-tenths of the world's wars and the insane competition in arma-

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ments. What nation of pre-Christian times could compete with Christian countries of to-day, allowing for all corrections due to difference of time and situation? Where, in pre-Christian times, would there be found highly organised corporations engaged in fanning war and talk of war for the mere purpose of financial gain? And how could this be unless there existed a vast mass of uncivilised feeling to which these war-mongers could appeal? Christian Europe forced non-Christian Japan into militarist channels, and it is forcing non-Christian China along the same road. It has compelled Turkey to devote its main energies to militarist preparations if it would be secure against Christian greed and bad faith. Every Christian nation openly proclaims that nothing save huge armies and enormous fleets will induce other Christian nations to act honestly or to respect treaties. Every Christian nation is groaning under the burden of armaments, while Christian leaders assure us that things will have to become worse before they can get better. And these same people have the insolence to talk about "Peace on earth and good will to all men"!

Let it be granted that all this, with the poverty, the misery, the vice, and the crime of present-day existence, has not resulted from Christianity. The pulpit legend is that Christianity brought peace, and brotherhood, and good will, and love to bear upon all human relations, and so moralised life. Where are the proofs? Has there ever been a time when even preachers have not lamented the presence of all manner of evils, and the fact that Christianity failed to make society, as a whole, better? Christianity, if it did not induce these evils, did not remove them. That is the solid fact, shirked by all religious controversialists, and the one fact that completely demolishes Christian claims.

As a matter of sober truth, Christianity did encourage the persistence of all the social evils concerning which complaints are raised. It diverted social energies and perverted the social consciousness. It dulled men's sense of social claims in order to strengthen those of religious obligation. The whole history of Christianity has been that of an exploitation of man's social nature in the interests of supernaturalism. If to-day the clergy are adopting another tone, it is only because the social forces are too strong for them, and, in spite of suppression and distortion, can no longer be denied. And there should be no mistaking the significance that all over Europe earnest workers in the cause of reform—no matter by what name they may call themselves—are at one in claiming that this world and this life must come first, and that religion itself must be tried by the test of how far it promotes human happiness here. Man has been long enough judged by the standard of how far he pleased God; it is now the turn of the gods to be tried by the test of how far they please man.

So far as the Christmas of 1913 has a helpful message, it is this. Peace on earth and good will to all men is what we all need. But it will never come until we clear our minds of superstition and our mouths of cant, and judge life from the standpoint of a rationalised humanity.

C. COHEN.

Man's Descent from the Ape.

BETWEEN theology and science there is an impassable gulf. It is true that many theologians accept the conclusions of science, but they inevitably do so at the expense of mutilating their theology. The theory of evolution, for example, flatly contradicts the doctrine of creation; but the doctrine of creation is a fundamental article in the Christian creed, and no one can renounce it without rendering the Gospel simply ridiculous. If Darwinism is true Christianity is founded upon a lie. When a clergyman rejects evolution, therefore, he pursues the only consistent policy: he only becomes foolish when he attempts to disprove it. We are bound to respect those divines whose faith in their system is so strong that they positively refuse to have anything whatever to do with science; but there are a few whom we cannot but despise, not because they are anti-scientists, but because they have the temerity, while defending their own faith, to bitterly and ignorantly attack that of the scientists. The Rev. Canon Digby Berry is a well-known Christian apologist who, at one time, won great distinction as such in Australia. About a month ago, he preached a remarkable sermon in Christ Church, Johannesburg, which was afterwards published, on "The Supposed Animal Origin of Man." Having carefully perused it, a necessity is laid upon us to declare that its attack upon Darwinism is distinguished only for its utter futility. Canon Berry accuses evolutionists of passing over "in silence those immense differences between man and all other animals, those impassable chasms, which suggest most forcibly that man, though he has an animal nature, has also another nature absolutely distinct from that of all other animals." There is in this charge an element of deliberate disingenuousness. So far are scientists from passing over in silence the enormous differences between man and all other animals that they expatiate upon them with marked emphasis. Huxley refers to them again and again in his well-known masterpiece, *Man's Place in Nature;* but he also calls attention to the fact "that the structural differences which separate Man from the Gorilla and the Chimpanzee are not so great as those which separate the Gorilla from the lower apes." Now, we charge the Canon with passing over in silence the *resemblances* between man and the anthropoid ape. The skeleton in both is composed of two hundred bones. They both possess the same hair covering the skin, the same mammary glands providing food for the young, the same four-chambered heart, the same reproductive organs, and the same brain-structure. As Huxley says, "Whatever organ we take, the differences between man and the anthropoid apes are slighter than the corresponding difference between the latter and the lower apes."

Canon Berry has, therefore, no right whatever to call the differences between man and the apes "impassable chasms," or to jump to the conclusion that because of them man has "a nature absolutely distinct from that of all other animals." He might as well say that the anthropoid ape has a nature absolutely distinct from that of all the lower apes. The truth is that the differences cannot reasonably be advanced as objections to the evolutionary theory, while the similarities are wholly inexplicable on the special-creation hypothesis. Furthermore, the differences between civilised and educated man and a raw savage are greater than those between the lowest man and the highest ape. Discussing the important matter of cranial capacity, Huxley says:—

> "After making due allowance for difference of size, the cranial capacities of some of the lower apes fall nearly as much, relatively, below those of the higher apes as the latter fall below man. Thus, men differ more widely from one another than they do from the apes; while the lowest apes differ as much, in proportion, from the highest as the latter does from man" (*Man's Place in Nature*, pp. 54, 55).

Canon Berry does not understand what the theory of evolution really means, his definition of it being as fallacious as it can be. Referring to the question of priority between the hen and the egg, he says:—

> "Now if you choose to assume that because the full-grown hen develops from the egg, therefore the whole race of hens has developed from an egg, and that that egg had no hen for its parent, you must not expect me to believe this without proof."

No one with the most elementary knowledge of Darwin's teaching could put the case against it in so crude and erroneous a manner. Is not Canon Berry aware that the simplest living form known to us is unicellular, and that every individual living thing, including man, begins life as a single cell which multiplies into two, four, eight, sixteen, thirty-two, and so on, until there is an innumerable

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host of nucleated cells? If he is, his argument against evolution is infinitely absurd; if he is not, he has no right to talk on the subject.

Equally unfortunate is his allusion to the fact that "the body of the human being before birth passes through such a series of transformations that it belongs in turn to every family of animals on earth." This is an extremely faulty statement of the repetition or recapitulation doctrine, of the truth of which there can be no doubt. The truth is that the human embryo has to retravel the road followed by the embryos of its ancestors. Even Canon Berry has not the hardihood to deny this truth; but his inference is, not that man has descended from the animals, but that God created him to be the head and the shepherd of the terrestrial creation. "Is it not therefore quite natural," he asks, "that the Creator should have made man the flesh and blood relation of all those creatures whose shepherd he was to be?" We regard that question as the most foolish that could be asked, and certainly it suggests no explanation whatever of the fact that the development of the human embryo is a shortened recapitulation of the evolution of animal embryos.

It is now a truism that both in plants and animals there are minute and practically useless representatives of organs which are highly developed and of direct service in other forms. There are many vestigial structures in the human body, such as remnants of the muscles by means of which animals twitch their skin, move their scalps up and down, and draw the whole ear backwards and forwards at will, and such as the third eyelid, gill-arches, and the vermiform appendix. Canon Berry observes that "if it is true that there are useless organs in the human body, this, on the special creation hypothesis, would imply that mere utility, mere usefulness to the individual, is not the only principle followed in the construction of man's body." The Canon is inclined, however, to deny the existence of such organs. He admits that there are organs, the use of which we do not yet know, but contends that our ignorance is no proof of their uselessness. We much prefer to take the testimony of people who have made the human body a special study, which is that "our own body is a veritable museum of relics."

Canon Berry falls back upon two men of science as his authorities in the denial of man's animal origin, namely, the late Professor Rudolph Virchow, of Berlin, and the late Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace; but they are both authorities utterly discredited by the biologists of to-day. Dr. Wallace was a thoroughgoing evolutionist on all points except the origin of mind, while Virchow rejected evolution entirely in its application to man. Now, on what evidence does the reverend Canon deny the evolution of man? On no evidence whatsoever beyond the fact that the Genesis story of creation has been before the world for twenty-five centuries at the very least, and probably for fifty centuries, whereas the theory of evolution was invented only a few years ago. He hinted that if he were lecturing instead of preaching he would have offered his hearers a great deal more evidence; but we doubt it, as in the sermon he offers no evidence at all. To aver that the so-called missing link has never been found is not to demonstrate man's heavenly origin. The Canon declares that he prefers the one miracle of Genesis to a chain of thousands of miracles offered us by the evolutionists. As a matter of fact, however, the evolutionists believe in no miracle whatever, the evolutionary process being, in their estimation, perfectly natural, conducted under physical and chemical forces alone.

At the close of his sermon Canon Berry makes the following amazingly naive admission:—

> 'Why can we not believe that man was evolved from the lower animals without any prejudice whatever to our Christian beliefs? I will give you two reasons in answer to that question. In the first place the evolution of man from the lower animals implies and teaches that man is a risen and rising being, instead of a fallen being. I am convinced that if once men are possessed with the belief that they are a race risen from the lower animals, they will give up all belief in the Fall, and in original sin: they will, in fact, refuse to be treated as sinners in need of salvation."

That is, indeed, an exceedingly valid reason, from the Christian point of view, for rejecting the theory of evolution. To a Christian minister the Fall is indispensable. He lives on the belief that men are sinners in need of salvation. It is his business to induce that belief in all who listen to him. There is no getting away from the conclusion that if man has been evolved from the lower animals, the Genesis story is nothing but a legend. If we have risen, and not fallen, we are not sinners in need of salvation, but slowly growing and improving beings. What we need is not salvation from sin, but conquest over ignorance and weakness; not forgiveness, but uplifting and inspiration. It is a good sign for the future of our race that it is gradually losing the sense of sin acquired in times of ignorance and superstition. There is, therefore, nothing more natural than that a clergyman should shut the door against the doctrine of evolution, and give the lie to all the known facts of life. But the facts are bound to triumph, for all that, and to demolish every system not founded upon them.

J. T. LLOYD.

"Wait Till You Come to Die."—V.

(*Concluded.*)

> "Like Frederick's grenadier, the Salvationist wants to live for ever (the most monstrous way of crying for the moon);.....the man who has come to believe that there is no such thing as death, the change so-called being merely the transition to an exquisitely happy and utterly careless life, has not overcome the fear of death at all; on the contrary, it has overcome him so completely that he refuses to die on any terms whatever. I do not call a Salvationist really saved till he is ready to lie down cheerfully on the scrap heap, having paid scot and lot and something over, and let his eternal life pass on to renew its youth in the battalions of the future." — GEORGE BERNARD SHAW, *Major Barbara*, pp. 169-70.

> "It would not do for the Church to admit that they [Infidels] died peacefully. That would show that religion was not essential at the last moment. Superstition gets its power from the terror of death. It would not do to have the common people understand that a man could deny the Bible, refuse to kiss the cross, contend that humanity was greater than Christ, and then die as sweetly as Torquemada did after pouring molten lead into the ears of an honest man —or as calmly as Calvin after he had burned Servetus, or as peacefully as King David after advising, with his last breath, one son to assassinate another."—COLONEL INGERSOLL, *Oration on Voltaire*, p. 25.

IF the Church cannot retain the allegiance of men of genius while they are alive, they always strive to obtain possession of their bodies when they are dead. Charles Darwin, who laid the axe to the root of the tree of Christian superstition, lies in Westminster Abbey. This was owing to the manipulations of the late Dean Stanley—for which he was called "the body-snatcher"—in spite of much opposition.

Recently we have had to witness the spectacle of Freethinkers, like Swinburne and Meredith, buried with the rites of a Church which they rejected and despised all their lives.

As Moncure Conway—who was himself educated for the ministry—has truly observed:—

> "Many brave and independent lives are still included with the conventional world at those helpless periods. We were baptised when we could not help it; we renounced the Devil and all his works, and took the vows of orthodox faith through various sponsors, when we had no will or reason of our own. Advancing in knowledge and thought, we found those pious swaddling bands the shroud of our living selves. We burst those bonds of a gorgeous tomb. We came forth, and are trying to live our own lives, to think our own thoughts. But when we again sink into infant helplessness, or when death comes, the conventional world and creed will again come with its rites, its burial service, to say, 'This man is ours. He lived a heretic, but could not die so.' Or, if it cannot say that, it will manage to get friends and relatives to bury the dead thinker's body

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with a Christian service, in order that it may go forth to the world that his testimony was in favor of the conventional system. How many have we known who, from lives of faithful testimony against established error, have gone to their rest beneath its symbols? Their burial is with the rich. The Church rarely refuses to bury such in the odor of sanctity. It is but too glad, if they are respectable and eminent, to gain the prestige of their virtues and talents, and have their epitaphs weigh where their lives did not—on the orthodox side. This desire to appropriate lives, to have their tombs support error when their protests are forgotten, underlies the strenuous efforts made in all ages to extort from dying Freethinkers recantations of their heresies. And often where there has been no recantation, invention has come in, when the dead cannot repudiate it, to report some last word favorable to the old system."*

"Even were such inventions true," says the same writer, "what would they amount to? So far as the real man and his thought are concerned, they amount to nothing. They would only mean that so long as he was sound he was liberal; when unsound was credulous. Freedom got his health, dogma his disease. Stories of death-bed conversions, says Heine, belong to the department of pathology. 'After all, they only prove that it is impossible to convert the freethinkers so long as they move about under God's open sky, in the enjoyment of their healthy senses, and in the full possession of their reasoning faculty.'"

"When a man has spent the main force of his life; when the brain grows feebler, the nerves weaker, the energies not able to keep abreast of advancing inquiry, there is sometimes a tendency to reaction, or at least to nearer conformity with those around. The feeble one desires peace, wishes to please relatives, perhaps consents, for others' sake, to see the parson, and makes the interview as conciliatory as possible. He consents to be buried as his family desire; and that is too generally in a tomb of the Arimathean, which goes on announcing from its false marble lips that he was what he was not, and believed what he believed not."†

Unfortunately, all the arrangements for human burial are in the hands of a Christian society, and Conway tells how an eminent London barrister, a veteran Freethinker, a friend of Leigh Hunt and other literary men of a bygone time, wishing to guard against misrepresentation, had his tomb made and the epitaph engraved—an epitaph scholarly, dignified, weighty, ending with (in Latin) "Let truth stand though the priest fall." He was unable to find a cemetery which would admit such an inscription, and for some years he paid a shopkeeper in Regent-street to exhibit the stone in his window. But all his precautions were in vain. The Church triumphed in the end, and his body was buried in the conventional manner.

In France and Italy these tales of recantation became so common that associations were formed to defend dying Freethinkers from the priests, and to witness their last words and death. "Since that practice began such legends have nearly ceased in those countries, and they who die in freedom are not buried in Arimathean tombs."‡

With the decay of religion we are regaining the serenity and tranquillity of the ancient Greeks and Romans. Nature itself provides an anodyne for death. As a distinguished French author observes:—

"Illness and old age always make us set less value upon the joys of which they deprive us, which they first render bitter then impossible; and the last joy of all, that of bare existence, is as subject to the law as its predecessors. Consciousness of one's inability to live brings with it inability to desire to live; it becomes a burden to draw one's breath."

Egoism declines with declining strength.

"One sentiment alone survives, a sense of weariness. We long for rest, long to relax the tension of life, to lie at ease, to have done with it once for all. Oh! to be no longer on one's feet. The dying well know the supreme joy of looking forward to their last resting place! They no longer envy the interminable file of the living whom they perceive, as it were in a dream, vainly marching and counter-marching upon the surface of the earth where they sleep. They are resigned to the solitude and abandonment of death. They are like travellers in the desert—worn with fever and fatigue, and unwilling to make another step in advance; they are no longer borne up by the hope of revisiting familiar scenes; they are unable to surmount the remaining difficulties of the way and request their companions to leave them, to march on without them, and, stretched upon the sand, watch without a tear, without a desire, the departing caravan creeping away toward the horizon."*

No terrors, no gasps and struggles. "Let me die in peace" was the pathetic request of the dying Voltaire to the priests who disturbed his dying hours. To be let alone, that is the last request of the dying, and it is often denied them by pious relatives.

It is science, not religion, that frees man from the fear of death. It is science, not religion, that triumphantly cries, "Oh, death, where is thy sting? Oh, grave, where is thy victory?"

Listen to the testimony of a very gifted woman—one brought up in the Christian faith, but who emancipated herself from the bondage of religion. It is Harriet Martineau who speaks—in her old age, face to face with death. She says:—

"The release [from superstition] is an inexpressible comfort, and the simplifying of the whole matter has a most tranquillising effect. I see that the dying (other than the aged) naturally and regularly, unless disturbed, desire and sink into death as into sleep. Where no artificial state is induced, they feel no care about dying, or about living again. The state of their organisation disposes them to rest, and rest is all they think about. We know by all testimony that persons who are brought face to face with death by an accident, which seems to leave no chance of escape, have no religious ideas or emotions whatever.....to me there is no sacrifice, no sense of loss, nothing to fear, nothing to regret. Under the eternal laws of the universe I came into being, and under them I have lived a life so full that its fullness is equivalent to length."

"The fresh air of Nature, in short, after imprisonment in the ghost-peopled cavern of superstition—has been as favorable to my moral nature as to intellectual progress and general enjoyment. Thus, there has been much in life that I am glad to have enjoyed; and much that generates a mood of contentment at the close. Besides that, I never dream of wishing that anything were otherwise than as it is. I am frankly satisfied to have done with life; I have had a noble share of it, and I desire no more. I neither wish to live longer here, nor to find life again elsewhere. It seems to me simply absurd to expect it, and a mere act of restricted human imagination and morality to conceive it. It seems to me that there is, not only a total absence of evidence of a renewed life for human beings, but so clear a way of accounting for the conception, in the immaturity of the human mind, that I myself utterly disbelieve in a future life."†

This fearless and Freethinking lady concludes that "The real and justifiable and honorable subject of interest to human beings, living and dying, is the welfare of their fellows surrounding them or surviving them. About this I do care supremely" (439).

Lest the pious should accuse this writer of vainglory, it is as well to state that her *Autobiography* was not published until after death.

Yes, the real subject of interest should not be an absorbing struggle for personal advancement, or a life of selfish pleasure, but an attempt to leave the world a little better than it was before we came into it. As Guyau eloquently says:—

"Next to the joy of possessing a truth or a system which seems to be true, is that of disseminating this truth, of feeling it speak and act in us, of exhaling it with our breath. There have been more than twelve apostles in the history of humanity; every heart that is young, and strong, and loving is the heart of an apostle." ‡

In future articles we hope to deal with the origin of belief in the soul and a future life.

W. MANN.

* Moncure D. Conway, *Lessons for the Day*, pp. 88-89; 1908.
† Moncure D. Conway, *Lessons for the Day*, p. 91.
‡ *Ibid*, p. 90.

* Guyau, *The Non-Religion of the Future*, pp. 537-8.
† Harriet Martineau, *Autobiography*, vol. ii., pp. 435-8.
‡ Guyau, *The Non-Religion of the Future*, p. 402.

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Acid Drops.

There was a rather curious sentence at the end of Professor Gilbert Murray's fine letter on the Stewart case, which we praised and quoted in last week's *Freethinker*. "Mr. Stewart," he wrote, "had served three months under the same law in 1911, a fact which probably goes some way to account for the ferocity of his anti-Christian feeling." Surely there is some mistake here. Stewart was not charged with any *ferocity* of criticism; he was accused of *ridiculing* the Christian religion. The ferocity was all on the other side. We suggest that Professor Murray should have written that Stewart's imprisonment in 1911 went some way—or a *good* way—to account for the ferocity of his Christian prosecutors. There is a real meaning in that. The more the appetite of bigotry is gratified the more it looks out for fresh victims. We have made this unquestionable fact the basis of our argument that the way to break down the Blasphemy Laws is not to go to prison, but to keep out of it; that is, by offering the most skilful as well as the boldest opposition to every indictment for "blasphemy." Our conduct of the Boulter case—for it was really our conduct—reduced the final result to a month's imprisonment. We called that comic-opera martyrdom. So it was. And it is to be noticed that "blasphemy" prosecutions left London for the provinces ever since.

The number of Catholic priests in Great Britain is 4,401; the number in little Ireland is 3,737. We hope the difference will continue, unless it alters for the better.

The Roman Catholic population of the world is reported to be as follows:—

Europe	...	...	190,352,931
Asia	...	...	6,059,572
Africa	...	...	2,769,604
America	...	...	90,268,391
Australasia		...	9,284,344

Who was it that said the fight between Religion and Freethought was over? To borrow a phrase from Charles Lamb, we should like to feel his bumps. Yet he persuaded a lot of timid or lazy (or both) "infidels" to say "ditto."

We noticed last week that Dean Inge had been singing the praises of "pain." We may add that the people who do that generally have the least of it, and are seldom energetic in obtaining more. But this is not uncommon to preachers. Most of them are like sign-posts. They point the way but never travel.

The Philosopher of the City Temple says that he receives many communications, written and printed, from people, pointing out that it will not be long before there is an end to Churches and creeds, and some of the writers are so reckless as to say they will be pleased when this occurs. This puzzles Mr. Campbell exceedingly, who cannot understand this frame of mind. So he comments on the phenomenon in this fashion:—

> "Suppose we were all forced by irresistible evidence to accept the conclusion that man is his body and nothing else, that there was no God and no future, and no room for belief in either, the news would not be good news; on the contrary, it would be very bad news, to be received with regret on the simple ground that there was no hope of anything better."

It is a pity that Mr. Campbell does not try to understand the communications he receives, for we have little doubt that the meaning of the writers is fairly intelligible. Freethinkers hail the dissolution of Churches and creeds because they see how these things stand in the way of the realisation of a more perfect human life. They do not contest the hope of anything better; on the contrary, their whole campaign is built on this hope. But while men expend their energies and base their aspirations on any form of supernaturalism, the result is wasted effort and frustrated hopes. And all history is behind the Freethinker in this assertion.

Mr. Campbell says he believes so earnestly in the future that he cannot accept the gospel of "Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die." Neither do we; but Mr. Campbell ought to know that this is merely a pulpit slander on the Freethinker. Of course, it has new Testament warranty, but it is a slander nevertheless. It was Paul who said that if there was no resurrection from the dead, then let us eat and drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die. But that was merely an illustration of the low moral standard of Paul and Christians generally. The only reason for not leading the life of a pig now was that you might live the life of an angel hereafter. If the life of the angel was not certain, "Then," the Christian said, "I am going in for a 'good time'"—and by that he understood wallowing in all kinds of sensual enjoyment. This has been the Christian teaching through the ages, and there is small wonder that with such a gospel the results of Christian teaching on human character were so disastrous. The poorest Freethought teaching has always been superior to this. If there be no future life, then all the more reason why this one should be made more worthy. There is really no need to bother whether there is a God or future life or not. It is enough that human life is real, and that the capacity for improving it is with us. The fault of the Christian is that he says to himself, "If I were not a Christian I should be a scoundrel," and then assumes that everyone else must be built on the same unfortunate lines.

Rev. R. F. Horton takes a more hopeful view of the situation—that is, hopeful for the clergy. He discovers that we are on the eve of a great revival of faith. We have heard about this revival of faith ever since we were old enough to trouble about such things, and have seen all the time churches emptying and Freethinkers becoming more numerous. But Dr. Horton brings forward proofs. Poetry, philosophy, science, and labor are turning towards religion. William Watson has written a poem confessing his return to a faith in God; therefore, poetry is returning to religion. Not a very convincing proof, this. Professor Eucken pleads for an alliance of religion and morality; therefore, philosophy is becoming religious. The evidence here quite matches that produced on behalf of poetry. And we can only say that when either Eucken or William Watson can produce evidence that they represent either poetry or philosophy on this point, we will agree with Dr. Horton's summary of the situation.

The movement of the world of labor towards religion is shown by Mr. Ramsay Macdonald. From this gentleman Mr. Horton gathers that the alienation of working men from church and chapel really means that they consider that the church and the chapel do not sufficiently embody the Christian ideal. We do not believe that five per cent. of absentees can be accounted for in this way. A good many of the labor men who do talk in this manner have got it into their heads that they can hoodwink the clergy and capture the Churches. And, on the other hand, the clergy imagine that by professing an interest in the labor movement they may ultimately harness it to the Churches. The first idea is simply stupid. No movement will ever be able to capture the Churches. It has been their business for so long to capture movements that they are up to every move in the game, and the cunning of threatened self-interest will always keep them on the alert. On the other hand, the Churches *may* capture the labor movement. They have succeeded in this direction more than once, and the result for the movement captured was extinction. Any Church will, in fact, eat the heart out of a reform movement, because its main function is to perpetuate the established order of things.

The conversion of science is, of course, shown in Sir Oliver Lodge—as though he had ever left religion! Only Dr. Horton adds some foolish flourishes of his own. For instance, he says that Sir Oliver Lodge disposed of the argument against prayer, based on the uniformity of nature, by pointing out that we interfere with the uniformity of nature every time we water a garden, and that the whole of human activity interferes with the uniformity of nature. Now, Sir Oliver Lodge has said many strange things, but he never said anything so hopelessly foolish as this. The merit of this observation belongs entirely to Dr. Horton. What Sir Oliver really said was that human ingenuity could "deflect" natural laws, as in engineering and other directions. But this is not contrary to the uniformity of nature; the process of deflection takes the uniformity for granted. When we water the garden we assume that the water will fall on the ground, not rise in the air; that it will nurture the plants, not kill them. The principle of the uniformity of nature does not say that things will happen irrespective of conditions; all it says is that, given certain conditions, certain consequences will follow. When a preacher shows an incapacity to follow a scientist on so simple a point as this, his opinion as to what is the real attitude of science towards life in general is not likely to be worth much.

Glastonbury's "holy" thorn, which tradition asserts has blossomed every Christmas since it was planted by Joseph of Arithmathœa, has this year no winter buds. We always considered this a rare "plant."

Lately there has been a revival of mediæval customs, and the election of boy bishops has taken place at Berden,

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near Bishop Stortford. Most of the bishops we are acquainted with are in their second childhood.

A working man received an invitation from a clergyman to attend divine service at a neighboring church, and the note contained a text, "Come unto me all ye that labor." The recipient wrote back, "Cannot attend, on strike."

The Bishop of London has authorised a Collect appealing for deliverance from dangers of riots in Ireland. Pity the sorrows of a poor old Deity! He'll have to go on strike too one of these days.

A strike of tailors has been settled at Johannesburg. We are glad to hear it, for people might have been compelled to imitate the primitive costumes of Adam and Eve, or the Tango dance of David.

The king personally selected all his Christmas presents, a society paper informs us. As far as we can judge, the "King of Kings" does not give presents, but only receives them—through the good, kind priests.

Is "Our Heavenly Father" a humorist? We ask this question in all seriousness, for, whenever his children are celebrating his "birthday," he replies with a disaster involving loss of life. The Tay Bridge disaster, the Messina earthquake, the Chicago theatre fire, the Ellcott Junction railway accident of 1906, and the Hawes Junction express wreck of 1912, are only a few of the noteworthy occurrences at this season of the year.

The Rev. R. J. Campbell said at the City Temple that "the mother of Jesus had done more for her sex than all other influences put together." How is it the "mother of God" waited two thousand years for Mr. Lloyd George and his colleagues to endow maternity? And why do women in Catholic countries till the fields and act as beasts of burden?

According to the Oracle of the City Temple, Protestants accord little honor to the Virgin Mary. They never forget to reverence "little Mary," as Mr. Campbell might notice in the City itself.

Another poor Jesuite! Rev. William Gay, of Ettrick, Blenheim-road, East Barnet, left £34,610. "These," as Johnson said to Garrick, "are the things that make death bitter."

The next poor Jesuite was the Rev. Canon John Miller Elvy, of Broughton Park, Manchester, who left £13,573. It does not equal the Rev. William Gay's leavings, but it is a pretty considerable "hump" all the same.

"Well done, Belfast," cries a correspondent of the *Northern Whig*. He congratulates that hub of toleration on showing itself not only "thoroughly Protestant" but "thoroughly Christian." And in what way? By refusing to let Mr. John Lawson keep the Palladium open on Sunday evenings with a program of pictures and orchestral music. Another correspondent, signing himself "Progress," suggests that an empty Palladium means the patronage of many worse places.

The churches of St. Louis, Missouri, advertise through the Church Federation, in the *Post Dispatch*, for "more." That is to say, for more money. We judge that their condition at present is a bad one. Yet they boldly announce, while begging for cash, that "The Church is all-powerful simply because the religion of Jesus Christ is back of it." That's all right, to start with, but something else is necessary. "The law demands that you pay your grocer and tailor," the advertisers say, "but greater by far is your debt to the Church." Maybe. But grocers and tailors deliver actual goods and can sue for the price of them. What do the clergy deliver, and on what basis could they sue for its value? As for Jesus Christ's religion being "a happy religion," we are willing to agree that it is—especially when it sends an "infidel" to prison or burns a sceptic at the stake. But the opportunities for such pleasures are not as frequent as they used to be.

The St. Louis clergy are competent at blowing their own trumpet. Take *them* out of St. Louis, they say, and "there would be no homes—no schools—no honor among business men." We had no idea St. Louis was as bad as that. Evidently the clergy haven't done much good there up to the present. "No matter—the time *will* come!" So plank down your donation for more of the same old medicine, and—wait and see.

Lord Halifax says that all the Church wants from the State is to be left free to manage its own affairs. So Church humbug replies to Nonconformist humbug. Really what Lord Halifax means is State support and State patronage *minus* any measure of State control. All take and no give.

Canon Gough has discovered a new proof that the Church and Labor are at one. Both, he says, desire that men may have life, and have it more abundantly. Quite so; but the life abundant of the Church is to be enjoyed after we are dead, and we hardly think that is the kind of life that Labor is anxious about.

Seven millions of money is spent annually in this country on hunting. The Christian upper classes have yet to learn kindness to animals.

The four Bible Societies last year had an income of £283,287, and 102 Home and Foreign Missions £8,881,094. This is only part of the economic basis of a religion "without money and without price."

"Half a century ago education consisted of the classics, with a little mathematics and Bible teaching," says Mr. A. C. Benson, formerly a master at Eton College. There was no doubt of the paucity of the mathematical teaching, for the majority of the pupils were taught that three gods were one, and one was three.

"Forty-one Years at One School" is the alluring headline to a paragraph in a daily paper. It does not refer to one of the Old Testament patriarchs, but to a modern schoolmaster.

The *Daily Mail Year Book* says that the Bible "is the supreme treasure house of literature told in stories and parables." Some of these stories are as true as the famous account of the Pekin massacres once published by the *Daily Mail*.

During the past ten years the number of voluntary schools has decreased by 1,564. Clerical influence has correspondingly decreased.

The clerical mind is a fearful and wonderful thing. Writing of Christianity in *Lloyds' Weekly News*, the Rev. W. D. Morrison, rector of Marylebone, says that "It is never made a test of discipleship with Christ that those who elect to follow him should assent to any elaborate confession or creed." Didn't the reverend gentleman sign the Thirty-Nine Articles? And hasn't he heard of the Athanasian Creed?

According to the dear *Daily News*, M. Anatole France took his stand during the Dreyfus struggle as "a natural Christian." What is a *natural* Christian? The village idiot is called a "natural." We fancy the *Daily News* has confused Anatole France with some members of its own staff.

"Vapid and salacious" is a New York parson's description of a play. The phrase fits some religious literature exactly

"Manners are growing coarser," a contemporary publication tells us. Christian Evidence patterers will have to start a competition if this goes on.

However could we get on without religion, is the cry of the ordinary pulpiteer. The real question is, How can we get on with it? Ireland is an instance. We have over and over again pointed out the part played by religion in the Irish question, and just lately Sir Edward Grey said:—

> "I believe that the real root of the difficulty is the difference of religion, and that but for that religious difficulty you would not find there was any difference of race, or point of view, or anything else which made it difficult for the two parts of Ireland to work together."

As usual, the people from different parts of Ireland can work together, eat together, talk together, walk together, trade together; the one thing they cannot do is to be religious together. And, worse still, the intrusion of religion upsets all other relations. If Ireland were without religion the chief difficulties of the situation would be non-existent. The greatest obstacles are either religious or use religion as

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a cover. We repeat, the world's difficulty has never been how it could get on without religion, but how it is possible to get on with it in our midst.

Rev. C. Ensor Walters says that, "If the little Bethels would only stand one by another, we have a force that could turn men out at election times." Maybe; but the prospect is a most horrible one. Imagine Governments made and unmade by a combination of "little Bethels"! Once before in the history of England the "little Bethels" stood together and elected or turned out men, and the result was the return of the Stuarts. No one could ever stand the rule of the Church for long. Geneva, Scotland, America, England, it has been tried in all these places, and in the end the people preferred anything to the reign of cant and hypocrisy and intolerance that resulted. Just think of the Free Church Council as the responsible government of the country!

Christianity is becoming a harlequinade. What with Harry Lauder holding forth in the kirk, and the editor of *Punch* preaching at a chapel, and actors reading the lessons at churches, the religion of the "Man of Sorrows" promises to become funnier every year. The *Daily Chronicle*, recognising this tendency, published an article on "Christmas before Christ," and entrusted it to the humorous writer, Barry Pain.

Dr. Wentz, writing in the *Daily News and Leader* on "Fairy Tales," urges the instruction of children in "the historic tradition of divine knowledge." There is no need for the gentleman to worry, for the fairy tales of the Bible are taught in countless day and Sunday-schools.

According to the *Jewish Chronicle*, there are over thirteen millions of Jews in the world. Exactly! And half of Christendom worships a Jew and the other half a Jewess.

The advertisement hoardings contain announcements of a "Wonder Zoo." It will not be able to rival the Biblical collection with its talking snake and jackass, savings-bank fish, lodging-house whale, and similar curiosities.

An appeal has been issued by ministers of religion for united prayer for, among other things, "brotherly love to OUR peoples." People who profess to love their enemies usually hate their neighbors, if they do not attend the same tin tabernacle.

During Christmas the Salvation Army distributed 80 000 puddings through the "kindness of friends." There is nothing miraculous in this, for the "General" of the first "Salvation Army" is alleged to have fed 5,000 persons with three sardines and two bath-buns.

A jocular American, who knows something of both the Bible and English history, says that in the old days England used to burn the witches, but now the witches are trying to burn England.

A poor old gas-stoker, who had been blind for sixteen years, and who had been maintained by his wife, died recently at Pimlico from destitution. Both had often been in want of food. What has happened to the philanthropic ravens who fed Elijah? Are they as dead as the prophet?

A melodrama has been made out of the "story of the rosary." All over the world priests have for many centuries seen the commercial possibilities of a string of beads.

"Animistic belief," says a writer in the *Daily News and Leader*, is "the chief refining influence in every state of society, from the barbarism of the black man in Central Africa to the civilisation of the Archbishop of Canterbury." Yet this "refining influence" permits Christians to sing of "the blood of the Lamb," and Pagans to eat their neighbors.

"It was clearly God's will," the Bishop of London says, "that there should be men and women in the world." It was clearly God's will, too, that the Bishop of London should be one of them,—which some people think is hardly a matter for general congratulation. It was clearly God's will, also, that the world's human beings should be quarrelsome and murderous. The Bishop of London says *no* to this. We say *no* to his contradiction. Why? What is the criterion? Whatever happens is, and must be, the will of God. There is no other criterion possible. "I, the Lord, do all these things."

The late Cardinal Rampolla was called the "Vice-Pope" by the journalists. An ironic compliment.

More "Providence." A Salvation Army Home has been burnt down at Cincinnati. Eight of the inmates were burnt to death, and many seriously hurt in the rush to escape by doors and windows. "Providence" is no respecter of persons; that is, there is *no* "Providence." An undiscriminating "Providence" is a contradiction in terms.

It will be remembered that we took a bigot to task for sneering at Charles Bradlaugh on account of his statue at Northampton being near a public convenience. We were able to show, from an old friend's letter, that the late King Edward's statue in a well-known part of South London is in a similar position—and that the public convenience was there first. We now hear from an Aberdeen correspondent that the Prince Albert statue in that city has been similarly situated for the last forty years. There is also a public convenience just below the late King Edward's statue; and another (in fact, two) in proximity to the only granite statue in the city—that of the fifth Duke of Gordon. So the Bradlaugh "misfortune" seems fairly fashionable.

"A current 'joke' originating with the New York *Globe* runs as follows:—

> 'Your father is a religious man, isn't he, James?' a small boy was asked.
> 'Oh, yes,' was the naïve answer. 'He just hates anybody who doesn't go to church.'

The correlation of religion and hatred is no joke. Writing in the *North American Review* on 'The Problem of Ulster,' Sydney Brooks deposes: The tale is told of an old Orangeman who had been called as a witness to the peaceable disposition of a friend of his. 'What sort of man,' asked the counsel, 'would you say Jamie Williamson is?' 'A quiet, decent man.' 'Is he the sort of man that would be likely to be breaking windows?' 'No man less likely.' 'Is he the sort of man that you would expect to find at the head of a mob shouting, "To hell with the Pope"?' Witness, with great emphasis: 'No, certainly not. Jamie was never anyways a *religious* man.'"—*Truthseeker* (New York).

Mr. Robert Bridges, who is Poet Laureate, has written his first "official" poem in the form of a Christmas hymn. He should leave that kind of work to the contributors of the *War Cry*.

"The duties of the modern bishops are very onerous," says a religious contemporary. If they have to attend all the theatrical and music-hall shows in their dioceses in order to safeguard the morals of their flocks, they have our sympathy. We hope the Bishops of London and Kensington enjoyed their pantomime visits.

Evening classes for policemen are to be established in the provinces. We are glad to hear it, for the boys in blue will be able to follow more intelligently the addresses of the open-air lecturers on Freethought platforms.

"Horseflesh as Beef" is the heading of a scare paragraph in the *Daily News*. Our old friend, Ezekiel, dined on something worse—if more highly seasoned.

We have often called attention to the slow spread of Christianity in Africa and the rapid spread of Mohammedanism. We now see that the Bishop of Uganda has raised a storm by declaring that the various Christian Protestant sects doing missionary work in the Dark Continent will have to close up their ranks and make common cause against the Mohammedan danger. This is not the first time that "the Arab thief," as John Wesley called the Prophet of Islam, has worsted the Prophet of Nazareth.

The fated missionary asked to be allowed to sing a hymn before being killed and eaten, and the cannibal chief replied that it was not their custom to have music with meals.

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To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £283 4s. 1d. Received since:—Freethinkers of Bethulie (Orange Free State), per P. Hamel: J. J. Warshaugh, £2 2s.; J. A. Jorissen, £2 2s.; P. Hamel, 10s. 6d.; Berman and Ben, 15s.; B. Knott, 5s.; W. Sontar, 5s.; J. D. Grant, 2s.; J. O. Grunow, 2s. 6d.; total, less cost of remittance, £6 2s. J. F. (per J. Neate), 10s.; F. H. H., 3s.; R. L. M., £2 2s.; M. M., 5s; H. T., 2s. 6d.; C. W. Thomas (New Zealand), £1 1s.; A. Hurcum, 10s. 6d.; E. J. Rawtell, 4s. 6d.; "Jersey," 10s; Edward Jones, 10s. 6d.; E. A. H., 5s. *Warrington Saints*: W. P. P., 5s.; W. McC., 2s 6d.; J. B., 3s.; M. K., 1s.; B. W., 1s. Total to December 31, £296 2s. 7d.

D. E. B.—You will find our views on "Agnostic" and "Atheist" stated at length in our pamphlet entitled *What is Agnosticism?* We do not answer questions in sociology as a rule, but we don't mind saying (for once) that when poetry and romance and passionate love have died out in the world there may be room left for "trial marriages." *Romeo and Juliet* and the wonderful chapter "A Diversion Played on a Penny Whistle" in George Meredith's *Richard Feverel* will illustrate our meaning. Love is an exclusive preference. Those who do not know it have never loved.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

BIRMINGHAM "SAINT."—We understand that no reply but a formal acknowledgment has been received to the Petition for Stewart's release or better treatment in prison.

W. DAVINSON.—It is amusing, with a serious side; but the law of libel is a nightmare to a Freethought editor. Thanks for news of the progress at Edmonton.

C. C.—J. M. Robertson's *Pagan Christs* would serve your object, but you can't get books of that kind at 2s 6d. Forms of affirmation can be obtained at the N. S. S. office.

MR. AND MRS. G. L. ALWARD.—Your seasonable good wishes are reciprocated.

JOHN MATTHEWS.—There is a faithful history of the Crusades in a chapter of our *Crimes of Christianity*. We do not know of any cheap single volume on the subject. References in our footnotes would guide you to its literature.

J. B IRVINE.—Mr. W. T. Lee held several debates with Mr. Foote in former years. The last one must have taken place some sixteen or seventeen years ago. We are sorry to see Mr. Lee's bills now disfigured by "meetings for men only."

H. BLACK.—Much obliged for your very useful cuttings. We may take your hint as to our next visit to Manchester.

RICHARD ALLEN.—Your letter and enclosure reached us on December 22—in time, you see. Thanks for your new year's good wishes.

DEUCALION (New Zealand).—It is not our province in this journal to deal with Labor questions, although we wish well to all men who are seeking to raise themselves in the scale of being. So many journals deal with Labor questions already, and so few are devoted to the work we are doing. We believe you will agree with us on second thoughts.

J. ROSS.—You say that "to believe that Shakespeare wrote 'Shakespeare' is to believe in a *miracle*." We answer that to believe that Bacon wrote "Shakespeare" is to believe in a *bigger* miracle—and an utterly incredible one. We have Bacon's acknowledged works, and we know his character, for he was a public man; and to assert that *he* wrote "Shakespeare" is to assert not so much the wonderful as the impossible. As a matter of fact, genius always *is* a "miracle." It is really what the biologists call "a sport." And that the greatest genius is the greatest sport is just what might be expected. All this will be dealt with fully in our book on Shakespeare, which we hope to finish during 1914. For the other matters see paragraphs.

G. W. (Birkenhead).—Charles Bradlaugh *did not* debate publicly with Celestine Edwards in the Manchester Free Trade Hall—or elsewhere.

H. ROBERTS.—We do not know of a book called *God's Funeral*. There was a poem bearing that title in the *English Review*, by Thomas Hardy. We do post copies of the *Freethinker* to persons prominently mentioned in it week by week.

C. J. P.—Glad you were so pleased with our attitude. Thanks for the reference and the pamphlet. Both may be useful.

E. B.—Your cuttings are always useful.

D. BERNSTEIN.—See paragraph. Thanks.

R. L. M.—We understand. Thanks.

W. P. BALL.—Much obliged for cuttings.

AVON DALE.—The theme is too egotistic. What can it matter to the world which of us turns out to be a genius? There are things that *do* matter to the world. Why not try to sing *them*?

T. M. BROWN (U.S.A.).—Glad to hear that you "get the *Freethinker* every week" and that you "agree with some other correspondents that it seems to get better every time."

H. BLACK.—Thanks for fresh cuttings, which we find useful. We cannot join in any newspaper correspondence on the Stewart (or any other) case. Such a work would be endless. We should have no time for anything else. We really must leave it to the local "saints."

WELSH RATIONALIST.—There is some truth in your criticism, but it does not really affect the general truth of our observation that the Catholic Church *is* Christianity,—the Christianity of history, of doctrine, and development—the Christianity of the Western World. What are Russia and a few Balkan States to all the rest of Europe proper—to say nothing of America?

J. BOSTOCK.—Better late than never, and better little than nothing.

R. H. W.—We answered the Hugh Price Hughes book, by his daughter, at the time it was published, and showed that she had only made the case worse for her father—and, we are sorry to say, for Mr. Holyoake.

E. A. H.—A clever compliment.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

The London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner, under the auspices of the N. S. S. Executive, will take place this year at Frascati's, on Wednesday, January 28. There are several reasons for the change in place, but they need not be entered upon now. The change in time, it is believed, will prove beneficial to the gathering. On the first occasion of the change, at any rate, the dinner will be associated with two great names in the history of Freethought. Thomas Paine was born on January 29—Charles Bradlaugh died on January 30. The Chairman will devote his address mainly to the principles, achievements, and examples of those English heroes of humanity.

The Annual Dinner tickets are the same price as before (4s.), but the room available at Frascati's will not accommodate more than 200. Those who wish to ensure their seats at this function should therefore apply for their tickets as early as possible.

There will be several speakers at the Annual Dinner as well as a good musical program. The list will include Mr. Cohen and Mr. Lloyd for certain, and other names will be announced next week. We note a general satisfaction at the changes made in this year's arrangements, especially in the matter of the date.

We reproduced last week an excellent article from the *Manchester Guardian* against the revival of the Blasphemy Laws in the Stewart case. Our contemporary returned to the subject, and we have pleasure in reproducing its second leaderette:—

"BLASPHEMY AS AN OFFENCE.

"We publish to-day a letter on what we said yesterday about the Blasphemy Laws in which a correspondent argues (we believe we represent his views fairly) that, though right is on our side in the matter, we have chosen a bad case to fight on. About Mr. Stewart we know nothing whatever; it may be, as our correspondent suggests, that his language on the platform was such as to constitute a breach of public decorum sufficient to warrant criminal proceedings; but, even if that were so, that does not in the slightest degree excuse the authorities in having based their action on the Blasphemy Laws. If a man attacks Christian doctrine, or even ridicules Christian beliefs, the proper place to bring him to book is not a court of law; he ought to be dealt with, as our correspondent has himself dealt with such people, in public debate; if in the course of such attacks he lapses into obscenity, then by all means let him be summoned and punished, but for the concrete offence of obscenity, and not for the nebulous, indefinable offence of blasphemy. We choose the case of Mr. Stewart because he happens to have been the only man recently convicted and imprisoned under the Blasphemy Laws. His conviction proves that these laws are regarded as still in force. We want to see them either repealed or allowed to lapse and we are confident that when they are removed there still remains ample, and, indeed better protection for the decencies of public controversy than they can provide."

We should like to strengthen this appeal by pointing out that while the Blasphemy Laws continue to exist, even if no prosecutions take place under them, they will still operate indirectly by raising a prejudice against any Freethought speaker who should be prosecuted merely on account of "bad language."

Further letters on the Blasphemy Law, with reference to the Stewart case, have appeared in the *Manchester*

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Guardian. One is from Sir W. P. Byles, who concludes with an appeal to his fellow Nonconformists. "Free Churchmen especially," he says, "whose fathers have suffered persecution and imprisonment for preaching the faith which is now freely spoken, are bound, in my judgment, to defend for others who differ from them—yes, even for Stewart—the freedom which they have inherited from the sufferings of those who have gone before."

"Secularist's" letter in this correspondence is an extremely good one. He points out that "Liberal Governments have no reputation for leniency in these affairs," and adds that "there is only one case of a pardon on record, and that was obtained through the death of the prisoner's wife." Here is another pertinent passage:—

> "Professor Murray is in error in stating that no efforts have been made to secure Stewart's release. Unfortunately for him, his immediate friends bungled the case very badly at the first, declining proffered help and expert advice from the National Secular Society, otherwise the case would have been carried to the Court of Appeal and the verdict in all probability overruled."

This is really the crux of the whole question. Fighting involves leadership. Even a defective leadership is better than no leadership at all. And the leadership of such a fight as this naturally devolves upon the President of the National Secular Society. No matter who he is. His being in that position is the all-important fact. Not "Providence" but the course of events has placed him there. Private feelings or silly little personal ambitions should not stand in the way of the cause. We might have had a big fight, and perhaps a successful one, over this case For the first time a "blasphemy" sentence might have been carried to the Court of Appeal, and the whole question of *the law* might have been argued for us by eminent counsel. But the time for that, alas, has gone by.

Mr. Mark Melford sent us notice some time ago that he was a dying man. He had about three weeks to live, and he wished us farewell. But there is always a risk in prophecy,—a function which is better performed after the event than before it. We are glad to see the dying old histrion turning up again as the author of *Life in a Booth* (Hendersons, 1s.), an interesting and by no means uninstructive account of his chequered career during sixty years as "dramatic actor, author, and variety artiste." Mr. Melford does not hide his Freethought; he even places an advertisement of the *Freethinker* at the end of his book. We have much pleasure in commending it to our readers' attention. Many a shilling is laid out to very much worse advantage.

We occasionally print special letters from our readers, who, by the way, are to be found in all parts of the world. The following letter is from Bethulie, in the Orange Free State, South Africa;—

> "Dear Mr. Foote,—We, the Freethinkers of Bethulie, wishing to show our gratitude to you, who do so much for our good cause, have made up a small collection towards your Honorarium Fund, and beg you kindly to accept our small gift. May Freethought spread more and more over the earth, and may mankind soon break the chains of superstition and become free.—Yours truly, P. HAMEL."

The details of the "collection" appear in our list of acknowledgments in another column. The above letter, dated Dec. 4, reached us on Dec. 23, so the subscriptions fall well within 1913. We thank the subscribers and assure them how glad we are that our work is appreciated in all parts of the English-speaking (or English-reading) world. We also cordially reciprocate their good wishes for the new year.

"Lord Haldane, greatly daring, ventured to speak the truth about education the other day when he said: 'The supporters of denominational education on the one hand, and on the other those who thought that everybody ought to be content with Cowper-Temple teaching—his view was that the one was just as sectarian as the other.' That is the crux of the whole religious difficulty. Cowper-Templeism, or 'simple Bible teaching,' is just as sectarian to the Anglican and to the Roman Catholic as the Church Catechism is to Nonconformists. Until Nonconformists recognise this elementary fact there will, and can, be no settlement in education. If justice is to be done the State must subsidise all religious views or none at all."—*Reynolds' Newspaper*.

We are glad to quote the foregoing paragraph from our Radical contemporary. We should have been better pleased however, if some reference had been made to the non-Christian members of the community, whose rights are infringed not only by "sectarian" religious teaching in the public schools, but by any religious teaching at all. No agreement between the Churches in the form of what is called "a compromise" can alter that fact.

Once a Year.

Christmas Morning, 1913.

CHRISTMAS morning was gloriously bright. Hard frost had preceded a heavy fall of snow, and nature smiled, like a girl child, in happy amazement at finding herself dressed in a soft, spotlessly white, new frock, all glittering in the sunlight, when she arose in the morning. Every branch of every tree was motionless with astonishment; there was no breeze to shake off its ridge of winter beauty. The rhododendron bushes had been transformed into minature snow palaces. The delicate twigs of the flowering currant bush were bowed beneath their heavy burden of loveliness. The wallflower rows were like minarets rising above a desert of white, glistening sand. The firs and pines philosophically objected not; and the big plane, standing in the centre of the lawn, seemed to feel conscious of a great accession to its natural majesty and dignity. And above the snow-roofed wood the hill sloped, its white summit rivalling the few fleecy clouds that drifted slowly in the light amethyst of the sky.

It was a morning to be happy; and when someone suggested tramping to the service the idea was laughed to scorn, and the proposer joined in the objections. Going to church would have eaten a goodly portion out of the day; besides, on a week-day, the thing was preposterous. And so Christmas was spent at home, with snowballing, sliding, tobogganning, snow-figure making; and the old snow-man of the skies, had he shown himself, would have melted in the genial warmth of our boisterous play.

It was good to see the merriment of the boys when they discovered what Santa Claus had not brought them. It was better to feel the pleasure their awkward thanks gave you. And it was better still to know that their young minds had not the least trace of religious coloring as they thought of the joyfulness of Christmas. There were no morning prayers to throw the day out of joint; but there was a mighty ringing of deafening bells, that would have frightened all the ghosts of Christendom into purgatory for peace and quietness. There was no thanking God for what we had given them; but there was, in each little mind, a grim determination not to disturb the happiness of the day by fighting; and the difficult resolution was faithfully carried out. When bedtime came, Christmas, a year ago, was voted a great success, the boys wishing it would come every month.

But my thoughts, this Christmas, are not so pleasant. A different environment surrounds me. There is no quiet, snow-draped country to dull my mind to the happenings of the busy world. I can see what is going on amongst the mass of men; and many things make this Christmas tainted. All over the land priests and pastors will be declaiming on the brotherhood of Christ; how it has encircled the earth with a belt of wondrous glory; how the Child Christ has enwoven the mirror-like strands of memory around Christmas; how Christianity has succeeded in entering the hearts of the people by opening them to the marvellous light of its homely love. Christmas is the time of the year when the Christ spirit bursts from the bonds that enchain it, the bonds of selfishness, of hardheartedness, and indifference, and goes winging its way amongst the people, bidding them think of others rather than themselves. Christmas is the time of memories, of new interests, of new regards. By his ineffable sacrificial example Christ has hallowed Christmas with a power that no human energy can shatter. Christ died for others. In imitation of his divine example, we live for others, on his birthday. Our present-givings, our remembrances, our well-wishes, are homage paid to the Divine Man, the Son of God, whose life we, in our little way emulate on Christmas Day. So the story runs.

Thousands of poor people enjoy a decent dinner—on Christmas Day. Thousands of the pauper brothers

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and sisters of the Lamb of God are treated as if they were human beings—on Christ's Day. Thousands of the little ones the Savior presumably loved so much, little ones whose daily lives are so unlovely that they seem like rank weeds growing in mire, receive toys, and have their starved hearts stunned by a sudden shaft of dazzling light—on Christ Jesus' birthday.

Christ is the prodigal son, who returns once a year to celebrate his birthday. The rejoicings are terrible in their hateful resemblance to the rattle of skeleton finger-bones on coffin-lids. The cynicism of the farce is a damnable disclosure of the ugliness of the putrefaction of death. The Christmas pauper smile is the grin of triumphant immorality. The unctuous smickerings of priests re-echo like the smacking of the fangs of wolves on a snowclad social prairie.

Brotherhood! Once a year! Good God! And *such* brotherhood, the fraternity of spiritual horrors! And there are social reformers amongst us who look on, amused or indifferent.

Perhaps it is unpardonable, perhaps it is an intellectual crime against reason; but when the mind realises the full significance of these things the blood goes raging in furious riot through one's veins.

Piety, what a horribly contorted thing it is, on Christmas Day. Saintliness, what a disgustingly sick thing it is, on Christ's day. Christianity, what a mocker of human virtue, what a reviler of human justice and reason, it is, on Christ's birthday. Extravagantly dressed ladies hand round bags of stale cakes to city urchins, and an agent gives parcels of cast-off clothing to the parents, because their Lord and Master bade them remember his little ones. This is piety. Priests and pastors move about blessing the multitude who live on the upper circles of the social abyss, and keep on smiling the seraphic smile—which is saintliness. The multitude, having fed, scatters, the many to hovels, the benevolent few to mansions; and this is the boasted activity, the vaunted social valuableness of Christianity.

To-day, Christianity discards its one loosely clinging, Eastern robe, its hypocrisy, and reveals a body covered with ulcers and sores. Like the Paphnutius of Anatole France's *Thaïs*, it stretches itself upon its phallic-like column of falsehood to bless the assembled people, all stricken with the divine mental malady.

"There are, Lucius," said Aristeus, the doctor of Lucius Aurelius Cotta, the perfect of the fleet of Alexandria, as they stood in the crowd looking at the stylite, Paphnutius, the holy man who vainly endeavored to escape from the sex desire, "certain forces infinitely more powerful than reason and science."

"Which?" asked Cotta.

"Ignorance and folly," replied Aristeus.

And it is just now, at Christmas time, that we understand more acutely the nature of the stuff that is the staff of life to Christianity. It is just now, perhaps, more than at any other time, that we realise to the greatest degree the anti-social character of the national religion. Almsgiving comes like an army of courtesans, the countless reincarnations of Thaïs, seductively smiling, bewitching the hearts, bodies, and brains of the foolish and ignorant. Charity flaunts its purple and gold around the human cesspool. The Church licks the wineglass of the wealthy, presses its wet lips on the dry mouth of poverty, and murmurs "blessed are the poor."

It is just now, at Christmas time, that we Freethinkers realise the gravity of the responsibilities our beliefs impose upon us. Amidst the carrollings and hymnsingings there sounds the whirr of our weapons against the grindstone of reason. And, breaking the sanctimonious solemnity of the foolish prayer, there rises the strong battle-call of Reason, "Glory to Man in the Highest, for man is the master of things."

ROBERT MORELAND.

Rampolla's Dream.

"The vain crowds wandering blindly, led by lies."
—LUCRETIUS.

CARDINAL RAMPOLLA, who died recently, was for sixteen years the Papal Secretary of State, and largely inspired all the later policy of Leo XIII. It was his daring diplomacy which during the years 1887 to 1903 sought restlessly for the means of restoring the Pope's political power; and it was he who suggested the Church's remarkable overtures to Republicanism and to Socialism. When Leo XIII. died, Cardinal Rampolla would have been elected to succeed him but for the veto of the Emperor of Austria, which was communicated to the conclave by a Polish Cardinal. While the Cardinals hesitated to accept this reactionary veto, Rampolla, with rare dignity, himself accepted it, and the present Pope was elected, and Rampolla's dream of the restoration of the temporal power came to an end. He lived thenceforward in retirement, and his diplomatic combinations crumbled into nothingness, and with them went the last hopes of the Catholic Church.

There was a time when the Catholic Church was as liberal as her younger Anglican sister. She once had her broad wing, her rationalists, her scholars, and thinkers, who found her borrowed mummeries and stolen creeds susceptible of mystical interpretation. The ignorant, evangelical party gradually prevailed over these, and exterminated them by fire and sword, rack and gibbet, leaving themselves more ignorant and bigoted than before. Gradually the whole Church was made over to their "leprous likeness."

It required centuries to produce this result. The very triumphs of Freethought indirectly contributed to this end. Every Catholic who became a Freethinker assisted this process. The more brains that were drawn out of the Church, the more did the huge mass part with its intellectual leaven, and tend to flatten and harden down to a mere mass of ignorance and intolerance. What constitutes the obstructive character of the Catholic Church is the abyss which now separates it from the highest intelligence around it; the live, alert intellect of science, and the leaden, moveless stereotype of dogma.

There has been of late a revival of interest in the Catholic Church since the Ritualistic party in the English Church has waxed fat and strong. The Ritualists have not done all that was hoped by themselves and dreaded by the timid Nonconformists, but they have secured a firm foothold, and the Bishops cannot turn them out. It is now certain that there is a very strong party of the Anglican Church who play fast and loose with the authority of the Church in its entirety. At this hour there are covered by the English Church's banner men who hold the extremest doctrine of the freedom of the individual, and men who are willing to submit to the utmost doctrine of priestly control. How long will this divided house stand? That a large and increasing number of the Anglican clergy are coquetting with Rome has caused attention in the Catholic Church. The Pope has hopes of reconverting England, of reimposing the yoke which our ancestors threw off. But much water has flowed to the sea since the English acknowledged Papal supremacy.

In darkened and superstitious times the power of the Catholic Church was great, but it finished with the yellow glare of the fearful fires of Smithfield. It was never as unquestioned and unresisted as in Italy, Spain, and France. There is a wholesome tendency to resistance in British blood, which is cooler than that of the Latin races. It shows itself whenever any specially arrogant claim on obedience is heard, as Charles I. and James II. knew to their cost, and as the battlefields for the free press also prove. The Church of Cardinal Rampolla may do its worst. We shall never as a people permit the cesspool of the confessional. We shall never submit

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to the poisoned weapons of priestcraft, its hypocritical affectations of celibacy, its tyranny in the home, its officiousness in public affairs, its menace and robbery at the death-bed. Ecclesiasticism had not a safe seat on English shoulders even before the days of the Reformation; it is an impossible dream now that there is an organised Freethought party, which has inscribed on its banners that significant phrase, "Crush the Infamous."

Where Rampolla failed his Church will fail too. Science expands in search of light and truth. The Christian Church is still entombed within the covers of the Bible. Men ask for the bread of knowledge; the Church offers but the sawdust of superstition. The Church's teaching is no longer of any practical use, and represents but a backwash in the river of human knowledge. The great river of human thought rolls on, and bears us further and further away from the ignorance of the past, further and further from the shadow of the Cross.

MIMNERMUS.

Some Little-Known Freethinkers.

X.—JOHN STEWART.

JOHN STEWART, commonly known as "Walking Stewart," and in his own day characterised as "Philosopher Stewart," has been several times written about, yet remains very little known. De Quincey consecrated an article to his memory, but dwelt rather upon his eccentricities and exploits than his opinions. It is, of course, chiefly as a Freethinker that he is here considered. Of Scotch origin, though born in London in 1749, John Stewart possessed characteristic Scotch hardihood, relentless energy, and independence. Educated at Harrow and the Charterhouse, at the age of sixteen he entered the service of the East India Company, and went out to Madras. Disappointed of advancement, in two years, he quitted this employment, writing to the directors that "he was born for nobler pursuits than to be a copier of invoices and bills of lading to a company of grocers, haberdashers, and cheesemongers." Smitten with what Leslie Stephen ventures to call "the characteristic passion of the wise and good—the passion for walking," which perhaps is mainly atavism from a nomadic state, he went on foot all over Hindostan "to become acquainted with the customs, laws, languages, and temperament of the inhabitants." He entered the service of Hyder Aly, first as interpreter, and afterwards as military officer, rising to the rank of general. He was wounded in battle, and applied for leave of absence to consult a surgeon at one of the European settlements. The request was acceded to by Hyder, after some hesitation; but his escort had orders to kill him, which design Stewart penetrating, he made his escape, seizing a favorable moment to plunge into a river and swim across. His swiftness of foot enabled him to outstrip his pursuers. He subsequently entered the service of the Nawaub of Arcot, became his private secretary, and eventually Prime Minister. He was not paid at the time, but many years after, when the East India Company liquidated the Nawaub's debts, he received £10,000 for his services. He walked from India through Persia, Armenia, and Turkey, to Europe. Crossing the Persian Gulf, a storm arose, and the crew were for casting him overboard like Jonah, but he persuaded them to compromise by immuring him in a hencoop, and suspending him by the yard-arm till the storm abated. He had many adventures, and gave his testimony that, in all countries, it was safer to travel unarmed. To the credit of human nature, he relates that whenever he made people understand that he trusted them they showed no disposition to do him injury. He travelled on foot through Germany, Italy, France, and Spain, settling for a while in Paris. Having walked through England, Scotland, and Ireland, he crossed the Atlantic in 1791, and perambulated the United States and Canada.

When he came into his fortune, he settled down in Cockspur-street, Pall Mall, that he might be "in the full tide of existence, and gave private Sunday evening concerts. Among his personal friends and acquaintances were the Freethinkers, Thomas Paine, Clio Rickman, William Godwin, and Robert Owen.

Hogg, in his *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley* (ii., 328), mentions the famous "Walking Stewart" as "a tall, hard-featured, middle-aged man, impatiently forcing his way through the crowd that commonly impedes the passage across Westminster Bridge," and says "his chief delight was to walk at the rate of five miles an hour, straight on and, as long as it was light. In the evening he sought literary and scientific conversation, and the commerce of wits." Hogg gives what is probably a highly colored anecdote concerning his parties. He says:—

> "He complained to William Godwin: 'You, and the other great wits of the day, seldom come to my evening parties, and I know why you do not come. It is because you are afraid that the good things which you say will be lost; but, I assure you, you are mistaken. Not a single word will be thrown away; nothing will be lost. I have taken effectual precautions to prevent it. I have engaged twelve eminent shorthand writers; they are placed behind screens in different parts of the room very judiciously posted. They take down whatever they hear, and report it to myself; nothing can escape them. So fear not; not a word will be lost; talk your best!"

A more veracious account is given in *The Reminiscences of Alaric Watts*, who describes him as an ascetic epicure. He was a vegetarian, eschewing, like the Brahmins, meat and intoxicants, yet concerning himself with the delectation of his guests. Watts says:—

> "One of his most cherished friends was Robert Owen, of New Lanark, who was always welcomed with greater cordiality, and was a general favorite with the younger guests. His manners exhibited the beau ideal of *bonhomie*, genial to all, and to the young most kind and paternal."

Stewart in 1803 gave "Lectures on the Human Mind and the Study of Man," and he wrote numerous books expounding his philosophic views. They had strange-sounding titles, such as *The Siphiometer*, *The Tocsin of Social Life*, *The Revelation of Nature*, *The Revolution of Reason*, *The Book of Intellectual Life*, and *Opus Maximum*. The books were as strange. A solitary thinker wandering among many nations, Stewart had acquired a thought and language of his own. As De Quincey remarks: "Potentially, he was a great man." But he lacked power of popular exposition and expression.

De Quincey, who was much struck by the eloquence of his conversation, lays his finger on a damning fault of his writings, in saying "he was everlastingly metaphysicising against metaphysics." A few quotations may illustrate both his views and his style:—

> "With what weakness is it asserted that matter is inert, while each atom proves to the contrary. Where do we discover matter destitute of power? Is it in the minute particles of the virulent poisons? or is it in the atoms of inflammable air buried in the earth, which precipitates whole cities into ruins? And where is the particle that does not possess electrical power, chemical affinity, and gravity? And this partial power, energy of nature—the great whole of power in its component parts."

Speaking of man, he says:—

> "Man is formed of particles of matter, organised so as to resemble a corded instrument of music of five strings, which correspond with the five senses. The intellectual faculties hold the bow and play, and the passions form the stops upon the handle of the instrument; and if just tones are produced, simultaneously or successively, their harmony of melody forms what is called an agreeable tune or air, or well-being and happiness, of which man himself possesses consciousness; and in this power he is superior to, and differs from, the inanimate instrument."

He advocated what he called "the philosophy of Materialism" and the "perfectibility of human nature." De Quincey says:—

> "Like the late Mr. Shelley, he had a fine vague enthusiasm, and lofty aspirations in connection with human nature generally and its hopes; and, like him, he strove to give steadiness, a uniform direction, and an intelligible purpose to these feelings, by fitting to them a scheme of philosophical opinions."

Alaric Watts (ii., 282) gives the following account of his opinions:—

> "His theory seemed to involve the rejection not only of revealed, but also of natural, religion, truly so-called. Kind-hearted and benevolent to the highest degree, it was his whim to ascribe his sympathy for his race to feelings of mere selfishness. He supposed that there was a continual transmutation of constituent atoms between all bodies brought within the sphere of reciprocal influence, and that the process was regular and invariable. He denied that there was any manifestation of intelligence in the structure of the globe, or of the bodies on its surface, and disclaimed wholly any belief in the existence of a superintending deity."

De Quincey said in *Tait's Magazine*, though he did not reprint the observation in book form:—

> "In fact, he was as deliberate and resolute an Atheist as can ever have existed; but for all that, and although wishing, for his own sake, that he had been a more religious man, or at least had felt a greater reverence for such subjects, and a closer sympathy with that which for so vast a majority of the human race must ever constitute their sole consolation under sorrow and calamity, still I could not close my eyes to the many evidences which his writings and his conversation afforded of a true grandeur of mind, and of a calm Spinozistic state of contemplative reverie."

Among his eccentricities, both of thought and diction, are many good things. He said with Spinoza: "To think is to

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identify ourselves with nature." He was himself a thinker, at times original and deep, but without method. He insisted that the mind should be regarded, "not as a sack of science, but as an instrument of sense." Travel and observation he preferred to books and knowledge. He says:—

> "The most important action of my life was to uneducate myself and wipe away the evil propensities and erudite nonsense of school instruction. I soon discovered that the maxims of virtue would avail little against the untutored dispositions of violence, fraud, cruelty, falsehood, and superstitious insanity."

He thought that most minds carried over-much sail with too slim a rudder. So he says: "The human mind should be taught to think before it is taught to know, and the rudder of reason should be fixed before the mind is launched into the ocean of life." Virtue and vice, he said, are synonymous with wisdom and folly. Christianity he calls a more ridiculous system of superstition than the Pagan Pantheon. "This Christian superstition," he continues, "brought on the long period of the dark ages, which now exists in defiance of all the progress of science, literature, and travels." He says: "All appeal to supernatural or universal power is downright insanity. Man can profit only in an appeal to the intelligible and communicative power of reason in his own species." "Intellectual discernment," he says, "would avoid the excess of wealth, which always produces corresponding poverty, and often the most frightful evils. It would seek to deduce good from evil, so to modify war that it may become the means of peace, coercion that it may become the means of liberty, and civil government that its power may become the means of national prosperity in reconciling public interest with private good."

Sometimes he shows a touch of wit, as when he says the Irish Catholics have "only Father Murphy's supper in the clouds to allure them." His travels gave him a good opinion of his own countrymen. He disputes their being phlegmatic, and says "an Englishman would buy a house before a foreigner would finish the bargain of an egg." He divided society into seven classes—viz., savage, pastoral, agrestic, scientific, confederate, and perfectible life. He advocated missions to the lower classes from the superior ones, "not to teach them, as has been the practice, the silly doctrines of mythology and metaphysics, to make fools of them, but practical secular education in useful arts and sciences." He notes how the offer of a reward for a chimney-sweeping invention did away with the cruelty of children sweeping chimneys, which religion was unable to effect. "Religion," he remarks, "demands implicit assent to all propositions upon pain of punishment, which disposes the mind to indolence of examination, ignorance, and a breach of probity." "Reflection, rising superior to the narrow confines of religious creeds and mythological dogmas, and comprehending the vast circle of nature's laws relative to man, discovers the end of his being to be the improvement of the mundane system in time and futurity."

De Quincey, who knew him well, says:—

> "He was a man of extraordinary genius. He has generally been treated by those who have spoken of him in print as a madman. But this is a mistake, and must have been founded chiefly on the titles of his books. He was a man of fervid mind, and of sublime aspirations; but he was no madman, or, if he was, then I say that it is so far desirable to be a madman."

In describing his own characteristics, Stewart, in his *Opus Maximum*, says:—

> "I have learnt to pity, and not to resent, the passions of others; and when to an angry or illiberal observation I reply with complacent language, it is but marking my own superiority of moral temperament, and showing that I am not to be infected with moral as with physical contagion. A philosopher may catch the small-pox, but if he catches his passions, he must be a fool."

Stewart died February 20, 1822, and left by his will a thousand pounds to Edinburgh University, which he esteemed the most liberal institution of the kind. His works remain a curious, ill-shapen, rugged mass of unrefined ore, whence, with much smelting, precious metal can still be obtained.

(The late) J. M. WHEELER.

Correspondence.

A CORRECTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Kindly permit me to correct a trifling error in last week's selection from the late Mr. Wheeler's "Some Little-known Freethinkers."

Judge Strange—my brother-in-law—was 76 years and 7 months old—not 75—when he died.

ELPHINSTONE BEGBIE (Major-General).

MUCH BETTER THAN CURSING.

Two Irishmen, the eldest of whom was badly club-footed were tramping along a country road. At noon they stopped under a tree to rest and have a nap. The club-foot man took off his shoes and placed them near him. In about an hour they awoke to find that some thief had made away with the shoes.

Immediately the young man made the air sulphurous with curses of the thief for fully five minutes. Then the club-foot man cried out: "Ah, ah! Mike, don't curse him so, but pray. Down on your knees and pray to the Virgin with me that inside of an hour my old crooked shoes'll fit him."

EXPERIENCED.

During an Episcopal convention in Boston, one of the bishops had an experience he will long remember. He was a portly man, weighing over 300 pounds. One afternoon while walking through Boston Common he sat down on one of the benches to rest. When he attempted to get up, he failed in the effort. He tried again and failed. About this time a little girl, poorly clad, came along and was attracted by the struggles of the bishop. Stepping up to him, she exclaimed:—

"Don't you want me to give you a lift?"

The bishop gazed at her in amazement and exclaimed:

"Why, you can't help me. You are too little."

"No, I am not," she replied, "I have helped my pa get up many times when he was drunker than you are."

It had been a trying day in the nursery, and nurse had had occasion several times to call for assistance in the management of what that day had proved a very unruly little miss. The child seemed conscious of her fall from grace, and it was with a very sober face that she came to ask forgiveness. After repeating the time-honored, "Now I lay me down to sleep," she continued, as was her wont, "An' now, Dod, please bess mamma an' papa, an' make me a dood dirl —" Here she paused, and, with the seriousness which convulsed the other members of the family and completely won her mother's forgiveness, she added, "An' if at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again!" It is to be hoped *le bon Dieu* took it as good-humoredly as her parents, and was encouraged to another almighty effort.

In a "Methodis' 'vival" once, attended wholly by enthusiastic darkies, there ensued so much commotion during the hysterical excitement that the red-hot stove was overturned. The result was a small panic, but the white-wooled pastor rose up in the pulpit, and, stretching out his arms, shouted: "Pick it up, Brudder Granger, pick it up! De Laud won't let it burn yuh!" Brother Granger, full of faith which was inspired by the revival, rushed forward and started to pick up the stove. A veil must be drawn over the details of the natural consequences that followed; but it was impossible not to hear Brother Granger's first remark, which was: "The hell he won't!"

A clergyman in an Eastern town warned his hearers lately "not to walk in a slippery path, lest they be sucked, maelstrom-like, into its meshes." This metaphor suggests that of another clergyman, who prayed that the word might be as a nail driven in a sure place, sending its roots downward and its branches upward.

"You might put on thar," said the bereaved husband to the rural sculptor, "that she died peaceful, an' that we wouldn't call her back." "Anything else?" "She never spoke a cross word in her life." "All right." "Bein deef an' dumb an' of a quiet an' retirin' natur'." "Is that all?" "Well, you might throw in a little scriptur'. Jest say, 'Her children rise up an' call her Betsy.'"

A country rector complained to a well-known dignitary of the Church that he had received only £5 for preaching a sermon at Oxford. "Five pounds!" ejaculated the dignitary. "Why, I would not have preached that sermon for fifty."

Sunday-school Teacher (after telling the story of David): "And all this happened over three thousand years ago." Little Clara: "Oh, my; what a memory you have got!"

The Sinner had been weighed in the balance and found wanting.

Whereupon the attorneys for the Sinner filed a motion for a new trial on the ground that the scales were out of order.

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THE
Freethinker
Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXXIV.—NO. 2 SUNDAY, JANUARY 11, 1914 PRICE TWOPENCE

Liberty means responsibility. That is why most men dread it.—G. B. SHAW.

The "Blasphemy" Case.

THE Petition to the Home Secretary in favor of the release or better treatment of Thomas William Stewart, the latest prisoner for "blasphemy," came to what I thought it would do—nothing. But as I signed it myself, in a soft moment, as I explained, I cannot be hard on those who engineered it. They are now getting up another Memorial, this time to Mr. Asquith, the Prime Minister, practically asking him to supervise and rebuke a member of his Ministry. I have not signed that. It appears to me unwise to attempt what we know must fail. One does not help any cause, however much one may gratify oneself, by a waste of time, means, and energy.

Mr. McKenna's reply to the Petition was belated enough to be uncivil, and its character is such that he may live to regret it. It seems to have been written without the slightest sense of responsibility. It betrays a very hostile feeling towards the prisoner,—which, to say the least of it, is injudicial, and it shows no sort of respect for the more or less distinguished people, closely associated with the intellectual and moral life of England, who signed the Petition.

Mr. McKenna's reply to the Petition was as follows:—

"Home Office, Whitehall, December 27, 1913.

"Sir,—I have laid before the Secretary of State the petition on behalf of Thomas William Stewart which you forwarded on the 2nd instant, and am directed by him to say that he has carefully considered all the circumstances of the case and consulted the learned Judge before whom the case was tried, but regrets that he has failed to find any sufficient grounds to justify him in recommending any reduction of the sentence.

"Mr. McKenna thinks it right to point out that the prisoner is not punished for holding certain opinions, nor for seeking to support his opinions by argument, but because in his speeches, which were uttered in a public place so as to be heard by all manner of persons, he held up to contempt the religious beliefs of others, and made use of language which was calculated to wound, and cannot have been uttered without the intention of wounding, the feelings of others.

"Mr. McKenna would further point out, what may not be known to the signatories of the petition, that Stewart also delivered lectures on 'family limitation' and the treatment of venereal diseases, and was engaged in the sale of the appliances for the prevention of conception; and it would appear, from his own words and from his sending his wife among the crowd which he attracted to distribute handbills and to solicit orders, that the purpose of his speeches on matters of religion was that he might use the publicity so obtained to advertise, for his own profit, his lectures and the appliances he sold.

"I am to add that the prisoner was entitled, within ten days from his conviction or sentence, to bring his case before the Court of Criminal Appeal; and he may still do so if he can satisfy the Court that there are sufficient reasons for allowing him an extension of time.

"I am, Sir, Your obedient Servant,

"E. BLACKWELL."

No doubt Mr. McKenna felt he was in a position to assume a lofty attitude. He had the petitioners "on toast"—to use the expressive language of the man in the street, which is always disdained by authoritarians and pedants when it first emerges into public notice, but is frequently admitted afterwards into the most respectable dictionaries.

Even if his reply were followed by questions in the House of Commons, he could foresee his own triumph *there*. For all the Christian bigots of all parties would support him against the handful of adversaries who were bent on doing justice even to an "infidel."

I propose to answer Mr. McKenna, and deal with the "blasphemy" case, and with the whole law of "blasphemy" up to date, on Sunday evening at Queen's (Minor) Hall, which I have had engaged for the purpose through the agency of the Secular Society, Ltd., into whose exchequer the proceeds will go after the payment of the necessary expenses. I have views of my own on this subject, and I will express them with sincerity and fearlessness, whoever is pleased and whoever is hurt. Mr. Herbert Burrows has kindly promised to take the chair.

Sunday happens to be my birthday. I don't know that I could devote it to any better object.

Meanwhile, I venture to reprint a new view of "blasphemy" first published when I was under prosecution myself in 1882.

G. W. FOOTE.

CHRIST THE BLASPHEMER.

It is rather singular that Christianity, whose founder was put to death after being arraigned as a blasphemer, should be so fond of flinging that epithet at every man who dares to expose its dogmas and ridicule its pretensions. One would think that after the charge of the priests, the scene before Pilate, and the crucifixion on Calvary, the Christians would banish the word as an opprobrium. Yet they have employed it more than all the other religionists of the world; they have made the vile principle of persecution involved in it a constitutional law; and although the ferocity of their faith is controlled by the growing spirit of humanity, they still howl "blasphemer" at plain-spoken heretics; just as they did centuries ago, when their power was as unlimited as their brutality, when they burned Freethinkers at the stake, broke them to pieces on the wheel, tore them to shreds with the rack, or boiled them alive in oil, for the benefit of man and the greater glory of God.

However they may shirk the fact, these malignant zealots must be reminded that Jesus Christ was a blasphemer. Let them not say that he was only accused as such without being guilty; for as the crime is impossible, or, if possible, only to be judged by God himself, the accusation is everything. Blasphemy is entirely a matter of opinion; it varies with time and place; but whenever a man is charged with it, we may be sure that he is in open antagonism to the established creed and its professional teachers.

Jesus Christ was in the same position as we are. He was not a learned rabbi, but a man of the people; not a courtly critic, but the sedition of the streets.

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And his enemies were the same as ours. The Scribes and Pharisees were the orthodox scholars and priests; and Jesus had set them against him by going, as we have, to the masses with ideas dangerous to priestcraft and privilege. It was "the chief priests and all the council" who sought for witness to put him to death, and they acutely fixed on blasphemy as the surest accusation.

When the high priest got something to lay hold of he rent his clothes, and said there was no need of any further witness.

> "Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death. And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him,.....and the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands" (Mark xiv. 64-5).

We all know the rest. These Jewish priests were sharp practitioners. The orthodoxy of Athens let Socrates live to seventy, but they got rid of Jesus Christ at thirty-three.

The Prophet of Nazareth had been called a blasphemer long before the tragic close of his career. We find the Jews saying "thou blasphemest" in John x., 36, and trying to stone him to death. He had evidently a bad reputation in that line. And it is remarkable that whenever the Jews uttered the word "blasphemy" they always wanted to do something vicious. It never expressed their love of God, but their hatred of somebody who differed from them and touched their prejudices to the quick.

It may, of course, be objected that Jesus Christ never *ridiculed* the priests. Quite true, but he denounced them. His utter incapacity for satire rendered this his only weapon of attack. No character was ever so deficient in humor; he often wept, but we never read that he smiled. It is not surprising, therefore, that he never satirised his enemies; but what he lacked in irony he certainly atoned for in invective. Listen to this fierce diatribe:—

> "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: therefore ye shall receive greater damnation. Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.....Ye fools and blind. .....Ye blind guides.....Ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and all uncleanness. .....Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Matthew xxiii. 15-33).

There's elegant invective for you; we yield the palm to Jesus in this game. But we rather think we have the advantage of him in sarcasm, and we think we have as much right to use one weapon as he had to use the other. Nay, we claim a right to use them both; and we shall not be frightened from our purpose by the fulminations of the pulpit or the terrors of the law.

We are quite aware that Pilate would not consent to the death of Jesus until the priests accused him of sedition; blasphemy being a crime unknown to the wise Romans, and any such charge being esteemed by them as only the bitter wrangle of sects. Yet the fact is plain, that the charge of sedition was preferred in the last extremity, so that the victim might not escape. Blasphemy was the original charge, and it led to the death of the Nazarene. Are we not justified, then, in speaking of Christ the blasphemer? Have we not the right to taunt the Christians with hurling at us the epithet that struck Christ on the brow, and drove the nails into his hands and feet? Let them dread the verdict of history, and tremble lest they share the execration meted out to those who murdered the founder of their faith.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Outlook.

REFORMERS are naturally optimistic. Their hopes lie in the future, and their ardor for reform is commensurate with their faith in the power of the ideas they represent, and in their belief that ultimately these ideas will triumph. Yet, because of this optimism, none are more ready to overvalue the actual progress already made. They shout, and mistake the absence of a counter cry for the non-existence of an enemy. They do not always reflect that the enemy, although silent—or comparatively so—may still be there, and that ideas that are backed up with a number of subsidiary interests, and resting upon a traditional basis, always have in them the possibility of a reaction. The number of people who take a genuine interest in advanced ideas is very small when compared with the rest of the world; and at any moment a combination of circumstances may present itself that would tempt threatened established ideas to make a last desperate struggle for unquestioned supremacy.

In other words, the possibility of a reaction is always present, and it is a possibility which reformers do not sufficiently take into account. Nor are there wanting signs that this process of reaction is already afoot. What, for example, has become of the Republicanism of fifty years ago? A half century since, with a woman on the throne—a circumstance that would not be without its appeal to male chivalry—one could have said with safety much more against Victoria than could now be said against George the Fifth. I do not, of course, refer to the personal character of either, but solely as Queen or King. During the past fifteen years the primitive superstition of the sanctity of the reigning monarch has made a strong and not altogether unsuccessful bid for re-establishment, and our glorious free press has, in general, worked hard in its behalf. Militarism is, apparently, more firmly established than ever; for if we do not have actual wars—although these have been plentiful enough of late—we have what is almost as bad, elaborate preparations for them, without the benefit of the object-lesson that a war provides. Both these things are enough to prove that the primitive man and the primitive mind are still with us, and that when the retrogressive section of society sets itself seriously to work, it is not impossible to neutralise the efforts of rationalistic workers.

In the religious world—in spite of all our talk about the advance of Freethought—we have seen within the last six or seven years a number of masked punishments inflicted for attacks on the Christian religion, and at least one man sent to prison avowedly for the Christian-made offence of blasphemy. Naturally protests have been made against this, although it is worth noting that the section of the Christian world which prides itself upon its liberality has remained practically silent. Prominent men in science and literature have raised their voice in protest, but prominent men did this in the case of the *Freethinker* prosecution of thirty years ago; so that this fact can hardly be chronicled as an advance. The important fact is that these prosecutions are still possible, that the mass of the people acquiesce in their existence, and that bigotry is powerful enough to set in operation this clumsy engine of suppression. In this respect we are practically where we were thirty years ago. Thought has broadened in the meantime, but has it deepened? What I mean is that there are unquestionably more disbelievers in Christianity than there were a generation since; but are there more disbelievers of the kind that really count on a critical occasion? One may well feel doubtful on this point. Non-religious scientists, politicians, and men of letters are as reticent now as they were a generation ago—perhaps more so. The real fighting is still left to a handful, and in this conflict there is hardly any such thing as a genuine neutrality. In England to-day the man who is not openly helping Freethought is covertly

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assisting its enemy. His very silence gives Christian bigots a confidence and a strength they would not have if he were outspoken; and so long as religion can by any means enforce silence it is doing for itself the next best thing to suppression.

In England the great medium of popular education—perhaps one ought to say of popular misinformation—is the press. And there is little or no improvement regarding its attitude towards avowed Freethought. You may liberalise in its columns, within limits. If Christianity is attacked, it must be in the name of some ridiculous "higher Christianity." News of Freethought meetings is still rigidly suppressed. For all that the general public can learn from the daily press, anti-Christian societies and publications and speeches might be non-existent. Each member of the public must discover them for himself, and when he discovers them he usually keeps his discovery to himself. We talk of Spain or Ireland as priest-ridden countries, in reality we are almost as priest-ridden as either Spain or Ireland. Not by the same order of priests, but that matters little. For it is organised religion that is behind this press boycott; it is organised religion that decrees silence to so many of our public men. And what is this but the rule of the priest. Religion still exerts a commanding influence over numerous avenues of social advancement, and so long as this influence remains, so long we are priest-ridden. We shall only be really free when this power is broken for ever.

So far, the black side of the picture. But there is a brighter side. In spite of boycott and suppression, the critical study of fundamental religious beliefs has progressed. A small army of workers, whose right to speak authoritatively cannot be questioned, have demonstrated that our ideas of God and the soul take their origin in the fear and ignorance of primitive humanity. This speculation, which is at least as old as the days of the ancient Greeks, has now received positive proof by the careful collection and classification of religious beliefs amongst existing tribes of primitive peoples. It is too often forgotten that god-making is really not a lost art. It still flourishes. Gods are still being brought into being, fashioned by the same methods which have always fashioned them. One can see the gods, first in a larval stage, and later on in full maturity. This study of religious origins has been so well done that, in its main outlines, it may fairly be considered complete. Our present great need is to affiliate past and existing primitive religious ideas with modern religious beliefs and doctrines. At present this task is shirked by our chief writers. They stop short at the very point where their labors become of supreme interest. That is, in showing that all religious beliefs, no matter how refined or how advanced, really rest upon the discredited superstitions of the savage. They have no other basis. And the man who accepts the origin of the belief in God and the soul in the ignorance of primitive mankind, need not bother about modern theories concerning them. He knows that they are falsehoods, and that no amount of apologising can convert an established falsehood into a possible truth.

Next to this, we have the help derived from a saner conception of historical growth and of the nature of the social forces. The average man cares but little for subtle points concerning doctrine. His interest in religion is of a more general character. So far as he values religion, it is because he believes it to have a beneficient influence on life; and, as his attention becomes directed to the real nature of the social forces, and to the part played by religious beliefs in social history, religion is contemplated from an altogether different point of view. It is then seen that religion, as such, can never give an impetus to reform. It never gives anything new; that is quite beyond its power. Its gods are always the shades of dead men; its heaven always a picture of the earth of yesterday, with its more disagreeable features eliminated. It is also being realised that the world-wide fight between religion and progressive ideas is not an accidental conflict. It is inevitable. The great social function of religion is to conserve. It aims at perpetuating the past because it is only by this means that it can live. All the fashionable talk about growth in religion is quite fallacious. Man does not grow *in* his religion, he grows out of it. His ghosts, his gods, his heavens and hells become less substantial with each generation. What is called growth in religion is really civilised common sense criticising the beliefs of the past, but without the moral courage for a complete break.

But, above all, the force working on the side of the reformer is the insistent, but largely unconscious, pressure of a changed social and intellectual environment on established beliefs. Against this force it is difficult for religion to guard because it does not express itself at any particular place or in any particular person. It is felt rather in the altered tone or temper with which religion is faced. Thousands of people who are not susceptible to a direct attack, yield to the insidious proselytising of a changed environment. Their beliefs slip from them without their knowing how or why. And it is precisely because of this fact that the immediate work of the Freethinker is to create a full consciousness of the nature of these changes. It is only by this method that Freethinkers can protect themselves against the dangers of reaction. It is not enough to merely note the broadening of thought and congratulate ourselves on the disintegration of religion. So long as people are not conscious of the full significance of the change, they represent a mass of material that may at any time be exploited by religious reactionary organisations.

This is more than a possible danger, it is in actual existence. The various "liberal" movements in the Christian churches, the new-born enthusiasm for social reform, and the like, really means this: large numbers of people have outgrown the old creeds, and were they fully conscious of the nature of their own growth they would be in the ranks of avowed Freethought. But they are not conscious, with the result that they offer the opportunity for exploitation by the Churches, and one which they cannot afford to neglect. And in any really decisive struggle, it is this class that will turn the scale. Conscious orthodoxy is no longer strong enough in this country to work its will. Neither is conscious Freethought. But between the two lies this large and growing body of people, dissatisfied with the old and not enlightened enough to take on with the new. They are easy slaves to phrases and catchwords. The cry of reform satisfies their ears, and their minds are not acute enough to see whether what is being offered them is genuine reform or not. It is this class that has, historically, always been the obstacle to reform, and it remains so still. We are not, as I have said, sufficiently advanced to be beyond the danger of a reaction; indeed, I believe that this reaction has set in. But how far this reaction is to go, to what extent it is to meet with success, will, I believe, be decided by our efforts in rousing this intermediate body of public opinion. We cannot convert the genuinely orthodox—at least, to any considerable extent—but we can awaken the minds of others as to where they really are and why they are there. The immediate question of the future is just this: Can Freethought enlist on its side the immense body of partly emancipated opinion that undoubtedly exists, or will it be captured by the pretended liberalism of the Churches, and so made the instrument of reaction and disaster?

C. COHEN.

Is Religion a Necessity?

NATURALLY the Pulpit assures us that in the absence of religion human life would be dark and miserable in the extreme, decidedly not worth living. Without a doubt religion *is* a necessity to the clergy of all denominations, for if it were suddenly to disappear

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their means of subsistence would be gone. And yet we are told of some ministers who are convinced that the common people could not possibly live without it, though they themselves do not believe in it. The "Man in Black," who figures so largely in Borrow's *Lavengro* and *Romany Rye*, was a Catholic missionary, entrusted, among others, with the reconversion of this country to Catholicism. Borrow described him to Isopel Berners as "a prowling priest," who could quaff an enormous quantity of cold gin and water with a lump of sugar in it. Isopel was instructed to keep the dingle well supplied with hollands, so that the "Man in Black" might quench his endless thirst and be induced to talk whenever he honored the strange couple with a visit. On one occasion the subject under discussion was Religion, and this is how Borrow introduces it:—

> "He proceeded to tell me that the experience of countless ages had proved the necessity of religion; the necessity, he would admit, was only for simpletons; but as nine-tenths of the dwellers upon this earth were simpletons, it would never do for sensible people to run counter to their folly, but, on the contrary, it was their wisest course to encourage them in it, always provided that, by so doing, sensible people could derive advantage; that the truly sensible people of this world were the priests, who, without caring a straw for religion for its own sake, made use of it as a cord by which to draw the simpletons after them" (*Romany Rye*, p. 9).

The "Man in Black" despised and reviled the very Church whose servant he was, and admitted his unbelief in the Christian religion itself. He called it a "ferocious" cult, which could have given all other cults "a lesson in the art of persecution." "None but Christians," he said, "have ever been good persecutors; well, the old religion succumbed, Christianity prevailed, for the ferocious is sure to prevail over the gentle." He was anxious to enlist Borrow as a partner in his mission, in spite of his unbelief in the Catholic Church; but having patiently listened to all he had to say, Borrow answered:—

> "'I will not entertain your proposal; I detest your schemes; they are both wicked and foolish.'
>
> 'Wicked,' said the man in black; 'have they not—he! he!—the furtherance of religion in view?'
>
> 'A religion,' said I, 'in which you yourself do not believe, and which you contemn.'
>
> 'Whether I believe in it or not,' said the man in black, 'it is adapted for the generality of the human race; so I will forward it, and advise you to do the same'" (*Ibid*, p. 20).

Here we have a man advocating the necessity of religion because it enabled the only sensible people, the priests, who did not believe in it, to live in luxury upon the simpletons who did. We know that many priests are sincere believers in the Gospel which they preach; but we also know that there are hundreds, if not thousands, whose private creed is of much smaller dimensions than the one they avouch in public. In other words, the religion which many clergymen preach from the pulpit is not the religion by which they live from day to day. The common people must have a religion, they declare, and it must be much larger and fuller than their own.

But do the so-called common people need a religion? What has religion ever done for its professors? Of what benefit has Christianity been to the inhabitants of the United Kingdom, for example? Read their history, contemplate the present conditions of life among them, and specify, if you can, the good which their belief in God and a future life has done them. It is our vaunted boast that we are the most Christian people under the sun, which no doubt we really are; but are the conditions of life amongst us just and humane? Do we live together in perfect peace and happiness as brothers and sisters in the Lord? No man of God has the temerity to answer those questions in the affirmative. The truth is that socially and economically we are more backward than some non-Christian nations. Are not capital and labor at perpetual war in our midst? There is no lack of religion in Dublin and Leeds, and yet in both cities employers and employees are at daggers drawn. God is powerless to keep order among his children, whom he is said to love with boundless affection. To safeguard life and property in London we require a Police Force numbering upwards of twenty thousand men and costing nearly two million pounds a year. We have fourteen Police Courts, presided over by twenty-six magistrates, and many other Courts, in which prisoners and litigants are dealt with. With these facts in mind, we wish to know what Christianity has done for British and Irish people. It has certainly not united them in the bond of brotherly love, abolishing class distinctions and antagonisms, and establishing economic justice and harmony.

It is safe to affirm that religion has conferred no benefit whatever upon mankind; and it is also safe to declare that it has done our race incalculable harm. So far has it been from promoting our progress, that it has even acted as a retrogressive agent. It is universally admitted that war is a terrible curse; and the majority of the wars in Christendom have been religious. Who can read the story of the bloody conflict between Presbyterianism and Episcopacy in Scotland without being forced to the conclusion that the Scottish people would have fared much better had they been without any religion at all? The battles of Rullion Green and Drumclog, and the fearful persecutions which lasted for years, were distinctly anti-social and anti-progressive in their direct and indirect influence. The same remark applies to the wars waged in this island between Protestantism and Catholicism, now the one and now the other being victorious. When Catholicism held sway Protestants were cheerfully put to death as dangerous heretics, and when Protestantism was in power, Catholics were treated in the same way. Whether in the Catholic or the Protestant form, Christianity has always been a disturber of the peace. Even in the twentieth century, religion, though it has lost most of its ancient power, is still setting its champions at loggerheads. Religious controversies are as acrid and heartless now as ever they were; and the people who engage in them never escape unscathed. Of necessity, they exert an injurious, degrading influence upon character. The Kikuyu controversy, now raging in the Anglican Church, only shows how Christian belief cramps and corrupts the mind, making it impossible for those who cherish it to act naturally and spontaneously in any given circumstances. The Bishop of Zanzibar may be a most excellent Christian; but his excellency, as a Christian, has engendered an exclusiveness which is fundamentally inconsistent with any rational doctrine of human brotherhood. Indeed, the brotherhood of man is not, never has been, a Christian tenet; and in practice Christians are the least brotherly of all people. Episcopalians cannot sit at the Lord's table in company with non-Episcopalians without being subjected to the charge of heresy—a charge which the Bishop of Oxford seems to justify. To non-Christians the Kikuyu controversy is infinitely ridiculous; and certainly nothing could be more calculated to alienate thoughtful people from the Christian Church.

The only conclusion to which we can come is that religion, so far from being necessary to mankind, is detrimental to its highest interests. It is a notorious fact that Christianity and intolerance have always gone hand-in-hand. Catholics hate Protestants, and treat them as schismatics. Different sections of Protestants are constantly unchurching one another, and not much love has ever been lost between them. Yes, the religion of the Galilean has been eminently successful in setting "a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law," and in causing a man's foes to be "they of his own household." The idea that we need such a religion is so absurd as to be intolerable. If we could but free our minds from prejudice we would see clearly that religion is an enemy of progress, a hindrance to the development of man-

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hood, and a destroyer of social union. Like the vermiform appendix it is a useless vestigial structure, and often proves harmful. We have outgrown it, and the wisest thing we can do is to cut it off and fling it away. They who have managed to do this rejoice in their deliverance. Life has become a new thing to them, and the world is clothed with fresh glory. They are no longer under the dominion of false fears, neither do they harbor illusive hopes. The earth has become their home which they love and never wish to leave. Their ideal is soundness of mind and body, which is the one condition of individual and social happiness. Our worst foe is disease, mental and bodily, and our first and supreme duty is to fight it. It is in disease that all the wrongs and ills of life have their root, and once we have got rid of it our greatest problems will be solved.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Unregenerate Kaffir.

IT always comes as a great surprise to the earnest observer of the Kaffir to find no evidence of the existence of that innate predilection towards belief in a Supreme Being which most Britishers have been taught is universal among savage races. No South African native language has any word descriptive or even suggestive of God or an after-life. Colenso and some of the German Lutheran missionaries have interpolated certain words and phrases which are intended to do duty for those religious ideas, but they are not in general use, and not understood outside certain mission stations.

I have had twenty years' intimate relationship with the Zulu, Basuto, Swazi, and Shangaan, both raw, civilised, and Christianised, and have never met one who could be said to comprehend the spiritual. Their ideas of an after-life, even after a course of missionary instruction, is childishly vague, and confirms the assertion of some that the Kaffir is incapable of grasping an abstract idea. Their idea of God is always that he is a severe white boss whom it is better to keep out of the way of. Jesus is still more incomprehensible. As an intelligent Swazi put it to me, Jesus was the favorite son of a great chief. Therefore it was foolish of him to go away from his father's kraal to live with a tribe who did not want him, and who tried to assegai him.

The hope or fear of an after-life, if it be entertained at all, certainly does not influence the Kaffir's present life in the slightest. In my official capacity I had charge of a native awaiting hanging for a murder. He had escaped after arrest, and was only recaptured after much trouble and nine months. After sentence he was assiduously attended by a young Lutheran missionary. I asked the native what the missionary talked to him about. He gave me a summary of the discourses, adding, "He says that I shall come alive again." I suggested that would be satisfactory. "No, they would only hang me again," he objected. I hinted that God being a white man, as all Kaffirs are taught, he would not hang twice for the same offence. With perfect sincerity, he answered, "That may be, but Inspector Clarke would not let him interfere." Inspector Clarke had shown great zeal in effecting the re-arrest and conviction. The natives stood in great awe of his detective and authoritative capacity.

A dying Swazi, who had been comforted by the missionary's assurance that he would meet his father in heaven, confidentially assured me that he had no wish to meet his father, as they always quarrelled, and "he is very clever with the sticks, although he is so old."

The "converted" Kaffir always regards his association with the mission as a business investment. I say, with a full sense of the weight and meaning of words, that I never knew a native Christian who did not retain his connection with a mission because of some material advantage. It might be only the privilege of grazing his goats on the mission reserve, or getting blankets a little cheaper than from the store, but there was always a tangible, material result. It is a matter of local history that I made a bet that I would empty a mission church one Sunday by the offer of a shilling and a feed of sheep meat to all absentees. I lost the bet, but 22 out of a congregation of 36 came ten miles on Sunday morning for the shilling and the feed. I believe that I would have won had not an old native insinuated that the affair was a sell, or a pretext for collecting arrears of hut-tax.

Those who have had experience of the incisive logic of the Kaffir can easily understand how Bishop Colenso was set thinking and eventually converted by the unanswerable questions of the old Zulu who had been unable to make the genealogy of Genesis harmonise. The Kaffir is strong on genealogy, and can trace his family tree through the tangles of a score of generations. Here are a few gems of Kaffir criticism and comment that I have heard from natives:—

"God and Jesus are white men. No white man can get on without Kaffir servants, therefore we natives will be servants in heaven as we are on earth."

"If God can mend a broken leg if you ask him, why can he not restore one that has been bitten off by a crocodile?"

"Why cannot God cure the bite of a black mamba?" [The black mamba is the most deadly African snake. Recovery from its bite is exceedingly rare.]

"The Boers prayed to God before they fought, and were beaten; the Tommies [British] never prayed, but drank and swore, yet beat the Boers."

"When a native chief becomes a kolwa [Christian], he gets drunk oftener and always dies soon."

"The missionary tells us that hard work is good, but he never does any himself, but makes the Kaffir do it for very little pay."

The year 1896 was disastrous for South Africa. We had the Jameson Raid, the terrific dynamite explosion at Braamfontein, lost a million cattle by rinderpest, had a severe small-pox epidemic; locusts appeared in record swarms and ruined many farmers, and the Boer Government enforced several vexatious laws against the natives. An influential chief in the Spelonken district, claimed by the missionaries as a model native Christian, was discussing affairs with me. In the most reverential tone, he asked if I did not think God was getting too old to look after so many things, adding, "I think he ought to let Jesus do more than he does to help him."

These remarks may sound flippant, but they were not so intended. The native is never jocular in discussion, or for that matter in anything else. He has no perception of humor apart from physical buffoonry, and sarcasm or irony are lost on him. His criticism is the genuine reflex of his thoughts. Reticence or regard for the feelings of the person criticised he knows not, as witness these remarks made to my face by natives who were "nobodies" in the kraal, while I represented the majesty of the law:—

"God does not love you so much as he loves M'futa [the chief magistrate] because he lets you do all the work and you do not get so much money. You are foolish to love Jesus for so little money."

"Why do you not pray to God to teach you to speak better Zulu. Is it because he cannot?"

"Why did God let you, who are a Christian, be nearly drowned, but keep Masupa, who is not, safe?"

This related to my being carried down a river in flood, while my Kaffir servant, who could not swim, escaped without risk.

I enjoyed a fairly good reputation among the natives as a humane official. Most of my colleagues with me in our Volunteer company during the late Boer War were regarded as the reverse. I was the only one of the party severely wounded. When the news reached the Native location, the Chief Induna remarked that he did not think much of God in letting me be shot in the stomach while Captain So-and-So, who was much fatter and wickeder, was not hurt.

DOUGLAS BLACKBURN.

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Acid Drops.

It is amusing to see the Archbishop of Canterbury and other members of the episcopal bench calling for special prayers against the calamity of civil war in Ireland. The right reverend fathers in God never trouble about civil war unless they think their "pals" will get the worst of it. We say deliberately that their calls for prayer at this particular juncture are simply a part of the organised Tory campaign to frighten John Bull into fits over the Home Rule Bill. "King" Carson keeps a solemn face over the farce, but even he must envy the preternatural seriousness of the head jokers of the Protestant Church of England.

Don Quixote, the wise madman, told Sancho Panza that there were only two parties in the world—the "haves" and the "have-nots." That is the key to all political battles. With it the secret of all political questions is unlocked. We may say this without going any further in the *Freethinker*. But this is enough for readers of common sagacity. Before any question enters into the field of practical politics you can always say which side Bishops will take.

The prayers for Ireland are "special." This does not mean that they will make a special impression on the Almighty. It really means that the object in view is one of special importance—to the ladies and gentlemen who do the praying.

The *Humanitarian*, the monthly organ of the Humanitarian League, is not a comic paper, but there is an intensely comic paragraph in the January number's editorial notes:—

> "The late Mr. Montague Crackanthorpe, K.C., was, in one way, the most remarkable man the world has seen. He did a thing that no one else has yet done. Having asserted that garrotting was put down by the lash, and having been confronted with the absolute proofs to the contrary, he actually *admitted that he was wrong!* Dozens of eminent persons, from the late Sir Walter Besant to the present Mr. Plowden, and scores of anonymous journalists of every grade, have found themselves in Mr. Crackanthorpe's position, and have taken refuge, as the case might be, in evasion, or in silence, or even at times in abuse; but none of them, as far as we remember, has ever owned his mistake. We suggest that a statue of Mr. Crackanthorpe should be erected."

We repeat that this is intensely comic. We add that it is also intensely tragic. What a satire it is upon human nature!

We are glad to see the *Humanitarian* continuing its crusade against the beating of children in public elementary schools. It is not *called* beating, of course; it bears the highly respectable designation of "corporal punishment." It is simply abominable that parents who would not strike their own children for the whole world, should be compelled to place them at the mercy of other people, and be told to mind their own business when they complain of vulgar ill-treatment. For beating children is a most shockingly vulgar performance. No further proof is wanted than a look at any person engaged in it. Why the teaching profession still uphold the necessity of this vulgar performance in the schools passes our comprehension. In doing so they deliberately rank themselves on a lower level than the teaching profession in other civilised countries. The plea that a small cane is used only in a small way upon small boys is all nonsense. Serious injuries are sometimes inflicted, and slighter injuries are quite common. The *Humanitarian* cites a recent case in which the medical evidence was to the effect that fifteen or sixteen blue and black weals were on the boy's back, painful and tender to the touch, and two on the arm—and that one of the blows must have required considerable force, as there was a bruise beneath a vaccination scar. The magistrate, however, "did not think any unnecessary violence was used." Of course not. Magistrates never do. State functionaries stand by State functionaries. One policeman's word, for instance, outweighs the word of a dozen citizens in every Police Court in England.

The South Normanton school managers have taken action in this matter. They protest against the "growing tendency of the staff to inflict corporal punishment." Some of the managers spoke of boys and girls having been shockingly treated, some of them having fingers swollen to double their ordinary size and discolored. It was stated that in one case a finger was stripped one inch, and that in some cases the punishment was "fearful." Mark that the "tendency" to beat children is "growing." Naturally. The appetite for cruelty grows by what it feeds on. It grows from a luxury into a lust. Teachers may rail at this as much as they like. It is the simple truth. It is a universal law of moral pathology.

James Woods, the sexton and parish clerk of Billingford, Norfolk, committed suicide in the vestry of his church, which had to be reconsecrated by a special service, at which the Holy Ghost must have been present, for all consecrations are effected through that personage.

The Bishop of Thetford was responsible for that reconsecration. Thetford is where Thomas Paine was born. They haven't made much progress in that district during a hundred and fifty years.

Some thirty years ago (we have not the exact reference by us at the moment) a Freethinker named Gilbert Easton shot himself in St. Paul's Cathedral. His case was hopeless. He was suffering from creeping paralysis. His suicide necessitated the reconsecration of Wren's great masterpiece.

Journalists are often jovial theologians. A writer in the *Southend Standard*, speaking of Christmas, said recently that "a truth to be found alike in the dicta of a Colonel Robert Ingersoll and in the teachings of the founder of Christianity is that the way to be happy is to make other folk happy." This is, indeed, the newest theology. We shall expect to hear presently that the Man of Sorrows wrote the *Mistakes of Moses*.

The *Daily Express* recently pointed out that "Jericho was a very important city, situated on a caravan road, which led, probably, due north and south, or, perhaps, east and west." When told to go to Jericho, our contemporary will have difficulty in making an express journey.

The editor of *Howe's Directory of Metropolitan Charities* estimates the income for 1914 of the charitable institutions in London at over eight millions of money. Of this huge sum no less than three millions will be devoted to missionary work, and £373,320 to Bible and tract societies. Not a bad economic basis for a superstition alleged to be "without money and without price," and the founder of which was a pauper.

Dr. Clifford has discovered another reason why he supports religious teaching in State schools. He believes, he says, in Cowper-Templeism because it is democratic in tendency. It gives voters a measure of control over the religion taught. This apology is rather worse than the others with which Dr. Clifford has sought to befool the public. In the first place, the voters are not allowed to say what religion they will have taught. They may not choose Roman Catholicism or any other 'ism. All the State says is that, if a district requires religion, it must be of an "undenominational" character. And, in the next place, Dr. Clifford should remember that it is one of the professed principles of Nonconformity that the State should have nothing to do with religious teaching in any form. It is not a thing that should be decided by vote. Imagine putting it to the vote whether religious doctrines are true or not! Why, in some parts of the British Empire Christianity would be hopelessly "snowed under." Really what Dr. Clifford wants is the State to teach a religion that is agreeable to him, but he lacks the candor to say so. And, after all, this is only what the Roman Catholic and the Episcopalian, and all the other odds and ends of the religious world, desire.

Meanwhile the *Church Times* remarks that it is strange to find the "descendants of the Puritans" wishing to impart a "residual" religion through teachers ranging from Romanists to Atheists, about whose convictions no questions must be asked. Nonconformists are not quite so simple as the *Church Times* assumes. It is true that on the surface no questions are asked concerning the religious opinions of teachers. Nevertheless religion does very frequently enter into the appointment of teachers, and more frequently still into the question of their promotion. Everyone knows, who knows anything about the work of local bodies, that in the choice of teachers the sect to which they belong plays a very pronounced part in appointments. And all over the country there are thousands of teachers who are fully aware that to let it be known they are Freethinkers means an absolute bar to promotion. They are not rejected on this ground, of course; others are appointed—that is all. And so long as religion is in the schools, so long this will continue. Christian members of an Education Committee would no more vote for the advancement of a teacher known to be an Atheist than they would support an Atheist in any

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other direction. The facts are patent. To deny their existence argues either deliberate lying or an almost incredible stupidity.

On the other side of the hedge the *Catholic Times* seems to be getting nervous about the approach of Secular Education. It remarks in a recent issue that "either Cowper-Templeism must go or other religions must come. More than likely Cowper-Templeism will go and Secularism will come." Secularism, as a distinct "ism," will not come, nor do Freethinkers desire that it should. But we may take the above as the Christian way of saying that the abolition of all religious teaching in State schools is not only the logical, but also the inevitable issue to the present controversy. We welcome the admission, and we hope that the *Catholic Times* will turn out to be a true prophet.

When the Churches found that they were unable to stop Sunday concerts, a good many of them started Sunday musical entertainments of their own, either in conjunction with, or following the ordinary service. The same thing seems to be taking place in connection with Sunday cinematograph displays. The Y. M. C. A. has now announced a series of "Electric Picture Services for Men." The idea, apparently, is to get people to a picture show and sandwich a sermon in between. The Christian gospel is truly a powerful instrument when it has to play second fiddle to the film.

The Middlesex County Council has forbidden Sunday picture shows. This is not only bigotry, but impudent bigotry. As a matter of fact, they have no legal power to grant a seven-days' license or to interfere with a seven days' performance. The question of Sunday entertainments, with a charge for admission, falls under a special Statute.

Christian missionaries of any kind are kept out of Afghanistan. What a wicked country! It ought to be wiped off the map.

Dr. A. C. Dixon (the libeller of Ingersoll) has been preaching some special sermons on "Heroes and Heroines" at the Metropolitan Tabernacle lately. One was on Joseph —of course. The Potiphar's wife's temptation of this "purity" hero "was dealt with in a frank and plainly spoken address." Something like the lady's own address to Joseph, we suppose. Three words expressed all that she desired and expected of him. It was a model of brevity. Not one preacher in a million could equal it.

We have received the report of a sermon on "The Future Life of the Soul," by the Lord Bishop of Down; and, after glancing over it, we must confess that his lordship appears to know as much about the subject as anyone else. The Lord Bishop observes that it is only a very few sophisticated people who are capable of imagining that death ends all, and their minds have been warped by modern Materialism. We quite agree the number of those who reject the belief in a future life is small compared with the rest of the world, but "very few" is rather a misleading expression. Between six and seven millions returned themselves as Atheists at the last census in France, and there are probably as many unbelievers in this country. And these are certainly not the least thoughtful among the population.

Quite unwittingly, however, the Lord Bishop stumbles on a truth when he points out that only the minority are capable of imagining death as the end. This psychological fact contributed in no small measure to build up the belief in a future life. Death, although it has always occurred, yet stands as one of the discoveries made by the human mind. The savage does not conceive death as a cessation of personality because his mind is not capable of a conception of this character. The majority cannot conceive it even to-day. How many people talk of the "terrors of annihilation"? What they have in mind is, obviously, themselves as spectators of their own annihilation, and imagining themselves living to see themselves quite dead. So the savage does not think of death as death, but as a mere change of existence. The man is somewhere still. The human mind cannot picture its own non-existence, and this inability forms one of the foundation stones of the whole doctrine of immortality. But our difficulty in thinking a thing as true is a very long way off demonstrating it to be false.

For the rest, the Bishop of Down is just full of the usual "ifs," which, like a true theologian, he takes as the equivalent of demonstrated truth. *If* there is a good God, *if* human beings are the special objects of his care, etc., etc., it is impossible to believe that he will let them perish. Well, but God—*if* there be a God—does neglect his children. And if he neglects them now, there seems no reason why he should not go on neglecting them to the end. It is, of course, admirable to think the best of people, even of God; and so one may hope that—*if* there is a God—he will behave himself better in the future than he has done in the past. But his past record does not provide very strong ground for such a belief. The Bishop asks the unbeliever, "What about the wrongs that are never righted, the sorrows that are never assuaged, the tears that are never wiped away?" etc. Exactly; what about them? This is not a question that Christians should put to Freethinkers; it is one that Freethinkers should put to Christians. It is their God that made the world; he made it so that things run in an unsatisfactory way; and then his worshipers argue that there must be another life because the Divine Creator has so badly bungled this one. And this is their great argument for another life—the fact that God has arranged this one badly. Of course, the belief gives God one more chance to redeem his reputation. But suppose the next world—*if* there be a next world—is as bad or worse than this one. What then? It is at least possible. The Creator who bungled once may bungle twice. God is the only one who gets credit for good work in the future because the samples already supplied are admittedly unsatisfactory.

Rev. Alfred Barff, vicar of St. Giles, Cripplegate, London E.C., fell in getting out of a train at Hammersmith, on Christmas Day. He struck his head and never regained consciousness, dying at the West London Hospital. The Bishop of London called to see Mr. Barff who was a personal friend of his, but the unfortunate gentleman had already expired. The Bishop offered a prayer in the ward, however, but what good it did is not ascertainable. Somebody, perhaps, will inform us how the hand of "Providence" is to be traced in this sad incident.

Nearly 25,000 persons have formally seceded from the National Protestant Church in Berlin during December. The Church authorities are at their wits' end how to deal with the movement. All they can think of at present is to get the police to stop public meetings against the Church.

Mr. G. K. Chesterton is getting tiresome in his assumed rôle of defender of the faith. In the current issue of *Nash's Magazine* he girds at the Higher Critics, and suggests that these gentlemen are incomprehensible. They are not nearly so incomprehensible as the faith they try to explain.

Mr. G. S. Street has been appointed censor of plays in the place of the late Mr. Charles Brookfield. A brilliant critic, he is austere in his use of language, and has been described wittily as "the Street which is called straight."

The Bishop of Carlisle has expressed his astonishment at London fashions. Laymen have been more astonished for centuries at the fashions of parsons. It was John Stuart Mill who declared that he would not say that every bishop was an impostor, but every bishop looked like one.

"Minister as Fire Fighter" is a bright headline in a contemporary. That sub-editor was asleep, for that is exactly what parsons are paid for.

A new society for the encouragement of pure English, both written and spoken, has been formed. Christian Evidence lecturers kindly note.

Mr. James Bryce has been lamenting the decline of a knowledge of the Bible amongst all classes of the population. The same thing, he says, is observable in the United States, from which country he has just returned. He also asserts that the loss of knowledge of the Bible—if only from the standpoint of education—would be an incalculable loss to the country. We see no reason why there should be an absence of knowledge of the Bible, nor do we believe that this will occur. But it is a very different thing to have a knowledge of the Bible as a part of the world's literature in a special direction, and giving the Bible a place in education above all other books, and to which it is certainly not entitled. The Bible was given the supreme place at a time when the Christian religion dominated everything. But it was inevitable that, with the growth of a more rational view of life, other interests should arise and receive attention. All this talk about the supreme value of the Bible in education is pure nonsense. It is no more indispensable than is the Koran. It has its place in a complete education, just as

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the Koran has; and from this point of view it will always receive attention. Freethinkers have not the slightest desire to prevent the Bible exercising any legitimate influence it may possess. But they do object to it being given a fictitious importance, and other things woefully neglected, in order that this fictitious importance may be maintained.

The Christian world, or at least the English part of it, makes the most of anything in the writings of eminent men that can be twisted, by hook or crook, into lending some sort of sanction to their doctrines. The Rev. Dr. Warschauer played this little game for all it was worth, in his debate with us at the Caxton Hall. He must have known if he had read Dr. Russel Wallace's writings, even with the care he devoted to the morning newspaper, that the great biologist's views on the subject of religion were as much like his as cheese is like chalk. Nevertheless, he put Dr. Wallace forward as a sort of champion of orthodox Theism. The fact was even concealed that Dr. Wallace was avowedly not a Christian. The honesty of this proceeding is, of course, only what might be expected from any practitioner of the art of priestcraft. But it is a useful thing to draw attention to the *mala fides* of practically all the members of this profession—which begins in ignorance, continues through mystery, and ends in fraud. We suggest, therefore, that Dr. Warschauer and the rest of his fraternity might exercise their great intellects in dealing with a startling statement of Dr. Wallace's which was published not very long before his death. It runs as follows:—

> "I have come to the general conclusion that there has been no advance either in intellect or morals since the days of the earliest Egyptians. Everything is as bad it possibly can be. There exist in our midst horrors and dreadful diseases never known before. Our whole social environment is rotten, full of vice and everything that is bad."

What a terrible result of nearly two thousand years of "Christian" civilisation. We say "Christian" advisedly. It is the simple truth. Christianity has been the dominating power. It has been so at every point—from the coronation of kings and queens down to the laws of Sunday observance. Only Christians—and in England only Churchmen—could go to a university. Since that state of things was altered national education has come in, and Christian religious teaching exists in elementary schools at public expense and under public authority. It is perfectly true, then, that Christianity still controls education—as it really controls almost everything else. And the result is—well, we need not repeat Dr. Wallace's indictment. "Call you that backing of your friends?"

Dr. Wallace's estate was of the gross value of £5,823, the net personality being £2,884. Put the savings of a lifetime (only ten years short of a century) against the Archbishop of Canterbury's £15,000 a year, or some of the big fortunes left by Church parsons! Science is not as grasping as theology.

Rev. John Clough Williams Ellis, Glasfryn Llabgybi, Carnarvon, left £41,989. Dr. Wallace was quite a poor devil compared with this wealthy man of God.

Rev. William Smith, Edge-lane, Liverpool, left only £9,968. But even he throws Dr. Wallace into the shade.

Here is another poor Christian. Rev. Prebendary James Fraser, of Chichester, left £16,160. How will he get through the needle's eye?

The Rev. R. J. Campbell receives almost as much advertisement in the public press as Saint Bernard Shaw. Only the other day a paragraph announced that the pastor of the City Temple was a grandfather. But why did one newspaper writer head it "The Campbells are Coming"?

The special new year's number of the *Daily News* opened with a characteristic article by Mr. Bernard Shaw on "The Peace of Europe"—obviously written for the public entertainment. We wish Mr. Shaw could be more serious. War itself is a very serious thing. It is an ill-subject for jesting. It often occurs to us that many professed friends of peace do not realise the horrors of war. Mr. Shaw appears to us to be one of them. He is capable of writing ably and vehemently against wrong and wrong-doers, but we feel the lack of sympathy and imagination. There is cleverness and logic, but little of what is not inaptly called "human nature." Curiously enough, the same number of the *Daily News* contains a report from Mr. William Willard Howard, of New York, who had just arrived at Paris in returning from his visit of investigation to Albania. The Balkan war is supposed to be over. But this only means the Great Powers cry "Peace" loud enough to drown the cries of strife. He reports as follows:—

> "Mr. Howard said that civil war was imminent between the forces of Essad Pasha and those of Ismail Kemal Bey, President of the Provisional Government of Albania.
>
> "Great distress, he also declares, exists in Northern and Middle Albania. During the past ten weeks 100 Albanian villages have been destroyed by Servian troops; 12,000 houses burned; 4,000 men, women, and children killed or burned to death; more than 100,000 made homeless. Of this number, Mr. Howard estimates that 30,000 will starve and freeze to death."

This horrible state of things should be put an end to at once. The great Christian Powers could do it. They are like Mr. Shaw in one thing,—they are not in earnest.

There is only one way to *be* good, and that is to *do* good. We venture to say that one practical resolution of the European Powers to terminate the Albanian tragedy would do more for international peace than all the books written and all the meetings held in its favor from one end of Europe to the other. The logic of peace won't save us from war; only the love of peace will save us from it. And love, like every other emotion, strengthens with exercise. A real act of kindness by the European Powers to a gallant but hopeless people would soften the heart of the western world in a way that nothing else could do. And it is to the development of moral qualities that we must chiefly look to stop the barbarities of war. One does not keep one's hands from one's neighbor's throat because one believes one would gain more by letting him live in peace and comfort. One abstains from attacking him out of respect for his right to life and liberty, and out of sympathy with him as a brother man and a fellow-citizen.

American statesmen seem more ignorant, ill-mannered, and silly than our own—when it comes to anything outside politics, and especially when it comes to religion. Most of our readers will remember Roosevelt's description of Thomas Paine as a "filthy little Atheist"—which we branded as "three lies in three words." Paine was not "filthy" but a remarkably clean and well-dressed gentleman until he was rendered helpless by a painful bodily affliction. Paine was not "little" but five feet ten inches high; that is, several inches taller than Roosevelt. Paine was not an "Atheist"—in fact, he wrote eloquently *against* Atheism. It follows, therefore, that Roosevelt deserves to be called a "filthy little liar" much more than Paine deserved to be called a "filthy little Atheist." Yet this vulgar libeller has been President of the United States of America, and wants to be so again.

Roosevelt has frequently been asked to justify or withdraw his printed description of Paine. But he never answers. He takes no notice. He stands upon his dignity. And what that is worth is obvious to anybody who takes a fair look at him.

Roosevelt has just published his Autobiography. We cannot afford time to go through it. One or other of our readers may be blessed with greater leisure. It would be interesting, in its way, to know whether "Teddy" shows any repentance for his abominable lies about a far better man than himself.

Bryan is another U.S.A. statesman. His party are now in power, but they won't have him as President. Still, he has a minor office, and is well paid for it, but he eks out his salary with some public lecturing, his idea being that a good Christian like himself cannot possibly live on less than £4,000 a year. Bryan is not to our knowledge a libeller of "unbelievers" except in a general way. He has always been fond of preaching—even when he is supposed to be lecturing; and it is sad to say that his pious platitudes are accepted by "believers" as grand oratory. His mental calibre is of the very lowest. He is reported to have lately given a "crushing" answer to Atheism. It takes the form of a question: "How does a red cow, fed on green grass, produce white milk?" The way to answer some questions is to propose another. We submit the following: "How does Infinite Wisdom produce so many Bryans?"

"More than 2,000 persons work in Somerset House, and not a soul sleeps on the premises," the *Daily Express* informs us. What terrible Materliasts there are in London.

There were 2,285 novels published during 1913; but no work of fiction approached the circulation of the Bible. Nor were all the books together so outspoken on sex matters as the sacred volume.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

Sunday, January 11, Queen's (Minor) Hall, London, W.; 7.30, "Mr. McKenna and Prisoners for Blasphemy."

To Correspondents.

E. B.—Thanks for cuttings, and new year's good wishes to "al connected with the splendid *Freethinker*."

A. Baidoks.—Thanks, but the Esperanto writer is not very witty; the thing were better left to imagination.

J. M. Gibson, J. T. Griffiths, L. Gumbs, and Others.—1914 acknowledgments will be started a little later on.

J. Ellison.—Always glad to see wives joining husbands in salutes and good wishes to the *Freethinker*.

W. P. Ball.—Thanks again for useful cuttings.

Sydney Smith (Canada).—Passed on to our shop manager.

E. Norwood.—We have more than once stated that, except as printer and publisher, Charles Watts's share in the *Heroes and Martyrs of Freethought* was confined to the title page. Mr Foote wrote every word of the book, and also of several numbers that were issued after the publication of the bound volume. There was some idea of Watts's co-operating at the outset, but it never approached to realisation. This is obvious to any judge of composition. It is not a question of good or bad, but of individual style.

H. Black.—See paragraph. Thanks.

W. C. T. J.—Stupid Christians, who invented the "watch story," charged Bradlaugh and other Freethought leaders with blasphemously giving God five minutes to prove his existence by striking them dead on the public platform. Now your Christian daughter wants to know why they *don't* use that argument. It is no argument at all. The result would prove nothing either way. Surely she has sense enough to see that.

R. C.—The report of a funeral on December 30 ought to reach us before January 6 (Tuesday!).

When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

Lecture Notices must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Friends who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Tickets (4s. each) are now on sale for the London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner at Frascati's on Wednesday evening, January 28. Mr. Foote presides, and the toast list includes many well-known London speakers. Mr. Cohen and Mr. Lloyd, of course, will be present.

Frascati's will not be able to accommodate more than two hundred diners on this occasion. Those who want to be absolutely sure of tickets should therefore purchase them early. They can be obtained of Miss Vance, N. S. S. secretary, 2 Newcastle-street, E.C., or at the Pioneer Press shop at the same address.

The Annual Circular *re* the President's Honorarium Fund will not be sent out until the end of the month, after the Annual Dinner. Mr. Foote will also have something to say on the subject. Meanwhile, subscriptions that arrive for 1914 (and they are coming in already) will be acknowledged privately—and held over otherwise until the first list is published.

Our good friend and highly valued colleague, though so distant in space—Mr. George Macdonald, editor of the New York *Truthseeker*—has been expending some of his humorous criticism on a suggestion of the veteran J. E. Remsburg's. The said suggestion is as follows:—

> "Freethought needs something to arouse it to a greater activity, and if the imprisonment or hanging of an Infidel editor will effect it, I know you are willing to be used as a sacrificial offering."

Mr. Macdonald retorts, with perfect good humor, that his old friend Remsburg should speak for himself on a subject like this. "Whenever have *we*," he asks, "shown any such recklessness of life and liberty as would justify a conclusion like that?" And why expect that the imprisonment or even the hanging of an Infidel editor would stir up a lot of so-called Freethinkers? All that could reasonably be expected of them, in view of their monotonous stagnancy, is that "they would submit the whole matter to the jurisdiction of evolution and the judgment of posterity." These people are "gifted with absolute self-possession; nothing rattles them." Mr. Macdonald most positively declines, if he is left any choice in the matter, to play the part of a scape-goat in "the vain hope of waking them up." He thinks he ought to require an assurance that at least one inactive Freethinker would open his mouth, the day after the hanging "without saying that the religious issue is settled." We confess that we agree with him in this matter. Those who yearn for martyrdom should be allowed to seek it—and enjoy it. But others should be equally free to adopt the attitude of the old lady who had an ill-selected portion of Scripture read to her by a district visitor. It had reference to painful exercise of the teeth by the inhabitants of hell, and the old lady remarked, with a mixture of indignation and reassurance, that it didn't apply to her. "Let them gnash 'em as has 'em," she exclaimed.

We have pleasure in reproducing the following leaderette from the *Daily News* (Jan. 2):—

> "Mr. McKenna and the Blasphemy Laws.
>
> "The sentence of four months' imprisonment for blasphemy passed by Mr. Justice Coleridge at the Stafford Assizes on Thomas William Stewart was difficult to defend in any case; and to that extent Mr. McKenna is to be pardoned for his failure to defend it successfully. But his reply to the petition for the reduction of the sentence not only fails as a defence of the Blasphemy Laws but does something much worse. It leaves it to be inferred that at any rate a certain type of offender who happens to be unpopular may be punished in the last resort not for any offence of which he may have been found guilty, but for actions or speeches of which he has been definitely acquitted or which are not illegal at all. All the suggestions which Mr. McKenna advances in defence of the imprisonment of Stewart belong to one of these two classes. He was tried and acquitted on the charge of publishing an indecent pamphlet, and it is most improper that this particular charge should now be brought up against him by the Home Secretary himself to palliate the sentence passed upon him on another count. Other alleged offences imputed to him by Mr. McKenna are not legal offences at all; it is not a crime to preach Malthusianism or to sell the appliances which Stewart is stated to have sold. As to the actual indictment, it is manifest that it is almost impossible to attack the fundamentals of Christianity without, in Mr. Justice Coleridge's words, 'ridiculing, outraging, and scandalising the feelings' of devout Christians. Much that Stewart said seems to have been mere vulgar nonsense; he is most probably weak-minded That is no reason why the administration of the law shoul be so too, or why the public generally should be exposed t the perils which leap to the eye if Mr. McKenna's letter is t be allowed to pass unchallenged."

This protest will, of course, have no effect on Mr. McKenna. On a matter like this he is backed by the Christian bigots of all parties, and they are an overwhelming multitude.

It may almost go without saying that the *Star* had a good article on the "blasphemy" case. We are glad to see that "Sub Rosa" devoted his column in the *Daily News* on Tuesday to the same case. His treatment of the matter was eminently satisfactory from beginning to end. He calls for the "repeal" of "the stupid law."

The *Inquirer's* leaderette on the Stewart case is as follows:—

> "The Home Secretary has refused to interfere with the sentence passed recently on Mr. T. W. Stewart for blasphemy. We should like to have some explanation of his reasons. The petition to which we referred last week was one of great weight. It was not the expression of popular clamor or of sentimental pity for a man who has received a severe sentence, but of the clear convictions of a large body of men who represent much that is finest in the intellectual and religious life of the country. No one will suspect them of sympathy with obscene or disgusting language. It is a case in which a natural feeling of distaste for the whole subject has not been allowed to interfere with the high demands of freedom and equity. It is clear that the matter cannot be allowed to rest where it is. The next step must be taken in the House of Commons."

With regard to the last sentence we have something to say in our own article this week.

In another paragraph the *Inquirer* speaks of 1883 as "the date of the famous Bradlaugh prosecution." What a peculiar reluctance some people have to mentioning Mr. Foote! The real explanation, of course, is that Bradlaugh is dea

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and cannot profit from any compliment or courtesy. Very little of either was shown to him when he was living—not even by Unitarians. The story of the *Freethinker* prosecution and imprisonment has been out of print for many years. One of our publishing ventures in the new year, and as early as possible, will be a new edition. It is positively necessary to prevent misunderstandings and misrepresentations.

Professor Geldart's letter in the *Manchester Guardian* contains the following passage:—

> "This recrudescence of prosecutions for blasphemy is an extremely disquieting symptom. It suggests that there is a diminution in the public, or at any rate in the official, mind of the value set upon fredom of speech, and that the police believe that their efforts to secure convictions for blasphemy will be viewed with favor."

We have been saying this all along. The more "blasphemy" prosecutions we have the more we shall get. Going to prison is not the shortest cut to the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws; keeping out of prison is the shortest cut; that is to say, by making it difficult or impossible for the bigots to obtain convictions. The real fight is in the court before the judge and jury. Everything else is only auxiliary.

A further article on the "blasphemy" case appeared in the *Manchester Guardian* on Friday, January 2, under the heading of "Mr. McKenna's Strange Letter"—which is described as "mischievous." "The question," it says, "after Mr. McKenna's letter, cannot be allowed to remain where it is. We look confidently for further explanation from him, and not only for explanation but for action, too."

Mr. George Greenwood, M.P., who has been out of the advanced fighting line for some time in consequence of a surgical operation, and is still awaiting another when the doctors give the word, was not able to refrain from writing to the *Daily News* on the Stewart case. Mr. Greenwood, who is a lawyer himself, says he has read a full report of Stewart's trial. "And I found," he continues, "that he had used language very foolish and vulgar and in very bad taste, but that he had said nothing which, in my judgment, having regard to the best interests of the community, ought to have subjected him to a single day's imprisonment." Mr. Greenwood asks "where is our boasted freedom of speech?" and what of our boasted Liberalism?" Echo answers "what?"

Last week's *Reynolds'* contained the following leaderette:

"Poor Mr. McKenna.

> "Really we are almost inclined to pity Mr. McKenna. He has an unfortunate genius for saying the wrong thing. If he had simply refused to interfere with the sentence of four months' imprisonment passed upon T. W. Stewart for blasphemy he would have disappointed many Liberals. But he goes out of his way to add to his refusal a statement of his reasons which are quite irreconcilable with any idea of justice. Stewart must serve his sentence for blasphemy because, in addition to blasphemy, he was charged with indecency (of which he was acquitted) and because he sold appliances for the limitation of families, which is not a legal offence. He has placed himself in an absurd position from which he had better withdraw as quickly as possible."

Mr. McKenna *won't* withdraw. But the rest of this leaderette is very good.

There are so many demands for photographs and mementoes of the late Charles Bradlaugh that Freethinkers will be glad to know that a unique statuette of the great Freethought leader is now obtainable. The original and only existing bust, modelled by the sculptor Burvill in 1881, is in the possession of Mr. Victor Roger, who has permitted a model to be taken and to become the exclusive property f the N. S. S. Mr. Thos. Judge, a member of the N. S. S. Executive, and a professional modeller, is supplying the statuette as a labor of love, at the bare cost of material. Mr. Foote is also kindly giving the statuette a gratuitous advertisement in these columns, and it can be seen at the offices of the Pioneer Press at 2 Newcastle-street, E.C.

The January *English Review* is well up to the mark. Mr. Aleister Crowley provides the opening poetry, which is a feature of this periodical. He is certainly a poet, but many people, unused to his symbolism, will probably find him none too intelligible. Mr. Gosse's paper on Laurence Sterne is both laudatory and discriminative. Mr. Ernest Newman has an excellent article on The Piano-Player and the Music of the Future. The editor's article on the State and the Family should arrest attention. Among the rest of the contents is a brief, bright, satirical article on the dinner given to M. Anatole France.

Natural Atheists.

CHRISTIAN conduct is a wonderfully made coat of many colors. In the various lights and shades of life it assumes many peculiar shapes, many strange assortments of color. To the Freethinker, whose sensitivenesses are easily aroused, it affords an all-round experience in human emotions. Let his enthusiasm for the cause be never so little, he need not search for uncommon mental experiences beyond the limits of his own restricted sphere. Close at hand he will discover, in Christian conduct, sufficient incentives to give his mind a taste of nearly every emotion that has swayed mankind from its earliest dawnings of mentality. Cynicism, amusement, anger, hate, revulsion, fascination, wonderment, amazement, hopelessness, will all crowd upon him, like little multi-colored angels, from this coat of many colors. And in every mental state he passes through laughter and wrath will struggle hard for supremacy. Christian conduct has its funny side, but it has also its serious side; and the Freethinker will often be at a loss to determine which is the stronger.

Some time ago I had a good opportunity to indulge in this weakness of mine for studying the Christian's wonderful ethical arrayment. Congregations of people go under many names. This one was called "a party."

Everyone was in the merriest of moods. Laughter was the reigning sovereign, and drew great tribute from all present. The room was large enough both for dancing and the usual party games; and old people and young people were carried away on the wings of happiness into that unnamed country where we are our real selves.

Sometimes, in private argumentation with our friends, we are met with great astonishment when we say that man, regarded homogenically, is naturally good. So accustomed are they to dwell on individual trivialities that their minds cannot comprehend Humanity as an entity apart, and yet inseparable from the unit. They shake their heads dubiously when we suggest that Humanity survives because it is innately good; if it were inherently corrupt it would perish. They are too concerned with the personality of life to fathom the deeper and grander truths latent in the impersonal Humanity. Surrounded, as they think, by innumerable petty faults and failings, feeling their own weaknesses perhaps, their own tendencies to deceit and dishonesty in many paltry ways, they conclude that the shortcomings predominate over the virtues. When we base our endeavors at social regeneration upon our conviction of man's soundness of nature, nearly invariably they tell us our experience of life must have been miraculously pleasant. They wish *their* outlook could be so optimistic; but they have all passed through the hards, toiled through disillusionment and despair, tasted the bitterness of human misdemeanor, and they *know* what life is; *our* ideas are filmy filagrees of theory, dreams that stand us in no good stead when we are assailed by adversity; which is untrue.

How much is Christianity responsible for this attitude? Mankind required a savior. To predicate a savior entailed a notion that man was bad, so bad that he could not save himself from his own degradation. In the process of salvation the individual casts aside his nature, becoming born again, as it were, with a totally different "heart," into a completely different life. But man was naturally evil. His real nature was bad. He could only achieve redemption by being saved through something absolutely foreign to him, something over which he had no control, but that could elevate him from his old and natural self into a new and unnatural self.

Christianity's keystone is man's vility; and in the face of that fact it seems a pitiable display of contradictoriness on the part of our pastors to exude so much puerility regarding moral impurity. Con-

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sistently has Christianity taught that Humanity was evil in the very heart of it; and so strongly emphasised has the teaching been that some of our friends, whom we know to be as near the hall-mark of human perfection as one could wish, will gravely inform us that the love of God alone keeps them from sin. Religion has built in their minds the idea of the necessity of a savior, with all its correlations, and with all its socially disastrous results.

It is extremely difficult for them to understand that the existence, the survival, of Humanity depends upon the high level of its morality; and that, if this be true, it disposes of the need of an unnatural savior. Disposing of a savior, you logically annul Christianity. Discovering that Humanity is naturally inclined to goodness, you discover also the falseness of the teachings of Christianity. But the Christian idea rises up in the minds of our friends to confuse these plain truths, to fill the path with obstacles.

When we say that the impregnation of religious falsehood into the communal mind has been socially disastrous, we mean that the upward social movement has been, and is being, seriously handicapped by Christianity.

Had religion retained its mediæval power, very probably Europe would have lapsed into savagery. Against the restricting influences of religion the forces of civilisation have fought, sometimes openly, when great minds came to suffer for their championship of the natural; often quietly, silently, in the unwritten lives of little people, when the demands of the commonplace relegated the claims of religion, for the time being, to the Never-Never Land. These forces of civilisation have kept the level of human goodness intact, proving themselves as strong as, if not stronger than, their enemy. Over the ordinary happenings of the ordinary day the power of religion has gradually lessened; but, some of us think, if the religious idea of man's natural evilness were assailed as it ought to be, the plane of national morality would be an inclined one, tending more and more to a wider angle as religion disappeared and reason came into its own.

These disconnected, fragmentary thoughts passed through my mind as I sat in the garden in the starlight, while the others kept laughter reigning merrily in the room. For them all the little worries and grievances and anxieties of ordinary life, the irritations that arise, so many of them, from our irrational manner of living, and upon which religion feeds, were forgotten. For a few hours these people were living their real selves. No one even dreamed of inflicting the least hardship upon the other. The welfare of each was the unconscious endeavor of all. Happiness gave the gathering a communistic character. In the absence of all the conflictions that spring from the cutting of life from a hideous slab of leaden necessity, they were good friends. If evil were the unconquerable element in man's nature, as religionists din into our ears, it was strange that these people betrayed no deliberate and painful attempt to subdue it. Evil, in fact, had fallen into so profound a slumber that one might have said, quite justifiably, that it was dead. My friends were living their real, unfettered, happy, natural selves. More strangely interesting still: sleeping side by side with evil, was religion.

Naturally these friends of mine were Atheists: they were living without the least recognition of God. Happiness had banished an idea enforced upon their minds by environment. Had I entered the room and rudely interrupted the merriment by drawing their attention to this, I should have cast the whole party into a fit of the blues.

Decidedly religion is a socially dangerous thing. When it stalks upon the stage there comes with it an unnaturalness that proclaims its antihuman character. People lose their real selves. Their attitudes are stiff; their manners are strained; their deference is forced; their words ring hollow. Everything partakes of unreality. Religion, even despite the habituality of it, brings an unintrinsic element in its train. To the acute observer the operations of this intruder are always visible. To Christians, even those whose minds are particularly susceptible to the influences of religion, the presence of the foreign spy is equally and similarly evident.

In their attempts to harmonise an instinctive feeling of repulsion—for, after all, the word most truthfully describes their feeling—with their beliefs, they find refuge in the delusion of sacredness. This sacredness casts a holy glow over themselves and their environment; it coats their objection with religious sugar. But the intruder does not settle itself comfortably in a moment. It does not enter and instantaneously eject the previous resident. A gradual, if sometimes speedy, process takes place; and, ultimately, the mind, having first resigned itself to the inevitability of the heavenly spy's determination to abide for a time, loses its repulsion. Custom and training assert their power; the mind bows itself humbly; and, if the circumstances are not too awfully embarrassing, it imagines itself in the presence of God.

I returned to the room to rejoin the merrymakers, to assist my Christian friends to forget God; and in my mind were the thoughts that the coming of happiness meant the going of God; and that, some day, Freethought would be hailed as one of the greatest influences in making the way to happiness safe.

ROBERT MORELAND.

Seeking the Light.

I.

WE met in one of the loveliest parks in South London—and there are many; but the one which, I think, in the summer-time, is the most picturesque and beautiful of them all, viz., Peckham Rye Park, with its old English gardens, its shady nooks, its glorious avenue of trees, its beautiful flowers. We met after many years, two old schoolfellows, and we sat beneath an old oak tree and talked of the happy days we spent at the dear old school in Tooley-street, then known as Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, but now known throughout the length and breadth of the land as "St. Olaves."

II.

We had both been brought up as Christians, and attended Sunday-school and church with unerring regularity in our youth. When we started to earn our living I went into the commercial world, and my friend did likewise. Neither of us were very successful, and my friend went into the Army, but I continued in the commercial world, going from occupation to occupation, until I finally landed in a berth that seems likely to last until I give up the regular pursuit of earning an income altogether.

III.

Many years elapsed before I met my friend again. He had had a most adventurous career—had fought in two wars, and had come out of both encounters unscathed. When we met in the Park, we fell into talking of old times. While he had been away he had heard, from a very reliable source, that I had joined "the wicked infidels." At first he could not realise how I could have taken such a step; he knew how earnest I had been in my early belief, and he could not understand what motive could have induced me to give up a belief in which I was trained from my childhood. But while he was away in South Africa he heard of the name of Charles Bradlaugh and read of his great parliamentary struggles. Then his interest was awakened. This Charles Bradlaugh, he said, was the famous Freethinker, and his old friend and schoolfellow was one of his disciples. Bradlaugh was a disbeliever in the Bible, and, what seemed to my friend at that time a great deal worse, "an Atheist." And so my friend thought he would look into the Bible to see what was the matter with it, and see what great men like Bradlaugh, and

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earnest, intelligent men like his old schoolfellow, could find in it to upset their early belief. And light came before many years. One of the young sergeants in the same regiment as my friend had some of the works of Ingersoll sent out to him; my friend borrowed them, and read diligently.

What a revelation to be sure! The Bible, then, was not God's Word at all: it was the word of man—in short, it expressed only the primitive ideas of our early ancestors. But, thought my friend, "if the Old Testament is unscientific in its statements, if it cannot be relied upon in its history or its morality, how stands the New Testament—is that any more reliable than the Old?"

A year or two later my friend, while still in South Africa, received some more pamphlets from the old country. He read Ingersoll's pamphlet on *What Must I Do to be Saved?* and then he began to get some larger works, such as Samuel Laing's *Modern Science and Modern Thought*, and these helped very much in dispelling the old superstitions that had found a place in his young mind in the old country. Two or three years later my friend went to India, and subsequently to China, and learned something of other great religions that not only had a larger number of adherents than all the sects of Christians put together; but some of them, like Brahminism, Buddhism, and Confucianism, were more ancient than any form of Christianity.

IV.

As we sat under the shadow of the glorious oak, my friend at length observed: "How different our meeting would have been if either of us had remained a Christian. We should probably have exchanged greetings; but if I had known that you were a Freethinker, while I was a Christian, I should have tried to be friendly, but I should have felt all the while that you were a person to be avoided, and that the very air would have been polluted with your infidel expressions, and that I should have run the risk of contamination. But now we can both speak with perfect freedom. I can show you my thoughts on any subject without reservation. That is a great gain, is it not?"

"It is indeed," I replied; "and that is the condition of mind I have been trying to bring about all my career as a Freethought advocate. Freethought purifies the atmosphere. A man who has once become a Freethinker could never again live in an atmosphere of superstition."

"What was your first step towards intellectual freedom?" my friend inquired.

"The first book I read on the subject was Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason*. That convinced me that Christianity was not true. You see, I have always had a logical turn of mind, if I may say so; and when Thomas Paine demonstrated to me that the story of the Fall of Man in Genesis was purely legendary and absurd, I saw at once that if the first Adam did not fall, there was no necessity for the atonement by the second Adam."

"That destroyed the whole scheme at one stroke?"

"But I was not satisfied to remain there. I wanted to know something of the origin and development of man from the point of view of science. I studied Darwin and Haeckel and a large number of other writers who had written on the subject, and I became convinced of the truth of the doctrine of evolution. That gave me a firm platform to stand upon, and, as a propagandist I did my best to popularise the facts upon which the great doctrine rests."

"Ah, but," said my friend, "do you not believe that there was some such person as Jesus Christ—a good man who went about doing good—and who was betrayed by one of his disciples, condemned for sedition or blasphemy, and crucified?"

"No, I am satisfied that no such person as the Jesus of the Gospels ever lived—that the character is purely mythical. That is, I do not believe that there ever was a Jesus who was born of a Virgin, whose date and place of birth are doubtful; a Jesus who fed five thousand hungry people on five loaves and two small fishes, who made the lame to walk, the deaf to hear, and the dead to come out of the grave at his command, who was crucified and rose again from the dead. No, I do not believe that there ever was such a person as the Jesus of the Gospels, and no other Jesus concerns me. There may have been hundreds of other men named Jesus (it is merely Joshua, you know) among the Jews in the early centuries of the Christian era, but I am convinced that there never was one who was capable of performing the wonders attributed to the Jesus of the Gospels, and that is enough for me."

"I am glad to hear you upon that point," said my friend, "because that is a point upon which so many persons get confused. That, however, is because they know nothing about the gods of other religions. They have probably neither heard of, nor seen, representations of the Vedic virgin Indranee, wife-mother of the savior-god Indra; nor of the Hindu god Vishnu, nursed by his virgin wife-mother Takshmi; of Devaki and Christna; or the Hindu god Siva, nursed by his virgin wife-mother, Parvati; and numerous other gods alleged to have been born of virgins."

"Quite so. And I may as well tell you that all these virgin births, and many others, are mentioned by Dr. Harwicke in his very rare and valuable work on *Evolution and Creation*. I have a copy which was presented to me by the author, which I value very much, and which I will show you when you pay me a visit."

"But what about the teachings of Jesus—what do you think of them?"

"I could not answer such a question in a few words. This, however, I can say, that I do not recognise any originality in the teachings of Jesus. A good deal of what he is alleged to have taught, especially in the Sermon on the Mount, had been taught by others hundreds of years before the alleged birth of Jesus. Recollect, I am not saying that some of the teachings of Jesus are not good, and some of them beautifully expressed; but I do say that many of them are absolutely impracticable, and some of them positively pernicious, and I do not think that one ought to be able to say with truth such a thing of the teachings of one who claimed to be one with God."

"No, I cannot agree with you altogether on that," said my friend, "because the Jesus of the Gospels appears to me to have been a very fine character and a bit of a Freethinker in his way."

"Well, I was not discussing his character—which I have said I regard as mythical—so much as his teachings, and it was to some of those that I found exception. But, never mind, we will discuss these questions at greater length when next we meet. And now let us walk through the park. It contains some spots of rare beauty. Let us walk over this rustic bridge, and then through this shady wood, to the old English gardens, and then through the main avenue of trees to the cricket grounds. We shall probably see some sport. In any case, I am glad that we have met after all these years; and I am still more glad that you are 'seeking the light,' and that you have cleared your mind of many an old superstition. Get on, my friend, in the path you are pursuing; persevere, there is a great deal for us all to learn; we can help one another. What do you think of the park? Is it not charming? Well, till we meet again, good-bye."

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

He gazed around the cheerful and comfortable-looking apartments; then, addressing the widow, he said: "Your husband's been dead over a year now?" "Yes," she answered, with a sigh; "over a year." "I remember reading his obituary," he said, "and I thought it contained a misstatement of facts." "A misstatement of facts?" "Yes; it said he had gone to a better home. In my opinion, it would be impossible for him to find a more cheerful, more comfortable, and, with you in it, a more charming and desirable home than this." The widow smiled sweetly, then he was accepted.

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Some Little-Known Freethinkers.

XI.—HENRY HETHERINGTON.

How many of those who enjoy the benefit of a cheap press know anything of the labors, dangers, and sufferings of those who made the cheap press possible? Not least among these must be counted the name of Henry Hetherington. Born in Compton-street, Soho, in 1792, he was apprenticed to Hansard, the parliamentary printer. He was one of the most energetic working men engaged with Dr. Birkbeck in establishing the Mechanics' Institution in London. In 1830 he drew up a "Circular for the Formation of Trade Unions," which formed the basis of the "National Union of the Working Classes," and led eventually to Chartism. On July 9, 1831, he first issued from his house in Kingsgate-street, Holborn, the *Poor Man's Guardian*, price one penny. On the title appeared the words, "Established contrary to the 'Law,' to try the power of 'Right' against 'Might.'" In place of the Government fourpenny stamp was a picture of a printing press, with the words, "Liberty of the Press," "Knowledge is Power." The *Poor Man's Guardian* was issued to fight the Battle of the Unstamped. It consisted of but eight small quarto pages; yet, immediately on its appearance, obtained a circulation of 50,000 copies, and when prosecution began it run up to double that number.

Only those who know the tyrannical censorship exercised over the newspaper press when it first became an influence in this country can rightly estimate the work of men like Carlile, Watson, and Hetherington in establishing for us a cheap and free press. Little more than a century ago publishers of papers were fined and imprisoned whenever they as much as mentioned the name of a peer of the realm. Press prosecutions were numerous. Hardly any paper ventured to exercise independent judgment. Anything and everything relating to politics or religion was at the mercy of the Attorney-General, who had the power of summary arrest for seditious or blasphemous libel. As the demand for newspapers increased the tax upon them was enhanced. In 1765 the newspaper stamp duty was three-halfpence; in 1789 it was raised to twopence, in 1797 to twopence half-penny, in 1804 to threepence, and in 1815 to fourpence. Here it remained until, through the agitation of Hetherington and his co-workers, it was in 1836 reduced to one penny, at which figure it remained until abolished by the exertions of men like Austin Holyoake and S. D. Collet in 1857.

Hetherington's *Poor Man's Guardian* was the chief instrument in the battle for the removal of taxes upon knowledge. It was the first penny newspaper in the country, and was followed by *Cleave's Gazette* and other unstamped papers. The general price of newspapers at that time was sevenpence. The first number of the *Poor Man's Guardian* coolly cited the law under which it was liable, and which it defied. Three convictions were soon obtained against Hetherington; but the Bow-street magistrates were unable to enforce their order for some time. With provoking coolness Hetherington sent them a note to say he was "going out of town," and went on a tour spreading the *Poor Man's Guardian* in the provinces. On returning to London to his mother, who was dying, he was dragged off to prison while knocking at his own door; and in prison he was kept for six months. Hibbert, Watson, Cleave, O'Brien, and others, saw that the *Guardian* with its outspoken policy was maintained, and as soon as Hetherington came out he was again directing affairs.

Mr. James Grant, in his work on the *Newspaper Press* (vol. ii., p. 302), says:—

> "Hetherington was in many respects a remarkable man. He was intelligent and clever, but it was in the qualities of determination and courage that he chiefly excelled. Nothing daunted him. He knew not what fear was. In the army he would have been a hero. Of all men in London at the time, he was just the man to fight the great battle of an Unstamped Press."

To courage he added resources. He evaded arrest by disguise. To distribute his paper dummy parcels were made up, duly labelled "*Poor Man's Guardian*," and sent off in one direction by persons instructed to make all the resistance they could to constables who seized them; while the real parcels were sent off by another exit. He got his friends to dress in his clothes, and again and again they were arrested in mistake for himself. In 1832 he was again convicted and imprisoned, together with his friend, James Watson, for six months. During the progress of the "unstamped" agitation fully five hundred persons were arrested for selling the *Poor Man's Guardian*. Their pertinacity gained the day in 1834.

The case came for trial before Lord Lyndhurst, who, says Mr. James Grant, was then a thorough Republican. In charging the jury he took up a copy of the *Poor Man's Guardian*, and, looking at it with an aspect of pity and contempt for its poor appearance, said, with a peculiar expression in his countenance, and no less peculiar in his tones: "Gentlemen of the jury, *that* is what *they*"—meaning the Government—"call a newspaper." All in the court then saw that the triumph of Hetherington, and the defeat of the Government, were certain. The jury returned a verdict that the *Poor Man's Guardian* was not a newspaper. No. 159 bore these words: "This paper, after sustaining a persecution of three years' and a half duration, in which upwards of five hundred persons were imprisoned for reading it, was declared in the Court of Exchequer to be a strictly legal publication."

The veteran William James Linton, in his *Memoir of James Watson*, has the following on Watson's friend, Hetherington:—

> "For four years he bore the brunt of the battle for a free press. Ever busy in the interest of his class during the Whig Reform ferment, he was among the most zealous as well as the wisest leaders of Chartism afterwards. A ready speaker, bold and fluent, passionate, sarcastic, or humorous on occasion (he had a spice of fun in him through all his trouble), he was deservedly popular in those days; and in the Chartist Convention of 1832 sat as delegate for Stockport and for London."

In 1840 Hetherington was arrested for selling Haslam's *Letters to the Clergy*. To test the impartiality of the law, some of Hetherington's friends commenced prosecutions against four high-class publishers—Moxon, Frazer, Richardson, and Saunders—for the publication of *Queen Mab*. The law was clear. Shelley's poem was a blasphemous libel, and, despite the eloquent defence of Serjeant Talfourd, Moxon was declared guilty. It remained for the prosecutors to call him up for judgment, which was never done, their object being merely to call attention to the state of the law, and to advertise *Queen Mab*. This course obtained for Hetherington the mildest sentence then given for blasphemous libel—four months' imprisonment. While in prison Hetherington wrote *Cheap Salvation*, a tract showing that all the advantages ascribed to religion could be retained, while dismissing priests and their theology. On coming out, Hetherington resumed Freethought publication, issuing the first translation of Strauss's *Life of Jesus*, *The Existence of Christ Disproved*, by a German Jew, *A Few Hundred Bible Contradictions*, *A Hunt After the Devil and Other Odd Matters*, by P. Lecount, tracts by Emma Martin, etc. He also devoted himself to the spread of Chartism and Socialism. He died August 24, 1849, leaving a will, signed shortly before his death, in which he says:—

> "I calmly and deliberately declare that I do not believe in the popular notion of the existence of an Almighty, Allwise, and Benevolent God, possessing intelligence, and conscious of his own operations, because these attributes involve such a mass of absurdities and contradictions, so much cruelty and injustice on his part to the poor and destitute portion of his creatures, that, in my opinion, no rational reflecting mind can, after disinterested investigation, give credence to the existence of such a Being."

He was buried in the unconsecrated portion of Kensal Green Cemetery, where lie the remains of many other worthy Freethinkers.

(The late) J. M. WHEELER.

Three of our "admirers" at Grahamstown, S. Africa—H. E. Griffiths, E. W. Stoyell, and D. H. Priest—have "taken the liberty" to send us a case of pines. "May the new year," our correspondents add, "bring you increased vigor for the cause you so splendidly champion is the wish of all three of us."

Mr. George Macdonald, of the New York *Truthseeker*, with some other "saints," has been trying to revive Freethought platform propaganda in "the empire city." A strong effort was made last winter, but it does not seem to have been very successful. The effort is renewed this winter, and we wish it every success. This is not a mere form of words. We mean all that the expression involves. We would much rather, though, that the wish were a hope. But a hope has to rest upon some certitude—and we confess that we see none in this case. It appears to us that the difficulties of regular platform propaganda in New York are nearly, if not quite, as insuperable as they are in London. Plenty of money, of course, would alter the aspect of affairs. If a fine central hall could be thrown open free on Sunday evenings, and a decent fee guaranteed to the lecturer or lecturers, the enterprise might succeed in all senses of the word in a few years. We throw this opinion out for what it is worth. We do not presume to instruct Mr. Macdonald and his colleagues in the problem of New York *as* New York. They know it a great deal better than we do. But we have had as much experience as anybody in the general problem of Freethought propaganda in big cities, and they will pardon what would otherwise be obtrusive advice on our part.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

QUEEN'S (MINOR) HALL, Langham-place, London, W.: 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Mr. McKenna and Prisoners for Blasphemy."

OUTDOOR.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, Miss Kough, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (King's Hall, Corporation-street): 7, E. Clifford Williams, "Napoleon Bonaparte and Thomas Paine."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Amos Rothwell, Humorous Dramatic Recital (Lancashire dialect).

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THE
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That which violence wins for us to-day, another act of violence may wrest from us to-morrow.
—FRANCISCO FERRER.

Canon Horsley on Blasphemy.

CANON HORSLEY is, of course, a Christian gentleman. But this is an adjective which often spoils the substantive. We remember his look of disdainful astonishment, a good many years ago, when we told him at a public meeting that he knew nothing about prison life. His reply was meant to be withering. He informed us that he had been a prison chaplain for ever so long. "Yes," we said, "but you have been on the right side of the cell door. It is only the man on the wrong side of the cell door who knows what prison life is." He took the correction in very ill part. But the audience took the point against him, and their applause was disconcerting to the cocksure ecclesiastic.

We expected to see Canon Horsley joining in the *Daily News* correspondence on the Blasphemy Laws, and we were not disappointed. We have not joined in it ourselves, partly because we have at our command an organ in which we can say exactly what we mean, and partly because we have long given up courting the insolence of hireling journalists and Liberal newspapers. We could not depend on any letter of ours, on any subject whatever—even though it were one on which we might reasonably regard ourselves a specialist—being inserted in journals like the *Daily News* or the *Daily Chronicle*, or being inserted, if at all, without serious and calculated mutilation. From one point of view this is an honor. The President of the National Secular Society, the editor of the *Freethinker*, the ex-prisoner for "blasphemy," is quite naturally selected as an object for Christian malignity. To be hated and insulted by some persons is the price one has to pay for the affection and praise of others. In a certain sense, therefore, we are rather proud of our isolation; though the wish is natural that we might occasionally enjoy the pleasure of applying the whip to a bigoted fool, or a foolish bigot, in the very presence of the audience before whom he has perpetrated his capers. But all that is by the way. Our real subject is Canon Horsley's letter. Here it is without the alteration or omission of a single word except the formalities—which, by the way, is the *Freethinker* tradition:—

> "Does not Mr. Leon give his case away when he argues that 'Stewart is punished not for blasphemy, but for the way he did it; therefore, the Home Secretary should at once order his release'? A bigamist is punished not for marrying, but for the way in which he did it. A drunkard is in prison not for being drunk, but for being drunk to the annoyance of the public. A motorist (ought to be) in prison not for driving quickly, but for the way in which he did it. What public opinion, what code of laws, has ever allowed action or speed without any limit at all when such action or speed is to the annoyance or injury of the majority?
>
> "Some rationalist speeches or writings make me desire to reason amicably with the writers or speakers. Some others make me desire that 'some layman would express my feelings for me'—with his boot.
>
> J. W. HORSLEY."

Such is the wisdom, such is the logic, such is the good-nature, such is the toleration, of a high-placed Christian clergyman, who is at least old enough to have learnt that it is only vanity that makes a man demand special respect to be paid to what happen to be *his* opinions on religion—or any other subject.

Look at the confusion in the bigamy illustration. Each of the two marriages is a separate act—not the same act done in different ways. The first marriage is legal—it *is* a marriage; the second marriage is illegal—it has no validity at all, in other words it is *not* a marriage. It is simply a fraud. Canon Horsley's other illustrations might be disposed of just as easily. We agree that no one should be allowed to act to the injury of the public, though it is done every day of the week with perfect impunity—by the classes against the masses. But in the case of criminal prosecutions the "injury" should be clear and unquestionable; and no such injury was alleged in the Stewart case,—or, for the matter of that, in any former "blasphemy" case. In our own case, thirty years ago, it was alleged that we had acted "to the great displeasure of Almighty God," which no attempt was made to prove at the trial. When it comes to "annoyance" still greater care is necessary. Especially in matters of controversy. It is a sufficient annoyance to some people that you differ from them at all. They overlook what is an obvious fact, that precisely as much as you differ from them they differ from you; so that the fault or the impudence on the one side is exactly cancelled by the fault or the impudence on the other. But bigots are built on lines that are a constant challenge to humor; and to "annoy" these people is the easiest thing in the world. You annoy them by inhabiting the same planet. Hosts of other people, of course, are not so bad as the born bigots; but they have their prejudices and prepossessions, and it is a wonder if some of these are not "wounded" in the course of controversy on any live topic. It is hard for a Liberal not to annoy a Conservative, it is hard for a Conservative not to annoy a Liberal, and hard for a Socialist not to annoy both. Many speakers, on all sides, cultivate the habit of annoying their opponents. It is not the man who says the best things for his own side, but the man who says the worst things of the other side, that is most applauded at public meetings. To talk about "annoying" people in *this* way is quite atrociously absurd in a country where the Prime Minister speaks of his "convictions" and the Leader of the Opposition bawls across the House "You haven't got any."

If it be argued that religion is a subject on which speakers should be specially careful—on the ground, apparently, that it is a subject on which people are specially tetchy—we reply, "Very well, then; let us have a definite law to this effect; and let it be *the same for all.*" Why should the feelings of Christians on the subject of religion be assumed to be any more tender than the feelings of Freethinkers? Very often, as a matter of fact, they are decidedly not so. The present law is really directed against one disputant and in favor of the other. It is always the Freethinker who annoys the Christian—never the Christian who annoys the Freethinker. That in the

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Christian is a choleric word which in the Freethinker is flat blasphemy.

To put the case in a nutshell. The present law of "blasphemy" no more protects religion than it protects astrology or alchemy. The speeches and writings that do most damage to religion are out of the reach of danger. (We do not say they always will be; we say they are now.) The law does not protect Christianity—it protects Christians. When they find it practicable they lay a street lecturer by the heels—especially if he appears to have no friends, and talks east-end instead of west-end English. Everybody knows that they are doing Christianity no good; but they are "getting their own back," which is a great comfort to the human nature that is a product or a survival of two thousand years of Christian civilisation. The present law of "blasphemy," indeed, is nothing but mob law, and is none the better for being carried out under judicial forms.

Canon Horsley's talk about the "majority" does not mend matters. The moral rights of the majority are not universal and absolute, nor are the moral rights of the minority dependent on their good will. Morality rests not upon numbers but upon reason. Canon Horsley ignores this altogether. His ethical position is that if the minority annoy the majority—no matter what the annoyance consists in—they must pay the penalty; but if the majority annoy the minority—that is what they are entitled to do if they please, just because they *are* the majority. Which is the most vulgar, insolent, and dangerous criterion ever propounded,—and would compel Canon Horsley to side with the mob that cried out "Crucify him! Crucify him!" on a famous occasion.

In spite of all this, however, it will be noticed that Canon Horsley does not plainly commit himself to the support of the Blasphemy Laws. He appears to lack the courage of his intolerance. His last sentences only imply what he dares not proclaim. Some rationalist speakers are meek enough to satisfy this reverend gentleman; some others call for a reply with a "boot." Not the Canon's boot, but a layman's: a policeman's, a judge's, a prison warder's. For this, of course, is what the angry man of God means.

The Bishop in the story who asked a layman to say what was appropriate to a trying occasion, did not suggest that suitable language had to be invented. There was no need for that. The Bible is still a handy book, and is quite a treasure-house of strong, vehement, and even violent language. The most savage speaker need not go beyond the vocabulary of Holy Writ for his boldest effects. The most reckless outdoor propagandist of Atheism would find it difficult to exceed the vituperative language of Jesus during the brief period of his last visit to Jerusalem.

We might have ended here. But we have yet a final word to Canon Horsley. Does he really mean us to believe that he is totally unaware of the kind of discourse so much indulged in by Christian lecturers in the open-air? We will take his word for it if he tells us so; but in that case we must tell *him* that it is high time he extended his investigations. If he favors the continuance of the Blasphemy Laws, after listening to the abominable and malicious talk of many of his co-religionists, it will be because he is a hopeless bigot and an incurable partisan.

G. W. FOOTE.

Religion and Morals.

SEVERAL weeks ago I made a passing reference to Mr. Harold Begbie's shocker, the *Weakest Link*. Mr. Begbie's book is concerned with the "White Slave" traffic, and as it provides a delectable feast for all those pure-minded people who delight to read of vice—real or assumed—around them, it has doubtless enjoyed a good sale. The author himself would say that he wrote the book in the interests of morality; and, indeed, he has a deal to say about morality in the course of his essay. But like most religious writers, he labors under a fatal delusion. Somehow or the other he has got it into his ill-instructed head that morality is the special concern of religion, and that good conduct can only flourish under its patronage and protection. I use the term "ill-instructed" deliberately, because a man who can write as Mr. Begbie writes is ill-instructed—one might almost say uncultured. For culture is not a question of mere scholastic attainment. One may have plenty of this, may boast of any number of degrees, and still remain, in the truest sense of the word, uncultured. It is the use to which one's knowledge is put, the ability to see life with its true measure of light and shade, and to see life as a whole—that is the sign of a true culture.

Now, the assumption that morality is the peculiar concern of religion, that it began under the shelter of religion, and flourished under its patronage, is one of the stock poses of the modern religious teacher. And the reason for this is that, with a declining interest in purely theological matters, the preachers of religion are driven to profess a concern for things in which a more living interest is shown. There is no justification whatever for the clergy posing as authorities in morals, either in teaching or in practice. They do not teach a *better* morality than other people, and they are certainly no better behaved. Generally speaking, their teaching is scarcely as good; and their conduct will not compare favorably with that of other educated classes. I do not mean by this that they are more often in the Courts than other people, although they are not strangers even there. But in their behavior towards each other, or towards those who disagree with them, in the habit of making reckless and unfounded assertions, and in cultivating the petty, non-legal vices of social life, the clergy evidence a somewhat lower standard than do most other classes of the community. A collection of testimonies from tradesmen and domestic servants, for instance, concerning the clergy, would be very illuminating reading for some people.

It is, however, almost doing the clergy an injustice to bracket Mr. Begbie with them. For many of the better ones would hesitate to say what he says on the subject of morals, and some might flatly contradict him. At least, one hopes so; for Mr. Begbie's view of morality is that of the most ignorant type of Salvation Army preacher. To him morality appears to be nothing more than animalism plus piety. Take piety away from animalism and morality disappears. Connect the two and you have morality again. Nothing, he says, can give man the courage to be moral save a "strength from outside us, a supernatural strength.....this it is alone which can cleanse the heart and fortify the soul in virtue." And this, I repeat, is making morality consist of a mere animalism with piety as a restraining force. For, like many Christian writers, with Mr. Begbie morality is all a matter of restraint—a case of denial. A man is moral because of a supernatural strength that enables him to crush the desire to have a "good time." It never dawns upon him that morality may not be a matter of self-denial but of self-expression, and that the man who behaves morally is having a genuinely "good time." That would be to make morality a matter of natural growth, and in that case the function of religion would be gone.

Here, again, is Mr. Begbie at his best—and worst. No man, he says,—

> "will dispute that animalism has a just right to preach its gospel and organise the life of the nation to suit its real and living principle, if we abandon faith in God..... Therefore, the salvation of humanity lies absolutely in God. Rescind the divine hypothesis, set democracy to think only of physical well-being, educate that democracy to believe in the naturalness of lust, and the right, nay the duty of every individual to extract from animal existence as much animal pleasure as he can comfortably assimilate,—do this, and in a generation you will have halved the population, you will have wrecked flesh and blood, you will have struck a deathblow at

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family life, you will have destroyed the vital instinct for transcendence."

Stupidity and slander are well harnessed here. Of course, if people think only of animal or sexual gratification, and sacrifice everything to this, the result is bound to be deplorable. But who teaches this? Who are the teachers of this gospel of animalism? They really have no existence outside Mr. Begbie's imagination. The notion that anybody or anything desires to organise national life on a basis of sheer animalism is almost too ridiculous for discussion. Probably the negation of religion means this to Mr. Begbie, but that is his fault. His own conception of human nature is so poor and so inadequate that he sees it as a mere bundle of gross appetites unless it is constrained by some "strength from outside of us." Thus, he dispenses slanders with the air of one scattering moral truisms. If he were in business and discussed his trade rivals with the same carelessness as to truth, he would soon find himself in the Courts. In social life he would find every door closed to him. Even in politics he would become a pariah. In each of these departments a higher standard of rectitude is imposed than is usual in religious controversy. Mr. Begbie confesses that he has written "with blood rather too heated for a nice discrimination in language." It is well to detect some glimmerings, however faint, of uneasiness. But no amount of heated blood can excuse a writer showing gross ignorance of the subject about which he is writing, and for slandering people whose ideals of life are at least as high as his own. The world would have survived had Mr. Begbie deferred writing his essay until his blood was cooler. It is not likely to benefit much now that it has been written.

When Mr. Begbie runs up against what might prove to be an instructive fact, he shows a complete inability to appreciate it. He cannot help but see that good conduct is not confined to religious circles, and if he were pressed he would probably admit that those outside were often better than those within. This is a very awkward fact for the religious advocate, and Mr. Begbie's way of meeting it is anything but original. He says:—

> "The long heredity of religion has exercised in the souls of men, however tolerant or base they may have been, an influence tending towards respect for virtue. Thus it has come to pass that reversions to barbarism have been rare among nations, and that the story of the human race, after the foreword of Christianity, is, for the most part, a tale of progress in respectablity."

There has been progress, but only after the foreword of Christianity! Well, was there no progress before Christianity? Let anyone read the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius, the writings of Cicero, or Plutarch, or Epictetus, or Aristotle, in the light of Mr. Begbie's comment, and he will realise how supremely ridiculous it is. And what has the heredity of religion to do with it? Morality has not, and never has had, any really vital association with religion. On the contrary, the greatest disturbing force in morals has been religion. Had men and women been always in the habit of measuring right and wrong by reference to some commonly accepted fact of daily experience, ethical theory and practice might have been more uniform than has actually been the case. But, by resting the theory of morals upon a belief in some supernatural power, confusion was made inevitable. And so it has happened that there is scarcely a virtue that religion has not somewhere and at some time branded as a vice, hardly a vice it has not at some time declared a virtue. People have robbed, and killed, and lied, and slandered in the name of religion, and they are at the same game to-day.

The driving force behind morality is not religious but social. Man is not an ethical animal because he is often a religious one, but because his nature is moulded by and for constant association with his fellows. Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as an individual ethic. Truthfulness, chastity, honesty, kindness, etc., are expressions of a relation. Destroy this relation and morality disappears. This is really why there is, on the whole, progress, and why human society can no more exist and disregard the virtues than an individual can flourish on a diet of prussic acid. And consequently the heredity that does operate is not that of religious teaching but that of social selection. The dice are loaded against vice because vice is the name for what are fundamentally life-destroying actions, just as virtue is the name for actions that are fundamentally life-preserving. The Freethinker knows this, and is therefore not afraid that morality is going to die out because this or that theory is propounded. Morality does not spring from theories, but from life. It is actual before it is theoretical. Mr. Begbie's foolish outbursts simply illustrate the truth that the worst possible teacher of morals is the ardent religionist with "blood rather too heated" for either discrimination in language or patience to acquire knowledge concerning the subject on which he writes.

The curious thing is that these religious writers seldom realise that all their attacks on contemporary life and manners are so many indictments of religion. When someone objected to Ruskin attacking the clergy because, he said, the clergy were the only friends the poor man had, Ruskin replied that that was the very worst thing ever said about them; for it meant that the clergy had played their part as moral instructors so badly that, with all their influence, they had not impressed upon people the most elementary notions of duty towards each other. So also with the moral condition of the world. So far as morality is a matter of conscious reflection, of action following upon theory, it has hitherto been mainly under the influence of religion. Had that influence been a healthy one, the world would have been moralised long since. Each newcomer would have found himself in a world where, if evil was not unknown, it would have been a negligible quantity. Our social heredity would have been thoroughly moralised. The world complained about is a world that has been under religious tutelage for thousands of generations, and its evil features are so many evidences of the failure of religion. "If human life is to be organised," says Mr. Begbie, "without reference of any kind to a God, then for a certainty civilisation may perish." To which one may well reply that a civilisation that has lived in spite of the rule of the gods may well consider itself indestructible.

C. COHEN.

The Quintessence of Irrationality.

ONE never ceases to wonder at the utterly and palpably irrational manner in which Christian apologists endeavor to justify the belief in the supernatural. Surely nothing can be more contrary to reason than the claim that science is at last lending substantial support to it. Mr. Hugh Capron is certainly wrong when he states, in his *Anatomy of Truth*, that to-day "we see the very weapons of religion being forged in the arsenals of science." Assertions of that kind are very easily made, as the readers of Mr. R. J. Campbell's sermons are well aware; but they are wholly insusceptible of verification. Indeed, Mr. Campbell, quoting Mr. Capron's wild averment as his sole authority, assures his public that he has been a true prophet in the prediction that we "should soon be witnessing a rehabilitation from the side of science of belief in the so-called miraculous—namely, of the occasional supersession of what we are pleased to call natural laws by the operation of facts and forces not hitherto included in that category, facts and forces only to be explained on the hypothesis that there is a spiritual as well as a material world." Without fear of any intelligent contradiction, we pronounce the reverend gentleman an entirely false prophet. He cannot name the science, or mention the scientific discovery, which furnishes the slightest bit of evidence that an immaterial world exists. We know of some scientists who believe in the supernatural; but they

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are honest enough to admit that they can find no warrant for their belief in science. Dr. Osler, the Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford, quotes the following passage from Sir Thomas Browne's famous *Religio Medici*, which he regards as a beautiful expression of what he calls "this old Platonic and orthodox view":—

> "Thus we are men and we know not how: there is something in us that can be without us and will be after us; though it is strange that it has no history what it was before us, nor cannot tell how it entered into us."

The remarkable fact is that Dr. Osler, whilst firmly holding this theological view, frankly confesses that it "has no place in science, which ignores completely this something which will be after us." Then he adds:—

> "The new psychologists have ceased to think nobly of the soul, and even speak of it as a complete superfluity.....Modern psychological science dispenses altogether with the soul" (*Science and Immortality*, pp. 47-50).

According to Mr. Campbell, what we have in the Gospel Jesus is the supernatural tabernacling in the natural, the most wondrous Being wearing human flesh. The portents and prodigies which preceded, accompanied, and followed his birth are looked upon as "what might be called a thrusting into our dark and narrow earthly conditions of something which belongs intrinsically to another and far higher mode of being." This may be exceedingly good theology, but we unhesitatingly affirm that from the side of science it derives no attestation whatsoever. Not a single religious weapon has ever been forged in the arsenals of science. Mr. Campbell himself tacitly acknowledges the truth of this in the following amazing utterance:—

> "As to the mystery of the Divine Incarnation, what can we say but that the glory before which angels veil their faces has revealed itself in terms of our own humanity? It is a mystery to be adored, but not understood; the intellect fails before it, but the spirit rises on the wings of faith into a joyful apprehension of its truth."

Thus science is shut out, the intellect beats an undignified retreat, and the spirit soars aloft on imaginative wings. How beautifully is the game given away. Curiously enough, Mr. Campbell says that it does not follow that "all that is recorded in the New Testament about the annunciation, the angelic appearances both before and after the holy birth at Bethlehem, and the like, is literally exact." "These winsome stories," he continues, "are rightly described as the poetry of the Nativity. But poetry is not less true than prose; quite the contrary. The very essence of poetry is that it suggests what literal and exact statement cannot convey; it is the language of the inexpressible." If this is not juggling with words we know not what it is. Jesus was born of a virgin or he was not; shepherds watching their flocks by night were informed of the wonderful birth by angels, or they were not; wise men from the east came to Bethlehem led by a star, or they did not. All the marvellous events related either happened or did not happen. Science insists upon it that all things must be either true or false. Until the advent of geology the Genesis story of creation was accepted as literally true; now it is taken for a beautiful legend, embodying poetically some great but inexpressible spiritual truth. Until the New Theologians appeared the narratives of the Nativity were either believed or disbelieved; now they are treated as partly true and partly untrue, as lovely poems essentially though not literally or exactly true. No science on earth will ever approve of such a shilly-shallying system of interpretation.

Mr. Campbell has the disagreeable knack of ruling out of court all schools that differ from the one to which he now belongs. A few years ago he used to declare that Jesus was Divine only in the sense that we are all Divine. To-day he pronounces him "essentially super-human." "The old Protestant liberalism," he announces, "is out of court." Is Unitarianism out of court simply because Mr. Campbell happens to be opposed to it? Are the views of such distinguished scholars as Schmiedel, Arno Neumann, Harnack, and Bacon out of court merely because the minister of the City Temple no longer sees eye to eye with them? Their teaching, he maintains, is "ruled out by the facts of history and of spiritual experience"; but this is sheer pulpit nonsense, because the illustrious divines just named are quite as competent to interpret "the facts of history and of experience" as Mr. Campbell, and yet they teach that Jesus was "essentially human," but in no sense "essentially super-human." Besides, science has no knowledge, direct or indirect, of superhuman beings.

This brings us to another illustration which the reverend gentleman supplies of the absolute irrationality of his position. His contention is that we are "witnessing a rehabilitation from the side of science of belief in the so-called miraculous—namely, of the occasional supersession of what we are pleased to call natural laws by the operation of facts and forces not hitherto included in that category, facts and forces only to be explained on the hypothesis that there is a spiritual as well as a material world." But further on in the same discourse he admits the immutability of the laws of nature. Listen:—

> "The physical universe is a closed system, complete in itself so far as its processes are concerned. We know, roughly speaking, how life has come to be what it is on this planet, what stages it has passed through, and what conditions have governed its growth. We should be all at sea if we suddenly found that that line of development were no longer being followed.....If the world were really as inconsequent and whimsical, and its happenings as unpredictable, as they are represented to be in the fairy books,.....we should be entirely different beings from what we are now. These things are all very well in works of imagination, but if they were sober facts we should have to revise all our means of acquiring knowledge; such a world would not be the world we know, and its ways would not be our ways."

We are in full agreement, and of course, such a view rules out the miraculous completely. "The physical universe *is* a closed system, complete in itself so far as its processes are concerned"; and being such there can be no supersession of its laws by the operation of any facts and forces of a higher order. And yet, in spite of this undoubted truth, Mr. Campbell still believes that Jesus Christ came from another and better world than this.

We now reach another glaring example of the fundamental irrationality of theological teaching. There is another world, Mr. Campbell oracularly informs us, infinitely higher and better than this, from which the Gospel Jesus claims to have come. Now, on the unverifiable assumption that there is another world, how on earth can anybody tell that it is better than this? The reverend gentleman entertains a shockingly bad opinion of the one we all know:—

> "Our lot in this world is very sad and dreadful. I hope my outlook is not becoming more sombre with advancing years, but I seem to perceive with ever-increasing clearness as time goes on the pitiousness of humanity. What a welter of sorrow and pain! What pathetic, futile dreams, baffled purposes, foiled endeavors, tragic defeats! What wonderful gains succeeded by miserable losses, as if some mighty, mocking demon watched our vain castle-building in order to have the pleasure of throwing it down! And what is there in this world that is worth our seeking that is lasting and secure? Nothing at all."

We beg to call Mr. Campbell's special attention to the highly significant fact that, according to his own teaching, the world he denounces in such eloquent and scathing terms is God's. God made it and God governs it, and it inevitably follows that he both made and governs it very badly. Now, what guarantee have we that if there is another world, also God-made and God-governed, it is one whit better and happier than this? None whatever, except the bare word of people who know nothing at all about it. A stronger and more irrefutable argument for Atheism than Mr. Campbell's sermon furnishes does

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not exist. It robs the Deity of every scrap of his character. To preach a just and loving Heavenly Father in a world such as the discourse under discussion depicts is the quintessence of irrationality.

J. T. LLOYD.

Saint Patrick Nothing but a Popish Myth.

THERE are several ancient lives of the saint, all written, as Miss Cusack admits, for edification—that is, to stir feelings of devotion, not to awaken intelligence or to give information. Not one of those lives reaches back to within two hundred years of the alleged death of the saint; and there is no evidence to carry us farther back.

Patrick cannot be regarded as a historical character. He belongs essentially to the class of beings known as Irish giants, or giants of any other land; and his deeds are all on a par with those of necromancers, wizards, fairies, genii, etc. His whole career is one of miracle—that is, of fudge and falsehood, borrowed from old mythological tales, worked up in their present garb, and located here and there to suit the purpose and improve the trade of the priests. The Irish fairy-tales are quite as real history as the legend of St. Patrick; and Puck or Titania is just as historical a reality as the Irish saint.

The miracle Patrick is best known for is the expulsion of all demons, snakes, and toads from Ireland. Supposing it were a true story, still Patrick introduced into Ireland and established there the worst vermin and the worst reptiles the world has ever yet been cursed by—namely, the Romish priests and their agents.

But the clearing of Ireland of snakes, etc., is ascribed also to Joseph of Arimathea, an older fiction located in the first century, or 400 years before Patrick's time. Solinus, a geographer of the third century, or 200 years earlier than Patrick, mentions the absence of reptiles, etc., from Ireland.

Patrick employed a drum to frighten away the venomous reptiles of Ireland, as Booth does now to scare devils. It must be pleasant for Booth to remember that he but follows the Popish saint in the use of the drum. Patrick beat his drum so vigorously that he knocked a hole in it. However, an angel, who had probably been brought up to that trade, soon mended it for him, and he banged away again.

One cunning old serpent refused to budge, do what the saint would. At length Patrick made a box, and told the serpent he could not get into it. This led to a controversy, and the serpent was foolish enough to get into the box to prove to the saint that he could get in. The saint clapped on the lid, fastened it, and flung box and contents into the sea—which proves that serpents are no match for Romish saints in point of cunning.

Another reptile, a monster, Patrick chained up in Lough Dilveen, and told him to remain there till Monday. There the poor thing still remains, and every Monday morning he calls out, in good old Irish, "It is a long Monday, Patrick." The people around the Lough are said still to believe that. And why not? It is as true as anything else they say of Patrick (*Credulities: Past and Present;* W. Jones; 1884).

Patrick began his fight with the demons of Ireland before he landed there. When he approached the island he found a cordon of devils (no one else saw them) on the shore to prevent his landing. He made the sign of the cross, and they fled.

In Christian art Patrick is represented with a staff, around which a serpent is coiled. Exactly. Patrick is merely the Pagan god of healing, Æsculapius.

Patrick is said to have blessed the shamrock, and to have used it to prove to an Irish chief that the conundrum of the Trinity was a true doctrine. But this yarn did not see the true light until about 700 years after Patrick's death. In sober truth, the Irish reverence for the shamrock has survived from the old Pagan times—as everything else now called Christian has done.

But I must pay particular attention to Patrick's miracles and miraculous experiences. We are told that he went in early life to Lerins, an isle in the Mediterranean. Here he found a very old woman. A blooming young man appeared and claimed the old woman as his daughter. Patrick was astonished. The young man explained that Christ had bestowed upon him the gift of perpetual youth; that this precious gift he had forgotten to ask for his children as well as himself; consequently his children grew old and died, while he himself was ever young.

From this island Patrick bore away with him the staff of Jesus—a miraculous crozier, or walking-stick; and with that he performed the miracles and signs he showed to the Irish.

When the blessed saint went to Ireland, he sailed thither upon his altar-stone, which he seems ever to have borne about with him, and which was quite capable of taking a trip through the air much better than any bird could fly.

Another version of the stone-yarn is given by Miss Cusack. She says that when Patrick was leaving the coast of Gaul a poor leper on the beach begged to be taken on board. The crew refused, but the saint flung his stone altar within reach of the leper, who sailed thereon in the wake of the ship until they reached Ireland; there the leper was the first to land.

On one occasion Patrick kindled a fire by five drops of water that fell from his fingers; and on another he performed the same trick with icicles. This happened while he was yet a child. He raised five cows to life and one man, while still in his boyhood. During the same early period he turned a bucket of water into the purest honey. Bee farmers would be delighted with a boy like that.

The fisherman at Wicklow refused to give the saint some fish, and he cursed the river to that degree that the fellow could never find fish there again.

A staff fell from heaven for Patrick—if it wasn't from a tree it fell.

Patrick had a furious contest, at the court of Tara, with the king's Druids. He raised one of them high in the air, and let him fall and killed him. Then an earthquake shook the place, and a furious storm came on, and a mysterious darkness surrounded the Pagans. Like Christ, he passed through the keyhole into the palace, much to the fright of the king and his people.

The Druid, not able to poison the saint, brought down a mass of snow, which covered the ground up to the waists of men. Patrick swept it all away in a moment. The Druid then covered the land with dense darkness; and Patrick dispelled that also.

Patrick then offered to shut up one of his converts in a hut with a Druid—the Druid clad in the Christian's tunic, and the Christian wearing the Druid's. The hut was set fire to, after being piled on one side with dry faggots, on the other with green wood. The Christian took his place on the dry wood, the Pagan on the green. The Christian came out quite unhurt, but the Pagan garment he wore was reduced to ashes. The Druid himself was burned to death, but the Christian garment he wore had not the least sign of fire upon it.

The king was not converted, but he might as well have been. There was no resisting a juggler like Patrick.

Patrick's stone altar, when an outrage was committed near it, emitted three streams of pure blood; but they do not say what animal's blood it was.

Patrick, in his travels, came to a cross erected over a grave. He went to the grave, and asked the corpse who he was. "A poor Pagan," replied the corpse. "How came the cross here then?" demanded the saint. A certain foreigner was buried not far off, and his mother came to erect this cross on his tomb. Grief blinded her, and she put the cross on

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the wrong grave. The saint thereupon rectified the mistake.

He lost his horses in the darkness, and he held up five fingers which illuminated all the plain like an electric light, and the horses were found.

Near Limerick they show a stone marked by the impress of Patrick's knees and body.

I have given a selection of the incidents and juggler-tricks in what is called "St. Patrick's Life." The Romanists believe all that wretched stuff—and gape for more.

That Patrick is but one of the heroes of the nursery tales, or of fairy tales, or of household tales, must be clear to all unbiassed people. Fin McCoul, the ancient Irish giant, was as historical as Patrick, and his miracles quite as edifying. Irish and other popular tales preserved by the peasantry are of exactly the same character and equally true.

And this ridiculous fiction the Irish Romanists yearly celebrate as the most important "personage" in their history! Such is one result of priestly tuition.

(The late) JOS. SYMES.

A Deathless Tragedy.

IT was quite by accident that we came to read *Foxglove Manor*. We had known George Buchanan by some of his terrible and arresting poems, and also by his melodious and pleasing "Wedding of Shon Maclean"; but his fiction to us was a closed book until we strayed across this exquisite specimen of a satirical and venemous attack on the Church. Whether it be through the medium of the novel, the pamphlet, by speech, or by scientific discourse, that the "Mother of Lies" is exposed and annihilated, any means is commendable. As Nietzsche says in one of his fierce indictments, no methods are too petty to use in attacking Christianity—the one immortal blemish on mankind. Messrs. Chatto and Windus are responsible for the publication of this little Voltairean gem; this does not in any way surprise us. Publishers who were prepared to be the medium of Swinburne's works would not strain at George Buchanan.

In a prefatory note, the author announces that the tragedy in fiction must not be construed into an attack on the priesthood generally. This, we venture to say, may be interpreted to suit the taste of any reader. If he happens to have orthodox inclinations, it will be quite acceptable; but, on the other hand, if he should be a reader of wider tastes than are found in Christian limits, he will smile; the powder is there in spite of the jam in the preface. Rabelais knew how to administer the powder; he did not convey it through his prefaces, but in what the superficial might consider coarseness and vulgarity. In a similar manner, Buchanan, working within limitations well known to creative artists in England, accomplished his task of writing a novel which, at an earlier date, might have meant burning at the stake for its author. Nowadays, kind Christian people freeze the unorthodox to death by many forms of social ostracism just for a little difference of opinion about the soul or other abstract questions.

The book opens with a pretty sketch of the parish of Oomberley, and in the village church we are introduced to the vicar of St. Cuthbert's, who is preaching a sermon. The Pagan richness of his discourse could never have emanated from any clergyman, we feel sure; we are indebted to the author for that. From a magnificent dissertation on the Greek gods, the preacher, of course, makes the inevitable transition to the Christian God, and terminates in an impassioned burst of rhetoric, which conveyed no definite meaning to the majority of his listeners. The pretty church organist, Edith Dove, is in love with this immaculate saint, and he, for spiritual reasons (this is a delightful stab), will not consent to having the engagement made public, and it therefore resolves itself into a *liaison*, with the usual clandestine meetings. On the day of the sermon there appears on the scene a Mrs. Eilen Haldane, who has attended the church, and the vicar recognises her as his favorite pupil when he was a teacher of classics in a seminary for young ladies. The beautiful girl of years ago is now wife of the owner of Foxglove Manor. This reappearance of the vicar's old love spells disaster to his amors with the pretty organist, and his time is now very well occupied with uninvited visits on the least pretence to see his former sweetheart. In a few words our author powerfully sketches her husband, who is—and we whisper it gently—an Agnostic.

> "His face, especially in repose, was by no means handsome. His grave, large, strongly marked features expressed decision, daring, and indomitable force.....a grim, self-sufficing, iron-natured man, one would have said, until one had looked into his blue-grey eyes which lit up his strong, rugged face."

Between George Haldane and his beautiful wife there is much conversation about religion, which all Freethinkers will enjoy. In one part of the book he asks her, "Why cannot you Christians dispense with incense and allow smoking instead—at least during the sermon?" There is also much argument between him and the vicar; and, when the husband has at last realised the intentions of this holy man, he declares vehemently to his wife:—

> "Mr. Santley is like all his tribe—a meddler and a mischief-maker. That is the worst of other-worldliness; it gives these traders in the Godhead, these peddlers who would give us in exchange for belief in their superstitions a *bonus* in paradise, an excuse for making this world unbearable. Well, my atheism, if you choose to call it so, against his theism. Mine at least keeps me a man among men, while his keeps him a twaddler among women."

There is a perfect little quotation from Lucretius, that splendid old Pagan, who knew what religion was:—

> "Which with horrid head
> Leered hideously from all the gates of heaven!"

We think now that we have quoted enough to prove that it will well repay reading by Freethinkers, who, as a class, are not so well provided with fiction as they might be. In these days it would almost seem, to judge by modern productions, that mental robustness in fiction is dead. The novel closes with a wise dispensation of poetic justice; and although it is tragedy in fiction, no one is killed.

Many Freethinkers may have read *Foxglove Manor*; some may not have heard of it; and others may not be able to procure it from their local libraries, those fountains of intellectual supply, whose needs are supervised very often by old gentlemen who would be better engaged in trimming rose-trees.

George Buchanan has been dead about twelve years. In the present day we read panegyrics of the latest work of genius from Manxland, *The Woman Thou Gavest Me*. It is difficult to pass an opinion on such works as this without a little heat. Given a supply of Christianity and a subject of illegitimacy, and lo! we have fame and a huge following. What a decline and fall from *Foxglove Manor!* We understand the symbol of the cross now. It should be, in all conscience, the cross of the Phallic worshipers.

The present writer once jokingly asked a friend of his why he did not read Hall Caine's novels. He replied: "I cannot work for my living and read his novels too"! *Foxglove Manor* will be a splendid antidote to this production, if anyone has been inveigled into reading it. We shall be most happy to send it to any Freethinker who would like to read it. If the writer were a millionaire it would give him much pleasure to circulate, free, ten thousand copies, say, in Leeds; afterwards we might try the Isle of Man.

WILLIAM REPTON.

I shall pass through this world but once; therefore, any good thing that I may do, or any kindness that I may show to my fellow-human creatures, let me do it *now*; let me not neglect it, or defer it, as I shall not pass this way again.—*Carlyle.*

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Acid Drops.

The greatest torturer of the age is dead. We refer to Lord Cross. He invented the plank bed for prisoners when he was at the Home Office under a Tory administration. He never achieved anything else worth mentioning. He was reckoned a good Christian and an exemplary man. In reality he was one of the worst criminals on earth. He was not called upon to inflict sleepless agony on his already unfortunate fellow-men. He did it by choice. We wish we could add that he has his reward.

Lord Cross did not patent the plank bed—he presented it to the nation, which accepted it and still uses it. But he obtained his payment in another way. He joined the band of political pensioners. Having filled three offices under the Crown, it was impossible to live afterwards on his own resources with adequate "dignity." He signed a paper to that effect and got his £2,000 a year accordingly; and he drew it for twenty-seven years. £54,000 was therefore the price of the plank bed. For that is all the nation ever got out of Lord Cross for it.

The Archbishop of Canterbury cries off from a correspondence on the Church and Sport with the Rev. J. Stratton, an active member of the Humanitarian League. He says it is "impossible." Quite so. If he says anything against fox-hunting, etc., he annoys his dearest friends. If he says anything in favor of it he deepens the modern hostility to the Church. So mum's the word now,—though he was indiscreet enough some time ago in the speech that occasioned Mr. Stratton's challenge.

For stealing umbrellas from Westminster Abbey a woman was sentenced to a year's imprisonment last week. It was her third offence at that church. Evidently she believed in putting something aside for a rainy day.

The *Essex Weekly News* tells us that "An Essex Vicar, writing in his Parish Magazine a description of the evening service on Christmas Day, says:—'The carols were nicely sung, although some of the choristers had apparently succumbed to Christmas fare.'" Comment is superfluous.

Three prisoners were confirmed by the Bishop of St. David's in Swansea prison chapel recently. The Church must get hold of men somehow.

What is there in the wit and wisdom of the Nonconformists that makes their ideas on the school question the standard and norm for everybody else? asks the *Catholic Times*. We can only reply, nothing but sheer impudence, only the question has a much wider scope than is given it here, and applies to all classes of Christians. What is there in the wit and wisdom of Christians as a whole that their ideas on life should be made the standard and norm for everybody else? When the question of divorce is under discussion, we are deluged with information about the "Christian ideal," what Christ taught, and what are the teachings of the Christian Church. So also with all other questions. Christians talk as though it was their duty to lay down rules and everybody else's to observe them. The attitude of Nonconformists on the education question is only part of the general Christian attitude. All other than Christians are calmly ignored. And this, we repeat, is just impertinence. It is part of the lack of consideration for others that is so striking a feature of Christianity wherever it is planted.

Consider the impertinence of the common expression, "Christian civilisation." Our civilisation, such as it is, has been built up by all kinds of men and women, holding all kinds of opinions. Inventors and discoverers, artists, musicians, and men of letters, philosophers and scientists, hewers of wood and drawers of water, have all played their parts. Many of the things that have contributed to our civilisation—the printing press, the steam engine, the telegraph, etc.—have no more connection with religion than with the inhabitants of Mars. And yet the whole is claimed as a part of *Christian* civilisation. Even the virtues do not escape; for we hear of Christian kindness, Christian truth, Christian charity, etc., as though anyone who possesses these qualities must be either a Christian or a poacher on the Christian preserves. Of course, there is only one adequate explanation, and that may be given in the words of Dr. Johnson. When Johnson was asked how he came to give a faulty definition of a certain word, he promptly replied, "Ignorance, madam, pure ignorance."

There was a keen fight the other day before the licensing authorities of Middlesex over the Sunday opening of cinematograph shows. The Middlesex Council has made it a condition of granting a licence for six days that the proprietors shall not open on the seventh. The cinematograph proprietors exhibiting within the County of Middlesex applied to have this condition struck out, and in support of their application produced a letter from Scotland Yard to the effect that the police had received no complaints concerning the conduct of these places, either as regards the character of the pictures or the behavior of the audience. Against this request Mr. Blacklock, on behalf of the opposition, urged that the opening of places of amusement on Sundays "flagrantly violated the dearest convictions of a considerable section of the population." This may be the case; but as no one suggests that they should be compelled to attend, it is difficult to see the relevancy of the objection. There is no noise made outside a picture show, things are admittedly well managed within, and the general testimony of the police in all parts of the country is that the conduct of young people has improved where these Sunday entertainments are given. Nevertheless these Sabbatarians object, and the Middlesex authorities prefer to please them rather than allow a perfectly harmless form of entertainment to be carried on.

We are glad to learn, however, that the proprietors of thirty picture shows have decided to open on Sundays without the Council's permission. Moreover, the Secretary of the Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association declares that if any action is taken by the Council the proprietors will receive the Association's support, and the matter will, in the event of a conviction, be carried to appeal. This is the proper course to adopt, and we are surprised that it has not been taken before. The position of the Council on this matter is far from secure, and a little courage on the part of those who have permitted the bigoted section of the Council to bully them into submission may result in teaching these catspaws of Church and Chapel a much-needed lesson.

Y. M. C. A. picture services are being held in London "for the benefit of young men who have no home in London." A film of the "last supper" would be an appropriate finale.

Mr. George R. Sims, writing over the signature of "Dagonet" in the *Referee*, has some amusing and pertinent remarks on the latest ecclesiastical rumpus. He says, "You made me Kikuyu; I didn't want to do it, is the refrain which is threatening to shake the Anglican Church to its foundations. I am wondering whether I am right in coming to the conclusion that the Anglican argument is that the confirmed murderer is more worthy of recognition than the unconfirmed Methodist."

"A Baptist Minister," writing in the *Daily Chronicle*, refers to Mr. Asquith, the Prime Minister, as "a good Old Testament saint." Decidedly a back-handed compliment.

Canon Ottley, the Secretary of the Imperial Sunday Alliance, was interviewed by a representative of the *Daily Telegraph*, and brought forward the usual *greasy* objections. Feeling was very intense against Sunday opening, of course. But, he said, they were not kill-joys.

> "If the people cared to open their places and give a pure, uplifting exhibition without charge, we would rejoice. We have no objection to cinematograph exhibitions in themselves. I would like to see the cinematograph adopted by every religious body in London, and in fact attached to Sunday-schools all over the country.....But we are out against these shows being run for profit on Sunday, entailing as they do much Sunday labor."

The humbug of this is painfully evident. In the first place, there is no more justification for asking cinematograph proprietors to work for nothing on Sunday than there is for asking all parsons to preach without payment. Second, whether a profit is made or not makes no difference to the labor employed. Third, the running of a picture palace involves no more labor than the opening of a church. Fourth, if they are attached to "religious bodies" and Sunday-schools, as much labor will be required as under present conditions. Finally, the whole of the apology rings false from beginning to end. What Canon Ottley wants is Sabbatarianism pure and simple. His is sheer bigotry *plus* cowardice.

It is concluded, by a writer in one of the weeklies, that because more "conscience money" is paid into the

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exchequer in England than in any other country, Englishmen have a more sensitive conscience. The circumstance is open to an exactly opposite inference. It may be that the exchequer is defrauded of more here than elsewhere.

Some extracts from a privately circulated note in favor of a new religion, by Sir Francis Younghusband, appeared in a recent issue of the *Daily Telegraph*. Sir Francis's new religion is of the Imperialist variety, and, so far as it aims at uniting people in all parts of the world in a common ideal of well-doing, no fault can be found with it. The mistake made is the common one of assuming that any such possible bond must be called, or deserves to be called, a religion. Sir Francis's career has brought him into direct touch with all, or nearly all, the principal religions of the world, and on reflection we think he would admit that nothing so fails to produce a common working bond as does religion. Of course, people of the same form of religion will unite, but their union only serves to make their separation from others sharper and more deadly. Men will sink their differences, in favor of some elements held in common, on any topic sooner than on a matter of religious belief.

Curiously enough, Sir Francis bears testimony to the truth of what has been said. He says that he has no desire to force men's faiths into a single groove, but aims at "a common recognition by all creeds of the essential identity of their ethical aims." Exactly; the religious basis is impossible as a means of union, but ethics or sociology *may* supply what is needed. Why, then, call the appeal religious? It is ethical, or humanitarian, but it is not religious. For thousands of years teachers have been striving for union on a basis of religion, and the end is as far off as ever. Such union as the world has realised has been brought about by the spread of humanitarian ideas and ideals, which have also forced religion to become more humanitarian in its teachings. Sir Francis's appeal cannot possibly bring union among people of different religious beliefs, and his lavish use of the word "religion" can only cool the ardor of those who might take some interest in his proposals.

The Central Y. M. C. A., Tottenham-court-road, intends starting a series of Sunday evening Picture Services. We beg to protest. This will involve much Sunday labor, and, besides, collections will be taken up—even if there is not a charge for seats. Moreover, there remains that large section of the population whose feelings are so terribly outraged by Sunday cinematograph shows.

The hero of the "Curate's Slander Case" won an easy victory on Monday. Rev. Thomas Ghent, curate of St. Andrew's Church, Stockwell Green, pursued Mr. Arthur Fitzgerald, a police-sergeant, of Stockwell, for slander—the said slander being that the reverend gentleman had misconducted himself (in the sense of adultery) with the defendant's wife. After a trial of nine days the jury disagreed. Mr. Ghent arranged for a new trial as promptly as possible, and the case came into court again on Monday. Mr. Fitzgerald appeared in person, but said that he could not conduct the defence himself. The first hearing had cost him £592, a good deal of which was still owing to his solicitors. He had no money to employ solicitors and counsel again, or to bring his witnesses into court, and was therefore bound to ask for an adjournment, which the prosecution opposed and Mr. Justice Lush refused. When the case was ordered to proceed, Mr. Fitzgerald, while not withdrawing his defence, walked out of court, saying "He must take his judgment, that's all. He is a man of means." Then the prosecution, the judge, and the jury went to work, and in a very short time judgment was given for the plaintiff, with £1,000 damages. Which shows that England is indeed a free country, with *one* law for the rich and the poor.

It appears that subscriptions were opened in the *Church Times* and the *Guardian* to assist Mr. Ghent in carrying on his action. The regulations of the Metropolitan Police prevented Mr. Fitzgerald from procuring assistance in the same way. Happy curate! Poor constable!

The clergy are not always in the wrong. According to last week's *Observer* the Rev. W. Temple has made the following statement. "I suppose," he said, "that no nation has ever been so indifferent and negligent of truth as the English nation." The only criticism we wish to make is that the reverend gentleman need not "suppose" this.

Rev. Evan Edwards, the oldest Baptist minister in the world, has just died at Torquay, at the age of ninety-nine. He started early as "the boy preacher" and continued until Christmas 1911. It is computed that he preached 8,080 sermons altogether. He will be glad to sit down a bit where he is now—if he can only find the floor. Another Welsh preacher, Rev. E. Morris, of Dyffryn, Merioneth, who died at ninety, is reckoned to have preached 10,000 sermons. He would be company for Mr. Edwards. Fortunately they belonged to the same denomination.

Rev. William Francis John Romanis, of Homefield, Godalming, Surrey, left £40,295. A big lump to thread the old needle's eye with. But the clergy seem to discount all that difficulty.

Rev. Canon Arthur Henry Sanxay Barwell, of Blechingley House, Blechingley, Surrey, left estate valued at £72,789 gross, with net personality £65,823. Not bad for a "Blessed be ye poor exhorter."

Mr. J. M. Robertson lectured at South Place Institute last Sunday morning on Carlyle and Diderot. An interesting subject, of course, and no doubt treated in an interesting manner. But a more seasonable subject might have been Mr. McKenna and the Blasphemy Laws.

The Bible has done mischief in many ways. Here is a new one. Copies printed in small type, and used in schools by children, are responsible for much injurious eyestrain. Dr. Lydia Towers, one of the schools' medical inspectors for Shropshire, has just made a serious complaint of this evil.

"Laughter as a Crime" runs a headline in the *Daily News*. It is considered so when it is directed against Christian superstition.

Mr. Balfour began his Gifford Lectures on "Natural Theology" at Glasgow on Monday. He is a very clever word-spinner and he attracted a vast audience—of the "classes" of course. A headline in the *Daily News* report indicated that Mr. Balfour wanted "A Social God"—which might suggest "A Smoke-Room God" to a good many people, and raise a vision of pipes and glasses. It seems to us that Mr. Balfour will have to take whatever "God" there is—and that his own wishes will count for nothing in the matter.

GOD'S APOLOGIES.

Small Boy: "Does God make apologies?"
Clerical Visitor: "Certainly not."
Small Boy: "Didn't he make you?"
Clerical Visitor: "Certainly."
Small Boy: "Well, pa says you are only an apology for a man."

She was a lone widow, and was spending her last day upon earth. The mild young curate at her bedside remarked that the end was very near. "Yes," she responded, "it's very comforting to think that before to-night I shall be folded in Beelzebub's bosom." "My good lady, you mean Abraham's bosom," corrected the young apostle. "Ah, well," responded the departing one, "it doesn't matter. After twenty years of widowhood, I'm not particular as to what the gentleman's name might be." And in this sweet truthfulness she died.

A clerical gentleman was the other day walking along the main street of a village where he had once been minister, and, on meeting one of his old parishioners, paused to speak with her. "How are you, Mrs. Block?" said he, kindly. "Vera weel, sir," replied the woman, plaintively. "And how is your husband?" "My man, sir, is in heaven, sir, this twa year." "In heaven? I am very sorry to hear it," responded the clergyman absently, as he passed on, leaving the poor woman dumb with astonishment.

An old Yorkshire woman being much distressed at the sudden loss of her husband, the dissenting minister assured her consolingly: "He is now with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." "That's the worst of it," she sobbed; "and he always was so shy among strangers."

Farmer Brown: We git drought right along every year now.

Farmer Greene: We allers got plenty rain till we got summer boarders. I think them cusses prays fer fair weather.

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To Correspondents.

E. B.—Thanks for welcome cuttings.

W. P. BALL.—We hope your health keeps fairly good. Many thanks for cuttings.

R. AXELLEY.—You would find an answer to almost all such questions in our *Bible Romances*. Profane historians—that is, real historians—do not relate the Israelites' crossing of the Red Sea.

H. B. AMOS.—Thanks for the copy of Mr. Salt's new volume, which we shall have pleasure in noticing.

J. W. GIFFEN (Australia).—Glad to receive your encouraging letter. You were just in time to get a copy out of the last packet of *Bible Romances* that we have in stock. The book will have to be reprinted.

E. PINDER.—Pleased to have "the Pinder family's Congratulations" and good wishes.

FREDERICK WALSH.—Thanks for marked paper. It is so good of you to trouble about such matters at all.

S. SCOTT.—See paragraph. Thanks.

N. S. S. GENERAL FUND.—Miss Vance acknowledges: John Alexander (Melbourne), £1 4s. 5d.

H. BLACK.—Yes, it *was* a successful meeting. Thanks for cuttings. Glad to see the correspondence continues in the *Manchester Guardian*.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

The Blasphemy Case.

THERE is not much more to be said on this particular case. We propose to deal with the whole question of the Blasphemy Laws at an early date. Even now there are misunderstandings all round. We speak, of course, as an expert in this matter.

Mr. Stewart will evidently serve out his sentence. We never really hoped for any good from a petition. We signed it in a soft moment, so that what was being done in that way might have the best possible *chance* of success. The second petition to Mr. Asquith seems to us a mere waste of time—at least as far as this Stewart case is concerned.

Mr. McKenna's first reply to the petition was a caddish one. His second reply is purely controversial, and his ace of trumps was played rather skilfully. Why petition the Home Secretary now that there is a Court of Criminal Appeal? Stewart knew he could appeal and he has not done so. Mr. Asquith may urge the same objection to *his* petition.

What has been done in this case is all very well in its way. We congratulate those who have engineered the Petition on their conversion since the Boulter case, and we hope the change will be lasting. But the two things that ought to have been done have not been attempted. There should have been the biggest possible protest meeting of all advanced parties in London, and the case should have been taken to the Court of Appeal. The latter point was absolutely vital; as our readers will see presently—when we return to the subject.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote was quite right in arranging for his Sunday evening's address at the Queen's (Minor) Hall on "Mr. McKenna and Prisoners for Blasphemy." In spite of the bitter cold snap that had set in so suddenly a large and enthusiastic audience assembled to hear the President of the National Secular Society on a subject in regard to which he might claim to be the first specialist in England. His address was listened to with profound attention, and the applause was very marked when he resumed his seat. Mr. Herbert Burrows, who is not a member of the N. S. S., but is an old enemy of the Blasphemy Laws, made an excellent chairman, and explained the "abolitionists'" position in a compact little speech, which was loudly cheered. Mr. Arthur B. Moss occupied a seat on the platform. A resolution of protest against Mr. Stewart's imprisonment was carried unanimously. It was short and sharp, and ran as follows: "That this meeting protests against the imprisonment for blasphemy of Mr. T. W. Stewart, and calls upon the Government to release him forthwith and put an end to the possibility of such an outrage on personal liberty occurring again."

The London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner takes place at Frascati's on Wednesday evening, January 28. Mr. Foote will take the chair as President of the National Secular Society, and will be "supported" by Mr. Cohen, Mr. Lloyd, Mr. Moss, and other well-known speakers. There are special reasons for a good rally this year, and the President hopes to see old friends as well as new ones. The reference to two hundred diners being all that Frascati's people can arrange for in the room engaged should not frighten any friends away. It was merely a friendly hint to certain friends, especially to those at a considerable distance, to make quite sure of their tickets.

Miss Vance asks us to invite friends who have tickets to dispose of to return those they feel assured of *not* getting rid of as early as possible, in order that she may make use of them otherwise.

A Burton-on-Trent subscriber writes as follows in renewing his *Freethinker* subscription:—

> "I read a great many papers and periodicals, but as a constant reader of the *Freethinker* (every word of it!) for more than 30 years I have to say of it that it is the best, the purest, the brightest, the clearest, the truest, the bravest, the cleverest, the wittiest, the most thoughtful, intellectual, honest, outspoken, truthful, and unbribable of them all. My debt to it is untold, incalculable, and can never be discharged."

This is a full measure of praise, pressed down and running over.

It is a sign of the times that Mr. Bottomley dealt with the "Kikuyu" trouble in last week's *John Bull*. His pointed and outspoken article ended with a laugh at what the Bishops are quarreling, and a quotation from Ingersoll to the effect that the mystery of things is understood by chimpanzees as well as by cardinals, by apes as well as by popes.

Without talking politics we venture to express our belief that the final and decisive retirement of Mr. Chamberlain from public life will allow the breath of a greater freedom to blow through the City of Birmingham. There seems a foretaste of this in the *Gazette's* editorial on the Stewart case, which we reproduce for our own pleasure and we are sure the pleasure of the great majority of our readers:—

> "Mr. McKenna's letter refusing to modify the sentence of four months' imprisonment passed at the Stafford Assizes on William Stewart for blasphemy is a keen disappointment to those of us who had supposed that Liberalism stood for freedom of thought, liberty of Press and platform, and equal treatment for all offenders. When men of eminence like Canon Cheyne, the head of the critical school in the Established Church, Dr. Clifford, and Dr. Estlin Carpenter join in protesting against such a sentence, it seems strange that a Liberal Home Secretary should lag behind them. Mr. McKenna's plea is that Stewart was sentenced, not for his opinions but because he expressed them publicly in a manner calculated to wound the feelings of others—a contention which is only another disguise for the old principles of intolerance by which the Blasphemy Laws were inspired. 'Bad taste' and 'vulgarity' are to be deprecated in all controversialists, but they are not the monopoly of one form of opinion. The Home Secretary makes his case worse by trying to palliate the sentence on the ground that Stewart was engaged in a neo-Malthusian propaganda. A pamphlet of that character formed the subject of a second indictment

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at Stafford Assizes, on which Stewart was acquitted, and Mr. Justice Coleridge specifically stated that in his sentence he was punishing Stewart only for the offence of blasphemy of which he had been convicted. It is grossly unfair that the Home Secretary should justify Stewart's sentence because of a charge of which he was acquitted by the jury."

The Birmingham of the old days speaks in that leaderette.

The *Gazette* did even better than that. It not only printed an excellent letter from Mr. John Breese but it returned to the subject on its own account. Two days later another editorial appeared, from which we make the following extracts:—

"It may not be easy for Mr. Asquith to censure the Home Secretary by reversing his judgment, but the principle involved is of more vital importance than Mr. McKenna's official status or personal feelings.....Nobody pretends that Mr. Stewart used nice language, or language that we should like to see made common in controversy. At the same time, vulgarity is neither a crime nor a monopoly. It is one of the abominable absurdities of the musty law under which Mr. Stewart was convicted that it only protects the established religion. 'Not only are some Christian religions entirely unprotected,' said Professor Geldart recently, 'but the peculiar doctrines of non-established Christian bodies, such as the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Mass or the beliefs of Unitarians, may be wantonly insulted so far as the law of blasphemy goes.' No Liberalism worth its salt will tolerate the pernicious discrimination and punctilious application of a law so self-condemned on all grounds of religious and civil fairness."

Stands Birmingham where it did? No. It is moving forward—and at a good pace too.

One point in Mr. Breese's excellent letter deserves special notice. After mentioning the high character of so many of the signatories to the petition for Mr. Stewart's release he continued: "But all these were ignored, and will be ignored, until one of these cases is taken to the Court of Appeal. The President of the National Secular Society offered to do this in the Stewart case, but, unfortunately, his proferred help and expert advice were declined." Mr. Breese recognises the vital point of the whole case, which was bungled from the very first. It was his own fault originally in thinking too much of himself, and too little of the Freethought party's interest in the fight for the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws. And it was the fault afterwards of the extraordinary ineptitude of the "friends" who got around him. Mr. Stewart himself does not always seem to be in his right senses; of his "friends" one must go to Dante for the proper words to say of them—*Non ragionem di lor, ma guarda e passa.*

We have pleasure in quoting the following paragraph from last week's *Inquirer* (Unitarian):—

"It is hardly necessary for us to add that we do not for one moment palliate the conduct of Stewart, or underestimate the danger to public morals, if he has offended in the way suggested. We wish that we could have made our protest against the Blasphemy Laws in a case which had not so many unpleasant features associated with it. But we must ask our readers to keep the distinction clearly in their minds between a public attack upon the Christian religion—the technical offence of blasphemy—and offences of an entirely different kind, which may deserve severe punishment when they can be brought home to the offender in a court of law. We object to prosecutions under the obsolete blasphemy laws as contrary to public policy and the true interests of religion, whether the accused be a scoundrel or a saint."

The last sentence hits the right nail well on the head.

We have often thought of making a collection of Ingersoll's best bons mots. We come across new ones now and then, even at this time of day. Ingersoll said once, in conversation, that England reminded him of a burglar with a white necktie. A palpable hit at John Bull's behavior in all parts of the world where anything is to be appropriated.

TRUE COURAGE.

I honor the man who is willing to sink
Half his present repute for the freedom to think;
And when he has thought, be his cause strong or weak,
Will sink t'other half for the freedom to speak;
Not caring what vengeance the mob has in store,
Be that mob the upper ten thousand or lower.

—*Lowell.*

Professor Bonney on Religion and Science.

"A man may reach the loftiest pinnacle of scientific glory whose heart has never heaved with one religious emotion. He may penetrate to the very holy of holies in nature's temple, and yet retain his Atheism, in spite of the hallowed influences that surround him. Nothing is plainer in theory, and, alas! nothing has been more surely confirmed by experience, than that the possession of science is not the possession of religion."—PROFESSOR HITCHCOCK, *The Religion of Geology*, p. 303.

"It is unfortunate to have a religion against which every good and noble heart protests. Let us have a good one or none. O! my pity has been excited by seeing these ministers endeavor to warp and twist the passages of Scripture to fit some demonstration in science. These pious evasions! these solemn pretences! When they are caught in one way they give a different meaning to the words, and say the world was not made in seven days. They say 'good whiles'—epochs."—COLONEL INGERSOLL, *The Dying Creed*, p. 18.

PROFESSOR BONNEY'S new book, *The Present Relations of Science and Religion*, is an interesting work, as any work needs must be, coming from one who is a Professor of Geology and a Canon of the Church of England. Here we shall have the reasons by means of which the author is enabled to run with the Church hare and follow with the hounds of science. It used to be the hare of science and the hounds of the Church, but the position is reversed now.

A good idea of the devastation wrought by science among religious beliefs may be gained by comparing this work with Professor Hitchcock's work on *The Religion of Geology*, written seventy years ago,* with precisely the same purpose; the author of which was also a Professor of Theology and Geology. This work was written before the advent of Darwinism, although the author laments the spread of Materialism and the use made of geological discoveries in attacking the Bible, and reluctantly confesses that the Deluge could not have been universal; yet, on p. 327, he gives a diagram, or geological column, beginning with the creation of the earth on the first day, the lowest forms of life on the second day, plants and fishes on the third day, and sun, moon, and stars on the fourth day! No more need be said. Every astronomer and geologist knows that millions of stars existed before the sun, that the sun existed many millions of years before the earth, and that the moon was thrown off from the earth while it was yet in a molten state, ages before any sign of life appeared on the earth's surface.

The writer also remarks that, in spite of the surrender of the universality of the Deluge,—

"the Bible has remained unaffected. The infidel felt confident that the arrows which he drew from this quiver would certainly pierce Christianity to the heart. But they rebounded from her adamantine breastplate, blunted and broken; and no one will have the courage to pick them up and hurl them again" (p. 99).

Let us see how the Bible stands to-day. Professor Bonney—who, by the way, admits nothing which he is not obliged, and takes refuge in all the holes and corners not yet explored by science—surrenders the scientific accuracy of the Bible, as follows:—

"The opening chapters of Genesis were formerly supposed to give the history of the early days of the earth more accurately than the Annals of Tacitus do that of his own age. We must frankly admit that at the present day no geologist of any repute would accept the narrative of the Deluge, or that of the episodes of the Creation, as actual history. Records of both of these are to be found on the clay tablets which once formed part of an Assyrian library, and they may be traced back from the later days of that monarchy to the times when the Semetic had hardly began to blend with the Sumerian race."†

Not only does the Professor give up the Creation and Deluge stories, but he candidly admits that the Darwinian theory of the origin of species is scientifically proved. He tells us that when Darwin published his *Origin of Species*, he frankly acknowledged

* Published in 1851, but mostly written, says the author, "eight or ten years ago"; preface, p. 5.

† T. G. Bonney, *The Present Relations of Science and Religion* (1913), p. 120.

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that the geological evidence, though strong in some places, was weak in others, attributing this to the imperfections in the geological record, and suggesting that the missing links would be found by later discoverers. "That," observes Professor Bonney, "has been done to an extent to satisfy the expectations even of the most sanguine" (p. 53). And further:—

> "Thus, the past history of plant-life, though on the whole it is rather less complete, confirms that of animal life, and we can confidently affirm that the facts which have been discovered since 1859 show that the gaps which then existed in the Geological Record have been largely filled up, and that evidence has been obtained which justifies the assertion that a process of evolution holds good in all parts of the earth, among all forms of life, both high and low, and throughout the whole course of terrestrial history."

Upon this point Professor Bonney speaks with authority, as, being a Professor of Geology, it lies peculiarly within his province. It is worthy of note that, in the science with which he is familiar, and in which he is an expert, he can find no support, but positive contradiction, to the Bible. Therefore, whatever support the writer gives to religion cannot be said to be founded upon his independent discoveries and researches in science; for he himself says, "I cannot venture to speak as an expert outside the particular branch at which I have worked. I have therefore preferred, in dealing with these results, to quote from some recognised authority rather than put his opinion into my own words" (p. 8).

In his chapter on "Recent Advances in Physical Science," Professor Bonney relies wholly upon such writers as Sir Oliver Lodge, Mr. Whetham, and De Tunzlemann, all theologians disguised as scientists, the only one cited on the other side being Professor Haeckel, but only cited for the purpose of attacking. In this connection we should like to point out that while the Nonconformist clergy—with a mixture of ignorance and malignity—treat Haeckel as though he was some ignorant little schoolboy, and they were schoolmasters, Professor Bonney knows better, and, though he accuses Haeckel of begging the question, he acknowledges his "wide knowledge of and valuable researches in biology" (p. 29); although we are sorry to see that he reproduces some insolent remarks regarding Haeckel, by De Tunzlemann; also the remark of Sir Oliver Lodge that it is impossible for a physicist to discuss, "within the terms of courtesy, the physical hypothesis which forms the basis of" Haeckel's *Riddle of the Universe*. Well, there is nothing remarkable about *that;* very few Christians are able to discuss Atheism "within the terms of courtesy," and, although the tone of Professor Bonney's work is far above the scurrility of the common or garden Christian Evidencer, yet even he cannot avoid the following flash: "A bald and blatant Atheism does, unfortunately, find more favor with the quarter-educated crowd." If Professor Bonney had studied the writings of the opponents of Christianity and religion as much as he has studied the apologists of them, he would have left this unsaid. In fact, he never really comes to grips with the Atheist at all, and those who go to the book for a confutation of Atheism will find nothing of what they want. In the meanwhile, he grants the evolution of plants and animals, and, indeed, finds the origin of the world and all its inhabitants, in the atoms of the Materialist, and he grants that these, in turn, are evolved from the ether; but his mind oscillates between science and religion. Replying to the objection that the evolutionist is prevented from accepting any revelation which is not gradual in its action, like the processes of ordinary growth, he observes:—

> "But we must remember that there are not a few authorities in zoology who would strongly repudiate anything like creation, as this was formerly understood, and yet believe that there are occasionally 'jumps' in the passage from one species to another, and many suppose, that notwithstanding a recent discussion, a break can still be found between the animate and the inanimate, between living and dead protoplasm, and even if we admit that, as we have endeavored to indicate, everything may be reduced to ether and electricity, yet even then a gap exists between that ether and its 'granulated' state as matter." *

That is to say that in all those problems of which science has not yet discovered the natural cause, the believer is entitled to say "it is the work of God." Very well, so be it; but in that case his religion has but a precarious existence, subject to constant alarms lest science should penetrate these mysteries upon which his religion depends. The past history of the warfare of science with religion proves this. At one time it was asked "Who made the world?" And when the nebular hypothesis solved the problem of the origin of stars and plants, the believer was ready with another mystery, "Who made the animals and plants?" And when Darwin solved that question with his book on the *Origin of Species*, the question was shifted to, "Who made man?" which he answered by his *Descent of Man*. Now, they ask, "Who made life?" The scientists reply, "If you will have a little patience and wait, we shall probably be able to explain the natural evolution of the living from the non-living, as we are actively engaged upon the problem now. And, as we have been so successful in explaining the natural origin of worlds, plants, animals, and man, so we have not the least doubt that we shall ultimately solve the problem of the origin of life."

The "gaps" in our knowledge are closing up. The fortress of religion is beleaguered. The advance guard of science is ever pushing forward; it is gradually encircling the walls of superstition, and when the circle is complete, there will be no gaps—as Professor Bonney calls them—by which the supernatural can intrude into the ordered domain of nature.

Further on, the claim for the interference of God at certain stages in the course of nature is altogether abandoned, as follows:—

> "Pantheism in some important respects comes nearer to the truth than that vague and indefinite dualism which contrasts God and His works and regards the universe as an elaborate piece of mechanism which, though once devised by Him, is not adequate or adapted for all possible contingencies, but requires Him to 'interfere,' as an engineer must occasionally do with a complicated machine, either to adjust it or add some temporary contrivance" (p. 138).

We shall come nearer the truth, he continues, if we say that in one sense all things are equally natural, "for they are all the outcome of law"; while in another sense "everything is supernatural," because we can follow the evolution from the complex to the simple; yet "we come at last to the cloud of impenetrable mystery, and begin to realise the significance of that phrase in the Book of Exodus, "Man shall not see me and live."

But if the universe and God are one and indivisible—as the Pantheist asserts—it is difficult to understand how anyone could see God, whether he lived or died as the consequence. For the rest, it is true that modern religion, pursued by its enemies, at last takes refuge in a "cloud of impenetrable mystery," being, in this respect, not unlike the cuttlefish, which surrounds itself with an inky fluid to escape observation. But it is the business of science to clear up mysteries; and religion will maintain but a shivering existence among these clouds.

Of the Pantheism of the ancients, Epicurus and Lucretius—who held that the gods had created the universe and then left it to its fate—he observes: "This, of course, is not Atheism, but so far as any practical results are likely to go, it is no great improvement" (p. 93); yet he thinks a form of Pantheism possible in which God and the universe might be regarded as one, and yet "that this God might love the world as, and because, it was a part of himself." The rock upon which Pantheism—as a religious system—splits, is the fact that if God and the universe are one, then man, who is a part of the universe, is also a part of God, and if he prays he is

* Bonney, *The Present Relations of Science and Religion*, p. 117.

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partly praying to himself. In other words, it does away with the personality of God; for you cannot have God and the universe as one and yet regard God as a person who sees and hears, and who can be prayed to and supplicated. As Schopenhauer truly remarked—Professor Bonney gives the quotation from Haeckel's *Riddle of the Universe*:—

> "Pantheism is only a polite form of Atheism. The truth of Pantheism lies in its destruction of the dualist antithesis of God and the world, in its recognition that the world exists in virtue of its own inherent forces. The maxim of the Pantheist, God and the world are one, is merely a polite way of giving the Lord God His *congé*."

The chapter entitled "The Credibility of Christianity" is a peculiarly futile performance; the Professor appears to think that if it can only be proved that the Gospels were written by, or during, the time of the Apostles whose names they bear, then we ought to believe in them as historical documents. He appears to be quite unaware that criticism has long passed this point. That it is not a question now of the authenticity of the Gospels that Christians have to defend, but whether there ever existed such a person as Jesus Christ or not. Professor Bonney has performed the feat of writing a defence of Christianity without mentioning Robertson's *Pagan Christs*, Professor Drew's *Christ Myth*, and Professor Benjamin Smith's *Ecce Deus*, to say nothing of Dr. Frazer's *Golden Bough*, which—in spite of its author's concession of the historical existence of Jesus as a man—is calculated to raise insuppressible doubts upon the subject. Whether this is due to an ostrich policy of burying the head in the sand to escape its enemies, or because Professor Bonney does not study his opponents' case, and has found no mention of the subject in the numerous apologetic works he cites from, we are unable to say; but the fact remains that this part of the work is about twenty years behind the times.

For a man of Professor Bonney's ability, the whole book is an exceedingly poor one. In spite of the rush of Rationalist and Freethought works from the press of late years, Haeckel's *Riddle of the Universe* is the only one noticed, and that only slightly. All the others works cited are apologies for religion or neutral. Professor Bonney, instead of coming as a scientific champion to the assistance of religion, appears to us as one who has himself had to wrestle with doubt, and has eagerly sought fresh air for faith in the apologies offered in defence of Christianity.

The work is more likely to raise doubts than to still them; especially the chapter—founded upon White's *Warfare of Science*—in which he, metaphorically speaking, stands in sackcloth and ashes; and proves how the Church in all ages has been the deadly opponent of science. We would welcome a few more chapters upon this subject—there is plenty of material—from Professor Bonney.

W. MANN.

The Locomotive Organs of Animals.

PLANTS possess the power of assimilating lifeless substances such as carbonic acid gas (carbon dioxide, CO_2) and mineral salts. Animals, on the other hand, require a supply of complex, living matter for their nourishment. As these organic foods do not come to animals, there arose the necessity for the power of movement, and to this end innumerable devices have been developed in the zoological kingdom.

As animal organisms developed in structure and function, the need of movement from place to place became essential. In consequence of this, the organs which assumed the responsibilities of transferring the animal from one spot to another usually took the form of elongations or processes projecting from its body. Moreover, in connection with these processes, which, in the higher animals take the form of fins, wings, arms, and legs, special muscular tissue was evolved for the purpose of securing the motion in question.

The energy essential to this power of movement is derived from the decomposition of the complex food substances which animals assimilate.

In some of the simpler animal creatures movement is secured through the protrusion of protoplasmic processes, as in the well-known instance of the amœba, whilst in other single-celled organisms it is made possible by the presence of minute filaments, resembling hairs, which are termed cilia or flagella. These processes move to and fro, and in this way propel the tiny creatures through the running brook or stagnant pool in which they dwell. But in the more advanced forms of life muscles are the chief agents in producing movement; they are, indeed, the driving forces of the various organs employed in locomotion.

As we ascend the ladder of life the more specialised become the instruments which secure motion. And among those vertebrate organisms, of which man is the highest product, some of the most remarkable locomotive adaptations are to be met with. As muscles render the fullest service when they have some rigid body to pull against, special hard parts of the animal frame were evolved for their support. With invertebrate animals the same result has been reached through the development of a hardened integument such as shells and leathery skins. But with backboned creatures, however, internal supports were evolved in the form of bone. The skeleton of these is a bony structure which not only provides greater play for the muscles but also serves to support the weight of the body and to preserve its shape.

Locomotion being so essential to the well-being of multicellular life, the bodily forms of vertebrates are so fashioned that they easily overcome the antagonistic incident forces of their environment. In other words, the shape of the body is such that it offers the least resistance to the medium in which the animal lives, whether its habitat be aquatic or terrestrial. With fishes, for instance, the body and its organs are specially adapted to meet the requirements of their watery home:—

> "Their bodies are elongated and flattened laterally, pointed in front and tapering behind, to offer as little resistance as possible when moving through the water. The head joins the trunk directly, so that no appearance of a neck is seen. The tapering hinder end of the body expands into a powerful tail set on vertically. The paired fins correspond to the front and hind limbs of the higher classes of vertebrates, but are much simpler in form; unpaired fins are also present. Locomotion is effected principally by the waving of the tail and the flexion of the body, the fins serving chiefly for balancing purposes."

Various very striking adaptations to their medium are afforded by the penguins, seals, porpoises, and whales. The modifications which these last have undergone are indeed remarkable. Those sea-dwelling mammals, the porpoises and whales, which are justly regarded as the descendants of four-footed terrestrial ancestors, have assumed such a fish-like appearance that until comparatively recent years they were regarded as fishes even by students of nature, a circumstance which still survives in the term "whale fisheries."

Every vertebrated animal possesses a long bony axis which is known as the vertebral column. This runs through the length of the body, and thus forms a firm foundation around which the body is built up. At one end the backbone terminates in a bony chamber, the brain-box or skull, which contains the brain and sense organs, whilst at the other extremity it usually tapers off gradually to form the tail. As a rule, two pairs of appendages are attached to the bony column, whose duty it is to perform the function of locomotion. Whether these appendages assume the form of fins, arms, legs, or wings, the paired arrangement of the limbs enables the organism to maintain its balance; although, as previously intimated, fishes are furnished with additional unpaired fins.

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Further interesting phenomena are disclosed by a fuller and more detailed examination of the anatomy of the animal body. Not for purposes of locomotion alone is the power of movement required. The comforts and conveniences of general life also demand adaptive power, and as a result endless modifications have arisen to meet this necessity.

The mechanical contrivances contained in the body of that faithful and intelligent creature, the dog, afford an excellent illustration of this. The canine body is composed of an axial portion (head, trunk, and tail) and an appendicular portion (limbs), the foundation being the backbone. Hence, if this foundation were formed of one unending bone, its rigidity would necessarily seriously incommode the bodily movements of the animal, and would render the body liable to sudden shocks and jars. To avoid such inconveniences, while at the same time securing a sufficiently firm support, the backbone is made up of a chain of bony rings termed vertebræ, "fitted end to end, so as to form a canal or tube, which contains the spinal cord." Lying between these rings are pads of gristle, which deaden shocks, and, in addition, the bones are bound together by tough ligaments. Thus, the vertebral column, though essentially one body, has been so adapted that it permits a certain amount of pliability.

The skull is attached to the first vertebra, or *atlas*, and this attachment is so arranged that the head is at liberty to move up and down just as if it were on a hinge. In addition to this, the head and the atlas together are capable of moving from side to side around a projecting pivot on the second vertebra—the *axis*. In this way the head is enabled to nod or to shake.

The skull is divided into the brain cavity and the facial section. The brain-box is built up of flattened bone plates, which form a rigid covering for that delicate organ, the brain. In the facial portion of the skull, the only movable part is the lower jaw bone, which is joined to the base of the skull, and its power of movement is essential to the mastication of food.

When we examine the structure of the chest, we discover that its expansion and contraction are essential to the process of respiration, and the ribs are so arranged as to provide for the necessary movement. As Randal Mundy writes in his excellent *Biology* :—

> "This freedom of movement is brought about by the rounded top of each rib fitting into a hollow cavity on the outside face of a vertebra, and by the lower end of the rib being either fastened to the breastbone by flexible gristle or ending freely without any attachment."

The upper and lower extremities, the arms and legs, are attached to the trunk by means of bony girdles. The fore limbs possess a wider range of movement than the hind limbs, and in consequence of this the hand and arm have become of vast importance to such animals as monkeys and men. Even in the case of the scratching dog, the fore feet are of far greater service than the hind feet to the animal.

Although the skeleton of a frog is built upon the same general plan as that of dogs and apes, it displays several distinctive features which mark it off from the anatomical arrangements of these higher vertebrates. These differences have arisen from its unlike mode of life. The frog is a poor and lumbering walker, but it leaps well on land and swims readily in the water. We therefore find that the amphibian's hind limbs have been splendidly adapted to these special modes of movement. The hind limbs are unusually long, are well provided with strong muscles, and are bent back upon themselves so that the frog may move forward by their sudden extension. The frog's strongly developed webbed feet, again, furnish an excellent leverage for leaping and swimming alike. And, in addition, the vertebral column has been so modified that it provides an increased support to the hind limbs. To a squatting and leaping animal a tail is an unnecessary burden, and the caudal appendage which the frog carries during its tadpole period is discarded as soon as it reaches its land-dwelling stage.

In surveying bird life we meet with other adaptive devices for purposes of locomotion. In handling a bird's skeleton the attention is at once arrested by its surprising lightness. This structural feature is an immense advantage to birds that are constantly on the wing. The following noteworthy adaptations present themselves in connection with the power of flight. The tail and wing feathers are well-developed; many of the bones are hollow and contain air, instead of marrow. In most cases, these pneumatic structures are the wing bones, breast bone, and some of the cranium bones. In some birds, however, the ribs, pelvis, and thigh bones, and even the vertebræ, are hollow also. With birds the head enjoys a freer movement than that of the dog. The neck is usually longer than in mammals, thus securing a wider range of movement for the head. Long legs are correlated with long necks, and greater facilities are in this way afforded for feeding. Various other adaptations occur, all tending to bring the animal into harmony with its environment. When walking or roosting, a bird is a biped, and in consequence the leg-bones and the pelvis have to bear the weight of the body, just as they do with ourselves. The toes betray a dwindling tendency, and they vary considerably in structure in different species. Some are furnished with talons, while others have been modified for running, hopping, perching, or for swimming.

Among backboned organisms the caudal appendage is almost universal. In man and the manlike apes it survives as an attenuated relic of former utility. Whether all life arose from the primitive oceans or not, the earliest vertebrates were most certainly aquatic creatures. In the fish family the tail is employed as a means of propulsion through the waters in which they dwell. All vertebrate denizens of the seas and lakes are provided with tails, which they utilise for forcing their bodies through the water, as well as for steering purposes. With the evolution of higher forms of life, many animals struggled to the shore, and their tails underwent those transformations which were rendered imperative by their changed surroundings. Where no longer necessary, their tails became rudimentary, or were modified so as to serve some new need. In the contemporary horse and cow the tail is used as a whip to drive off troublesome insects; among other animals it serves to shield the rectum. Climbing animals employ the appendage as a balancing organ; with monkeys and other creatures it has been modified into a prehensile organ which enables these animals to cling to the branches of trees; while in birds it fulfils the function of a steering apparatus.

We thus see that from the pseudopodia and cilia of unicellular organisms all the most highly elaborated instruments of animal locomotion have been evolved. Every available scrap of evidence points to these evolved products as the outcome of purely natural causes, and of these alone. The power of the adaptive process is everywhere manifested, but for the exercise of creative energy or guidance no particle of evidence is anywhere to be found.

T. F. PALMER.

Science is properly more scrupulous than dogma. Dogma gives a charter to mistake; but the very breath of science is a contest with mistake, and must keep the conscience alive.—*George Eliot.*

Obituary.

The remains of Mrs. Geo. Duncan, daughter of the late Thos. Thompson, of 50 Washington-terrace, North Shields, were interred at Preston Cemetery on Tuesday, Dec. 30, 1913, in the presence of her sorrowing husband, son-in-law, grandchildren, and friends. Messrs. Rowe, Chapman, and others representing the South Shields Branch, of which deceased was a member.—R. C.

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Notices of Lectures etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

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INDOOR.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workman's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, C. Cohen, a Lecture.

OUTDOOR.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, E. Burke, "Kikuyu; or, The Kick-Out Controversy."

COUNTRY.

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Freethinker
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To grow up in a narrow creed and to grow out of it is a tremendous trial of one's nature.
—OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

Dodging Persecution.

IT seems strange that anybody should be prosecuted for libelling a Ghost, and stranger still that the aggrieved Ghost should not be required to appear in court, or even to send a blood relation. But this is a strange world, and the unexpected is always happening. Things may be ordered differently in some other part of the universe; but this planet of ours is, and always has been, the home of as much folly and stupidity as could well be concentrated in so small a space. The fool-crop, as Heine said, is perennial; if you reap it down in one generation it springs up almost as lively as ever in the next.

Matters, however, were worse once, so we need not absolutely despair. Time was, that if you breathed a word against a Ghost, you were not even treated with the ceremony of a trial, but just had your brains knocked out on the spot. Now you are treated less summarily, and there is a chance of "the law's delay" mitigating the savagery of superstition. Yet the Ghost's friends are still so powerful and numerous that, if they once taste the pleasure of hunting down heretics, they are likely to continue the pastime until they are thoroughly satiated.

Now all hunted creatures, if not rapidly exterminated, perforce develop a capacity for evasion. Even philosophers, said Voltaire, should have plenty of holes to run to when the priests are on their track. And that supple and dexterous heretic certainly practised this doctrine to some purpose; for he doubled and shifted like any old fox, and led his persecutors a wild dance for more than fifty years; during the whole of which time he ravaged their territory without their ever once getting properly on his scent.

If you wish to visit a certain spot, and there are two ways of reaching it, one direct and the other circuitous; and if by taking the straight route you are sure to meet a large band of well-armed assassins; you naturally take the other route; for although it is a long way round, you do reach your object at last. And if the assassins got wind of your movements, and shifted accordingly, you would naturally find out, if possible, a third way to avoid them. Always providing that as soon as you have friends enough to meet the rascals on equal terms, you will walk boldly up the straight road, and blow them to Hades, or whatever place in the universe affords hospitality to the souls of murderous blackguards. This proviso saves your valor from being all discretion, and makes your prudence honorable.

It will not be amiss to take a brief historical survey of the strategy of sceptics, and to point out how one might carry on a covert war on the Christian superstition by opposing cunning to force.

If we go back to the Renaissance we shall find the soldiers of progress fighting against terrible odds with nothing but a pen. But how they plied that weapon! Not daring to assail God, they struck at his friends. Merry tales were circulated at the expense of priests. The greatest fool, drunkard, glutton, and profligate of the story was sure to be a monk. These predatory vermin are satirised in scores of French *fabliaux* and Italian *novelle*, and even the gentle Boccaccio ridiculed them on page after page of his golden book, playing about them the soft summer-lightning of his wit.

His countryman, the fiery-souled Bruno, followed a somewhat different plan, as did many of his French contemporaries. He quizzed the gods of Paganism in such a way that the wise reader could apply the satire to the gods of a later faith. When, in *The Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast* (*Spaccio de la Bestia Trionfante*) he wrote of deities who could "walk on the water and do other pretty tricks," his readers would naturally think of the natatory feat which Jesus Christ is alleged to have performed on the sea of Galilee. Bonaventure des Periers slants at the Christian deities in like fashion when he is making riotous fun of the Pagan gods and goddesses in his *Cymbalum Mundi*.

Poor Des Periers, however, was after all not astute enough to keep out of mischief. The keen-nosed priests scented his heresy and denounced him. Père Mersenne called him an "impious rogue"; M. De L'Estoille said he was "an Atheist, and unworthy the name of a man"; and Pasquier declared that he was "only fit to be thrown into the fire." This is how the beagles of persecution spoke of one of the finest writers of that epoch. His end is wrapped in some obscurity, but it seems that he fell on his own sword in prison to escape being roasted alive for the glory of God.

Rabelais was more fortunate. He dodged the enemy to the very last, and his Jovian laughter rang over the baffled pigmies. "After any particularly deep thrust," says Coleridge, "as if to break the blow, and to appear unconscious of what he has done, he writes a chapter or two of pure buffoonery." Rabelais had no taste for martyrdom and objected to dying out of bed. No doubt he expressed his own sentiment when he made Pantagruel quit the bigoted city of Toulouse, where they "stuck not to burn their regents alive like red herrings," saying: "Now God forbid that I should die this death, for I am by nature dry enough already without being heated any further." This grand thinker and humorist evaded many perils by his inexhaustible adroitness, and continued to a ripe age overwhelming the enemies of progress with a constant flood of irony.

We have already referred to Voltaire, who imitated Rabelais to some extent, three centuries later. Voltaire published many of his attacks on Christianity anonymously, and sometimes he attributed his pieces to other authors; as in the case of the *Epitre à Uranie*, which was ascribed to Chaulieu, and the *Examen*, which was ascribed to Bolingbroke. Condorcet justifies Voltaire's conduct in this respect. He writes (*Vie de Voltaire*, p. 32):—

> "The necessity of lying in order to disavow any work, is an extremity equally repugnant to conscience and nobleness of character; but the crime lies with those unjust men, who render such disavowal necessary to the safety of him whom they force to it. If you have made a crime of that which is not one; if, by absurd or by arbitrary laws, you have infringed the natural right which all men have, not only to form an opinion, but to render it public; then you deserve to lose the right which every man has of hearing the

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> truth from the mouth of another; a right, which is the sole basis of that obligation, not to lie. If it is not permitted to deceive, the reason is, that to deceive anyone, is to do him a wrong, or expose yourself to do him one; but a wrong supposes a right; and no one has the right of seeking to secure himself the means of committing an injustice."

Carlyle calls this Jesuitry in disguise, and sneers at Condorcet for putting forward such a plea. Yet we humbly opine that Carlyle's judgment in this matter is not worth very much. Both he and Mill kept back from the world a good deal of their convictions, although they had to face no greater foe than Bumble and Mrs. Grundy. Condorcet was an exceptionally honest man, and he was not likely to screen Voltaire or anyone else with a false plea. He knew the difficulties of the case, and could properly estimate the dangers in Voltaire's path. We agree with him that the persecutors' party have no right to complain. Their brutality is responsible for all the evasion. Voltaire's high courage was proved too often to be doubted. Who shall accuse the protector of Sirven and the vindicator of Calas of cowardice? Voltaire was assuredly no coward. But he had to fight single-handed an unscrupulous and powerful enemy. He matched his wit and finesse against all their strength—and won!

Mill somewhere (was it in a conversation with John Morley?) indulged in a cheap sneer at Gibbon's "insincere style." This is simply absurd. Gibbon's irony was necessitated by the Christian law, which sent Woolston to gaol for saying that the miracles of Christ were allegories, and Peter Annett for saying that the Pentateuch was not inspired. Everybody fit to read the *Decline and Fall* could understand exactly what Gibbon meant. He deceived nobody, but simply protected himself against a brutal law. When he wrote "it was not in this world that the Christians expected to be either happy or useful," his readers understood him as plainly as if he had said that "they were unsocial fanatics."

The same criticism applies to all the great eighteenth-century Deists; to Anthony Collins, to Lord Bolingbroke, and especially to David Hume, whose grave satire, in the *Essay on Miracles*, is simply inimitable. In plain language his last paragraph comes to this: that Christianity is a religion of miracle, and that no man can believe it without having a miracle worked inside him. Hume had an eye to the Blasphemy Laws. And there could be no doubt as to the danger; for when Thomas Paine put the scepticism of Bolingbroke, Gibbon, and Hume into direct and vigorous language for the common people, the cry of "Blasphemy" was raised by the Church and its dupes, as if Silenus and his ass had joined in a common bray.

Recurring to France, we may notice a delightful bit of strategy on the part of Diderot and D'Alembert. They once had a long chat on religion in a *café*, and in order to baffle a listening police-spy they agreed to call the Trinity by fictitious names. God the Father, if we remember rightly, figured as Monsieur Lepère, and Jesus Christ as Monsieur Lenfant. When the conversation ended the spy came up and politely asked who were the Messieurs Lepère and Lenfant that had been described as such dreadful characters. "Oh," said Diderot, with an innocent look, "they were two police spies."

Might we not, if the worst came to the worst, go in for something of that kind? We might even dispense with names altogether, and use algebraic symbols. (x) would do capitally for God, the great unknown. The minus sign ($-$) would do for our old friend Jahveh, as signifying that he is worse than no God at all. The plus sign ($+$) would serve for Jesus Christ, as signifying the cross on which he had his last cold spread. And if we were put to it we should probably succeed in working out appropriate signs for all the heavenly host.

Richard Carlile, whose untameable heroism is alone enough to inspire men with courage, tricked his persecutors in a way which we have no doubt sent a laugh through Hades, and even made old Monsieur Lepère smile upon his throne. The much prosecuted publisher, after he and his family and a dozen shopmen had gone to prison, devised a dial with a revolving hand and a list of his publications. The customer turned the hand to the name of the work he wanted, and it was passed through an aperture. No vendor was seen, and therefore sale could not be proved. Mrs. Carlile did a roaring trade, and all over the country the reformers toasted "Carlile's invisible shopman."

If one were only prosecuted and punished under the Act of William the Third, what a splendid comedy might be performed! The last clause of that Act provides that any offender may obtain a discharge from all penalties and disabilities by going to the court within four months after conviction, and making acknowledgment and renunciation. Suppose one took advantage of this proviso; what a howl would go up from the bigots all over the country, like a pack of hounds who have lost the game!

G. W. FOOTE.

When They Find Out.

ONE of the speakers at a religious conference held in Islington the other day said that the Rev. Dr. Forsyth had told him that in his opinion there were troublesome times in store for the Churches. The congregations, said Dr. Forsyth, had not as yet begun to realise the full bearings of modern criticism, and that before the ultimate adjustment took place there would be a very trying time in the Churches. It was not reported what this ultimate adjustment would be like. Apparently it was assumed that when people did understand the meaning of modern critical attacks on religion there would be a passing "shindy," and then there would emerge that much-talked-of "purified" faith, with the clergy re-established in full possession, and unbelief surviving as a mere intellectual curiosity.

The confession was, however, interesting. It was an admission of the truth, so often pointed out in these columns, that the great mass of religionists have really no conception either of the nature of modern critical attacks on religion, or of the way in which these have completely shattered the orthodox Christian structure. They know, in a hazy sort of way, that Christian doctrines are called in question, but they do not fully realise why, and the clergy—Dr. Forsyth among them—take care that their ignorance shall be as complete and as long sustained as possible. One need only study those sermons in which attacks on religion are dealt with to see how this ignorance is maintained. Anti-religious criticisms are presented by the preacher in the crudest possible manner—generally he retails a form of attack that was current a century or so ago, and the congregation depart in the full belief that they have heard the worst that can be said against their creed. In reality they have been told just enough to keep them from inquiring further, and that is generally what the preacher is aiming at.

The confession was also interesting because it, quite unconsciously, displayed the clergy in their true colors. Dr. Forsyth was not referring to the general public, but to "our congregations"—to the people, that is, who had been under the direct influence of the clergy, and had looked to them for light and leading in matters of religion. It was they who were in the dark, and it was from them that trouble was expected when they began to appreciate the position. But suppose the clergy had dealt honestly and faithfully with their congregations; suppose they had kept them informed of the results of modern scholarship and the trend of modern criticism; what cause would there be to fear trouble? Obviously, none. They would not only be aware that their beliefs were questioned; they would know why—on what grounds; and their remaining in the Church would be an evidence that they considered these attacks ineffective. At present their remaining

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Church-worshipers is proof only that they do not know. And their not knowing is indisputable evidence that the clergy have been hiding the truth from them—not always telling them direct lies, but always suppressing part of the truth.

For here is the essence, and the evil, of the situation. To "our congregations" the clergy are the recognised authorities on religion. When a newspaper refers to an "authority on religion" it has not in mind a man like Frazer, or Tylor, or Spencer—any one of whom knows more about religion than any number of parsons; it is thinking of some well-known theologian whose knowledge consists of dogmas and doctrines, of church ceremonies or ecclesiastical frills. Of course, this is sheer superstition. It is a survival from the time when priests were believed to be, in a very peculiar sense, the representatives of Deity. They could then give information about religion because they were the only ones "in the know." To-day conditions have changed. The people who know all about religion are those who do not believe in it. Those who believe in it do not know. Our knowledge about religion has been derived, in the main, from outsiders—or, rather, they became outsiders because of the knowledge they acquired. And these authorities use Christianity and its clergy exactly as they use savage cults and their priests. The one illustrates and illuminates the other. We know the meaning of Christianity only when we appreciate the workings of the savage mind. We understand the savage mind only when we note its survival in current Christianity. That is why there is likely to be trouble when "our congregations" grasp the full meaning of modern criticism.

But Dr. Forsyth and his kind are here; and their business is to delay the coming of that knowledge as long as may be. Between the congregation and the expert on religion stands the parson. He is, consciously or unconsciously, all the time engaged in a conspiracy that aims at keeping his people in ignorance. Consider for how long the very alphabet of Biblical criticism was kept away from the congregation by the pulpit. And even when the truth, or some of it, is reluctantly admitted, the game of mystification is still pursued. In sermon after sermon preachers refer to what our Lord said, or what Moses said, or what someone else said, and the scenes and circumstances are described direct from the Bible as though their genuineness had never been questioned. And the net result of this procedure is that the ordinary listener leaves the Church with his mind practically undisturbed as to the accuracy of the Biblical account. It is true he knows that criticisms are offered, but the constant use of the Bible in the old way, its habitual treatment in church and chapel as a trustworthy historical narrative, prevents him seeing the bearings of this criticism on his belief.

Anyone who understands the present position of the study of religion knows that the essential issue rests with the anthropologist. If his account of the subject is correct, nothing else matters. If the belief in a God owes its origin to a personification of natural forces, or to the savage fear of the ghost; if the belief in a soul has a similar origin, what is the use of all this discussion about man's consciousness of God and the like? The forms of religion, the various beliefs about God and the soul, are still interesting subjects of study, but their value is precisely the value of a classification and study of folk tales and fairy legends. It is instructive to know how they originated and what influence they exerted, but that is all. They remain delusions, no matter how fervently they may have been believed, no matter how refined or rationalised. You cannot rationalise a lie into truth, or a delusion into a reality. At most you can only befool yourself as a preliminary to befooling others. How long will it be before "our congregations" realise this? And what will happen to the Churches when they do?

A century ago a vital question at issue was "Is the Bible true?" To-day, the question to an informed mind is largely without meaning. That it is not true, as a sober record of historic fact, is obvious. The utmost that one can grant is that it is psychologically true—that is, it faithfully reflects the ideas and beliefs and the knowledge of those who wrote it. Well, we need not question it. It is hardly worth discussing. Suppose someone called Jesus—to whom was given the title of "Christ"—actually lived. Suppose that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, actually lived at the same time, and wrote the Four Gospels that we possess. Suppose they believed all the miracles recorded, and faithfully recorded their convictions. Suppose all this, and more, what does it matter? It does not in the least prove these stories to be true. The belief of a present day Salvation Army convert proves as much as St. Paul proves, and his testimony is quite as convincing. Both of them believed these things. That is really all there is in it. And no one disputes the belief. The only question at issue is why these things are believed. It is not a question of historical verification of fact, but of the prevalence of certain psychological conditions. And these may be understood more surely by studying primitive Christian history in the light of a Salvation Army meeting, than by explaining a revival meeting in terms of some assumed supernatural happenings of two thousand years ago.

Modern criticism does not attack by mere denial, but by explanation. Mere denial was the first crude revolt of the intellect against an absurd proposition. Faced with the demand to believe in the reality of events that were contradicted by everyday experience, the bolder minds simply denied their truth. Later came a more sustained examination and the cultivation of a more scientific frame of mind. It was seen that the question of questions was not whether certain things really happened, but why people believed they happened? It is not a vital question now whether witches travelled through the air on broomsticks a couple of centuries ago, but how people came to believe in this method of locomotion? It is not a question of whether the "Holy Ghost" spoke to the disciples, but how they came to believe it? We need not trouble whether it is a supernatural influence that is responsible for the conversions at a revival meeting, but how people came to entertain such a ridiculous notion? Once these questions are answered, nothing of any vital consequence remains.

Now, suppose that by some miracle all the church congregations of the world realised that this was really the essence of modern criticism, how much of Christianity would there be left in the course of a generation or so? They would realise that it was not a question of religious facts versus scientific fancies and theories, but the other way about. It is the scientist who has all the facts, the religionist who wallows in mere fancy. It is a fact that, given certain psychological conditions, the result is the prevalence of certain beliefs. We see it in the superstitious customs and beliefs of savages, the beliefs of childhood, and the superstitions of adult life. The *facts* that constitute the raw material of religion are not denied, it is the interpretation of these facts that creates an issue. To listen to the average parson, one would imagine that the modern critic proposed taking everything out of the religious man, and leave him a mere bag of emptiness. He aims at doing nothing of the kind. He takes him just as he is, only furnished with a new and more satisfactory understanding of himself.

Suppose, further, that "our congregations" realise that the great obstacle between them and the understanding of modern criticism is the parson. Suppose they awaken to the important truth that the policy of the pulpit is not to educate, but to confuse. That it first denies, then hides, then minimises; and, lastly, confuses the truth. What then? The ordinary layman has, obviously, no direct interest in believing a lie. The parson has an obvious interest in teaching one when its acceptance is the condition of his supremacy. Or, if that

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expression is considered too harsh, his interest lies in preventing his congregation knowing the whole truth about the religion he preaches. He may disguise this, even from himself, by vague talk concerning the duties of the pulpit, or the pulpit not being the place for the discussion of such questions, but the bald fact remains. But for the clergy the truth about religion would now be as common as the truth about geology or astronomy. It is they who stand between large numbers of people and its acquisition. And Dr. Forsyth may well feel that when Church and Chapel congregations realise the truth, there will be trouble. All the religions of the past have died of being found out, and there are signs that the Christian religion is seriously attacked with the same complaint.

C. COHEN.

Religion a Superfluity.

IF we consult any modern Dictionary we shall find that "religion" is a word the central meaning of which cannot be mistaken. In Nuttal's *Standard Dictionary* it is defined as "a habitual, all-pervading sense of dependence on, reverence for, and responsibility to, a higher power; or a mode of thinking, feeling, and acting, which respects, trusts in, strives after, the Divine, or God; any system of faith and worship." Webster's definition is practically identical, though more fully expanded and illustrated. *The New Standard Dictionary*, issued last year, is in substantial agreement with both Nuttal's and Webster's, but puts greater emphasis than either upon the supernatural character of religion. In theological books we read of two special kinds of religion, namely *natural* and *revealed;* but in both kinds man's dealings are with the supernatural. It is to be borne in mind, however, that attempts are being made, at present, by Positivists and Ethicists, to strip the term of its supernatural connotations. Whether such efforts are likely, or deserve, to be crowned with success or not, is a point with which this article is not in the least concerned. Our present purpose is to call attention to, with a view to condemning, a wholly illegitimate and vicious use of the word "religion" by professional exponents of its conventional signification. In the *British Congregationalist* for January 15, there was a notable article under the title of "Compulsory Moralities," from the pen of the Rev. A. C. Hill, of Tollington Park Congregational Church. Mr. Hill is an ingenious and resourceful thinker as well as a master in the art of expression. With two-thirds of the article under consideration we are happy to confess that we are in entire agreement. It is perfectly true that if a man is to live comfortably in society he must be loyal to the fundamental principles of social life. There are certain rules which require to be carefully observed, no matter what position one may occupy in society. Mr. Hill supplies a short list of situations in which sobriety, honesty, fidelity, and truth are indispensable virtues, and then adds: "Until one recognises the moralities, one can confer no benefit upon society." At this point, however, we are forced to part company with the reverend gentleman, and set ourselves in direct opposition to him.

Clever and, in some respects, far-seeing as he is, Mr. Hill is laboring under the commonest and most deplorable of religious delusions. We suspected this at an early stage in the progress of the article, when he referred to "a commissionaire connected with some big bank receiving £70 or £100 a year—probably less, certainly not much more." We asked ourselves, "Why this allusion to the smallness of the man's salary?" Though in receipt of such meagre pay, a commissionaire, when entrusted with perhaps a thousand pounds in Bank of England gold, is expected to watch over that amount with as much fidelity as if it were his own, to protect it from a thief, perhaps, even with his life. There is also a reference to a policeman who played the hero under most unfavorable conditions. He was in middle life and by no means strong. He was in charge of a certain factory. One night, at about one o'clock, a noted burglar entered, and at once the two men came into a conflict which lasted until half-past five. The result was that the burglar was ultimately taken to the police-station and the policeman permanently invalided. Having related that incident, Mr. Hill observes: "Now, that is an example of fidelity purchased at about thirty shillings a week." Again, we ask, why thus harp on the smallness of the pay? Here is the explanation:—

> "I wish that men would think about these things. For to think about them will lead inevitably to conclusions which are implicit in them, but do not appear on the surface. How can a man be a moral man and yet not believe in God, who is the foundation of all morality? How can a man talk about being loyal when he does not believe in a Divine Being, who rules the world, and has the first claim upon our loyalty? What right has an employer to say to me that I must respect the money in his till unless he and I believe in something that is infinitely more important than the cash?.....If the shopkeeper or business man understood he would know that the claim he makes upon the lowest office-boy in his employ is really an argument for religion."

Here is the delusion in all its shamelessness, and the mystery is how any sensible person could ever have become its victim. To see it in its native ghastliness we need only reverse some of Mr. Hill's questions; for example: How can a believer in God be an immoral man? How can a believer in a Divine Being, who rules the world, and has the first claim upon our loyalty, be yet continually guilty of disloyalty, not only to God, but to the essential principles of social life? Surely, Mr. Hill must be going about with his eyes closed if he is not aware that the majority, the overwhelming majority, of immoral, vile, and criminal people in Christendom are firm believers in God and a future life. The truth is that religion and morality are two entirely different things, and ought to be kept distinct. This is how Professor Peake treats the subject:—

> "I have sought to vindicate the radical distinction between religion and morality. They spring from wholly different instincts in our nature, and are often found acting in antagonism, or viewing each other with mutual distrust and disdain.....Religion and morality have each their due places in human life.....There are the people who have genuine religious feelings and desires, but combine with them a low moral standard. Partly this is due to the fact that they are much more developed on the religious than on the ethical side. To some extent it is due to sheer blindness of perception. There were many holy people not long ago who thought that it was quite right to keep slaves. And I have heard of a director who was so religious that he would not read a newspaper on Monday because it had been printed on Sunday, who yet was responsible, with his colleagues, for a colossal financial disaster which plunged thousands into ruin. But we must fall back on our principle of the radical distinction between religion and morality and the frequent antagonism between them in the lower stages of their development" (*Christianity: its Nature and its Truth*, pp. 13, 14, 17, 18).

We go much further, and affirm that, on innumerable occasions during its long history, the belief in God has been the direct cause of many of the darkest and most dishonorable crimes ever committed. Has Mr. Hill the courage to read the history of the Christian Church and deny the truth of this? On the other hand, multitudes of completely non-religious people, as we have again and again pointed out, are great luminaries in the moral firmament. Mr. Hill admits this:—

> "They take the rules of their profession and obey them. They accept the government of the principles that rule in their own particular business. They would consider themselves permanently disgraced if they gave you thirty-five inches for a yard or fifteen and a half ounces to the pound."

The reverend gentleman declines to acknowledge that such good people are quite honest in their non-

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profession of religion, which is exceedingly polite of him. Read this :—

> "There is a famous person in French literature who made a discovery. One of his friends explained to him the difference between poetry and prose. 'Why, then,' said this man, 'I have been speaking prose all my life, and did not know it until now.' That was a discovery for the Frenchman. But there is an even more remarkable discovery that some of our modern men may make—the discovery that they are really religious without knowing it."

That is the most cowardly and dishonest way out of a difficulty imaginable. Put in a nutshell, the argument is this : "These eminently good people imagine that they have no religion, that they do not believe in a Divine Being who rules the world, but I know them much better than they do themselves, and I unhesitatingly declare that they do have a religion, and do believe in God, though as yet they do not know it." Well, all we can say is that the argument is utterly fallacious, a black lie and a studied insult, and that Mr. Hill ought to be above identifying himself with it.

Our conclusion is, not only that there is a radical distinction between religion and morality, but that religion is an imaginary something beyond morality, and without any vital bearing upon it. In its Christian form it is an alleged reality which infinitely transcends morality. The claim is that we have a spiritual nature to which religion alone can minister. But we maintain that that claim is false. We are convinced that there is a sufficient number of well-attested facts to completely disprove it. In civilised countries no one ever becomes religious naturally, or without training. It is an incontestable fact that those who are unaffected by religious influences in their childhood and youth scarcely ever pick up a religion in later life. It is not true that religion meets and satisfies a need in our nature which nothing can do. Some of the greatest and noblest people in this country are conscious of no need which only religion can supply. George Meredith was as happy a man as any that the nineteenth century produced, but he had no religion. It is wondrous kind of Mr. Campbell to look down upon and compare him to "a small boy in the dark, whistling to keep his courage up"; but, then, the oracle of the City Temple pretends that he has had supernatural assistance to show him the value of religion. From the giddy height of spirituality he condescendingly admits that the philosophy of life contained in Meredith's poems "is about the best that can be furnished by the mind of our age apart from religious faith." As for us, we are quite content to go through life seeking to live up to the best that human wisdom can tell us, while regarding religion as a complete superfluity, and on the whole much more harmful than beneficial. We wish to calmly bend

> "To read the lines dear Earth designs
> Shall speak her life on ours."

And what is her speech to us? This :—

> "Accept, she says; it is not hard
> In woods; but she in towns
> Repeats, accept; and have we wept,
> And have we quailed with fears,
> Or shrunk with horrors, sure reward
> We have whom knowledge crowns;
> Who see in mould the rose unfold;
> The soul through blood and tears."
>
> —*Poems*, vol. ii., p. 138.

J. T. LLOYD.

Pioneers and Persecution.

> "Rough work, Iconoclasm, but the only way to get at Truth."—OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

POETS and apostles are ever prophets. Swinburne saw and sang "A Vision of Spring in Midwinter," and before that Shelley asked the question, "If winter comes can spring be far behind?" Happy are the pioneers who can ignore the mistakes of the past and the present and fix their gaze on the promise of the future. For them the darkest night is jewelled with the brightest of stars. For them there is a budding to-morrow in every midnight. For them there is nothing irrevocable, for their eyes are ever looking forward.

The other day Mr. Lloyd George, turning aside from the pettiness of party politics, related to an astonished audience the drawbacks of a political career. He spoke of the calumnies to which the politician was exposed, and in a characteristic passage explained the seamy side of politics :—

> "Some people talk enviously about a Minister's lot, as if he was basking eternally in a comforting sunshine. I can assure you that there is not much basking, but a good many burdens. Sunshine, indeed! They forget the heat, and they forget the midges and the mosquitoes. We cannot, for they swarm and buzz around the head of every Minister, stinging when they can.
>
> "Do you know what a Minister's life is like? Tradesmen have their worries and anxieties; but suppose that in addition to their ordinary troubles they found a constant mob of detractors standing outside their doors, some doing it for hate and some for hire, yelling into every customer's ears as he entered their shop : 'Don't go there, whatever you do. You will be robbed and cheated at every turn if you do business with those fellows. They are all thieves, rogues, and liars.'
>
> "Every time they get a glimpse of you behind the counter they shriek at you opprobrious epithets. When they see you weigh a pound of sugar they call out that three-fourths of it is sand. When you measure cloth they swear that it is rotten shoddy. You have, moreover, the whole time while you are attending to your customers to dodge bricks, clods, and worse hurled at your head.
>
> "Most of you, I think, would rather give up business than endure all this, even if you had to break stones for a livelihood."

Undoubtedly there is much truth in this frank avowal, but if there is sacrifice in the case of the politician, what is to be said in the case of a leader of a really unpopular movement, to whom sacrifice is a science and denial an art. Freethought is a far wider and nobler creed than a merely political one. It has its roots in intellectual necessity, and, deeper still, in ethical right. It is based on the psychological law of human development, only apprehended by a few choice spirits for ages, but latterly taking on a new significance and a fresh urgency. Perpetually reaffirmed from generation to generation by unnumbered examples of unselfish martyrdom, from the days of Hypatia to those of Ferrer, it is to-day changing the direction and character of the ideas of the civilised world.

The Freethought leaders are the most potent forces of progress. No other men are discussed so widely as these apostles of freedom; but magnificent as is their life-work, the men are greater. Hissed at by the superior people, stoned by the vulgar, they have many trials to submit to. Perhaps the hardest which can be mentioned is that of seeing charlatans ride by in their carriages, or, in other words, to mark the success of humbug, whilst they find that intellectual honesty is not a paying career. Yet good and true men and women have had to submit to this treatment. Bradlaugh, prematurely aged by his fight for liberty, saw honors showered on men not fit to black his boots; Ferrer, fronting the rifles of the soldiers, had to find his triumph in his own heart. Mr. Foote had to listen to the mocking voice of the judge telling him he had devoted his talents to the service of the Devil. Yet in their hours of apparent failure these men had triumphed. They were martyrs who missed the palm but not the pains of martyrdom, heroes without the laurels, and conquerors without the jubilation of victory. Laboring not for themselves, but for the universe and for the coming generations, for them shall be influence as far-reaching at the utmost reach of the great wave whose crest they sometimes were.

When Mr. Lloyd George carries on a campaign against the landed privileges of the nobility, he necessarily encounters the resistance of only a small portion of the people, whereas Mr. Foote, directing

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his force against entrenched ecclesiasticism and the hundreds of thousands of dupes of superstition, has to bear the brunt of an enormously greater opposition. No enmity is more relentless, or more venomous, than religious hatred. The abuse directed against Mr. Lloyd George and his colleagues is politeness itself compared with the assault and battery made upon Mr. Foote's reputation. The politician has at least the support of half the press of the country; but the Freethought leader is boycotted by Liberal and Tory and Socialist papers alike. Accused of almost every crime in the calendar, this well-nigh intolerable animosity is in reality a tribute to his influence. The man, against whom a hundred thousand pulpits and platforms constantly fulminate abuse, will have his reward in the coming time. Thanks to his courage and devotion, heterodoxy is no longer the disgrace it once was to the citizen, and open speech has nearly lost its danger in our land. He has given seriousness to Freethought advocacy, placed its exponents on a strong platform, organised its forces, justified its rights to equality of citizenship. Through the religious prejudices of our time he has knocked a hole large enough for the heretic to pass through in future, and in many other directions our lives will be easier because of his life-work.

For our part we must not be content with idle New Year wishes in this connection. There is an object to be achieved towards which all may contribute. The Freethought movement has been attacked, and is threatened with a monstrous recrudescence of persecution. There was never a time when it was more clearly the duty and the interest of the party to resist the "mailed fist" of the Churches. Mr. Foote has told us that it is for the Freethinkers to stop this plunge into mediævalism, and it is certainly time that the party took a definite and final stand against the flouts and gibes at its deepest convictions. Persecution will offer no insuperable obstacle if we face the enemy with a full war-chest and up-to-date equipment. Our leader begins the New Year with high hopes, and it is our task to see that he is supported adequately, so that his wishes are fulfilled.

The keynote of the movement might well be, "Close up your ranks and stand shoulder to shoulder." Forgetting trivial distinctions in the face of the common enemy, let us secure the movement from attack. To-day the situation is critical. Let to-morrow and all to-morrows find it becoming less so, and those who have given their mites will be judged worthy.

MIMNERMUS.

A Rebel.

I HAVE ever been a Rebel from the time
When conscious first of Right and Wrong I grew,
And looking on the world around me knew
That I was born into an alien clime:
I saw men tolerant of bitter wrong,
Too timid to assert their rights as men;
Willing for gold to barter tongue or pen,
The weak betraying, flattering the strong:
And thus I saw that Force rules over all,
And Right and Faith are little more than names;
That most men steer their course towards mean aims,
Though much of truth and honor they may bawl:
Rebel against these things I must be still
While in me lives a conscience and a will.

LIFE'S HUMILIATIONS.

How many sad necessities must we
Submit to merely for existence' sake,
From which mankind no more itself can free
Than can the ape, the tiger, or the snake!
Slaves of imperious appetites, are all
Who would preserve what oft is worthless—life;
And none may disregard that humbling call
That is with all aspiring thoughts at strife.
Half-Deity a man perchance may be,
Yet he must be half-Caliban as well;
Nor can he live the life of flower or tree
In whose clean course there is nothing to repel:
Ah! why must Man, Life's masterpiece and crown,
Be with so many grievous ills pressed down?—B. D.

Acid Drops.

We have to criticise ourselves in this paragraph. We allowed Robert Buchanan's name to pass as George Buchanan in an article in last week's *Freethinker*. How we managed to let it pass we can hardly understand, except that the article had been standing in proof for some time, and was hurriedly fitted into the make-up at a late hour, thus escaping our usually close attention. We take all the blame for the "howler." Mr. Repton, the writer, had no reason for knowing Robert Buchanan as well as we did.

"When every allowance has been made," says the *Free Church Year Book*, "it is evident that the Free Churches are not keeping pace with the growing population, or even replacing the annual loss by death." And yet we are always being told of the great revivals of faith all over the country, and of the powerlessness of modern thought to kill religion in the hearts of men. The truth is that under anything like fair conditions of competition religion would become a negligible factor in our social life.

In Bethnal Green six Churches have united to hold a week of prayer. So as not to enter into competition, services were held in one church at a time. The result was that never less than 200 people were present. We are not told what was the maximum number, but a congregation of 200 as a result of six Churches "pooling" their prayers doesn't seem a wonderful result.

The Salvation Army has opened a café at New Jersey. It is on the American bar system, with free lunches with the drinks, which are all "temperance." "We use the Devil's ideas," the major says, "to perform God's work." Then why not throw in a little whisky?

Dr. C. Bullard, a noted New York Presbyterian minister, in a farewell sermon, described his congregation as "whited sepulchres, ingrates, and hypocrites." Well, he knows them, and they no doubt know him, better than we do.

The Salvation Army International Congress meets in London on June 11. Delegates will speak in thirty-four different languages, and presumably the Holy Ghost will understand them all, but how on earth will they understand each other? Two native gods will be brought from Java and will be carried about at the head of the Congress processions—a blasphemous proceeding which ought to be put a stop to in a country with stringent Blasphemy Laws. What would be said if Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were carried about in a Freethought procession?

The *Daily Chronicle* says that the various parties in the Church of England were "aptly" summed up in the House of Commons a few years ago as "the low and lazy, the broad and hazy, and the high and crazy." Aptly!

Aged 100, Miss Jane Bird, a pious old lady, who had only once seen a train and had never travelled in one, has died at Little Laver, Essex. Not a bird of passage; but now a bird of Paradise—if the Bible be true.

"Record January Heat" is an editor's headline for the modest record of 54 degrees in a religious paper. He might have given more exciting figures concerning the place so often mentioned in sermons.

Rev. Dr. Len Broughton is not what one would call a profound thinker; but, religiously, that must be counted to his credit. It prevents him seeing the absurdity of his faith, and so does away with the need for elaborate and half-insincere apologies. Accordingly he will have nothing to do with the theory that Jesus was a natural product, winning men by his goodness. "The mere naturalness of Jesus," he says, "exemplified in his beauty and goodness, was not enough." What the world needed was the supernaturalism of Jesus, "for he had come to establish a supernatural religion." Now that is the right note—that is, the honest note. It was Jesus the supernatural magic-worker, not Jesus the benevolent social reformer, that the early Christians, and *all* Christians until recently, worshiped. Good teaching and good men were common enough; but no one ever built a religion out of these, and no one ever will. They are very good as extras for a sophisticated community, but they are

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no use as essentials. A religion to thrive must have a core of supernaturalism—and supernaturalism is doomed.

Another sentence from the same sermon is worth recording. It is only noticeable because of the dishonesty of Christians of the water-drinking variety. "I am often asked," says Dr. Broughton, referring to the wine used in the communion during apostolic days, "if that was unfermented or fermented grape juice. If you read the account of its use you will not have to ask. It was fermented wine they used in the days of the apostles. It was so fermented that the people got drunk on it." Quite so; exactly what we have always said. But if Dr. Broughton keeps on blurting out the truth in this fashion, he will lose caste with his fellow-preachers. They are quite ready to prove that among the other things originated by the primitive Christians was a Blue Ribbon Army.

"George Washington to-day" is the bright idea of a Yellow Press newspaper-man concerning the arrival of a boat of that name at Plymouth. The real George is, if the Yankee preachers are right, giving the glad eye to the angels.

"Greenland is covered with ice to a depth estimated at 5,000 feet." Just the place for a "hell-fire" campaign.

"Kings rarely get on well with their eldest sons," is a sage observation of Mr. A. G. Gardiner, of the *Daily News*. Some of the Biblical monarchs get on remarkably well with other people's daughters.

Hereditary monarchy is a superstition. This truth is amply proved in Professor Frazer's great work the *Golden Bough*. It is also proved in practice by royal families—especially in countries where monarchy is a reality. Look, for instance, at the Crown Prince of Germany. What a wonderful combination he is of wisdom and dignity. His divine patron should be proud of him.

A Mrs. P. Gaskell, the *Suffragette* informs us, has circularised the clergy in her district with copies of Miss Pankhurst's book, *The Great Scourge*, and it is hoped that this example will be followed in other districts. For example, Brixton.

According to a recent issue of the *Suffragette*, no less than £519,676 has been raised on behalf of the militant women. If this sum of money were raised for Freethought, the doom of the Churches would be at hand.

A man named Joshua Maden, of Bacup, who died recently, arranged the details of his own funeral. Some Christians really believe that Moses wrote the account of his own interment, and other pious people pretend to believe it.

Mrs. Albert Midlane, of the Isle of Wight, who died last week, was the widow of the author of the popular hymn, "There's a Friend for little children." We once saw this hymn referred to as "A *Fiend* for little children" through the carelessness of a compositor. Yet one expression was as true as the other.

"Dagonet" (Mr. George R. Sims) has a ghost story in last week's *Referee*. There are sufficient ghost stories in the Bible to raise the human hair quicker than Tatcho.

Wireless telegraphy has scored again. The lost Royal Mail liner *Cobequid* was located after all by the rescue ships and all on board were saved. It was another triumph of science and humanity. Praying for help from "above" will soon be forgotten.

Flaming headlines advertised the "Heroism of the Women" on board the *Cobequid*. What does the reader think they did? They went down below and prayed! That's all. Prodigious!

Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner's controversy with Mr. Philip Gibbs on the question of the Portuguese political prisoners is not very convincing on either side. What we wish is that the friends of the present Government of Portugal would recognise that the sins of a Monarchy *are worse* when imitated by a Republic. What is the use of change if it brings no improvement and no relief? We should like to see the situation investigated by some independent person, who is not a partisan of Freethought or the Catholic Church, nor of the Republic or the Monarchy. There must be something wrong somewhere when a Government, which came into power by revolutionary means, has not settled down enough in three years to abolish military tribunals and bring prisoners up for trial within ten or twelve months of their arrest.

The Bishop of Yukon has arrived in England. His object is to "raise funds for his vast diocese." But what the vastness has to do with it we fail to see, unless his lordship wants to paint the landscape. Fortunately he will not suffer as much as some people would if he goes back rather empty-handed. He was once reduced to eating his moccasins. But the worst of that sort of meal is that it can't be repeated. Nor could it be very inspiring in the way of saving souls. In one of the Anti-Jacobin songs, if we remember rightly, a besieged officer had to boil his boots and eat them, but the diet was not exhilarating. He was bound to admit before he sampled the menu that:—

> "Looking at that melancholy food,
> It may be eaten but it is not good."

We hope the Bishop of Yukon will be able to take back some tinned stuff.

Religious freedom is a foreigner in Spain. Colonel Juan Labrador was lately sentenced to six months' imprisonment for refusing to attend Mass before presiding at a court-martial. Vain efforts are being made to obtain his release.

Elijah has been selected as the patron saint of Russian aviators. Not a bad choice, either. The hairy old prophet was the first Bible hero who sailed away to Kingdom-come, and his flying machine was something splendid—a chariot and horses of fire. Jesus Christ's voyage to heaven was poor in comparison. He went up in a cloud—a most rheumatic conveyance.

Mrs. Besant is appealing to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council against the order of the Supreme Court of Madras for the return of two boys transferred to her by their father Mr. Narazaniah, who wants them back because he is dissatisfied with their moral training under Mr. Leadbeater. It appears that the elder boy is to be trained for the spiritual leadership of the world of Theosophy. The next Messiah perhaps.

Mr. Bonar Law is one of your pious believers in miracles—if he is not a pretended believer. In his last pessimistic speech about the Home Rule Bill, he said: "We have given a pledge that if Ulster resists we will support her in her resistance. We intend, with the help of the Almighty, to keep the pledge." Yes, but suppose the Almighty doesn't help, what then? The pledge is off, we presume. Mr. Bonar Law really offers Ulster (or the three-fifths that he *calls* Ulster) a miracle. We hope the "Covenanters" will note what it is that they are relying upon.

More "Providence." Earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and tidal waves, are reported to have killed a hundred thousand people on a small area in Japan. "He doeth all things well."

Rev. Wm. Moore, of Appleton Rectory, Abingdon, Berks, left £8,696. Rev. Charles Henry Bowly, of the Rectory, Toppesfield, Essex, left £7,120. Not so big, as clerical fortunes go, but enough to make the cashier of the first Salvation Army stare.

"Troops of Sweated Women" was a headline in the *Daily News* lately. It was well-meant, of course, but mightn't it have been put a little more politely, not to say elegantly?

Some of the ladies, on the other hand, might try to curb their impatience a bit, especially in public,—as they would *have* to if they were not *women*, claiming all the privileges of their *sex*. At the Economic Circle dinner at the National Liberal Club lately it was announced that a letter had been received from a lady well known in literature on the ground that she could not take part in arguments on the subject of woman's work and wages; if she came at all she would have to bring a stone. At which there was much laughter, even from the women present, one of whom sensibly read a paper as the basis of discussion. "Pretty Fanny's way."

Three new Bishoprics are being launched—Sheffield, Chelmsford, and Ipswich. According to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners the necessary endowments and residences have been provided; that is, several thousands a year in each case, and a large handsome house to live in—fit to receive the Lord if he ever looked in at dinner time as he

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did to old Abraham. Meanwhile, people perish by the thousand of sheer destitution in this Christian country. "Feed my sheep" is evidently a text that requires very careful interpretation.

When the Chinese Government invited—about a year ago—the Christians in China to join in a day of general prayer, we pointed out all that was meant by it. In the first place, the Government, not being Christian, was tolerant enough to place all religions on the same level. Secondly, it was a 'cute move to enlist the sympathies of missionary advocates all over the world on behalf of the newly established Government. Whether the missionaries and the leaders of the Christian Churches saw through the move or not is doubtful. At all events, they professed not to. And they interpreted the invitation in a peculiarly Christian manner. The invitation to pray to the Chinese Christians became an invitation to Christian Churches all over the world. And it was issued because the Chinese Government felt that the prayers of Christians were all-powerful. So ran the story, with all the Christian trappings and pious disregard for the truth.

Now for the sequel. The value of the Christian prayers was seen by the fact that things worsened in China as soon as the Christians started praying. If there is any efficacy in prayer, we must not forget to put that to the credit of the Christians all over the world. Next, the other day an Administrative Conference was called at Pekin to consider a proposal that the President should worship Heaven in the Temple of Heaven, and wearing the old ceremonial robes. The Conference began to discuss the question. Discussion was more or less of a farce, and the Conference was told that it had simply been called together to register the Government's decision, which was the re-establishing of Confucianism and Heaven Worship. The decision was registered, and the much-talked-of golden opportunity for the wholesale conversion of China disappears. The *Daily Telegraph* correspondent says that this decision will estrange missions of all denominations, who are already disappointed by the progress of events. We do not doubt it. The idea that China would ever embrace Christianity was one that only a fool or a fanatic could have entertained. The pity of it is that neither is likely to learn anything from what has just occurred.

Mr. Balfour's fee for his present series of Gifford lectures is £500, which comes from what a daily newspaper calls "an old bequest." This is a somewhat ancient way of talking of the Gifford Trust, seeing it was established within the memory of people who can hardly be called more than middle-aged. But that is by the way. £500 is what Shylock would call "a good round sum." No wonder the Christians keep the monopoly of this lectureship. Lord Gifford enjoined perfect fairness upon the Trustees. They were not to have *revealed* religion dealt with at all, but only what is called "natural religion,"—and that was to be treated in a scientific way like any other subject, and even Atheism was to be no barrier to a competent man's appointment to the lectureship. We need not say that there has been no rush of Atheists. We don't recollect that one Atheist has been allowed to handle that £500.

What is commonly called English literature now is mainly in the hands of *farceurs*. Mr. G. K. Chesterton having left the *Daily News*, and the *Daily News* having pitched into the *Daily Chronicle's* sweet insurance scheme, the latter retaliates by working up a boom for Mr. Chesterton's drooping play *Magic* at the Little Theatre. This has been further promoted by means of a carefully arranged discussion at the same theatre on the question "Do Miracles Happen?" According to the preliminary announcement—

> "It is understood that Mr. Chesterton has promised to be present and will take part in the discussion. The debate, however, will not be upon the play, but deal solely with the question it has raised regarding miracles—do they happen, or do they not?
>
> "Already Mr. Kenelm Foss is in communication with many well-known authorities, representing all shades of both lay and clerical opinion, and one of the most remarkable gatherings ever known in a theatre may be looked forward to."

Representing *all* shades, eh? Mr. Kenelm Foss (any relation to Sam Foss?) has not extended an invitation to the President of the National Secular Society or to the Editor of the *Freethinker*. Knowing too much about anything is worse than knowing too little—at least in a public debate. Moreover, it was easy to see that the discussion was to be a sham. The Bible was to be left out of it altogether. And as the Bible contains all the miracles of Christianity *per se*, leaving the Bible out is leaving Christianity out. So *that's* all right. It is what the *Chronicle* calls "eliminating all possibilities of offence." Well, if that is what the debaters want they could secure it still more certainly by keeping their mouths shut altogether.

"Do Miracles Happen?" Everybody knows they *don't*—even if they *did*. Everybody, that is, but the most docile and orthodox Catholics. So it seemed likely beforehand that the debate may sink into a fine old shindy between Catholics and Protestants. If Atheists were let in they would have to say "A plague on both your houses." Theoretically, the whole thing was a farce; practically, it is an advertising dodge.

Monday's *Chronicle* made it appear as if the question about miracles happening or not was going to be put to the vote. It was observed that "the verdict" to be given at the Little Theatre would be one of "quite unprecedented significance." What nonsense is this! The question was long ago discussed, not in the Little Theatre, but in the Great Theatre of civilisation. It is nearly fifty years since Matthew Arnold was able to announce, in a book written for Christians, that miracles were doomed in educated and thoughtful society, and that all miracles were fairy tales, including those of the Bible. That has been taken for granted for the past half-century; yet here are a lot of jokers raising the question again, as though it still possessed actuality. What ought to be discussed now is not whether miracles happen, but whether there is a God? This question, however, is too strong for the *Chronicle* and its scratch debating forum. They prefer something that looks brave but involves no danger.

When the *Chronicle* announced that "practically every phase of opinion on the subject" was represented in its list of speakers it must have known that it was imposing on its readers,—unless its ignorance was as incredible as it was inexcusable. The only name worth printing in the whole list, in this special connection, was that of Mr. Maskelyne the conjurer. But that word is too vulgar for the *Chronicle*, which calls him an "illusionist."

Atheists were ruled out of this farcical debate to begin with. There were two rigorous conditions for all disputants; first, the inspired authority of the Bible was not to be challenged (which we have criticised already), and, secondly, an "equally reverent attitude towards the Divine will" was to be "taken for granted in every case." A very nice muzzle for the bulldog!

Our readers might like to see the definition of a miracle adopted (from the *New English Dictionary*) for this fantastic discussion:—

> "A marvellous event occurring within human experience, which cannot have been brought about by human power or by the operation of any natural agency, and must therefore be ascribed to the special intervention of the Deity or of some supernatural being."

Not bad. But who ever knew Christian debaters stick to a definition? Even their own?

The debate (heaven save the mark!) took place on Monday. It was a perfect farce. The *Chronicle* reporter seemed ashamed of it himself.

If the *Chronicle* is ready to organise a real debate on Miracles, and will put forward Mr. G. K. Chesterton as the orthodox representative, a practical debater can easily be found to represent the other side. The President of the National Secular Society and Editor of the *Freethinker* is available.

"Eve's dress allowance" is a Transatlantic penman's description of a domestic dispute. The Bible heroine's pin-money would not have purchased a packet of Woodbines.

Japan is specially favored by "Providence" just now. Besides the victims of earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, there are said to be 9,000,000 people starving in Hokkaido and the North-Eastern Prefectures.

"The Amir of Afghanistan has decreed the punishment of death for any Christian missionary who converts a native. We understand that the missionaries are continuing their good work—and drawing their salaries—with equanimity."—*John Bull.*

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To Correspondents.

BIRMINGHAM "SAINT."—We have not noticed anything from the pens of tip-top Socialists about Stewart's imprisonment for "blasphemy." Their heads seem too big for such trivial things. "G. B. S." himself has denounced the Blasphemy Laws vigorously enough, between prosecutions, but we hear very little from him when bigotry is on the rampage again. It is a strong point of the joke that those who have been prosecuted for "blasphemy" of late years, from Boulter to Stewart, have nearly (if not quite) all been Socialists.

W. P. BALL.—Much obliged for cuttings.

M. E. PEGG.—See paragraph. Manchester and district ought to give a man of Mr. Lloyd's ability and eloquence crowded audiences.

E. B.—Best thanks for weekly cuttings.

G. H. BARKER (New Zealand).—So you first heard us lecture at Norwich in 1871. We are honored by the recollection. No doubt the book you mention will arrive safely. We thank you in anticipation; also for your good wishes.

A. J. MARRIOTT.—We don't endorse your theory that the "blasphemy" prosecutions under Liberal Governments are instigated by their opponents. We rather think that the Liberals are glad to have it proved that there are worse than they; that they draw the line somewhere, as the saying is. Moreover, it is a safe thing to persecute Freethinkers when you are sure of the support of the Opposition in the House of Commons as well as your own side.

J. F. JACKSON.—Our shop manager will attend to your requests. Glad to hear of the good you have done by distributing back numbers of this journal, and hope for the same result in the future

W. A.—We should be glad if Mr. Heaford would take your suggestion and straighten out this Portuguese tangle again.

A. MARTLAW.—We had corrected the blunder, as you will see. Pleased to find you read this journal so closely, and glad to hear you are "grateful for the brilliant articles which appear in it each week."

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

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Sugar Plums.

Freethinkers are so numerous that if they all spoke out there would be a very considerable abatement of Christian insolence. Unfortunately it is only here and there that persons of social or industrial distinction openly avow their Freethought. One of these is Sir Hiram Maxim, who has been giving orthodoxy a good shaking lately. We are pleased to say that he will attend the London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner at Frascati's next Wednesday (Jan. 28), and will speak if called upon by the Chairman—which may be taken for granted.

We are sorry to learn that the change in the date of the Annual Dinner has prevented a few of the older "saints" from attending. It will be unpleasant to miss some welcome faces, but, alas, it is not possible to suit all conveniences. We wish it were.

Mr. Lloyd lectures, afternoon and evening, at the Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints, Manchester, to-day (Jan. 25). We hope the local "saints" will give his visit all the publicity they can. People can't go to hear him if they don't know he is lecturing, and ordinary advertising is so expensive that it can only be done in a very limited way.

We reproduce on another page an article on "The Blasphemy Case" from the *Daily Chronicle*. It is so important, in its way, that we wish our readers to see the whole of it. We quite agree that it was no use petitioning the Home Secretary, and we said so at the time. In former years that was the only thing to be done if the "blasphemer's" friends desired to shake the verdict or mitigate the sentence. But there is a Court of Criminal Appeal now, and the real centre of the battle should have consisted in carrying the case thither. A correspondence between the Rationalist Press Association's secretary and Mr. McKenna may or may not be interesting, but it is certainly of no value; whereas there would have been very great value in the Law of Blasphemy being argued by competent counsel in the Court of Appeal, and followed by a responsible decision of the Judges who happened to be sitting. We pointed this out, and we believe we were the only person who did point it out. We did more than that. We offered to take the full responsibility, financial and otherwise, of taking the Stewart case to the Court of Appeal. And we would have spent any amount of time and trouble in giving the appeal the benefit of our own knowledge and experience. But it was not to be. "And fools rushed in," etc., etc.

The passage that the *Chronicle* quotes from Macaulay is very good in its way, but it is a wonder that our contemporary did not perceive its weak point. It is called a crime to give other people "pain and disgust." What other people? Christians, and Christians only. And who are to decide whether the culprit, who must necessarily be a Freethinker, shall be prosecuted? Christians. And who are to try him and find whether he is guilty or not guilty? Christians. And who is to pass upon him the proper sentence? A Christian. And who is to keep him in prison during his term of punishment? Christians. This "pain and disgust" is a very one-sided affair. When the Christians once set about him, the poor Freethinker stands about as much chance as a sheep before a tribunal of butchers.

We are glad to see the *Chronicle* urging the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws. That is the one thing to be done now. But will the Liberal Party help to do it? We wish we could say Yes.

Mr. Asquith's answer to the second petition was exactly what might be expected. We see by the newspapers—for that is our only way of obtaining information on these matters—that Mr. Asquith "is unable to intervene in a matter which lies wholly within the competence of the Secretary for the Home Department."

We ask our readers' attention to a final point. Lord Coleridge and Mr. McKenna both say that Stewart is not suffering for his opinions. That is all nonsense, of course, for if he had advocated any other opinions the "violence" or "vulgarity" of his language would never have caused his imprisonment. But the anxiety of both the Judge and the Home Secretary to assure everybody that Stewart is *not* suffering for his opinions, shows that the judgment of Lord Chief Justice Coleridge in the course of the *Freethinker* trial in 1883 holds the field beyond any possible challenge. The result is, as we have declared any time the last fifteen years, that Freethought funds are perfectly safe under an Incorporation like the Secular Society, Ltd., but at the same time Freethinkers are still liable to prosecution on account of their want of proper respect for those undefined "decencies of controversy."

The following is from *John Bull*:—

"THE BLASPHEMY LAWS.

"We respectfully suggest to Mr. Asquith that he should give favorable consideration to the appeal now being made to him for the repeal of the stupid and antiquated Blasphemy Laws, as they are called. Matters of taste—and that is all that it comes to—should not be made the subject of legal enactment. Besides, there is just as much blasphemy talked by persons nowadays as there is by street-corner orators. Mr. Foote sealed the doom of this relic of ecclesiastical domination twenty years ago."

Twenty years, Mr. Bottomley? No, thirty.

The following resolution has been passed by the Committee of the Humanitarian League:—"That inasmuch as a very large number of birching sentences are passed by magistrates upon working-class children, often for trivial offences, and as these police-court punishments are much severer and more degrading than the correction administered in schools to the children of the well-to-do, we strongly condemn the attempts now being made to secure an extension of the age of limitation from 14 to 16, and we would express the hope that the Labor Party and all democratic organisations will resist the proposal."

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Goethe.

ONE of the most extraordinary men of genius our planet has ever produced was the mighty Humanist and Freethinker, Johann Wolfgang Goethe. The mental product of antiquity and of modern philosophical, literary, and scientific thought alike, the creator of *Faust* has exercised an enormous progressive influence throughout the civilised world. Much of the Freethought, and many of the other progressive ideals which distinguish modern Germany are vastly indebted to Goethe's life and work. Among his intellectual parents are to be numbered Lessing, Herder, Voltaire, and Rousseau, while his religious conceptions were more largely moulded by the teachings of the serene and patient pantheistic philosopher, Baruch Spinoza, than by those of any other mortal man.

Goethe first saw the light which he came to love so well at Frankfort-on-the-Main on August 28, 1749. His grandfather was a tailor who had risen from a working class family, whose second wife was a comely widow, who kept an inn. Husband and wife were happily mated, and were above the average in intellect and character. Three children blessed their union, of whom the father of the poet was the youngest. As the fortunes of the family improved, the parent of Goethe was sent to study law at Leipsic and Giessen and took the degree of Doctor of Jurisprudence. After practising in Wetzlar and journeying in Italy, he settled in Frankfort. His easy circumstances enabled him to secure a position of honor and dignity, and he became an imperial councillor in the city. Dr. Goethe was a man of strong character, was a sincere lover of art and letters, was well versed in Italian, and was an enthusiastic student of Tasso, the Tuscan poet. At the age of thirty-eight, he wedded the daughter of Textor, the chief magistrate of Frankfort. This lady, the mother of Goethe, was then a mere girl of seventeen. But she was bright and beautiful, a lover of music and poetry, and had a remarkable aptitude in inventing that kind of story which delights and captivates children. From such a stock as this, very fruitful issue might have been predicted, and the birth of Goethe as the first child of the marriage affords a striking instance of the importance of a sound and healthy pedigree.

Of the succeeding children, one only survived long enough to influence Goethe. This was his sister Cornelia, just fifteen months younger than himself, who loved him dearly, and influenced him for his good during his fiery youth. From his mother Goethe inherited his wealth of brown hair and dark lustrous eyes which, from childhood to old age, arrested by their brilliancy the attention of every beholder. As a little child he was deeply imaginative, and, as he tells us in his autobiography, he was happy when seated at the window of the Frankfort house, which commanded a fine view of a fertile valley stretching beyond the city walls. From this coign of vantage he could view storms and sunsets, and watch the children at their shouting play in the gardens near. Doubtless many of his nature pictures had their birth in his childish musings here. And when the house was rebuilt, as it was by Dr. Goethe, it was made both convenient and tasteful with maps and engravings, and the numerous objects of art he had collected in Italy. During the rebuilding Goethe and Cornelia were sent to a relative, and the boy now became acquainted with the sights of his native city.

> "As the town in which the Emperors were elected and crowned, Frankfort held a position of high honor among the free imperial cities of Germany. Within its old walls and gates it still retained, in its architecture and customs, many traces of the troubled picturesque life of the Middle Ages."

The crowds in the market-places, the boats laden with merchandise, the gilt weathercock, and the famous Council Hall, all interested and stirred the impressionable boy, and probably helped to color the first part of *Faust*, although the legend itself seems to have become known to him through the German folk-books he devoured as a child.

Goethe was about seven years old when the wars of Frederick broke out, and great were the diversities of view concerning the merits of the Prussian king and his antagonists. Bitter family differences arose in the Goethe family when the Seven Years' War began. Dr. Goethe was a stout supporter of Frederick the Great, and when some two years later Frankfort was basely betrayed into the hands of his French enemies, the doctor was compelled to receive Count Thorane, one of the French officers, into his dwelling. Thorane proved a polished gentleman, and he and young Goethe soon became excellent friends. The lad was enraptured by the whirl of excitement which the presence of the military occasioned. The artists who came to execute work for Thorane aroused a passion for draughtsmanship in Goethe, and he zealously practised drawing with marked success. He likewise learnt French, and listened to the reading of the French plays which were now being presented on the Frankfort stage. In this school he grew to like the Gallic people, and that liking did not desert him even at that later time when his fatherland was trodden under the iron heel of the great Napoleon.

The tutors who had been employed to teach him found their duties sadly hindered during the two years' residence of the French in Dr. Goethe's house. Irregular as the boy's schooling had been, he had gained a fair acquaintance with several languages, ancient and modern, and to these he now added English.

In accordance with the prevailing custom, Goethe was confirmed in his twelfth year. As a very little boy, he was puzzled by the problems of pain and evil. In 1755, the terrible Lisbon earthquake filled his mind with misgivings. Such a catastrophe appeared hard to reconcile with God's justice and mercy. Even at this early time the Pagan spirit asserted itself, and the child set up an altar to the orb of day in his sleeping room. In 1765, just after his sixteenth birthday, he was sent to Leipsic to study law, but the professors had nothing to offer which their new pupil was willing to accept. The whirling student days which followed were attended by the inevitable love episode, the second in Goethe's lengthy amorous career. He had many acquaintances, good, bad, and indifferent, but by far the ablest man with whom Goethe came into personal touch at Leipsic was Oeser, the director of the Academy of Drawing, Painting, and Architecture. Oeser was a disciple of the famous Winkelmann, who, although his own artistic work was of minor importance, was, nevertheless, a man gifted with the power of creating interest in all that appertained to art, and of stimulating all his pupils to do their very best. Goethe now became a passionate student of art, and he carefully studied every picture of moment in Leipsic. These exhausted, he spent a holiday at Dresden for the purpose of studying the treasures of its celebrated art gallery.

But this enthusiasm for art was soon eclipsed; the claims of literature gained the ascendancy. He had already read Wieland's rendering of Shakespeare, and he now eagerly devoured Dodd's *Beauties of Shakespeare*, although he was still far from realising the overwhelming greatness of the mighty English poet.

Wieland, having outgrown the piety of his uncritical youth, began to set forth his easy-going philosophy in prose and verse, and from him Goethe learnt much. But a deeper influence was exerted by the humane and freethinking Lessing, whose *Laocoon* and *Minna von Barnhelm* were regarded by Goethe as triumphant masterpieces of German literature. In 1768 Lessing spent a month in Leipsic, but the fates decreed that the two humanists were never to meet. About the same time, Goethe received the grievous tidings of Winkelmann's tragic death, and he sincerely mourned the loss of the master whose writings

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had so materially contributed to his mental and artistic evolution.

During the whole of the Leipsic period, Goethe was an assiduous attendant at the play, sometimes as spectator, and occasionally as an actor, in private performances. The enthusiasm engendered by these experiences induced him to try his hand as a dramatist, and he wrote two small plays, *Die Laune des Verliebten* (The Lover's Humor) and *Die Mitschuldigen* (The Accomplices). Both plays are confessedly autobiographical, but are too closely imitative of conventional French models to rank as anything but promising failures.

At this period an affair of the heart wounded the poet deeply, and all his efforts to silence his sad emotions proved unavailing. In this instance distraction did not prove a panacea, and Goethe became seriously ill. His sickness was made bearable by the affectionate care of his male and female friends, but as he made but poor progress towards recovery, it was decided that he should return to his father's house. There he became convalescent, but soon succumbed to another dangerous ailment. But he slowly regained his health, and never again was he visited by any serious malady.

In his twenty-first year, Goethe went to Strasburg to take his degree, and while in that cathedral city he met the rationalistic philosopher, Herder. The latter was then twenty-six years of age, only five years the senior of Goethe. But Herder had been matured by hard discipline, and two volumes of essays had already appeared from his pen. A painful eye disease, coupled with a somewhat overbearing disposition, made Herder a harsh man to deal with. Goethe, however, discerned a fine nature beneath a rugged exterior, and made light of his occasional boorishness, and was ever willing to solace and assist him. Goethe's virtue was well rewarded, for from Herder he learnt to appreciate the good contained in the messages of Rousseau and Voltaire. He also grew to value Shakespeare at his proper worth, for in the creator of Hamlet, so said Herder, Nature had met her profoundest interpreter; and,—

> "returning in earnest to the study of his dramas, Goethe was impressed, as he had never been impressed before, by their power and beauty, and felt more and more strongly that it would be impossible for him ever to exhaust their meaning."

Herder also made him realise the position of the true Freethinker. No set of doctrines, however sacred, was to be accepted as a complete and irrevocable canon of truth. Goethe now looked around him, and strove to free his mind from all preconceptions and to judge every phenomenon on its merits alone. Having once mastered this great lesson, he made strenuous efforts to hold fast to it through life.

This great formative epoch was constantly lit by the light of love. Goethe had been smitten by the beauty of Friedereke Brion, an Alsatian pastor's daughter, and although he was parted from her, her affection and beauty inspired some of his loveliest lyrics. In after days she might have wedded joyously and well, but her unvarying answer to her adorers was: "The heart that Goethe has loved can never belong to another."

To gratify his father—for to Goethe law was dry and barren—he became a Frankfort advocate. In a few weeks he received his first brief, and judgment was recorded in the courts in favor of the youthful Goethe's client. But the attractions of Shakespeare proved more potent than those of jurisprudence. A Shakespeare festival took place in his father's house, and Goethe, with flashing eye and eloquent tongue, described the plays as masterpieces in which "the history of the world sweeps on before our eyes on the invisible thread of time."

In a literary sense, the period from 1771 to 1775 was the most productive of the poet's life. He penned *Goetz, Werther, Clavigo*, and other works in rapid succession. The reception accorded *Goetz von Berlichingen* was enough to turn the head of a weaker man. Goethe was hailed as a marvellous genius, and the success of this, his first tragedy, confirmed his confidence in his own power, and he never doubted that his future creations would completely fulfil the most sanguine predictions of his most enthusiastic admirers.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be continued.)

Blasphemy.

ONE of the many libellous charges that Christians are continually bringing against Freethinkers is that of blasphemy. The wicked doubts of the Atheist may be ignored, but directly he speaks candidly upon the Christian religion, then the whole of Christendom is up in arms loudly protesting against a so-called "blasphemy." Accordingly, it would be well to discover whether Christians, in making this charge, are following out any consistent moral code.

The world in which we live contains a vast amount of evil. The Christian believes this, for he is constantly deploring the depravity of the world. The Freethinker also recognises that immorality is common to most parts of the globe, but, at the same time, he lays emphasis upon such remediable evils as slums, poverty, dirt, and ignorance. It is an established fact that a high degree of morality will not be attained until these material evils have disappeared. But there is one evil that, apparently, can never be removed; the evil referred to is that brought about by nature's law of "the survival of the fittest." Evolution is the cause of much pain, suffering, and waste.

Now, the Christian doctrine teaches that God is omnipotent, that is, he has complete control of the universe. Consequently, God is responsible for all the evil that exists in the world. He possesses power over the Devil, and if this is not so, then the term "Almighty God" is a misnomer and ought never to be used. The Christian believes, at one and the same time, that Almighty God is the loving Father of mankind, and that he not only allows evil to exist, but that he invented a system of evolution, which brings untold pain to all species of life. Surely, this is one of the most despicable and lying blasphemies ever uttered! It is an insult to an intelligent person's conception of a Deity. It is a paradox that is both ludicrous and immoral, and one which would hardly be perpetrated even by Mr. G. K. Chesterton. Is there one man in a hundred who would allow evil to exist if he possessed the power to prevent it? No. The position is untenable to the rational person. He must take one of three courses:—

(1) He must acknowledge that God is not almighty, and that his power is limited (he would presumably share the control of the world with the Devil).
(2) If he still holds the conviction that God is almighty, then he must acknowledge that he worships a Deity who, in his opinion, is an immoral being.
(3) He must throw overboard the whole doctrine, and become an Agnostic.

One can easily speculate on the line of thought that will be taken by the majority of present-day Christians in the near future. They will discover that the idea of the Christian God was founded upon a blasphemy, and they will look back with astonishment upon the time when the truth was considered as being blasphemous.

THE MAN IN THE STREET.

There never has been a "Fall of Man" from which he could be saved by the suffering and death of God or man upon the Cross, and the preaching of such a mode of salvation constitutes a miserable mockery. It is an utterly misleading aside from the real work of the world that remains to be done; and the money spent in sustaining the great delusion at home and propagating it abroad might suffice for the extinction of poverty if preventively applied.—*Gerald Massey.*

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Literary Gossip.

How often a good reader is tempted to say to a critic "Physician heal thyself." And when a man makes a mistake himself in correcting the mistake of another, he is approaching, if he has not entered, the region of comedy. I have just been reading an interesting and suggestive little volume in the "Home University Library," by Wm. T. Brewster, A.M., Professor of English in Columbia University. Professor Brewster is one of the four editors of this excellent series of books. One would have expected from him greater care in composition and proof-reading than from most of his colleagues in this enterprise, for the title of his contribution is *The Writing of English*. Yet as early as p. 15 one finds the following lapse:—

> "So precise a person as Matthew Arnold misquotes Keats's 'Pure ablation round Earth's human shores' as 'cold ablation' without a blush and under circumstances that called for great accuracy (Maurice de Guérin, in *Essays on Criticism*)."

Professor Brewster, in correcting Matthew Arnold, was himself called upon for great accuracy. But in calling attention to one blunder he perpetrates a worse one. Keats, of course, did not write "ablation" at all. What he wrote was "ablution." The passage occurs in probably the last of his sonnets, written on a blank page in Shakespeare's poems, facing *A Lover's Complaint*—and runs as follows:—

> "The moving waters at their priestlike task
> Of pure ablution round earth's human shores."

That is John Keats at his very best, as we might expect when a great poet is apostrophising the greatest of all poets. And it is over the two lines enshrining this superb image that two writers like Matthew Arnold and Professor Brewster both stumbled. * * *

I hesitated to believe that Matthew Arnold had turned that beautiful "pure" into that terrible "cold." But on turning to his fine essay on Maurice de Guérin I found that he had done so. When I read the essay before I must have taken the Keats quotation for granted as I knew the lines so well. It was really performing an act of memory instead of an act of perception. And the worst of it is that Matthew Arnold let that shocking misquotation stand for more than twenty years. My own copy of the book is a part of the collected edition of his works dated 1886.

* * *

Arnold's mistake was a perfect "howler." I hope his publishers may yet be able to set it right. Professor Brewster's may perhaps be called a slip in proof-reading. Yes, but an author should read his proofs more carefully, especially in such circumstances.

* * *

The *Positivist Review* for January opens the new year well. There are excellent articles by Professor E. S. Beesly, Mr. Frederic Harrison, and other well-known contributors to this ably conducted magazine. Mr. S. H. Swinny, the editor, writes a brief, eulogistic review of Professor Bury's *History of Freedom of Thought*, which has been noticed at considerable length in these columns. "The book," Mr. Swinny concludes, "contains a weighty protest against the recrudescence of prosecutions for blasphemy." I expected more reference than this to the agitation around the recent Stewart case. But the one fault I have to find with Mr. Swinny's monthly is that his staff of writers seem to live out of the present world. This comment does not apply to Mr. Swinny himself, whom I meet (with pleasure) on many committees.

* * *

Talking of "blasphemy," I notice a belated discovery on this subject. Professor Bury, in his admirable little book, remarks that passages of "blasphemy" be quoted from Swinburne's *Songs Before Sunrise* were surely open to prosecution if they had been expressed in prose, and in the prose of the common people. This remark is taken up by Mr. J. M. Robertson in a recent article on Toleration and patronised as no doubt true. I happen to know from personal observation that Mr. Robertson was alive in 1883, when I was prosecuted for "blasphemy," and made what the *Times* called "a remarkable speech in defence" before Lord Chief Justice Coleridge. I can hardly imagine, for special reasons, that Mr. Robertson can have forgotten the character of my address to the jury, which caused a good deal of excitement at the time. Now it happens that I read to the jury those very passages (with others) which Professor Bury quotes from Swinburne, and I asked them if these passages were not as "blasphemous" as anything in my indictment? Lord Coleridge answered that question himself in the affirmative. Some of the passages I read were in his opinion free from such criticism, but with regard to others he said:—

> "They do appear to me to be open to exactly the same charge and the same grounds of observation that Mr. Foote's publications are. He says—and I don't call upon him to prove it, I am quite willing to take his word—he says many of these things are written in expensive books, published by publishers of known eminence, and that they circulate in the drawing-rooms, studies, and libraries of persons of position."

Lord Coleridge went on to say that if the writers of such things, using language "not fairly distinguishable from that used by Mr. Foote," were ever brought before him, they "would find but one rule of law laid down in this court."

* * *

Professor Bury's suggestion, adopted by Mr. Robertson, is therefore some thirty years behind date. The point now raised was thoroughly discussed at my trial.

* * *

Mr. H. S. Salt's new volume, the *Humanities of Diet*, is published by the Vegetarian Society, 257 Deansgate, Manchester. It is neatly got up, and I fancy the price must be sixpence, but I cannot find any statement to that (or any other) effect. With the exception of the first article, reprinted from the *Fortnightly Review*, the contents of this little book are all gathered from the *Humanitarian*, the *Vegetarian*, and other propagandist journals. Some are in prose, some are in verse, and all are entertaining; for Mr. Salt is not always solemn,—he is often witty, humorous, and jovial, when the occasion calls for such treatment of the subject. Mr. Salt in his lighter vein will be an agreeable surprise to those who only know him in his serious moods. A wide circulation of this volume would be a good thing for the cause of Humanitarianism.

* * *

One may add a few words to the comments on Mr. Campbell at the end of Mr. Lloyd's article in this week's *Freethinker*. It is George Meredith that one has in mind, and for whose reputation one is concerned. Mr. Campbell is a very small matter in comparison. He is a born sentimentalist, and was bound to shudder when he came up against the sternest elements of Meredith's philosophy. Faith is a good thing if based upon reason, but not without reason, and still less in spite of reason. "You want to live for ever, do you?" says the strong man to the weaker one. "Well, nobody can add anything to what Nature has given you. I cannot add one day to your life, here or hereafter; and I do not know that I would if I could. Who are you? Who am I? that Nature should be strained to gratify our vanity and selfhood? We must just share the common lot. And if you like to dream of personal immortality, do so; I shall not quarrel with you, though I do not propose to join you. All I can offer you is what Nature offers you, if you choose to accept it,—an immortal life in the life of the race. Live in your children. Live in posterity. You owe something to the past; pay it to the future. It is the only way in which you can discharge the debt." But that is not good enough for sentimental egoists like Mr. Campbell. He calls it a "melancholy prospect." It is to him. It was not to Meredith. That is the difference between the two men. Character, like water, cannot rise above its own level. It takes a Danton to cry, "Let my name be blighted, so that France be free." It takes a Paul to hope that others may be saved even if he be lost. It takes a Moses to rejoice in his nation entering the promised land, though he is doomed never to set *his* foot upon its holy soil. These are instances in Mr. Campbell's sacred book. He will remember them. And perhaps he will think over again the matter of that "melancholy prospect." * * *

So far there is no particular harm done, but Mr. Campbell goes on until self-contempt makes him insolent. He says that Meredith's words of courage in face of the fact and thought of death remind him of "a small boy in the dark whistling to keep his courage up." Mr. Campbell reminds us of a street urchin who rings his superior's front-door bell and runs away. * * *

Human reason will never take us beyond Meredith's position. Mr. Campbell admits it, he asserts it, he emphasises it. Something more than human reason takes Mr. Campbell along the pleasant way he wants to go. He looks to the Cross of Christ. And what were the last words of Christ himself on the Cross? "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Wasn't *that* a "melancholy prospect"?

* * *

By the way, Mr. Campbell supposes that Mr. G. M. Trevelyan is writing a book on George Meredith. He wrote one nearly eight years ago—the *Poetry and Philosophy of*

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George Meredith. Mr. Trevelyan is not frightened at Meredith's teachings. If it causes terror at the City Temple it must be because of the plethora of shop assistants in the congregation.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Blasphemy Case.

In common with all true Liberals, we loathe prosecutions for opinion. It is the pride of Englishmen that they live in a land where a man can say whatever he will. Milton desired, above all liberties, the liberty to utter and argue freely. Holding these opinions, we have an instinctive aversion to prosecutions under the Blasphemy Laws. Not only do such prosecutions encroach on liberty of speech, but they almost invariably defeat their own object. Recently a petition influentially signed was presented to the Home Office urging the release of the man, Thomas William Stewart, who was convicted at the Staffordshire Assizes on November 18 for blasphemy at Wolverhampton, and was sentenced to four months' imprisonment. The Home Secretary declined to accede to the prayer of the petitioners, and for his refusal he has been bitterly assailed by some newspapers, notably the *New Statesman*. Now what is the duty of a Home Secretary in such a case as this? He is, of course, the Minister responsible for the exercise of the King's prerogative of mercy. That prerogative has to be exercised with the greatest circumspection. It certainly does not entitle a minister to arrogate to himself a dispensing or suspensive power in regard to the law of the land. The essence of the prerogative is that it must only be exercised with great rarity and under exceptional circumstances. Of those circumstances the Home Secretary is the only competent judge, for no one else has all the facts before him; no one else is able to consult the judge who passed sentence. In the Stewart case Mr. McKenna had to bear in mind that the prisoner had been found guilty by a jury, and that he had been tried before a judge of liberal mind and humane traditions like Mr. Justice Coleridge. He had necessarily to consider the nature of Stewart's language at the open-air meetings he addressed. The evidence showed that this language was coarse, ribald, vulgar in the extreme.

Mr. McKenna was evidently influenced, too, by the fact that after Stewart had attracted a crowd by his attacks on religion, it was his custom to send his wife to distribute handbills among his listeners advertising certain appliances. That in itself is no offence, but the Home Secretary seems to have asked himself: "Is this the sort of man in whose behalf I ought to take the exceptional step of exercising the prerogative when he has been lawfully convicted by a jury of his fellow countrymen?" He decided that he was not. Mr. McKenna himself is utterly free from all suspicion of intolerance, but he probably takes the same view in these cases that was taken by Macaulay, as good a Liberal as ever lived, in the following passage:—

> "If a man in a place of public resort applies opprobrious epithets to names held in reverence by all Christians, such a man ought to be severely punished, not for differing from us in opinion, but for committing a nuisance which gives us pain and disgust. He is no more entitled to outrage our feelings by obtruding his impiety on us, and to say that he is exercising his right of discussion, than to establish a yard for butchering horses close to our houses and to say that he is exercising his right of property. He must use all his rights so as not to infringe the rights of others."

For our own part, we wish Stewart had not been prosecuted. We would leave speakers of this type alone, confident that the public's good sense is the best prophylactic against any abuse of free speech. But it is unjust to make a rancorous attack on a Minister because he has refused to release Stewart. The Secretary of State in these matters must act on his own judgment. To attack him for his decisions is easy, but fruitless. In order to avoid prosecutions for blasphemy, the effective way is not to abuse the Home Secretary, but to obtain the repeal of the Blasphemy Acts. We would like to see them repealed to-morrow. Religion would be in a poor way if it could not withstand the vulgar language of itinerant orators.

—*Daily Chronicle*, January 17, 1914.

Mark Melford: An Appreciation.

"Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note."

THERE were only three or four of us gathered within the little chapel of the Crematorium, which the leaden clouds of a grey January day rendered even more sombre than usual. No organ pealed forth a melody of mockery upon ears close-sealed to earthly sound. No meaningless words were babbled from hired lips of a vague and theoretical future; not a tinge of morbid curiosity intruded within the mournful area of regret rendered sacred by its sincerity. The last tragic farewell had been spoken when the curtain fell at the close of the Matinée at the Little Theatre a few weeks ago.

The last dignified exit took place when, at a given signal, the frail shell was slowly drawn along the catafalque until it passed from view within the oaken doors, where "Neither foe nor stranger would tread o'er his head."

It was the perfect realisation of the solemnity of silence. One and all felt the passing of a mighty intellect paramount above all physical suffering; and as we stepped into the outer air the gentle drip, drip, of falling rain only seemed a fit accompaniment to our mood and surroundings.

Truly no man could have a more enduring epitaph than that he was ever a protector of the defenceless and a faithful friend; and it was thus that we "left him alone with his glory."

ANNIE BRADSHAW.

SHELLEY AN ATHEIST.

In religion, Shelley was an Atheist. There is nothing uncommon in that; but he actually called himself one, and urged others to follow his example. He never trifled with the word God: he knew that it meant a personal First Cause, Almighty Creator, and Supreme Judge and Ruler of the Universe, and that it did not mean anything else, never had meant anything else, and never whilst the English language lasted would mean anything else. Knowing perfectly well that there was no such person, he did not pretend that the question was an open one, or imply, by calling himself an Agnostic, that there might be such a person for all he knew to the contrary. He did know to the contrary; and he said so. Further, though there never was a man with so abiding and full a consciousness of the omnipresence of a living force, manifesting itself here in the germination and growth of a tree, there in the organisation of a poet's brain, and elsewhere in the putrefaction of a dead dog, he never condescended to beg off being an Atheist by calling this omnipresent energy God, or even Pan. He lived and died professedly, almost boastfully, godless. In his time, however, as at present, God was little more than a word to the English people. What they really worshiped was the Bible; and our modern Church movement to get away from Bible fetishism and back to some presentable sort of Christianity (*vide* Mr. Horton's speech at Grindelwald the other day, for example) had not then come to the surface. The preliminary pickaxing work of Bible smashing had yet to be done; and Shelley, who found the moral atmosphere of the Old Testament murderous and abominable, and the asceticism of the New suicidal and pessimistic, smashed away at the Bible with all his might and main.—*G. B. Shaw in the "Albermarle"* (Sept., 1892).

RELIGION AND INSANITY.

We frequently see persons in insane hospitals sent there in consequence of what are called *religious* mental disturbances. I confess that I think better of them than of many who hold the same notions, and keep their wits and appear to enjoy life very well, outside of the asylums. Any decent person ought to go mad if he really holds such and such opinions. It is very much to his discredit, in every point of view if he does not ..... Anything that is brutal, cruel, heathenish, that makes life hopeless for the most of mankind, and perhaps for entire races—anything that assumes the necessity of the extermination of instincts which were given to be regulated—no matter by what name you call it—no matter whether a fakir, or a monk, or a deacon believes it—if received, ought to produce insanity in every well-regulated mind. I am very much ashamed of some people for retaining their reason, when they know perfectly well that if they were not the most stupid or the most selfish of human beings, they would become *non-compos* at once.—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

A HOLY POPE.

When in 1474, the death of Sixtus IV. was received in Rome with a pæan of joy, people commented not so much upon his selling benefices to the highest bidder, and his other devices of extorting money, as upon the manner in which he rewarded the boys who served his unnatural lusts by granting to them rich bishoprics and archbishoprics.—*H. C. Lea, "History of the Inquisition."*

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Notices of Lectures etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workman's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, E. Burke, "Why Empires and Religions Decay."

OUTDOOR.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, W. Davidson, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (King's Hall, Corporation-street): 7, F. E. Willis, "Blasphemy."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): J. T. Lloyd, 3, "Christianity, the Church, and History"; 6.30, "Vain Delusions." Tea at 5.

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Secretary: MISS E M. VANCE, 2 Newcastle-st. London, E.C.

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THE
Freethinker
Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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I differ with Moore in thinking Christianity useful to the world; no man of sense can think it true.

—SHELLEY.

Laws Against Religious Liberty.

THE present age boasts of its freedom. Civil and religious liberty is almost a commonplace among Englishmen. Catholics, Dissenters, and Jews have all been enfranchised. They enjoy the full rights of citizenship; their propaganda, worship, and property are fully protected by the law. But there is one exception to this rule of toleration. Freethinkers are still victims of oppression. They may vote for members of Parliament, and other representatives of the people; they may even sit in Parliament without hypocrisy or subterfuge under Mr. Bradlaugh's Oaths Act; but they are still insulted as jurymen by ignorant or bigoted judges; and they are liable to penalties for propagating their principles.

Many persons who are not Freethinkers are unaware of the grievances under which they suffer, and the following statement is intended for their benefit. It is believed that, when they understand the facts of the case, they will, for the most part, be favorable to an alteration of the law, so that *all* forms of opinion may enjoy a legal equality.

Under the old English law, heresy, blasphemy, schism, and other such offences, were tried and punished by the Ecclesiastical Courts. By the writ *de heretico comburendo* atheists, heretics, blasphemers, and schismatics could be burnt to death. This penalty was only abolished in 1677 by the Act 29 Charles II., cap. 9. The Act did not, however, take away the power of the Ecclesiastical Courts to deal with such offenders by "censures not extending to death." But in the course of time, by a gradual change of practice, the Ecclesiastical Courts have lost actual jurisdiction except over clergymen of the Church of England.

As *heresy* dropped out of sight attention became fixed on *blasphemy*. Lord Coleridge said that "the law of blasphemous libel first appeared in our books—at least the cases relating to it are first reported—shortly after the curtailment or abolition of the jurisdiction of the Ecclesiastical Courts in matters temporal. Speaking broadly, before the time of Charles II. these things would have been dealt with as heresy; and the libellers so-called of more recent days would have suffered as heretics in earlier times.

This law and practice continued till the passing of an Act known as the 9 and 10 William III., cap. 32, called "An Act for the more effectual suppressing of Blasphemy and Profaneness." It declares that "any person or persons having been educated in, or at any time having made profession of, the Christian religion within this realm, who shall, by writing, printing, teaching, or advised speaking, deny any one of the persons in the Holy Trinity to be God, or shall assert or maintain that there are more gods than one, or shall deny the Christian doctrine to be true, or the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be of divine authority," shall upon conviction be disabled from holding any ecclesiastical, civil, or military employment, and on a second conviction be imprisoned for three years and deprived for ever of all civil rights.

Lord Coleridge and Sir James Stephen have both called this law "ferocious." But it still disgraces the Statute Book. So much of it, as affected the Unitarians, was ostensibly repealed by the 53 George III., cap. 160. Lord Eldon, however, in 1817, doubted, whether it was even partially repealed; and Chief Baron Kelly and Lord Bramwell, so late as 1867, held that a lecture on "The Character and Teachings of Jesus: the former Defective, the latter Misleading," was an offence against the Statute.

This "infamous" Act was drawn up with such stringency that it defeated itself. No prosecution ever took place under it. But it largely guided the judges in their view of the Common Law of Blasphemy, under which scores of Freethinkers have been imprisoned.

The Act of William III. specifies certain *opinions* as blasphemous; it says nothing about the *language* in which they are couched. The crime was not in the *manner* but in the *matter*. And this view of Blasphemy was held by all our judges up to 1883, with the single exception of Lord Coleridge. In Woolston's case (1730) the Court "would not suffer it to be debated whether to write against Christianity in general was not an offence at Common Law." In Carlile's case (1819) the Court "was bound not to hear the truth of the Christian religion questioned." It declared that "if the defendant wished to produce authors to show that the Christian religion *might be denied*, that could not be allowed." Lord Chief Justic Abbott said "it was not competent in a Christian court, in a court of law, to rise up and say that the Christian religion was not a religion of truth." Mr. Justice Best went still further. He said: "The Act is not confined to those who libel religion, but extends to those who, in their most private intercourse, by advised conversation *admit* that they disbelieve the Scriptures." Lord Ellenborough, in the case of Eaton (1812), who was prosecuted for selling Paine's *Age of Reason*, said that "to deny the truth of the book which is the foundation of our faith, has never been permitted." In the case of Hetherington (1841), it was decided by Lord Chief Justice Denman that "an attack upon the Old Testament is clearly indictable." In the case of Paterson (Edinburgh, 1846), the Lord Justice Clerk said that the law expressly provided that "they who publish opinions contrary to the known principles of Christianity might be called to account and proceeded against by the civil magistrate." When the late Mr. Charles Bradlaugh was illegally arrested at Devonport, in 1861, for *intending* to lecture against the Bible, he brought an action for false imprisonment, and obtained *one farthing* damages; Lord Justice Erle, holding that the policeman, although he acted illegally, had really conferred a benefit on the plaintiff by preventing him from disseminating infidel opinions. Precisely the same view was taken by the Court of Exchequer in the case of Cowen *v.* Milbourn. Baron Bramwell said "it was unlawful to deny the truth of Christianity or the divine authority of the Scriptures." Lord Chief Baron Kelly added that to call the teaching of Christ misleading was "a violation of the law and cannot be done without blasphemy."

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.

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The Clergy.

LAST week's article was hardly out of my hands before I received a lengthy letter from a correspondent, which, curiously enough, dealt with an issue raised therein. The writer complains of what he calls the "habit" of Freethought writers dealing with the clergy as though they were all either rogues or fools. He says that he is personally acquainted with many intelligent and worthy men in the ranks of the clergy, and protests against the habitual injustice to which they are subjected. He adds that he does not call himself a Christian, although from the tone of his letter I do not think he is a Freethinker. Still, he is within his rights in ventilating what he considers a grievance, and I purpose dealing with his complaint in the same tone in which it is raised. I do not intend dealing with the rest of his letter at length, as it merely illustrates and enforces the point noted.

First of all, as to the facts. It is not true that writers in the *Freethinker* are in the habit of classifying clergymen as either rogues or fools. They know better. They know that such a statement would be false, and they would be themselves fools to make assertions, the consequence of which, would be injury to their own case. What they do protest against—or, to put the matter on a personal basis—what I have always protested against is the assumption that the clergy are better, morally or intellectually, than other people. They are not. On the contrary, there are circumstances connected with their training and status that tend to dull their sense of moral discrimination and intellectual rectitude. I am not prepared to say that the clergy, as a class, are worse than any other class. I do say they are no better, that their assumption of superiority is a relic of the old magic-working days, and that no man is made a better man by becoming a clergyman. However good he may be, the probability is that he would have been better had he never entered the pulpit.

Let us stick to two facts—facts that can be accepted by both sides. As a class, the clergy represent a body of educated men. They have all been carefully trained—too carefully trained. A large number of them carry degrees, and, whatever their faults may be, they cannot be due to want of education—using that word in a purely scholastic sense. Yet what proportion of new ideas, of advanced ideas, spring from their midst? What sort of a welcome is given by them to new ideas when advanced by other people? It is notorious that in both respects they make a poorer show than any other class in the community. And they make greater claims than any other class. Doctors do not profess to guide the community save in the matter of health. Lawyers only profess to guide in matters of law. But the clergy profess to guide in all the larger and more serious issues of life. The clergy not only fail to originate or to respond to new ideas in science, in ethics, or in sociology, it is the same with regard to their own special subject. They do not lead in matters of religion. The last century saw an enormous revolution of opinion on religious subjects; yet this was forced upon the clergy from the outside, and many have not accepted it yet. For over 200 years the clergy fought against the truth concerning the Old Testament. They were instrumental in getting men and women imprisoned, pilloried, whipped, and slandered for teaching the truth, and they only admitted they were in the wrong when denial became more dangerous than admission. To resist as long as may be, to denounce the investigator as an enemy to all that is worth preserving, and to minimise the importance of new ideas when they can no longer be denied, is the historic policy of the clergy of all the Churches.

Putting on one side the opposition during early years to Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, Buffon, and Lyell, let us take the clergy in relation to the theory of evolution. Darwin's work was met by them with universal vituperation. It was not that they rejected Natural Selection as untrue; that would have been a legitimate ground of objection, although the clergy were quite incompetent to express an opinion. Their objection was that it was contrary to their religion. So far, I agree with them; and this was the one grain of truth that figured in their mountain of abuse. It deposed God, they said, and established Atheism. In a very few years the more astute among the clergy saw that the game was up. Accordingly a new discovery was made. Christianity implied evolution. Darwin became a teacher of Christianity as Bradlaugh was—after his death—made a religious character. Evolution placed religion on a scientific basis. Science became the handmaid of theology.

Were the clergy quite genuine, even here? Did they, do they, even now really welcome scientific advance and investigation? If science and all its works could be banished, would the clergy complain? I have my doubts. In the sixteenth century the Jews of Spain were faced with the alternative of conversion or exile and death. Thousands became converted and were regular attendants at Church. But from the Church service many hurried home to carry out the Jewish ceremonies in private. If one could have watched the converted Spanish Jew in his home one would have found how genuine his adherence to Christianity was. When one watches the clergy carefully one notes how real is their attachment to scientific advance. Let a scientific worker challenge any presentment of the doctrine of evolution; above all, let him point out that there are certain limitations to science, that on some topics our ignorance is indestructible, and nowhere is he hailed with such glee as in Christian pulpits. Everywhere else ignorance is regarded as a misfortune. In the pulpit it becomes glad tidings of great joy. Now, as ever, the clergy show that they feel general ignorance to be the surest guarantee of their own rule.

Still more facts. Two hundred years ago, even a century ago, the clergy had the same beliefs that they had possessed a thousand years before. They believed in special creation, in Providence, in prayer, in miracles, in inspiration. So far as mere words are concerned, they have these beliefs still. Now I say deliberately that the majority of the clergy do not believe in these things at all. Press them to explain what is meant by a miracle, and they will reply ancient miracles were misunderstood natural happenings. Ask them whether prayers are really answered, and they will reply, Yes, *subjectively*. That is, one derives a mental solace and strength from the belief that one is in contact with a higher Power. The names are here, but their old meaning has gone. And the chief objection is that even now these definitions are only submitted on compulsion. When they can, the clergy keep up the delusion. Will any of them have the courage and the honesty to say plainly from the pulpit that the course of nature is unalterable? That disease is not to be cured by prayer, that prayer will not produce a good harvest, send a ship safely to its destination, or bring an army success? Will they tell their congregations plainly that the only benefit from prayer is that it gives those who pray a mental tonic, so long as they believe? My correspondent knows as well as I do that they will not do this. They will continue to keep the old illusions alive by the use of the old language and the old forms. Men may believe in all the things named and be stupid; they cannot accept the better knowledge of to-day, and continue preaching the old doctrines, and still retain a sound title to honesty.

Here, then, is the plain issue. A man of small culture and intelligence—there are plenty such in the pulpit—may retain a character for honesty and still preach the old doctrines. But in proportion as his culture and intelligence is enlarged, so his straightforwardness is diminished. Either he deliberately preaches things he knows to be false, or he gives a new meaning to the old doctrines—a meaning

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which they never did bear, and cannot now be fairly made to bear. That is the reason why with each generation the occupancy of the pulpit becomes more and more distasteful to men of genuine ability. Lesser men get their chance. And the religion that once found its leaders in a Hooker, a Jeremy Taylor, a Butler, and a Newman, now finds it in a Dr. Dixon, a Bishop Ingram, and a R. J. Campbell.

Do I mean, then, that the bulk of the clergy are hypocrites? Not a bit of it. They are, many of them, humbugs, but not hypocrites. Human nature could not sustain so elaborate an hypocrisy, or even so large a humbug, if all were conscious of the part they played. The humbug is sustained because it is largely unconscious. It is moralised because it springs from a class ethic. Given a body of men whose whole interest in life is bound up with the maintenance of a particular institution, let them be specially trained for service in or on behalf of that institution, and they inevitably come to measure things by different values to that which attach to other matters. We see something of this in the professional ethic of lawyers or doctors; but we see it most clearly, and with its evil features most pronounced, in the case of the clergy. For religion is by its very nature less open to the influence of new knowledge and needs, and more dependent upon the maintenance of the beliefs and intellectual atmosphere of bygone generations. It is, consequently, more alert to detect innovating tendencies, and more ferocious in the opposition offered. Not, be it noted, on the real ground that they threaten the interests of a class and the security of an institution, but on the fictitious ground that they weaken morality, degrade humanity, etc., etc. In this way bigotry and self-interest shelters itself behind a cloud of moral phrases, and does this so effectively that it imposes upon the clergy themselves. Strongly as I believe in the humbug of the modern clergy, and their utter uselessness to the State, I also believe that large numbers persuade themselves that they are working in the interests of society at large. Education and self-interest combined have taught them to identify the welfare of the Church with the welfare of the State, and so prevents their looking at things from the standpoint of a rational, healthy, social life. There are, of course, other types of clergy, about whom the less said the better.

Well, then, here are the facts that must determine any rational judgment concerning the clergy. A body of educated men, at least 50,000 strong, shows itself to-day, as of old, absolutely unproductive of new or progressive ideas. In the main, they show themselves hostile to their introduction and propagation. They are trained, not to search for truth as a scientist is trained to seek truth, not to use the supposed truth already possessed as a means of acquiring more, but simply to teach a body of doctrines already established. The consequence of this is that the whole of their real interest lies in maintaining things as they are. Identifying themselves with their Church and the welfare of their Church with that of the nation, the clerical mind operates under the influence of an ethic that is false in theory and dangerous in practice, and only those who thwart them know how the peculiarities of the clerical ethic express themselves. For a clergyman to be intellectually straightforward means that he must be either stupid enough to close his mind to developing knowledge and life, or he must leave the pulpit altogether. If he does not belong to the first class, and lacks the courage to follow the last course, his whole life becomes a series of evasions, apologies, and intellectual shuffles such as hardly any other educated body of men would stoop to. It may well be that the clergyman is not always consciously dishonest in these tactics. Personally, I should say that the vast majority are not. But the fact remains. And the fact that the mental crookedness is unconscious, that it can be concealed under the cover of a moral duty is only the more conclusive proof of the evil of the profession. No Freethinker need deny the existence of many good men among the clergy. The more numerous they are, the stronger is his case against the order. To paraphrase Ingersoll, our quarrel is not with the man beneath the priest. It is with the priest that almost inevitably strangles the man.

C. COHEN.

Sin.

THE Church is beginning to realise the vast importance and incalculable value of the doctrine of sin. In its absence the Church, in its present form, could not exist, and the significant fact is that the sense of sin is undoubtedly weakening everywhere. This was frankly admitted by the Right Rev. George Nickson, Bishop of Jarrow, in a paper which he read at the Islington Conference at Mildmay Hall a few weeks ago. Whilst stoutly contending that sin is a fact in human experience, his lordship was bound to recognise the grave danger of its ceasing to be such a fact. He bluntly stated that the piety of the best Christians to-day is an entirely different thing from that which prevailed even a generation ago. As a well-known scientist said a few years ago, "the higher man of to-day is not worrying about his sins, still less about their punishment." For this ecclesiastically mournful state of things Dr. Nickson blames the growth of luxury and the pursuit of power which are characteristic of the present age. Those are what he calls material causes of the decay of the sense of sin. Evolutionary science, too, has to bear its share of the responsibility, because its natural tendency is to "obliterate the impression of a Personal God," without which impression sin, in its theological meaning, becomes an impossibility. Now, the Bishop tells us that it is the bounden duty of the Church to "make it clear that sin is a fact of human experience."

The Rev. E. A. Eardley-Wilmot, M.A., also read a paper on sin at the Islington Conference which ran on similar lines to that by the Bishop. Both clergymen deplore the fact that sin is either openly denied or thought so lightly of at the present day. Mr. Eardley-Wilmot quotes the following passage from the pen of Bishop Gore:—

> "There will be no revival of vital religion among us on any large scale, or with any adequate results, except through a deepening of the sense of sin—a return to the properly Christian severity of view about the meaning of sin and its consequences."

Dr. Gore is perfectly right; but the revival for which he looks and works is not likely ever to take place, because the sense of sin, instead of deepening, is rapidly becoming shallower and shallower. "What has decayed among us rapidly," said Dean Inge many years ago, "is the reality of sin," and what was true then is much truer now. On this point there can be no two opinions. Bishop Nickson admits that if Massillon, one of the greatest of French preachers, lived to-day instead of two hundred years ago, he could not paralyse his hearers with his vivid description of men's sins and of their terrible consequences, as he so easily did then. The days for frightening people in that manner are past, never to return, because the sense of sin, being the product of superstition, is being destroyed by knowledge. The Bishop was quite right when he held science partly responsible for the change which he so ardently deplores; but we go a little further, and declare that science has been the chief agent in bringing it about. Professor David Smith, in his Correspondence Column in the *British Weekly* for January 22, asserts that, whilst the theologian is bound to accept all its findings in its own domain, science has no right to invade that of the theologian. "Its province is strictly limited," he assures us. "It takes cognisance of things *as they are*, and investigates their genesis and relations. Beyond this it cannot travel." Are we to infer that the theologian deals with things as they are *not?* This is what Dr. Smith says about the man of science:—

> "When the Scriptures affirm an initial catastrophe he holds his peace. 'Of that,' he says, 'I know

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> nothing. It is only things as they are that lie within my ken, and I cannot tell what may have preceded or determined them.'.....The moment he goes further in the way of affirmation or of denial, he invades the province of theology and ceases to be a man of science. Thus it is open to the theologian, while accepting the legitimate verdicts of science, to assume that initial catastrophe denominated the Fall, and the question is whether there be evidence to justify the affirmation."

What a horrible caricature of the man of science that extract is. To deal with things as they are and trace their evolution is to discover that there is absolutely no record of an initial catastrophe. Geological remains disclose no sign whatever of the Fall. What is the use of quoting Coleridge on the subject? Coleridge never investigated the genesis and relations of things, nor had he the means of doing so, such as we possess. Dr. Smith imagines that there is at least a two-fold evidence of the sinful condition of mankind. Let us hear and examine it:—

> "The presence in man's life and within the orbit of his influence of moral disorder and the suffering which it entails. In an otherwise orderly universe it is impossible to regard this as normal, and thus, to my mind, the doctrine of the Fall is a corollary of the scientific axiom of the orderliness of Nature. Human lawlessness is a dislocation of natural law."

That extract is chock-full of scientific errors. "Human lawlessness" is a figment of the theological imagination. A dislocation of natural law is a natural impossibility. The unbreakability of Nature's laws is a scientific truism. Heredity is insusceptible of dislocation. It is a law that works in a thoroughly orderly manner. Imperfection also seems to be a law from which Nature never departs. What the Professor speaks of as "moral disorder" is nothing in the world but natural imperfection, which throughout the animal kingdom entails suffering. "Disorder" is a wrong term in such a connection. All human actions are so far from being disorderly that it is possible to predict them. Whether good or bad, they are always orderly. That is to say, all deeds are determined by the laws of heredity and environment.

We now pass on to the second fold of the alleged evidence:—

> "The testimony of our moral instincts. If sin were merely the natural imperfection of an incomplete development there would be no sense of guilt; for, as Erasmus puts it, we would have no more reason to lament that we are sinful than a horse that he is ignorant of grammar. But the sense of guilt is here, demanding explanation; and, to my mind, there is no explanation apart from a primal Fall."

This is the worst fallacy of all, though sound theology. The sense of guilt, in the theological sense, is not here by nature. It is a sense whose genesis is due alone to religious instruction. It is not a moral instinct at all, but a religious emotion peculiar to believers in God. Atheists are devoid of it, and their offspring know of it only by hearsay. Professor Smith's illustration undermines his case:—

> "When a beggar sees a rich estate he covets it; but it is a more painful emotion that is stirred in the breast of a spendthrift by the sight of the broad lands which he has lost through his own wickedness. He curses himself and blushes for the folly which has robbed him of his heritage. The problem lies in this sense of shame, this instinct of self-reproach in the human breast; and the doctrine of the Fall is its solution—the only and, to my mind, the inevitable solution."

We confess our utter inability to comprehend the last sentence in that extract. Why, the sense of shame after committing a harmful act is entirely natural, and to reproach one's self for it is certainly to furnish no proof of "an initial catastrophe." We are acquainted with a sheep dog and a fox terrier who are bosom friends. They have been together for years without a single quarrel. Occasionally the terrier attempts to steal his friend's biscuit, when naturally he gets punished; but no sooner has the penalty been inflicted than the transgressor is affectionately licked. Now, is it not a sense of shame, or an instinct of self-reproach in the sheep dog's breast, that induces him to kiss his offending brother? But surely there is no problem here the only solution of which is to be found in "an initial catastrophe" that overtook the canine race some four thousand years ago. It is the social instinct that solves the problem involved in the sense of shame. Man's sense of shame on account of a wrong act is so much stronger than a dog's simply because the social instinct in him is immeasurably more fully developed, and should be regarded, not as suggestive of a Fall in the far distant past, but as the outcome of a succession of ascents.

That we are fallen sinners needing redemption through the shed blood of an innocent Christ is an essentially degrading doctrine. The truth about us is that we have risen, not fallen, and that we need education, self-development, not restoration by an outsider. Divested of its theological connotations, sin denotes social offence, and is a sign of imperfect adaptation to environment; and in this sense, deliverance from sin is possible only as the result of our own efforts.

J. T. LLOYD.

Science and the Soul.

> "As to the other great question, the question what becomes of man after death, we do not see that a highly educated European, left to his unaided reason, is more likely to be in the right than a Blackfoot Indian. Not a single one of the many sciences in which we surpass the Blackfoot Indians throws the smallest light on the state of the soul after the animal life is extinct. In truth all the philosophers, ancient and modern, who have attempted, without the help of revelation, to prove the immortality of man, from Plato down to Franklin, appear to us to have failed deplorably."—LORD MACAULAY, *Essays*, vol. ii., pp. 541-2.

> "For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; and man hath no preeminence above the beasts: for all is vanity. All go into one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knoweth the spirit of man whether it goeth upward and the spirit of the beast whether it goeth downward to the earth? Wherefore I saw that there is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his works; for that is his portion: for who shall bring him back to see what shall be after him?"—The Holy Bible (Revised Version), Ecclesiastes iii. 19-22.

> "Just as our consciousness comes out of nothing in the first months, or years, of our life, so it will pass into nothing at the end of our life."

> "Science cannot admit the immortality of the conscious soul, for consciousness is a function of special elements in the body that certainly cannot live for ever."—PROFESSOR METCHNIKOFF, *The Nature of Man*, pp. 160-285.

THE majority of people, in this country, are taught from earliest childhood to believe that they possess an immortal soul. So deeply rooted is this idea—like most of the ideas authoritatively taught during childhood—that people are surprised when first they meet with someone who has doubts upon the subject, and still more so at one who denies the existence of an immortal soul altogether.

Yet there is not a scrap of scientific evidence to prove that man possesses a soul that will survive the death and dissolution of the body. Even Professor Fiske, the author of *Through Nature to God*, regretfully admits: "It is not likely that we shall ever succeed in making the immortality of the soul a matter of scientific demonstration, for we lack the requisite data. It must ever remain an affair of religion rather than of science."* And if scientists know nothing of a soul, the philosophers have been equally unable to supply evidence of its existence. Upon this point we have the express testimony of Bishop Watson, who, in his *Apology for the Bible*, written in reply to Paine's *Age of Reason*, declared:—

> "Notwithstanding the illustrious labors of Gassendi, Cudworth, Clarke, Baxter, and of above two hundred other modern writers on the subject, the *natural* mortality or immortality of the human soul is as little understood by us as it was by the philosophers of Greece or Rome. The opposite opinions of Plato and Epicurus, on this subject, have their several supporters amongst the learned of the present age, in Great

* Fiske, *The Destiny of Man* (1890), p. 108.

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> Britain, Germany, France, Italy, in every enlightened part of the world; and they who have been most seriously occupied in the study of the question concerning a future state, as deducible from the nature of the human soul, are least disposed to give from reason a positive decision of it either way. The importance of revelation is by nothing rendered more apparent than by the discordant sentiments of learned and good men (for I speak not of the ignorant and immoral) on this point. They show the insufficiency of human reason, in a course of above two thousand years, to unfold the mystery of human nature and to furnish from the contemplation of it any assurance from the quality of our future condition."*

Moreover, the idea of an immortal soul and a future life is not only rejected by millions of the more enlightened inhabitants of Europe, but it always has been rejected by millions of the followers of a religion which numbers more adherents than Christianity—namely, Buddhism.

Mr. G. T. Bettany tells us that "Buddhism even does not allow that there is a soul distinct from the body. Practically, it only recognises the combined being that is seen or is conscious of itself, and that suffers; and it has no explanation beyond."† This is confirmed by Professor Rhys Davids—our highest authority upon the subject—who says: "Buddhism does not acknowledge the existence of a soul as a thing distinct from the parts and powers of man which are dissolved at death, and the Nirvana of Buddhism is simply extinction."‡

The ancient Jews themselves had no idea of a future life. The Bible did not give us the idea of immortality, says Ingersoll:—

> "The Old Testament tells you how you lost immortality; it does not say another word about another world from the first mistake in Genesis to the last curse in Malachi. There is not in the Old Testament one burial service. No man in the Old Testament stands by the bed and says, 'I will meet them again'—not one word. From the top of Sinai came no hope of another world."§

In Genesis we read that God placed Adam and Eve in a garden, giving them permission to eat of the fruit of every tree except the tree of knowledge—knowledge appears to be as much feared by God as it is by the priests. Adam and Eve having, in spite of this arbitrary command, eaten of the tree, we are told,—

> "the Lord God said, behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever.....he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life" (Gen. iii. 22-24).

We read nothing whatever of any promise, or hope, of a future life after death. Later, in the Hebrew God's covenants with Abraham, all the good things promised are to take place in this world, his seed will outnumber the stars in the heavens and the sands of the sea (Gen. xxii. 1-7), he is to be the father of many nations, and in return Abraham, to fulfil his part of the contract, is to see that "Every man child among you shall be circumcised" (Gen. xvii. 10), Abraham's own reward being, "And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age" (Gen. xv. 15). Again, in the Ten Commandments delivered to Moses, the Lord tells the people to honor their parents, not that they may inherit eternal life, but "that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee" (Ex. xx. 12).

Plenty of children, wealth, and a good old age were the rewards held out to the Jews if they placed all their religious business with the house of Jehovah, and had no dealings with disreputable firms like Baal, Moloch, Dagon, and other competitors.

Bishop Warburton wrote a great work—great in size, we mean—entitled *The Divine Legation of Moses*, to prove that God did not reveal the idea of a future life to Moses. Voltaire describes Warburton, in this work, as "ranging through a hundred labyrinths, and fighting all he met with on the way."*

When the translators of our Authorised Version of the Bible came to the passage in the book of Ecclesiastes which declares that man, in his death, has no pre-eminence over the beasts that perish, they were shocked that the Holy Ghost should have inspired the writer with such infidel sentiments, calculated to cut at the very roots of religion. So they quietly altered the inspired words to read, "the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth" (Eccle. iii. 21). The true reading is rendered in the Revised Version, as given at the head of this article.

They also accomplished many other pious frauds, notably the celebrated passage in Job, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," which the Revised Version has *not* corrected, although every Hebrew scholar knows that the original says nothing at all about a Redeemer, but speaks of an Avenger who will put a curse upon Job's enemies in this life. In fact, Professor Dillon, in his learned and scholarly work, *The Sceptics of the Old Testament*, has demonstrated that the authors of the book of Job, Ecclesiastes, and of the sayings of Agur, in the book of Proverbs, were thorough-going sceptics when divested of the orthodox trimmings added by priests and translators. The Messiah, whose coming is foretold by the prophets, was not regarded as a heavenly ruler, but as a victorious king upon earth, who would restore the kingdom of Israel and place the Gentiles under their feet; and, in fact, the Jews still look forward to the coming of this Messiah, steadfastly rejecting the claims of Jesus Christ to that title, through nearly two thousand years of blood and fire.

Even so orthodox a defender of the Bible as Mr. Gladstone, the author of *The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture*, admits that "the truth concerning a future state does not appear to have constituted a specific element in the divine commission entrusted to the Hebrew race."† And when Gladstone abandoned an orthodox defence, the case was indeed a hopeless one.

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

"THE LIGHT THAT FAILED."

A generation or two back badly lighted churches were the rule. In one of Edward Fitzgerald's letters to Fanny Kemble, he narrates the following, which was told him by "a pious but humorous man":—

Scene.—Country Church on Winter's evening. Congregation with the "Old Hundredth" ready for the parson to give out some dismissal words.

Good old parson, not at all meaning rhyme: "The Light has grown so very dim, I scarce can see to read the Hymn."

Congregation, taking it up: to the first half of the "Old Hundredth":

> "The Light has grown so very dim,
> I scarce can see to read the Hymn."

(Pause, as usual: Parson mildly impatient): "I did not mean to read a Hymn; I only meant my eyes were dim."

Congregation, to second part of the "Old Hundredth":

> "I did not mean to read a Hymn;
> I only meant my Eyes were dim."

Parson, out of all patience, etc.: "I didn't mean a Hymn at all—I think the Devil's in you all!"

Two little girls, returning from Sunday-school, were discussing the progress they respectively had made.

First girl: "I'm past original sin."

Second girl: O! that's nothing, I'm past redemption!"

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* Richard Watson (Lord Bishop of Landaff), *Apology for the Bible* (1820), p. 138.

† G. F. Bettany, *The World's Religions*, p. 227.

‡ Professor Rhys Davids, Article "Buddhism," *Encyclopædia Britannica* (Ninth Edition).

§ Ingersoll, *The Dying Creed*, p. 31.

* Voltaire, Article "Soul," *Philosophical Dictionary*.

† *Nineteenth Century*, 1891.

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Acid Drops.

Mr. Winston Churchill never suffered from attacks of modesty. He put it on record that divine aid was consciously vouchsafed to him when he escaped from captivity by the Boers. He promised to explain the whole incident some time in the not too distant future. But that time has not arrived yet, and probably never will, unless the right honorable gentleman lives long enough to be senile. At that stage of life it is common to indulge in pious reminiscences.

One would like to have had Kruger's opinion of Mr. Winston Churchill's escape. The old man would in all likelihood have sneered at the young Britisher's story of heavenly assistance. That sort of thing was, of course, enjoyed exclusively by the Boers, and mainly by their godly President, who occupied a prominent place in the celestial visiting book.

Whoever goes to the Admiralty will spend more and more millions—if he can. What is wanted is a great body of Navy Scouts, all good Christians, and all able to imitate Jesus by walking on the sea—as Jesus said they would if they only believed. That would be an immense saving in ships. At present the members of the British Navy cannot walk on the sea at all, and sometimes not on shore.

Miss M. Edith Durham, in a letter to the *Nation*, quotes the following passage from a communication from an inhabitant of Kortcha in Albania—where the Greeks are said to be doing so much good:—

> "Pen can never describe the misery and discontent which prevails among the poor population. The above-mentioned incidents are insignificant as compared with the cruelties which I can never write down on paper. The world must surely be amazed that nations, calling themselves Christians, can, either through anger or greed, commit such barbarisms on their brethren. What we expected from the Turks we got in abundance from these Christians. Instead of the liberty and peace for which we fought during so many years, they brought all the debasing elements of their 'civilisation,' with unbridled passions, which are a great disaster to all our invaded places. Yes; the 'Allies' fought side by side simply for the extermination of our nation, and is it surprising, when I say the plain truth, that the population at present under the Servian and Greek banners are calling for the rule of the Crescent and not the Cross?"

Miss Durham used to be a light-hearted friend of the Balkan Christians. She recognises now with a sad heart that they are inferior to the Mohammedans.

Cassell's *Saturday Journal* is bound to provide its readers with something religious in the list of contents. In the last issue a Mr. Parkes Withers answered the question "If We Lost Our Religion?" He thinks we should lose very little for a time, but afterwards there would be a hell on earth, such as he fancies existed before Christianity was introduced. But the fact is that there never was such a hell on earth as this gentleman imagines; and there is hell enough on earth now, after nearly two thousand years of Christianity, to satisfy the appetite of the worst devils conceivable. Christian civilisation seems to be finally winding itself up in a war fever, although it is always declaring that its Founder came to bring Peace on earth, in spite of the fact that he himself said that he came not to send peace but a sword. More of the fruit of man's labor is spent every year on preparations for war. Huge armies of anti-social celibates are maintained at the cost of the better elements of human society, which is cursed and impoverished thereby. And when fighting actually takes place, as in the Balkans lately, it is found that the "Soldiers of Christ," as they call themselves, easily outdistance all rivals in cruelty, murder, and lust. The real truth is that nothing could be worse than Christianity, and almost anything else would be better.

Why did the great Christian Powers keep out of that Balkan cockpit? Simply for their own advantage. All other alleged motives were hypocritical pretences. The combatants were restricted to certain areas. That is all. There was no compassion or humanity in Western diplomacy. The Concert of Europe did not save one man's life, or one woman's honor, or one child's future promise. Yet it might have prevented the whole evil if it had only been minded to do so.

Mr. Parkes Withers argues—if it can be called arguing—that if we lost Christianity altogether "We should without a doubt speedily degenerate into a set of human furies, resorting to all the disorder, violence, and ruthless gratification of our basest animal nature." That is precisely what happened in the case of the Balkan armies, not *without* Christianity, but *with* it. And it has been happening in Albania since what is supposed to be the conclusion of the war. Soldier of Christ has always meant Soldier of Hell.

Dr. J. J. Willis, one of the two bishops whose action in Uganda has led to the Kikuyu controversy, preaching at Westminster Abbey recently, said that the missionary pioneers "died a thousand miles from anywhere." How exact! It reminds one of the customary opening of fairy tales, "Once upon a time."

Lord Charles Beresford, writing in the current issue of *Nash's Magazine*, says that "religion is an accident of birth." It is an accident that leaves lifelong traces.

"You may live anywhere now," says the Rev. A. C. Hill, "from Cornwall to John o' Groat's, and no one will ever suggest to you that you should go to chapel." We beg to differ. We receive scores of circulars during the year, and so do most other people, inviting us to church or chapel and suggesting a grave infringement of duty if we stay away. And what about the house-to-house canvassing that is every now and then attempted? Mr. Hill's excuse for small attendances is too thin. And if it were not, the phenomenon would need explaining. Why is it that, whereas attendance at "Divine Worship" was once thought indispensable it is now negligible? Does it not look as though people are discovering that whether they go to church or stay away, pray or cease to pray, makes no real difference? When people have got hold of a really good thing they usually stick to it. That they have not done so in the case of church attendance speaks volumes to those who read things aright.

Mr. Hill says that no man is now religious for what he can gain either in loaves and fishes or social position. And he adds that social prestige is outside, not inside, the Church. The Church is the home of the poor and the lonely, as it always has been. Well, this is simply not true. It may be admitted that in very many cases a man may stay away from church, and, *if he is silent*, not suffer. But let him open his mouth about religion. Let him exercise the same freedom of speech about the falsities of religion that other people do about its assumed truths, and then see what will happen. In a very large number of cases he will find that social prestige is all on the side of a respectable hypocrisy that aims at pretending to believe in the truth of religion even while it is known to be false.

How else are we to explain the silence of so many public men who are known to be anti-Christian, even anti-religious, in opinion? Are they silent because they do not desire to speak? We do not believe it. Very few men are willingly hypocrites, or remain silent when they might speak. Certainly it is untrue of men who show by their whole life that they have a deal of the propagandist in their make-up. No, the truth is that their social position would be ruined if they spoke out. Religious bigotry does not always approach the heretic with the jailor's key, or with the bribe of solid cash. It would succeed if it did. But the pressure of social boycott tells where other things would fail; and it is only the few that can stand out against that.

As for the Church being the home of the poor and the lonely, Mr. Hill knows better. The one cry of the clergy is that they cannot get the poor to attend Church. Let anyone stand outside a church or chapel on Sunday and note the entrants. How many poor and forlorn will be see enter? And who supplies the funds? Do these come from the poor and lonely? Mr. Hill must try again. His next attempt cannot easily be worse.

"Good Americans, when they die, go to Paris." It seems as if Ella Wheeler Wilcox is bound for the same goal. She has a poem on "Heresy" in *Nash's Magazine* which should guarantee the lady a free ticket. A stanza runs:—

> "The world has a thousand creeds, and never a one have I:
> Nor church of my own, though a million spires are pointing the way on high.
> And heretic, though I am, outside of the pale of creeds,
> I have love in my heart for god and man: and I think it is all one needs."

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A lengthy discussion has been going on in the *Guardian* respecting the supply of the clergy. The complaint is that the quality is poor and the quantity inadequate. The general agreement arrived at by the correspondents and by the editor is that the question is almost entirely one of funds. If better incomes can be provided, better men and more men will be attracted to the ministry. We do not quarrel with this conclusion, save that no amount of money will ever again be able to purchase the kind of intellects that once figured in the Churches. Life has become too vast, and theology too obviously artificial, for that to occur. Money may purchase advocacy, but it cannot buy convictions. And the really great men of the past had sound convictions. That has now become almost an impossibility for men of first-rate intelligence. The Church to-day must either "suffer fools gladly," or buy the ability of men who are for sale, and who fail to convince others because there is no sincerity in themselves.

Apart from this, we quite agree that the question of the supply of the clergy is a question of funds. And no one has even the moral right to object to a clergyman being paid by those who require his services. But if this is so, why keep up the hollow cant about the clergyman being "called" to his work, as though it were a species of supernatural selection? Why not admit plainly that the profession of a clergyman is adopted exactly as that of a lawyer, or a doctor, or a banker. It is one of many methods of gaining a living. Once a man is a clergyman, the profession involves quite enough of self-stultification without its being initiated by an act of hypocrisy.

We don't know what is to be done with the Committee of the Swinton Poor Law Schools. Probably something in the boiling oil line might meet the case. Anyway, this band of reprobates has actually gone so far as to provide the children under its care with cinematograph shows on Sunday evenings. The Guardians have been asked by the Bishop of the diocese to consider the seriousness of "training the children committed to their care to consider attendance at picture theatres as a proper way of spending Sunday evenings." We don't know whether the Committee is considering the gravity of its offence, but obviously its duty to the Bishop and the clergy is to provide customers for the clergy as far as they can. Picture shows on Sunday evening! And for poor-law children too! If *they* cannot be made to attend church on Sunday, then the situation is indeed hopeless.

The *Church Family Newspaper* deserves some special award for its daring. Commenting on the coming performance of *Parsifal*, it remarks that Wagner's opera stood for something more than art and music even at its best; "it was the outcome of fervent religious devotion at its best." Wagner the Atheist as an exponent of religious devotion at its best! It would be a pity to spoil such a gem by further comment.

The Rev. Allen Edwards of South Lambeth, has published an appeal in the *Daily Mail* for Sunday clothing for 3,500 Sunday-school children. This appears to be an English adaptation of the manufacture of "rice Christians," so well-known in the mission fields.

Bishop Tucker has had a fit of mock heroics. Speaking of the present Bishop of Uganda, he said that "if he is sent to the stake I am prepared to go with him." Christians are not martyred for their opinions nowadays. They prefer to penalise Freethinkers.

The death of General Picquart recalls the Dreyfus trial, for the dead soldier took a prominent part in that affair. The great hero of the Dreyfus case was the Atheist, Emile Zola, whose swift live pen set Europe ablaze with indignation, and led to the reinstatement of the unfortunate Jewish officer.

The authorities, who found that Westminster Abbey was too full at the deaths of Herbert Spencer, Swinburne, and Meredith to permit of further burials, have promptly offered to the family the privilege of having Lord Strathcona's remains interred in the Abbey. The clergy do so love the "poor."

The so-called debate held at the Little Theatre on "Miracles" by Mr. G. K. Chesterton was referred to as the "Magic Debate" by the *Daily Sketch*. The whole performance was a miracle of politeness, for few of the speakers ever got near the subject in discussion.

One of the principal jokes in the farce of the "Do Miracles Happen?" debate at the Little Theatre was the presence and participation of the Rev. Dr. J. Warschauer—the gentleman who debated with Mr. Foote at Caxton Hall and made such an exhibition of himself by losing his temper. It was gravely announced in the *Chronicle* that Mr. Warschauer came up all the way from Bradford on purpose. His purpose, we presume, was to save London from being misled. With characteristic modesty he concluded that London was likely to suffer that calamity if he were not there to avert it. So he "came," and we dare say he added the rest of Cæsar's boast "I saw," "I conquered." We understand that the reverend gentleman returned to Bradford. We shudder to think of what might have happened there if he had not done so. To save one place and lose another is such doubtful economy.

"There are things in nature," says Mr. A. C. Benson, one of the most interesting of present-day religious essayists,

> "which one cannot see without a horror of indignation. One sees weak, innocent, well-meaning, harmless people tortured by disease, by miserable delusions of the mind, by wretched misfortunes. I am not now speaking of the victims of the cruelty of man, but of what seems to be the cruelty of nature. No effort of reason, no easy optimism, no ingenious hypothesis is of the smallest avail to explain away these things."

Quite so; but need we try? We can accept them—we *must* accept them—as part of the order of things, and do our best to remedy them. But need we bother about explaining them? We do not "explain" why, if a man's head gets in the way of a falling brick, the man gets damaged. We accept the circumstances as in themselves sufficient. But if we knew that a man's hand threw the brick so that it would encounter the head, then we should want to know why he did it. So with nature. Eliminate the idea of an intelligence behind nature ordering events, and Mr. Benson's perplexity disappears. It is a problem that owes its whole existence to an accepted theory. And there is not the slightest need for the theory. That is why Atheism is by far the more hopeful and helpful position. It does not create difficulties, but it learns to face obstacles boldly. The same problems face Atheist and Theist, but the Atheist is not depressed by feeling himself the sport of an intelligent force quite beyond his control, but apparently quite callous to human suffering.

Mr. Benson finds some "help" in the reflection that sometimes some of our greatest trials have ended well, "and if that is so in one single instance, it is a basis for faith." We do not think so. Granted that in one case out of a large number we benefit from a trial or a misfortune. How can we reconcile that (1) with the idea of a Deity who could as easily have given us the benefit without the misfortune, and (2) with the fact of others getting the same benefits without the misfortune? Besides, it is not true that one case of goodness emerging from evil gives a basis for faith. The reverse of this is the case. One case of undeserved suffering, one case of unmerited disaster, destroys the basis of faith. It certainly destroys all basis for belief in a Deity whose love and mercy is over all his works. At most it leaves man the sport of a capricious intelligence that could have made him better had it chosen to do so, and even now awards favors and punishments with little or no regard to individual merit.

Mrs. T. R. Ferens, wife of one of the Nonconformist M.P.'s, offered a year ago a sum of a guinea to all mothers in Hull with newborn babies, if their children were living a year hence. Mrs. Ferens has now been called on to pay nearly four hundred pounds. The *Methodist Times* says that this is just one illustration of the effect that may be produced when public attention is directed to any particular matter. In the course of our weekly newspaper reading we come across a deal of rubbish, but this is a gem. We wonder that the mothers of Hull don't rise up and lynch the editor of the *Methodist Times*. Does he imagine that these four hundred mothers only kept their babies alive for a year in the hope of getting a guinea from Mrs. Ferens? If any of them did this, we strongly decline to discriminate between the mothers who allowed their children to die, and those who kept them alive for the sake of a paltry guinea. Of course, we do not believe that the offer of a guinea made the slightest difference to the infant mortality in Hull. The incident only shows what an exalted idea of human nature Christians possess.

Mr. Cresswell, M.P., the labor leader in the House of Assembly, was arrested at Johannesburg under Martial Law, and has since been sentenced to a months' imprisonment for what he might have done in England with absolute impunity. Evidently the authorities must have considered

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him a very dangerous character; nevertheless they thought a month's imprisonment a sufficient punishment for his offence. Over here, in the old country, a judge calls it a lenient sentence when he gives a mere nobody four months' imprisonment for certain vulgar words about the Christian religion. The *truth* of what he said is not disputed; the charge against him is made on grounds of *taste* and *feeling*.

How much the people of England, and especially the Liberals, really care for religion, may be measured by the following incident. Sir John Simon, M.P., the Attorney-General, in the course of his recent speech at the Oldham Reform Club, made some gibing observations on several Conservative leaders, including Mr. Balfour. What would be the surprise of a political Rip Van Winkle who fell asleep in 1905 and had only just returned to consciousness? "He would find," Sir John said, "the old, ingenious, astute, and delightful leader of the Conservative party lecturing on religion at Glasgow." This was greeted by the audience with loud laughter. There was something irresistibly absurd in the drop down from the Tory leadership to lecturing the British people on religion. Oh what a fall was there!

Truth, like murder, will "out" sometimes. Some of it was uttered at Plymouth the other day and got reported in the *Western Daily Mercury*. There was a large congregation in the Union Congregational Church to hear a special sermon by the Rev. G. E. Darlaston, of Crouch End, London. We quote the following passage from the *Mercury's* report:—

> "He remarked that hundreds of people did not believe in Christ because of the terrible condition of their big cities. An embassy was recently sent from Japan to study the social conditions of our country with a view to adopting Christianity. They, however, saw the awful conditions of the slums, and went back to Japan and told the Mikado that Christianity in England was a failure. In their slums there was a terrible scene; immorality, vice, and drunkenness reigning supreme."

"How were they going to stop it?" the reverend gentleman asked. Ay, there's the rub. His own recipe was Christian unity. But how is that to be obtained? There's another rub—and the worst of all.

"Mack, the Sky Pilot" is the subject of a report in the *Daily Mail*. He is collecting money "to alleviate the lot of the camp-worker in Canada and other parts." What are the employers doing? We rather suspect it is the "spiritual" lot of these hard workers that "Mack" is seeking to improve.

Rev. Preb. David Jones, Rector of Llanfechain, Montgomeryshire, left £10,484. Another poor servant of Christ is hardly worth mentioning after that:—Rev. Arthur Williams, Mount Wise, Newquay, Cornwall, left £1,299.

John D. Rockefeller, who follows Jesus Christ's teaching about the blessings of poverty by becoming and keeping the richest man in the world, delivers pious addresses as a Christian amateur. Having a mania for saving, at anybody's cost, he has been advising the Sunday-school boys and girls to save all they can, and contribute the result to missionary work. Some of them must have winked. They were listening to one of the greatest jokers of the age.

Rev. R. J. Campbell seems to be sailing on a new tack. He preached the other day at the Digbeth Institute, Birmingham, and spent a good deal of his time in disparaging the human intellect. He quoted the old text about increasing knowledge increasing sorrow. To think, he said, is pessimistic. "The shadow of tragedy," he said, "was over all we do; he defied anyone to say otherwise; intellect was calamitous. There was Swinburne the poet, no man had been able to write more passionately than he, but he saw no glorious to-morrow for mankind." Indeed! It was not thus that *we* read Swinburne in the days of our youth. Forty years ago, on the title-page of a little book called *Heroes and Martyrs of Freethought*, we put the following verse from Swinburne:—

> "Have we not men with us royal,
> Men the masters of things?
> In the days when our life is made new,
> All souls perfect and true
> Shall adore whom their forefathers slew;
> And these indeed shall be loyal,
> And those indeed shall be kings."

Forty years have rolled by and we say "Amen" still to that noble verse. Let it be remembered that the death of the old Lord God in the *Hymn o Man* was accompanied by "the love-song of earth," that Swinburne sang of—

> "Reason and love, whose names are one,
> Seeing reason is the sunlight shed from love the sun."

that he sang, not to the fancied deities of a dreamland faith, but—

> "To the pure spirit of man that men call God,
> To the high soul of things, that is
> Made of men's heavenlier hopes and mightier memories."

And now let Mr. Campbell read the magnificent finish of the splendid "Epilogue" to *Songs Before Sunrise*, and then ask himself whether what he said of Swinburne was really true.

Mr. Campbell commits a blunder which is very common to "believers." They fancy themselves with their present feelings and a different set of beliefs. But a little reflection would convince them that this is an impossibility. You cannot go on fearing you will lose heaven, for instance, when you have come to believe that there is no heaven to lose; neither can you dread going to hell when you once believe there is no hell to go to. Your feelings adjust themselves to your beliefs in all cases. You may suffer in all sorts of ways—personal, domestic, social, and political—by a change in your convictions; but you cannot suffer in the way that Mr. Campbell imagines. You may suffer while the change is going on, but you cannot suffer when the change is completed.

The feelings that gather round anti-theistic convictions—for that is what Swinburne called himself—are naturally very different from the feelings that gather round convictions like Mr. Campbell's. And the preacher might have seen, if he had read the poet more attentively, that the psychological adjustment was as complete in the one case as in the other. Not believing in God or in a future life, Swinburne had to look (and did look, and was satisfied) to natural instead of supernatural "consolations." His ideas of life and its meaning were more stoical than the preacher's, they were also less egoistic, and one is puzzled to see how they were less "glorious." Take this stanza, for instance, from the "Prelude" to *Songs Before Sunrise*:—

> "For what has he whose will sees clear
> To do with doubt and faith and fear,
> Swift hopes and slow despondencies?
> His heart is equal with the sea's
> And with the sea-wind's, and his ear
> Is level to the speech of these,
> And his soul communes and takes cheer
> With the actual earth's equalities,
> Air, light, and night, hills, winds, and streams,
> And seeks not strength from strengthless dreams."

Swinburne, like Meredith (in a letter to Mr. Foote) had no love for "smoking priest's opium." Mr. Campbell, with the cheap tears in his eyes, and the cheap grief round his mouth, seems unable to find comfort in anything else. But he is *not* a Swinburne, and *not* a Meredith; and a little calm reflection on that fact might do him a great deal of good.

Father Bernard Vaughan has been chuckling over the fact that the Church of England was created by Act of Parliament, and he prophesies that it will die by Act of Parliament. Yes, and there will be no vacancy created—not even for the Catholic Church.

We don't understand the surprise caused by the Abbé Lemiere's resigning one of the four vice-presidencies of the Chamber of Deputies, in deference to the Pope's objections. A Catholic priest is a priest first, and a citizen afterwards to say nothing of the separation of Church and State.

Seats in the pit were sixpence in Shakespeare's time. Prices were doubled on Sunday afternoon when new plays were introduced.

Canon Sutton ought to find the Holy Ghost quite enough in the ghost line to preach to the Church people of Dearham, in Cumberland. One old-established ghost might be forgiven. But when the reverend gentleman starts a ghost-shop of his own he goes too far for an age of cheap books and compulsory elementary schools. The one about the girl with the sealskin coat in the moonlight, which he saw on the roadway when riding home after dining at Davenby Hall, suggests a number of questions, which we prefer to leave to the reader's imagination.

London dealers took advantage of the prolonged bitter east wind to raise the price of coal several shillings a ton. They then denounced the greediness of the coal porters who demanded an extra penny a ton for their share of the business. And this is a Christian country.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

March 1, Glasgow; 22, Manchester.

To Correspondents.

ROLAND WOOD.—See paragraph. Thanks.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

JOSEPH BAYCE.—Proof in due course. Always glad to hear from you. We hope the pressure of business has its compensations.

E. B.—Your cuttings are always welcome.

J. B.—Probably he was "associated with Bradlaugh and Foote" as a man in the street watching the royal procession might have been associated with Queen Victoria on Jubilee Day. Thanks for the cutting. We daresay the man Musgrave has found it "better to be with Jesus."

J. W. BURGESS AND OTHERS.—We are not passing your letters over to Mr. Repton. There was no need for the promise he made at the end of his article. We understand that there is a sixpenny edition of Buchanan's *Foxglove Manor*. That price puts it within the reach of everyone who wants to read it, without troubling Mr. Repton or anybody else in the matter.

W. DAVIDSON.—We are much obliged. We wish others would take as much interest in promoting our circulation. See also paragraph.

A. J. MARRIOTT.—We see no analogy. Your letter was not ignored, it was answered, all the pith of it being given in the reply. This has always been our policy, and nobody is deceived. We have never laid ourselves open to publish a lot of correspondence; our space is insufficient to do anything of the kind; nor is it within the scope of our object in carrying on the *Freethinker*.

A. E. MADDOCK.—Received and shall appear.

G. HULL.—Figures reprinted from a publication dated 1892 are not exactly up-to-date in 1914. Are they?

H. R. E.—We have printed official figures again and again after Christian Church Conferences. The decay of the Churches, in point of numbers, is a common-place of every Annual Meeting.

W. DODD.—See paragraph in "Sugar Plums." Thanks.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. J. Atherley Jones, who has retired from North-West Durham, after representing it for so many years, has taken the post of Judge in the City of London. He was a good Radical and his father was Ernest Jones, the famous Chartist leader. Mr. Atherley Jones was engaged by the National Secular Society's solicitor as senior counsel for the defence of Harry Boulter in the "blasphemy" prosecution six years ago. He called upon the jury for an acquittal, which he did not obtain, for the judge was evidently in favor of a conviction. But it is certain that Mr. Atherley Jones's speech—which was reported verbatim at the time in the *Freethinker*—had a great deal to do with the lenient way in which Boulter was treated. He was allowed to give an undertaking not to repeat such language as he had been prosecuted for, and was liberated on his own recognisances. Even when he broke his undertaking, a year or so afterwards, he was only sentenced to a month's imprisonment.

Mr. Foote conducted his own defence at the time of the *Freethinker* prosecution in 1883, but Mr. Avory and Mr. Cluer were retained to watch the case on points of law. Mr. Avory has become a "red" judge, and Mr. Cluer is a well-known and highly esteemed London magistrate. It is curious that the court he presides over is situated in Old-street. The Hall of Science, Bradlaugh's headquarters from 1869 to 1890, was situated in the same street. It has long ceased to exist, having been demolished to furnish a portion of the site of the huge Bovril block of buildings.

Our principal point has still to be pressed home. All who have stood, even legally, against the Blasphemy Laws, have made their way in the world. In spite of all the bigotry in England they have gained honor by serving the ends of justice. There were K.C.'s who declined to accept a brief in the Boulter case. It is to Mr. Atherley Jones's honor that he accepted it as a matter of duty.

Mr. Lloyd visits Glasgow to-day (Feb. 1) and delivers two lectures (noon and evening) for the local N. S. S. Branch in the North Saloon, City Hall. We hope the local "saints" will give him the audiences and the welcome he merits.

The President's Honorarium Fund Circular will appear in next week's *Freethinker*, together with acknowledgment of all subscriptions for 1914 received up to date. Those who desire to be in the first list should remit by Monday, February 2.

Commissioner Lamb, of the Salvation Army, had a long puff of the Army's work in Canada—a long puff and a very brazen puff too—in the Edmonton local newspaper—the *Weekly Herald*. It was followed, in the exigencies of make-up, perhaps, by a bright little letter from Mr. Walter Davidson, leading up to the announcement that he intends to offer to supply the Edmonton Free Library with a copy of the *Freethinker* every week. Mr. Davidson will also "place at the disposal of our opponents a ten years' file of the *Freethinker*, for anyone of them to point out the passages which render the paper unfit for the public. If they fail (he adds) to make their case good no reason will then remain for refusing the offer." What answer can there be to this offer? It shows Mr. Davidson's absolute *bonâ-fides*.

We are glad to hear that Mr. Aneurin Williams, the Liberal candidate at the North-West Durham by-election, is in favor of "religious equality for Wales." We hope he was also heckled about religious equality in England. We mean with respect to the prosecution, which is also persecution, of Freethinkers. The woes of Nonconformists are always being trumpeted; listening to the Rev. Dr. Clifford, you might imagine that every Church parson kept a Dissenting minister a captive in his cellar; but one hears very little, even from them, of the wrongs and sufferings of Freethinkers. We confess to feeling our ardor somewhat damped by Nonconformist selfishness. We do not mean that *all* Nonconformists are indifferent to the rights of others. Mr. Halley Stewart, for instance, is a friend of justice and liberty all round.

HUMAN AND DIVINE JUSTICE.

Surely the perfection of human justice is measured by its efficiency. That system is best which most diminishes crime. But if we apply this rule to divine justice we get into hopeless difficulties. We must suppose that the Creator wishes to diminish wickedness as much as possible, for otherwise he would inflict useless suffering. Yet we have to suppose that he inflicts punishments—infinite and eternal, according to the most logical theologian, in such a way that the reforming influence is a minimum and the suffering a maximum. If a human ruler admitted that the punishments inflicted by his laws had very little deterrent effect, but argued as a set-off that he kept the greatest part of his subjects in perpetual confinement and incessant torture, we should certainly say that, whether by his misfortune or fault, he had a very ill-regulated kingdom. Yet, when we try to reconcile ourselves to the existing evils by assuming the existence of this supernatural balance, we necessarily present the universe after this fashion. Whether it is an edifying theory or not I cannot say. I do not see how it helps to strengthen our belief in the safeguards of morality. The explanation is simple enough. The world is what we see it, abounding in misery and wickedness. If you believe in a moral governor you are bound to put extraordinary limitations upon his power to vindicate his benevolence, or to limit his benevolence in order to vindicate his power; and, in either case you take away with one hand that safeguard to morality which you give with the other. Meanwhile, in any case, you have to stop all logical gaps by talking about mystery. It is simpler to admit that the whole is a mystery, and to cease the effort to play ourselves with words.—*Leslie Stephen*, "*Science of Ethics*," pp. 455, 456.

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The Cross Roads.

HE was playing on an old string of the ministerial lyre—a string, I imagined, that had been played done. There were two-and-a-half newspaper columns on the Cross Roads of Life; and, according to the news-note, the sermon had been preached to a large audience mostly composed of young people. Evidently they had enjoyed a debauch of verbosity. My first thoughts after reading the sermon were smothered in the awful perils these cross roads presage; the stress and trial; the courage and glory and renown; the strength and grandeur of character; the weakness, humiliation, darkness, and despair; the unutterable hardships, and disgrace, and sorrow; all these things, and many more, came sweeping around my mind from this fantastic place named the Cross Roads of Life.

It is, or was, a favorite subject with our enemies. Instinctively you connect it with young men, who are always invited particularly to be present. Girls do not matter. Their road is always a straight one to the household and the pew. When the supply of young men becomes more limited, and the ministry is on the rocks for human raw material, perhaps it will be discovered that girls have cross roads.

We see a wide road stretching before us, delightfully shaded, in places, by rich foliage. It is the way of youth. There are fields on both sides where the happy days speed quickly, passed in the sunshine; and the shade, what is it but the close safety of the home, with the strong paternal arms around us, and the deep love to mellow our young lives? But the trees are growing farther apart as we walk along; the fields are not all free; some even have barbed wire fencing; and the clouds often obstruct the sunrays. The shadowy places are not quite so safe nor so comfortable; and the road is often rough and wearies the feet. Self-reliance comes as a substitute to the fatherly care; but its coming is frequently fitful, and often frightens us. As yet we are too timid. And then the trees are left behind. Rocks and morasses guard the roadway. The glare of the sun fills our eyes, and the rain comes plashing down. The road curves, too; and often we feel as if we toiled through a foreign country. And then, suddenly, we hesitate, afraid; for before us are the Cross Roads.

Up to this interesting point the young man never knows where he is going. Without warning the necessity of selection comes into his unprepared mind. He is called upon by circumstances to exercise faculties of which he has been more or less unconscious. Difficulties have to be met and overcome; dilemmas that harass and confuse the brain have to be tackled; conclusions have to be reached; conclusions upon which a life's happiness may rest, or from which a life of misery may ensue; all of which represent rather a strenuous undertaking for a brain entirely untrained in the unravelling of the intricacies of human affairs.

The peculiar strain of the circumstances is intensified also by the strange lack of verifiable data. Although so much depends upon the direction in which the young man will go, the information regarding the various roads is exceedingly lean. And what there is of it possesses the weak character of the unprovable. It appears to be a fairish amount of assumption backed up by a goodly amount of dogmatism, and not very much else.

However, be that as it may, the young man has reached the cross roads. Before him are three finger-posts; and the pastor has a fine opportunity for picturesqueness of language. Never yet have I been disappointed in this respect. When you strip off the verbiage you discover that one road leads to Worldism—that is, Materialism, the place where there are plenty drinks, plenty gambling chances, plenty women, and evil things like these. It is an enjoyable place, for a time; but it is Hell. The finger-post that points the other way bears no instructions. It just points. That road leads nowhere at all; and only young men who "don't care a hang" go there. Needless to say, the road is crowded; and the pastor implores his young hearers to think well ere they start to traverse the way of apathy and indifference. He waxes woeful on the soul-destroying influences of thoughtlessness. While the hell-road kills the soul quickly, the unassuming perils of the unnamed road accomplish the same result slowly. The pastor is not very sure whether the lingering death is not the more terrible.

The third road is the one that leads straight on. It is but the continuation of the happy road of youth. The finger-post says, "To Heaven," mystic words, out of which so much courage has been drawn, and from which so much refreshing hope has been obtained after the hardships of early manhood!

With many flourishes of arms, and with many passionate intonations of voice, young men are strongly advised to overcome the alluring fascinations of the road that leadeth to destruction, to despise the easy way of apathy, and to choose the path of Godliness, that which bringeth peace of heart passing all understanding, and by the side of which floweth the waters of everlasting life. Despite this advice, the young man must e'en make his own choice. Upon his own soul rests the responsibility of his selection. He, himself, must decide upon eternal life or eternal death.

It is a fairy tale. As a matter of fact, young men simply do not have cross roads to throw them into a state of extreme mental exhilaration. They drift into religion and drift out of it. They slip into human indiscretions and into the mire, if they have been born out of it, just as they slip into moral strength if they happen to have been born outside virtue. The process is generally a slow one. Choice never exists. Ninety-nine per cent. of young men are sublimely unconscious of any struggle previous to finding themselves on this or that road; and the one per cent. suffers from delusion.

The picture of a young man standing, chin in hand, head downcast, in the orthodox attitude of deep thought, at the hypothetical cross roads of life is pathetic. "Perhaps," says the cynic, "the poor pastor refers to other things beside religion. Mayhap he means love. But here again he is slightly off. The young man in love is never out of cross roads."

The cross roads of life, in the pastor's estimation, are really named Religion and No-Religion. Their existence is imagined, and then forced upon minds more or less religiously receptive. When the youthful eyes begin to sweep wider and ever wider ranges of the activities of life; when the home influence is superseded by the more powerful outside environment; when the young mind finds within itself the potentiality to weigh things in the balance; and when it discovers that there are many contradictions to the teachings of the fireside; then it is that the ministerial fraternity tremble at the possibility of another loss. They imagine a stopping-place where none exists. They dream of pitfalls on a smooth road. They vision an upward path and a downward where there is really the one broad highway of human life.

Young men, as a body, obey the law of averages. The majority of them never escape from the average mentality. They never experience the intellectual anxieties imagined and exploited by priests. The exceptionally gifted young man may pass through many mental crises. He may be drawn up sharply by a startling absurdity in his beliefs, and a shadow may be cast upon his mind. New knowledge may pull a foundation-stone from the temple of sacred truth, as he deems it, and he may feel the first shiver of the falling building. A swiftly flying shaft of criticism may penetrate to the deeps of his most cherished opinions, and he may writhe as he finds himself secretly at war with his best friends. But, even for him, there are no cross roads, as the priest pictures them. His Freethought is a slow process of evolution. It needs time, study, patience, and perseverance. Ordinary reasoning can dispose of an

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example of religious fatuity; but much study is required to satisfy the mind regarding the genesis and survival of that fatuity.

The cross roads fallacy is a religious fly-paper hung from the pulpit to catch the unwary; but thanks to the teachings of Freethought the average intelligence of young men to-day is more 'cute than it used to be; and there are fewer flies on the paper.

ROBERT MORELAND.

Goethe.—II.

(*Continued from p. 59.*)

YET, despite this proud beginning, Goethe was musingly mournful. This was not traceable to love, say some, or blank despair, or unrequited affection. "He had longings," says James Sime, "which the actual world seemed incapable of satisfying, and the more he reflected on life, and sought to comprehend its meaning, the more he was oppressed by the old, old mysteries which have baffled and saddened so many a noble mind." He seems to have been as melancholy as Hamlet, without that brooding thinker's tragic excuses. In all likelihood, however, Goethe's despondency was mainly attributable to the semi-morbid emotions which so frequently accompany the generative phenomena of adolescence.

In addition, his idolised sister Cornelia was at this time married, and her loss was no small matter; his loved Lotte also took to herself a spouse, and his friend Merck went away. He also quarrelled with his truculent friend Brentano, and all these untoward circumstances conspired to give birth to a clever, if morbid, work from Goethe's pen. This story, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, is a fragment of highly colored autobiography in its main outlines. The incident upon which the suicide of Werther turns is as old as the world. We are confronted by the usual three, husband and wife and lover, and the lover shoots himself, and the lady lives unharmed. Charlotte is cutting bread-and-butter for the children when Werther sees her for the first time; and if Thackeray is to be trusted, she went on with this same congenial occupation after Werther's body was borne before her on a shutter, lying cold and dead.

Werther gave Goethe a European reputation. It ran like wildfire through Germany. In was enthusiastically acclaimed and it was sternly reprobated. Napoleon read it over and over again. Various governments—so like governments—gave it a splendid advertisement by attempting to suppress it. As Oscar Browning writes :—

> "It was printed, imitated, translated into every language of Europe, criticised in every periodical, with the fullest meed of praise or scorn. It made the round of the world, and penetrated even to China. The *Werther* fever wrung the hearts of men and women with imaginary sorrows; floods of tears were shed; young men dressed in blue coats and yellow breeches shot themselves with *Werther* in their hands. It opened the floodgates of pent-up sentimentalism.....which the calamities of the next generation were sternly to repress."

Crowned with the laurel leaf of fame, the author of *Goetz* and *Werther* now produced various trifles such as *Clavigo* and other immature pieces. He was now a man of consequence, and could afford to make literary experiments. Men of letters eagerly sought his society. Klopstock was too woodenly religious for Goethe's taste. The scoffing Basedow he found interesting. Lavater, the celebrated physiognomist, decidedly attracted him, despite his dogmatism and intolerance. In a way, Lavater's religiosity formed a bond of union between the two men. Goethe was able to compare the theological ideas of Lavater with the spiritual strivings of Fräulein von Klettenberg, the friend of his youth, whose religious aspirations and meditations are immortalised in *Wilhelm Meister* in the "Confessions of a Beautiful Soul." Her influence on Goethe, then and subsequently, was undeniably great. But this, as Lewis states, "was not so much the effect of religious discussion as the experience it gave him of a deeply religious nature. She was neither bigot nor prude. Her faith was an inner light which shed mild radiance around her."*

That Goethe's attachment to Lavater was purely psychological in character, and that he in no way sympathised with his quaint religion, is made manifest enough in the comic pen-picture the poet painted, in which he sits like a worldling with a prophet on each side of him. Goethe eats a chicken with epicurean relish, "while Lavater explains to a country parson the mystery of the Revelations, and Basedow astonishes a dancing master with a scornful exposure of the inutility of baptism."

Goethe was still sweet and twenty; a quarter of a century of his life had rolled away. Jacobi saw in the wild and wayward youth an extraordinary creation of God, endowed with a nature "which develops itself as the flower does, as the seed ripens, as the tree grows into the air, and crowns itself." Speaking of him at the same period, Heinse said, "Goethe was with us, a beautiful youth of five-and-twenty, who is all genius and strength from head to foot, his heart full of feeling, his soul full of fire and eagle-winged." The youth had yet to attain the full proportions of manhood, but the ripened experience which procures this was materially assisted in Goethe's case through the influence of Spinoza.

He had read one of the innumerable "answers" to the Jewish philosopher. But, as he says, "It made little impression upon me, for I hated controversies, and always wanted to know *what* a thinker thought, and not what another conceived he *ought to have thought*." He now re-read Bayle's malicious essay on Spinoza with pronounced dislike. He was prepared to judge the tree by its fruits, and the philosophy which nourished and sustained such an ethical personality as Spinoza's must, so Goethe reasoned, be vastly different to that execrated by its assailants. Goethe now studied Spinoza himself, and he writes of him :—

> "This man, who had wrought so powerfully on me, and who was destined to affect so deeply my entire mode of thinking, was Spinoza. After looking around the world in vain for the means of developing my strange nature, I met with the *Ethics* of that philosopher. Of what I read *in* the work, and of what I read *into* it, I can give no account; but I found in it a sedative for my passions, and it seemed to unveil a clear, broad view over the material and moral world. But what especially rivetted me to him was the boundless disinterestedness which shone forth in every sentence.....The all-equalising calmness of Spinoza was in striking contrast with my all-disturbing activity; his mathematical method was the direct opposite of my poetic style of thought and feeling, and that very precision which was thought ill adapted to moral subjects made me his enthusiastic disciple, his most decided worshiper."

At an earlier period Goethe had been attracted by the luckless Italian humanist Bruno, whose life, labors, and martyrdom he had read of in Bayle's imperfect sketch. And now he for the first time began to realise the grandeur and glory of Bruno's greatest disciple and successor. At the same time he was anxious to form an impartial judgment of the merits of the Christian faith. The influence which Fräulein von Klettenberg and the Moravian Brethren had exerted over him began to wane. The Christian doctrine of the fall of man was repugnant to him, and he found that he was really of the company of those who, while "admitting the hereditary imperfections of man, ascribed to nature a certain internal germ of good which, animated by divine grace, was capable of growing up into a joyous tree of spiritual happiness."

These and similar thoughts led him towards the idea of writing an epic on the Wandering Jew, in which he intended to rationalise the story of Jesus' mission and death. But although the subject long recurred to him, his contemplated treatment of the legends of Ahasuerus and Christ in poetic form was never realised.

* *Goethe*, p. 31. Third edition, 1875.

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Another theme at this time haunted his mind. Goethe meditated long and deeply over man's position in relation to Nature or God, and he was more and more impressed with the importance of human individuality. What more natural, then, than that he should turn to the Greek myth of the Titan, Prometheus? As he himself tells us:—

> "The fable of Prometheus lived within me. The old Titan web I cut up according to my own stature, and began to write a play expressing the incongruous relation in which Prometheus stood with respect to Jupiter and the later gods, in consequence of his making men with his own hands, giving them life with the aid of Minerva, and thus founding a third dynasty."

Although the *Prometheus* of Goethe remains a fragment, it is a fragment of such splendid quality that had it been completed it might have rivalled *Faust* itself. It rises to height of grandeur that extremely few of his subsequent writings approach. As George Henry Lewes pointed out, the Prometheus of Æschylus glories in his audacity, but

> "while glorying he *complains:* the injustice of the tyrant wrings from him cries of pain, cries of physical and cries of moral agony. The whole tragedy is one wild outburst of sorrow. The first words he utters fling his clamorous sorrow on the air, call on the Divine Ether, and the swift-winged winds, on the sea springs and the multitudinous laughter of the waves, on the Universal Mother, the Earth—and on the all-seeing Eye, the Sun, to witness what he, a god, must suffer."

In the *Prometheus* of the modern poet the Titan never indulges in self-pity. He defies the unjust Zeus in terms of sublime scorn. Inscrutable Destiny, which creates Titans, is likewise the parent of the gods, and will witness their decline and fall. Prometheus knows full well that the brutal tyranny of Zeus is not eternal, and he looks forward with calm resignation to the better and the brighter day. It is also true that the Titan of Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* never flinches, as witness the wondrous lines:—

> "To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
> To forgive wrongs darker than earth or night;
> To defy power which seems omnipotent;
> To love and bear; to hope till Hope creates
> From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
> Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent."

And now note the even grander majesty of conception which leaps in Goethe's sublime lines:—

> "Curtain thy heavens, Zeus,
> With clouds, with mist!
> And like a boy that crushes thistle-tops,
> Loosen thy rage on oaks and mountain ridges,
> Yet must thou leave
> Me my earth standing;
> My hut, which myself built;
> My hearth with its bright flame
> Which thou dost envy.
> I know nought so pitiful
> Under the sun as ye gods!
> Scantily nourishing
> With the forced offerings
> Of tremulous prayer
> Your divinity!
> Children and beggars,
> And fools hope-deluded,
> Keep ye from starving!
> Who gave me succor
> From the fierce Titans?
> Who rescued me
> From slavery?
> Thou! thou, my soul, glowing
> With holiest fire!
> Yet didst thou, credulous,
> Pour forth thy thanks to him
> Who slumbers above!
> I reverence thee? Wherefore?
> Hast thou lightened the woes
> Of the heavily laden?
> Hast *thou* dried the tears
> Of the troubled in spirit?
> Who fashioned me man?
> Was it not almighty Time—
> And Fate eternal,
> *Thy lords and mine!*
> Here I sit and shape
> Man in my image:
> A race like myself,
> That will suffer and weep,
> Will rejoice and enjoy,
> And scorn thee,
> As I!"

(*To be continued.*) T. F. PALMER.

Freaks of the Saints.

ONLY those who, like the unfortunate writer, have waded through the refuse rubbish heaps of blood, mire, and putrefaction known as ecclesiastical history, and turned over, in the hopes of discovering the lost secret of Christianity, the records of folly and fanaticism in the lives of the saints, can fully realise the mingled atrocities and absurdities which go to make up Christian history. Christianity always seems to me like the brigand of the story, who, after accumulating wealth by the most nefarious means, sets up as a millionaire prince, posing as a philanthropist, and imposing on those who knew not his past history. The records of Christian sectarian strife, of the crusades and other wars of religion, of the persecution of Jews, witches, science, and torture of the Inquisition, and other items of past Christian history, are so abominable and appalling that no sensitive mind can even read its red record without trembling and tears. Fortunately, with the long tragedy there is mixed some elements of comedy and even of broad farce. As it is probably better to smile at Christian folly than to frown at its fanaticism and fraud, we may look back on these with some amusement, even though the knowledge of the sombre background forces sobriety into our mirth.

The student of the humors of Christianity might find a wide field in the comicalities of its sectarian disputes; the quarrel between the Homoousians and the Homoiousians, whether the Son was the same or similar to the Father; whether he is co-eternal as regarding his sonship; whether he has one or two natures; and the great split between the Greek and Latin churches on the momentous question, whether the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father or from Father and Son combined. Gibbon, the great master of the lofty sneer, has touched on many of these points, but in the records of synods and councils there is an extensive field of humor which even Gibbon did not completely explore, or at any rate did not expose.

What a field of mirth might be found in the questions solemnly discussed by learned bishops and divines, such as whether Christ was not an hermaphrodite; the method by which Mary was impregnated; whether Christ resumed the portion of his person which he lost by circumcision when he resurrected; and many similar delicate subjects, in which celibate priests and monks have ever delighted. Then the philosophical questions of the schoolmen in regard to quiddities, essences, remission, intention, proportion and degree, nominalism and realism, the nature of God and angels.

> "Whether angels, in moving from place to place,
> Pass through the intermediate space;
> Whether God himself is the author of evil,
> Or whether that is the work of the devil.
> When and wherefore Lucifer fell,
> And whether he now is chained in hell."

One learned synod, over which Pope Boniface IV. presided, resolved the question as to whether monks, being dead to the world, could perform episcopal functions. It was demonstrated that they could, because monks were angels, which was proved by the following "*sillygism*": "All animals with six wings are angels. Monks have six wings, the cowl standing for two, and the four extremities for four more—*ergo*, monks are angels."—Q.E.D.

But the most amusing records of Christian insanity are to be found in the stories told of the Christian saints. The forthcoming writer of the *Comic History of Christianity* will here discover matter enough, not only as Fabian says, for a May morning, but to occupy many volumes. Some of the Gospel miracles, as, for instance, turning water into wine and devils into pigs, are comical enough, but they are beaten by the miracles of the saints. Here are a few instances:—

St. Paul, of Thebes, outdid Elijah, who is now said to have been fed by Arabians instead of by a raven. We are told by St. Jerome he was fed daily for sixty

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years by a crow. When St. Anthony, he who the Devil tickled at night and tempted in the shape of a nude female, visited St. Paul, the obliging crow always brought a double allowance. Probably it was like manna, the angels' food baked in heaven after the prescription for *Kosher* baking supplied to Ezekiel.

When St. Catherine of Sienna visited the tomb of St. Agnes of Monte Pulciano, and the living saint sought to kiss the feet of the dead one, the latter lifted up her leg through an excess of humility, so that St. Catherine might not bend too low to perform the osculation.

St. Bonaventura, not being able to take any food in the ordinary way, by reason of a violent disorder in his internal regions, had the pyx placed outside, and the holy wafer thereupon penetrated into his bowels. Who that believes that Christ fed five thousand on a few loaves and fishes, should doubt it?

St. Clare, of Montefalco, had meditated so constantly upon her Savior's passion, that all the instruments—cross, hammer, nails, scourge, and crown of thorns—were found engraved upon her heart after death. These stigmatics are quite common, and the effect of mind on matter is further shown in an image of Christ at Naples, which an impious wretch stabbed. So sensitive and sensible was the statue that it put its hand to the wound, and it has stayed there ever since.

St. Barbara's father was a heathen; and when he discovered that she had become a Christian, he drew his sword to kill her. She prayed to God, and a large stone opened itself and received her body into the cavity, and carried her to a mountain full of caves. She was discovered by a shepherd, who, for his insolence in approaching the virgin, was turned into a marble stone, and his herd into locusts. This is, perhaps, as true as that Lot's wife was changed into a pillar of salt.

The Devil was always tempting the saints and getting the worst of it. He once impertinently intruded his person into the chamber of St. Juliana, at an unseemly hour. It was a dangerous thing to do. To intrude into female saints' chambers at unseemly hours is ever perilous. He found it so. She engaged Beelzebub in a pitched battle, and fought tooth and nail, throwing him down on the floor and trampling him with her feet, till he was glad to escape with his tail between his legs, howling all the way back to hell. St. Juliana ought to be the patroness of the prize ring.

The devils, unable to obtain any triumph over the chastity of Marie Angelique, resolved, with refined malignity, to insult her modesty by standing her on her head in the presence of credible witnesses. They did so, but an immediate and truly extraordinary miracle was wrought simultaneously. The law of gravitation was suspended with regard to her clothes. They remained stiff and immovable around her virgin limbs, as the marble drapery of a statue. The blood may have been drawn into her face by her peculiar attitude, but there was not the slightest occasion for a blush.

The usual method of meeting the assaults of the Devil was by self-flagellation. One saint, when he saw a female, rolled himself in snow. Another went naked among briars. St. Macarius, having one day killed a gnat, by way of atonement went into the marshes, and there for six months exposed himself to all winged and creeping insects, till his flesh was swollen and ulcerated. This legend is one which shows that Christian monkery was brought westwards by the monks of Buddhism. In the full odor of sanctified filth, St. Macarius once returned to his monastery humiliated by the sense of his own inferiority, exclaiming: "I am not yet a monk, but I have seen monks." He had fallen in with two of these wretches stark naked. The saint was accustomed to carry about with him eighty pounds of iron. His disciple, St. Eusebius, outdid him, carrying one hundred and fifty pounds of iron, and living for three years in a dried-up well. Some, however, objected to nakedness, also to soap and water. The latest addition to the Romish calendar, St. Labre, never washed himself for forty years. St. Athanasius boasts of St. Anthony's holy horror of water, with which he never contaminated his feet, save in the direst necessity. St. Euphraxia joined a convent of one hundred and thirty nuns who never washed their feet and who shuddered at the mention of a bath. St. Ammon had never seen himself naked. On one occasion, coming to a river, he was too squeamish to undress. He prayed to be spared this indignity, and an angel transported him to the other side. No wonder Jortin remarks of a miraculous monk, whose corpse was said, like that of St. Philip Neri, to emit a heavenly perfume, that it was not surprising that he should smell like a civet-cat when dead, who had smelt like a pole-cat when living.

But the subject of the freaks of the saints is too extensive to be comprised in a single article.

(The late) J. M. WHEELER.

IMMORTALITY.

On no subject, perhaps, has so much weak reasoning been permitted to pass current as on this of the immortality of the soul; partly because men had already a faith secured to them on quite other authority, on quite other grounds, than those reasonings which served very pleasingly and eloquently to fill up the page. In old woodcuts one sometimes sees a vessel in full sail upon the ocean, and perched aloft upon the clouds are a number of infant cherubs, with puffed-out cheeks, blowing at the sails. The swelling canvas is evidently filled by a stronger wind than these infant cherubs, sitting in the clouds, could supply. They do not fill the sail, but they were thought to fill up the picture prettily enough.

Most of these arguments resolve themselves into passionate wishes to prolong some experienced delight, or to gratify some thwarted desire. A fragment of this present life is torn from all its necessary conditions, and perpetuated in the future world. Sometimes the action of the drama, broken off on earth, is to be carried on elsewhere; the revenge is to be completed, the calamity to be redressed. Sometimes the happiest scene of all the drama, alas! so transitory here, is represented as stationary and eternal there. Loving souls love on for ever. They see themselves like a group of beautiful sculpture, placed, safe and changeless, in Elysian bowers. Beautiful sculpture it must be; for life, as we know it—the very life they would transfer into eternity—is perpetual change, is growth and decay, extinction and reproduction; and our present human consciousness is built on, or interlaced with, the incessant movements of a vital form, that grows, blossoms, and dies like any other flower of the earth.—*William Smith.*

PROPER SELF-RESPECT.

At the gates of Heaven an angel prest,
An angel newly and properly made;
And she was—and she knew it—so very well drest
That nothing in Heaven could make her afraid.

Through the gates of Heaven she peered at the Blest,
As through Paradise streets they wandered and strayed
And gave audible thanks that *she* was well drest—
For *they* were in garments most shockingly made.

Every angel she saw—and to see them thus drest
Brought a blush to the cheek of this *à la mode* maid—
Wore a radiant garment, cut, it must be confest,
Like that in which mortals in sleep are arrayed.

A positive pain wrung her sensitive breast
At the sight of this garb, which decorum forbade—
And the dread that she also must be thus undrest
On her sensitive face cast a visible shade.

Saint Peter advanced with a bow of the best
(For the Saint liked the looks of this trim little maid),
And he graciously said: "When you're properly drest,
Your harp is all ready, and waits to be played."

Just one glance all disdainful she cast on the Blest,
In their garments of white, to Saint Peter salaamed,
And replied: "If in Heaven one can't be well drest
I'll go—Somewhere Else, and be well drest and damned!"

TRUE SECULARISM.

Love each other, help each other,
Juggle not with dreams and phrases—
Make ephemeral existence
Beautiful, in spite of God!

—*Robert Buchanan.*

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KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Mr. Miller's, 8 Matthias-road, Stoke Newington): 7.30, Business Meeting—the Season's Program, etc.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workman's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, C. Cohen, "Christianity in its Cradle."

OUTDOOR.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (North Saloon, City Hall): J. T. Lloyd, 12 noon, "The Passing of the Christian Sabbath"; 6.30, "The Lying Gospel."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, E. Egerton Stafford, "Dreams in Relation to Religion."

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As men's prayers are a disease of the will, so are their creeds a disease of the intellect.—EMERSON.

The Child—and Religion.

IN the *Sunday Chronicle* for January 25, "Hubert" discusses the question of "What is the Salient Characteristic of Our Time?" He concludes that it is the changed attitude of society towards the child. In this I am strongly inclined to agree with him, although not for quite the same reason that "Hubert" gives, and at the same time very strongly dissenting from some of the statements made by him in the course of his article. Here is one statement, for example, that specially challenges contradiction:—

> "Religion is not changing, that's flat. It is changing its forms, but change is not necessarily decay. There is probably more interest taken in religion in this twentieth century than there has been since the sixteenth; there is more interest taken in it in this year 1914 than there was in 1904. In the eighteenth century there really was a decay of religion; then practically all cultivated persons were sceptics. To-day even the most prominent men of science are freely uttering doubts about Darwinism and the mechanical theory of the universe.....Roughly we may say that if the nineteenth century was a period of doubt diversified by faith, ours looks like being a period of downright credulity diversified by doubt."

This is a very positive statement of the present position, and yet nearly every sentence admits of serious question. "Hubert" accepts interest in religion as equivalent to religion being a living force. But there is really no necessary connection between the two. For reasons that will appear presently, I take a very keen interest in religion; but I hardly think that anyone would cite me as evidence that religion was alive. Religion is only alive and healthy when it exerts a distinct influence on human life. When a savage consults his tribal deities before venturing on an expedition, when a Spanish or Italian peasant kneels before a roadside shrine for much the same reasons, these are proving that with them religion is really alive. But how is it with ourselves, or with any other advanced community? We do not look to religion for any real help, we do not trust to it in any great emergency; prayers for rain, for the averting of disease, or for national improvement, are openly smiled at; and in a hundred-and-one ways we see that, while numbers still accept religion as a mere theory, very few seriously attempt to guide their life by it. And if this does not prove decay, what, in the name of all that is reasonable, does it prove?

Unquestionably there is great interest shown in religion. Studies of religion were never more elaborate than they are now, and never called keener brains to the work. But between studies of religion and belief in religion there is a world of difference, and the difference is vital. Consider the significance of a man like Professor Frazer devoting ten large volumes to one work on religion, with another work on religion, also in several volumes, in course of issue. It is not that Professor Frazer is religious. He would probably call himself an Agnostic, while I should certainly describe him as an Atheist. All that his study of religion proves, all that the awakened interest in religion proves, is that people have discovered that the key to understanding many social and other customs lies in a knowledge of religion in all its phases—particularly the earlier ones. Religion is very early in the field. It is one of the earliest, if not the earliest, of man's conscious attempts to subdue nature to his needs. Our social institutions, from kingcraft to matrimony, begin amid a perfect welter of superstitious beliefs. For many, many generations, religion maintains a strong ascendancy in social life. And the consequence is that the man who would understand life must understand the nature of the beliefs in the light of which human nature has endeavored to map out for itself a safe course. No man would insist more strongly upon a thorough study of religion than an educated Atheist. It is not at all a question of *believing* it—merely one of understanding it.

A consideration of the subject from this point of view would have saved "Hubert" from his curious confusion about the eighteenth century and afterwards. It is not true that then "all cultivated men were practically sceptics." There were very many who were not. And even then the scepticism of the large majority was only in relation to Christianity. They would nearly all have professed some sort of a religion. And revolting from Christianity merely as untrue, they naturally ceased to interest themselves in it. But that was before the rise of a really scientific study of social evolution. The science of anthropology was unknown. With the growth of that branch of knowledge men were forced back upon the study of superstition as essential to a right understanding of social phenomena. Interest in religion revived, but it was the interest of scientific curiosity, not that of the convinced believer.

In passing, I may also say, that I do not know the prominent men of science who "are freely uttering doubts about Darwinism." I do know many who are doubtful as to whether Natural Selection alone is adequate to explain the origin of new species; but that is quite a different question. As to doubts about the mechanical theory of the universe, I can only say that men of science were never more "mechanical" than at present. The only reasonable significance of the mechanical theory in this connection is that of the operation of forces that are invariable and ultimately calculable. And far from that view being rejected, the tendency is to bring even the operation of "spirit" within that category.

I have been a long while coming to the child, but it was necessary to say first what has been said, because "Hubert" suggests in an oblique manner that the growth of interest in the child is in some way connected with the revival of religion. Of course, this is not the case. Historically, religions have shown precious little interest in children, and the concern of the modern Church to capture them is, in itself, symptomatic of religion's decline. While religion really controls life there is no need for the Churches to bother about children, because social life impresses religion upon them as they grow up. With the decline of religious belief there arises the need for secluding children, as far as possible, from the influence of contemporary life and thought. The child has to be captured or the adult will be lost. Consequently, the interest of the modern Churches

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in the child is no more than that of a number of corporations anxious to secure clients.

The rise of the child originates from a quite different quarter. As a subject of profound educational, sociological, and racial significance, the study of the child is mainly post-evolutionary. "Hubert" thinks that part of the present significance of the child is due to the fact that we have ceased to appeal to the past. This is partly true, but it is also true that it is in a way due to our recognition of the profound importance of the past, and that the child here gives valuable help. When the rise of the doctrine of evolution taught men that the origin of our civilised institutions was to be found in savage life, that both biologically and psychologically growth is always from the simple to the complex, and that, in a general way, individual growth is a *resumé* of racial growth, it was soon seen that the child offered unexpected opportunities for scientific exploitation. Watching the growth of a child's intelligence, of its attempts to grapple with the various phases of life as they successively present themselves, observers were the better able to reconstruct for themselves the part played by religion in the mental evolution of the race. The child became a veritable human document, however blurred some of the pages might be.

One aspect of child study inspired by evolutionary teaching had this reference to the past. Another had reference to the future. This latter was too obvious to have ever been ignored, but it is safe to say that evolution gave it an altogether new significance and importance. Discussions on heredity—Lamarckian, Mendelian, or other, questions as to the selective or modifying power of the environment, all bore directly on the possibilities and capacities and significance of childhood. Even so simple a thing—apparently—as the play of children became a deeply interesting problem, fraught with great possibilities of race culture. The problem widened and deepened the more closely it was studied. Nature and nurture became the key-words of all who dreamed of putting racial development on a really scientific basis. First, the perfecting of the stock, next the preservation of desirable types once we had secured them.

I agree with "Hubert" that the emergence of the child is the most characteristic feature of our time. But with this religion has had nothing to do. The concern of all the Churches in the child is a purely sectarian one. That is the problem there. The scientist has a higher and a better purpose. His object is not sectarian, it is not even national. It is racial. The breeding of a better race is the purpose here, and whether that better race is predominantly British, or German, or Latin, or Slav, is a question of quite subordinate interest. But the main thing I wish to stress here is that the great humanistic and humanising impulse has come from science—which is so often called by short-sighted people and by hide-bound theologians, "cold," "heartless," "materialistic," etc. Materialistic in the ethical sense of the word it certainly is not. Materialistic in the philosophic sense it is and must be if it is to remain science. But it is ultimately the great civiliser and the great humaniser, because it is the great truth-bringer. It shows man what he is, what are his capacities, and what he may become. And beside that message, and beside these lessons, the gospel of theology becomes a mere idiot's tale—sound and fury, signifying nothing.

C. COHEN.

The So-called Christian Facts.

CHRISTIANITY is said to be a religion founded upon facts of history and productive of facts of experience which, it is claimed, is not true of any other religion under the sun. The so-called facts of history, so confidently gloried in by simple-minded and ignorant believers, are being seriously questioned by modern criticism. Indeed, there are Christian teachers not a few who no longer regard them as true. While adhering as firmly as ever to the conviction that Jesus actually lived, they have abandoned the belief in his miraculous birth and resurrection. That is to say, they have retained the human Jesus at the expense of renouncing the Divine Christ. Those of them who still believe in and worship the Divine Christ, regard him, not as a historical being, but as a theological creation. Of what service the alleged historical Jesus is to them it is difficult to understand, because, like all others, they wholly ignore his teaching and worship only the Christ. Of course, the majority of them, dropping the Christ altogether, call themselves followers of Jesus simply, although few, if any, really follow him, except nominally. Some divines, however, while nominally accepting the conclusions of criticism, yet cling wistfully to the stories of the birth and resurrection, treating them, if not as facts, at least as beautiful poems or parables. "There is a sense," they aver, "in which they are true, though it is almost impossible to express it in words." As we have no religious axe to grind, we do not hesitate to declare that criticism has completely undermined the historical foundation upon which Christianity was erected. Virgin births and resurrections are mythological fancies, not historical facts.

Now nearly all theologians are agreed that, even though the facts of history must be given up, the facts of experience cannot be disputed. "Christ lives," they exclaim; "we enjoy daily interviews with him; he is the way, the truth, and the life within us; and this joyous experience proves the truth of our faith beyond the possibility of a doubt." Again and again are we assured that the testimony of experience is absolutely conclusive, or that experience is the court of final appeal. In the estimation of some, religious experience is synonymous with knowledge. We have heard many a perfervid Christian's cry: "I know that Christ lives because I commune with him every day." Here and there, however, we do come across a theologian who is bold enough to cast a suspicion upon the reliability of the testimony of experience. Professor Peake says:—

> "When eminent religious teachers stake the truth of Christianity on the testimony of the religious consciousness, and say that this in itself is enough, though criticism do its worst against the New Testament, one may well stand aghast at the recklessness of such a position. The Christian consciousness is a very complex thing; it is rooted in certain historical facts guaranteed to us by the New Testament teaching. Cut the New Testament away, and sooner or later the Christian consciousness will vanish with it" (*Christianity: its Nature and its Truth*, pp. 146-7).

We venture to endorse Professor Peake's criticism. In our opinion the Gospel Jesus and Paul's Christ are identical, in the absence of whom there would have been no Christian experience. No sentence could be saner, or more logical, than the last in the above extract: "Cut the New Testament away, and sooner or later the Christian consciousness will vanish with it." The only rational inference is that Christian experience possesses no evidential value whatever. If a man believes the New Testament with any degree of enthusiasm he is bound to have the Christian consciousness; if he does not believe it, he is denied the experience. The ordinary apologist says: "Prayer and communion with God are as much facts as those of science, and of far greater importance, as affecting the whole man." Of course they are facts that affect the whole man, and no Freethinker ever dreamed of contradicting the statement; but they are facts entirely dependent upon acceptance of the Bible as a Divine Book. We candidly admit that religious experience is a fact which some people thoroughly enjoy, but our contention is that it proves absolutely nothing except that those who have it are supernatural believers, while those who are not are without it.

Professor Peake, we are aware, is a believer in God and the living Christ. To him they are both personal beings in personal relation with mankind. He

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believes that he has a blissful fellowship with his loving Heavenly Father and his all-merciful Redeemer. Of necessity, fellowship is the state or relation of being a fellow or associate, or companionship of two or more persons on equal and friendly terms. "Our fellowship," says St. John, "is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1 John i. 3). "God is faithful," says another Scripture, "through whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. i. 9). If language is to be relied upon, God and man are fellows, associating on terms of closest friendship, and God calls us "into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." Such is the Christian creed subscribed by all believers. Is it true? Professor Peake answers for us: "Cut the New Testament away, and sooner or later the Christian consciousness will vanish with it." Can this be a compliment to God as man's fellow? Surely a fellow worthy of the name would not withdraw from fellowship through the destruction of a book? Does not the Professor realise what a terrible insult he offers to God if God there be? Does he not see that in reality he paints God as the very worst fellow conceivable? Not only he will not enter into fellowship with us unless we know and believe the New Testament, but if by any chance this sacred book is destroyed, sooner or later he will cease to be our fellow. Why, the moment you throw the powerful searchlight of reason upon such teaching you discover how infinitely ridiculous it is. If God existed he could and would communicate with all members of his family without the instrumentality of any book or priestly order.

When Professor Peake wrote his memorable sentence, "Cut the New Testament away, and sooner or later the Christian consciousness will vanish with it," he little thought that he was playing beautifully into the hands of his opponents by furnishing them with a weapon whereby to crush the Christian faith. A God who can only come to us through a book or a church, a Savior who can only do his saving work through and up to the capacity of a professional priesthood, is not worth having—is, in fact, far worse than no God at all. Yes, Professor Peake deserves our warmest thanks for having forged in the arsenal of theology an arm of immeasurable strength to the soldiers of reason. We have often heard the statement made by preachers, more noted for zeal than intelligence, that if every copy of the Bible in existence were burnt to-morrow Christianity would be utterly unaffected, because Christ sat on the throne of the Universe and was resolved to bring the whole world to his feet. Being the head of the Church, he would not rest until she embraced the entire human race. But those champions of the Cross were fundamentally mistaken. Deprived of the Bible, the Church would be shorn of all her strength, and without the Church there would be no Christianity. The truth of this is being illustrated before our very eyes. It is a common complaint that people no longer read the Bible. The Sacred Book is so utterly neglected because it has ceased to be regarded as God's Word. The result is that the Churches are steadily emptying, and that with the decay of the Churches Christianity is losing the little hold it ever had upon the population.

The truth is that the Christian religion is supported by no facts. The nativity-narratives, the accounts of the miracle-working career and the sacrificial death, the resurrection and ascension stories, are so legendary as to be practically worthless, while the facts of experience only prove that those who enjoy them treat the legends as if they were literally true, which is absurd, especially in face of the undeniable truth that socially and morally Christianity has been a gigantic failure. All the proud claims made on its behalf have been flagrantly falsified all through the long and dark centuries. The facts are all dead against it. They rise mountains high, and testify in the clearest manner that the Cross has caused rivers of innocent blood to flow wherever its banner has been waved. Even to-day Christian Europe is a vast armed camp. All possible preparations are being made by every Christian country to shed blood on the largest possible scale. This is the state of things to which Christianity has brought us, and in which all the Churches acquiesce.

J. T. LLOYD.

Science and the Soul.—II.

(Continued from p. 69.)

> "The received doctrine is that God puts a soul into every human being at his birth—*i.e.*, that whenever man makes a body God makes a soul, or sends a pre-existing soul, to inhabit it; or that, in some mysterious fashion, with the commencement of earthly life commences also the life of an immortal nature. On the assumption, then, of man's free agency (an essential postulate of all intelligible reasoning on moral questions) it would seem to lie in man's decision how many souls shall be created or incarnated, and when, and pretty much to what earthly conditions and influences. On his determination, or passion, or it may be on his indulgence of a momentary appetite, depends the question whether an immortal spirit shall be called into existence, and shall encounter—*having no voice in the matter*—not only the risks and sufferings of this short human life, but the incalculable and fearful chances of an unending life to come." —W. R. GREG, *Enigmas of Life* (1891), p. 214.

> "Can another body, then, avail to stay the hand of death, and shall man by a second nervous system escape scot-free from the ruins of the first? We think not. The laws connecting consciousness with changes in the brain are very definite and precise, and their necessary consequences are not to be evaded by any such means."—PROFESSOR CLIFFORD, *Lectures and Essays*, p. 175.

WHAT can science tell us of the soul or of a future life? Absolutely nothing. There is not an atom of scientific proof that the intellectual faculties can exist apart from the brain; they are extinguished with the life of the body. In the words of Professor Tyndall, in the famous "Belfast Address,"—

> "Divorced from matter, where is life? Whatever our *faith* may say, our *knowledge* shows them to be indissolubly joined. Every meal we eat, and every cup we drink, illustrates the mysterious control of Mind by Matter."

The belief in the existence of a soul apart from the body, and its survival in a future life, had been undermined by the Materialists of the eighteenth century. The advent of Darwinism and the theory of evolution shattered it for ever. It now remains a matter of faith, not of knowledge.

In the days when people believed the Bible to be the inspired Word of God, that the world was created in six days, and that God moulded the first man from the earth, it was easy to believe that God placed a soul in the clay whereof he had moulded Adam, as a sculptor fashions a model of the figure he intends to carve in marble.

But when it was discovered that man—instead of being specially constructed in this manner by a divine artist—was the result of countless ages of evolution, and that his ancestors could be traced back into the animal world, from which he had descended, the question at once arose as to where the soul came in? To this searching question the Churches have as yet made no intelligible reply. The case is well put by Sir Ray Lankester, as follows:—

> "No one ventures to deny, at the present day, that every human being grows from the egg *in utero*, just as a dog or a monkey does; the facts are before us and can be scrutinised in detail. We may ask of those who refuse to admit the gradual and natural development of man's consciousness in the ancestral series, passing from ape-like forms into indubitable man, 'How do you propose to divide the series presented by every individual man in his growth from the egg? At what particular phase in the embryonic series is the soul with its potential consciousness implanted? Is it in the egg? in the fœtus of this month or of that? in the new-born infant? or at five years of age?' This, it is notorious, is a point upon which Churches have never been able to agree; and it is equally notorious that the unbroken series exists—that the egg becomes the fœtus, the fœtus the child, and the child the man. On the other hand, we have the historical series—the series the existence of which is inferred by Darwin and

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his adherents. This is a series leading from simple egg-like organisms to ape-like creatures, and from these to man. Will those who cannot answer our previous inquiries undertake to assert dogmatically in the present case at what point in the historical series there is a break or division? At what step are we to be asked to suppose that the order of nature was stopped, and a non-natural soul introduced?"*

Again, if man has an immortal soul, why deny one to the animals, from which he descended. Says Archbishop Whately:—

"None of those who contend for the natural immortality of the soul have been able to extricate themselves from one difficulty, viz., that all their arguments apply, with exactly the same force, to prove an immortality, not only of *brutes*, but even of *plants*; though in such a conclusion as this they are never willing to acquiesce."†

John Wesley saw, and admitted the force of this argument. Southey, in his *Life of Wesley*, says:—

"Some teachers of Materialism had asserted that if man had an immaterial soul so had the brutes, as if this conclusion reduced that opinion to a manifest absurdity. 'I will not quarrel,' said Wesley, 'with any that think they have. Nay, I wish he could prove it; and surely I would rather allow them souls than I would give up my own.'"‡

In a footnote to this, Southey observes:—

"On this point Wesley's bitterest opponent agreed with him. 'I will confess,' says Toplady, 'that I never yet heard one single argument urged against the immortality of brutes which would not, *mutatis mutandis*, be equally conclusive against the immortality of man.'"

In one of his Sermons, Wesley conjectures:—

"What, if it should then please him, when he has made us 'equal to angels,' to make them what we are now,—creatures capable of God, capable of knowing and loving and enjoying the Author of their Being?"§

He thought that their appearance would be changed into their "primeval beauty," their corruptible body put on incorruption, when "they shall enjoy happiness suited to their state, without alloy, without interruption, and without end" (p. 71).

There is not a single argument used to prove the natural immortality of man that cannot equally well be used to prove the immortality of animals.

But suppose it be admitted that the horse, the dog, the elephant, and the higher anthropoids share this gift with man; where are you going to draw the line? Why deny it to the rat, the scorpion, the flea, and yet lower vermin not usually mentioned in polite society?

Then, again, no hard-and-fast line can be drawn between the plant and the animal kingdom. Some organisms, like Æthalium septicum, a fungus common on the surface of tan-pits, under other conditions exhibits all the characteristics of an animal. As Professor Huxley says, there is "an intermediate kingdom, a sort of biological No Man's Land for all these questionable forms."‖ The plant world merges, by insensible gradations, into the animal world, just as the animal, by insensible gradations, has emerged in man.

Suppose we grant a soul all round, then we must suppose that, after death, the spirit of man will support the spirit of a flea while riding a spiritual horse, followed by the spirit of a dog—the horse supporting itself on spiritual grass.

Then, again, to cite Ludwig Buchner:—

"Life in eternity, according to the tolerably unanimous opinions of theologians and philosophers, is to be a continuation of or an improvement upon the life in this world. It must therefore seem to be indispensable that each individual soul should at least have reached on earth a certain stage of formation as a groundwork for its further development to proceed upon. But now only think of the souls of children dying in infancy, of old people who had lapsed into second childhood, of insane persons, of idiots, of badly trained individuals, of irresponsible beings, of savage nations, or of those standing on the lowest rungs of our European society. Are the defects in civilisation and education to be continued in the other world on the same or on a higher scale."*

There are other problems to be considered. For instance, it is reported in the Gospel of Matthew (ch. xxii.) that Jesus, upon being asked regarding the case of a woman who had buried seven husbands, as to whose wife she would be at the resurrection, evaded the question by stating that at the resurrection they would neither marry, nor are given in marriage. Closely connected with this is the question of recognition in the future life, which, as Professor Bonney remarks, "often causes perplexity." He observes:—

"Suppose a married couple to have been parted by death while both were comparatively young, and the survivor to die at an advanced age, how is that one to be recognised by the other; or the child, which has been taken away when its parents were in their prime, to know them when they also, after thirty years or more, cross the dark river—to the 'land of the leal.'"†

The Professor hobbles out of the difficulty by hazarding the conjecture—

"the same person may wear a different aspect to different individuals. Parents may seem young to the child whom they lost in the earlier years of their married life, and old to those who, some forty years later, had been the solace of their age."

So that mothers who died leaving infants in long clothes will know them in that state; those who died when the infants had reached twenty years of age will know them as young men; while others who knew them as old men will know them in that condition. So that the same person will appear to different people as an infant, as a young man of twenty, and as an old man of eighty or ninety.

Such are some of the inextricable confusions and absurdities into which we are led by the theory of an immortal soul.

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

* Sir Ray Lankester, *The Advancement of Science* (1890), pp. 53-54.

† Richard Whately, *Essays on Some Peculiarities of the Christian Religion*, p. 67; cited in Huxley's *Hume*, p. 178.

‡ Southey, *Life of Wesley* (Bohn's Edition, 1871), p. 369.

§ Sermon lx., "The General Deliverance," Wesley's *Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 72.

‖ Huxley, *Lay Sermons*, p. 128.

* Ludwig Buchner, *Force and Matter*, pp. 414-15.

† Professor Bonney, *The Present Relations of Science and Religion*, p. 170.

Goethe.—III.

(Continued from p. 76.)

IN the winter of 1774 Goethe was presented to the young Prince of Weimar, Karl August, and this led to his visiting him at Mainz. In the following year the Prince became the ruler of the Grand Duchy of Saxe-Weimar, and shortly afterwards, while on a wedding journey to Stuttgart, he pressed the poet to visit him as soon as he returned to Weimar with his bride. As the invitation was delayed, Goethe became restless and dissatisfied, and decided to depart for Italy. He had reached Heidelberg when the summons arrived from the Court, and Goethe retraced his steps and appeared at Weimar in the autumn of 1775. This visit he regarded as a brief holiday with a friendly ruler, while in reality circumstances so shaped themselves that his whole future career was completely altered.

Weimar is now a famous city, but before Goethe and his circle made it so it was a mere uninteresting speck on the map of Continental Europe. An old-world walled town, its architecture and inhabitants were reminiscent of the Middle Ages. The city gates and portcullis preserved the defences of wild warlike days. "Saxe Weimar," in the words of Lewes,

"has no trade, no manufactures, no animation of commercial, political, or even theological activity. This part of Saxony, be it remembered, was the home and shelter of Protestantism in its birth. Only a few miles

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> from Weimar stands the Wartburg, where Luther, in the disguise of Squire George, lived in safety, translating the Bible, and hurling his inkstand at the head of Satan, like a rough-handed disputant as he was. In the market-place of Weimar stand, to this day [1854], two houses, from the windows of which Tetzel advertised his indulgences, and Luther afterwards in fiery indignation fulminated against them."

Arrived in Weimar, Goethe and the Duke were soon on terms of the closest intimacy. Envy, hatred, and uncharitableness sent the whisper abroad that the poet and his royal friend squandered their days and nights in graceless gaiety. The ligneous Klopstock sent Goethe a sermon on the subject, and the meddling moralist was politely but plainly informed that he was prying into matters that in no way concerned him, the real facts of which had been grossly misrepresented.

Whatever the true circumstances were, the whirling gaities of Goethe's early Weimar weeks were certainly exciting, and may have led to a serious waste of precious time. As a matter of fact, the young Duke was a gifted man, and his favorite was a brilliant genius. There is hardly a man of outstanding ability in the whole realm of history and biography who has not a dash of the Devil in his nature. Among these Devil-endowed mortals the prince and the poet must be included. But that their sins were serious, or that Goethe led the Duke astray, are the inventions of the poet's scandal-loving enemies. No one who has studied the facts can resist the conclusion that Goethe was the Duke's guardian angel, and that he strenuously exerted all his powers of persuasion to curb the wild, passionate craving for pleasurable excitement which Karl August had inherited from his fierce and warlike ancestors. Both by precept and example, Goethe provided a pattern that any ruler who realised that the prince is but the first of his subjects might copy with advantage. As a result, the Duke became one of the best and most enlightened of German princes.

The young Duchess for a time regarded Goethe with disfavor, but she soon appreciated him at his proper worth, and it fell to the lot of the poet to compose the domestic derangements of the newly-wedded pair. The Duchess Amalia, the young Duke's mother, recognised Goethe's extraordinary abilities from the first, and she was untiring in her efforts to induce him to remain in Weimar.

Wieland was already there, and he and Goethe again met. Despite an old grievance, Wieland was soon won over to Goethe's side, and, as he said in a letter to a friend, he was soon "as full of Goethe as a dewdrop of the morning sun." The post of Court Preacher falling vacant, Goethe earnestly recommended Herder as an excellent candidate for the office; but the clergy, who regarded that philosopher as being little better than an infidel, were by no means willing to welcome him. All opposition, however, was ultimately overcome, and Herder was installed at Weimar in 1776. And it is only just to point out that Goethe secured this favor for his friend at a time when Herder was most bitter in his language towards him.

Karl August's attachment to Goethe was so strong that he was anxious that they should never be sundered. He therefore sounded the State officials as to Goethe's admission to the public service. The sage councillors were aghast at the suggestion; they one and all regarded the idea of a dreaming poet entrusted with the responsibility of State business as utterly preposterous. The Duke and his mother, nevertheless, swept all official opposition aside, and Goethe began his wonderful government career.

At this period Goethe's friendship with the Frau von Stein commenced, a friendship that lasted some ten years. Whether she was highly intellectual or not, she was certainly a woman of culture and character. Goethe's senior by six years, she had been eleven years a wife, and was the mother of seven children. Baron von Stein was a sensible man of the world, who regarded his wife as a honest woman, which she unquestionably was. Her advice—and very good advice—was always at Goethe's service amid all his cares and anxieties, and to such a nature as the impressionable poet's the sympathy and affection of an intelligent and handsome woman were of incalculable value. Her children, in common with all other children with whom Goethe was brought into touch, were never so happy as when in his company.

Goethe now experienced a profound change in his estimate of life's duties. He began to reproach himself with his desultory versatility. He sternly determined to master his imaginary weaknesses and immolate his passion for pleasure on the altar of self-sacrifice. He became conscientious to a degree in the manner in which he carried out his official duties at Weimar, and he performed his functions like one to the manner born. He was a constant attendant at the meetings of the Privy Council; he mastered every public matter submitted to him; he reformed the currency; he reopened the disused mines of Ilmenau; he brought the ducal army into a state of efficiency; he acted as diplomatist, and he modernised and did much towards rationalising the University of Jena. He employed considerable energy in promoting popular education in Weimar, and established a precedent which afterwards enabled Haeckel to speak his fullest and freest thoughts from the chair of a university which is probably less hampered by sacerdotal interference than any other in the world.

During this laborious period he commanded universal respect. His benefactions were boundless, and he performed his works of charity in secret. Even among Germans the warm-hearted poet is commonly pictured as a cold and austere man. The stately dignity of his old age is to some extent responsible for this, but Goethe's lack of insularity appears to be the chief cause of this misconception. The author of *Faust* was too universal in his outlook to make a good patriot, and he had small faith in the general run of German rulers. To classic Greece and Imperial Rome, to the English Shakespeare, the French Voltaire, and the Hebrew Spinoza he owed and acknowledged allegiance. He sang his songs in the temple of all-creating Nature, and his deity was coextensive with the universe itself.

Before Schiller knew and loved the man who was afterwards to mean so much to him, he was amazed to observe the reverential attitude which Herder displayed towards Goethe. But when Schiller's personal relationship with Goethe enabled him to form a juster judgment, he confessed that—

> "It is not the greatness of his intellect which binds me to him. If he were not as a man more admirable than any I have ever known, I should only marvel at his genius from the distance. But I can truly say that in the six years I have lived with him, I have never for one moment been deceived in his character. He has a high truth and integrity, and is thoroughly in earnest for the Right and Good; hence all hypocrites and phrasemakers are uncomfortable in his presence."

After ten years' strenuous service to the State, Goethe could no longer resist the day-dream of his youth, and he made preparations to visit the land of the olive and the vine. Almost in secret he set out on his Italian pilgrimage, and in the southern atmosphere his poetical and artistic powers reasserted themselves. He visited Verona, Vicenza, and Venice, and was enraptured with the splendors of the city by the sea. At Florence he tarried but a few short hours; the City of the Seven Hills beckoned him away. "If I am dragged to Rome on Ixion's wheel," he wrote, "I will not complain." He was fascinated with the capital of the ancient world. He strove valiantly to restore to his mind the palmy days of Rome. But as he mournfully confesses—

> "It is a sour and sad undertaking to pick out the old Rome from the new.....One comes upon the traces of a splendor and of a destruction, both of which go beyond our conceptions. What the barbarians allowed to stand, the architects of modern Rome have laid waste."

But this melancholy feeling soon passed away, and

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he began to picture in his mind's eye something near akin to the departed grandeur and glory of the Pagan mistress of the world.

The Apollo Belvedere and other masterpieces of ancient art he now studied at first hand, and for the first time realised the immense inferiority of the plaster casts to their inimitable originals. His old interest in anatomical science was revived by his studies of the ancient marbles, and he meditated more and more deeply over the problem of the metamorphoses of plants.

The semi-Pagan art of the renaissance also impressed him profoundly. He was lost in admiration for Raphael's Vatican masterpieces, but he bowed down before Michael Angelo's paintings in the Sistine Chapel. "I could," he said of these sublime creations, "only gaze and stand amazed. The inward sureness and manliness of the master, his greatness, go beyond all expression."

Goethe led a retired life in Rome. He made himself known to a few choice spirits, and enjoyed happy intellectual intercourse with Tischbein and Meyer, the artists, with Moritz, the author and traveller, and with the famous Angelica Kaufmann. For a time he essayed to become a reputable artist, and took great pains to improve himself in painting, modelling, and drawing. At the outset he was gratified at his progress, but was ultimately driven to the reluctant conclusion that Nature had denied him the capacity which enables the artist to create things of enduring beauty.

To Italy he had carried various writings to complete or recast. His prose *Iphigenia*, a drama to some extent founded on the play of Euripides, he determined to transform into poetry. In its present form Goethe's *Iphigenia* is a poem of wondrous beauty, but the friends in Rome to whom he read the manuscript were evidently disappointed with it. They looked forward to something more closely akin to the earlier *Goetz von Berlichingen*. Angelica Kaufmann alone appreciated the great merits of the poem. Most competent critics now regard it as a consummate work of art which is in many ways superior to its Greek prototype.

Having received an extended leave of absence from Weimar, Goethe journeyed with Tischbein to Naples, and observed with interest the smoking volcano Vesuvius. He enriched his mind with the art treasures of Naples, and recalled the departed glories of Pagan civilisation as he studied the ruins of Pompeii and Herculaneum. After a visit to Sicily, during which he half ascended Mount Etna, he reached Messina, whence he embarked for Naples. Once more in Rome, the attractions of the city of the Tiber frustrated his earlier resolve to return immediately to Weimar. For almost a year he lingered in Rome, and in the meanwhile he gave *Egmont* its final form, worked at *Faust*, and gave the finishing touches to some of his minor writings.

The immense services that art has rendered religion were made clear to Goethe when he attended the imposing ceremonies of Catholicism during Passion Week at Rome. The sacrament of the Mass in the Sistine Chapel, and the ceremonies in the same edifice on the morn of Easter Day, were doubtless responsible for some of the most marvellous scenes in *Faust*. At length the hour of parting came, and having enjoyed a moonlight ramble along the Corso, and after paying a farewell visit to the Capitol and the Colosseum, he passed northwards towards Florence and Milan, and in June, 1788, returned to Weimar.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be continued.)

Poor Old Father!

Tess of the D'Urbevilles on the films is a disappointment. From almost every point of view it is inadequate, and altogether unworthy of a remarkable book. And yet, even when this is said, Mr. Hardy's work has a central incident so vivid and so unmistakable in its purport that any kind of representation can hardly fail to have other than a salutary effect. The Christian consciousness has manifested itself in a few uglier ways than in its vicious assessment of the relative guilt of man and woman in all forms of sexual irregularity. The heartless treatment meted out to the mother of an illegitimate child, for instance, makes one almost despair of human nature, whilst the extension of the penalties to the hapless infant is surely the last word in meanness and brutality. To waken minds to generosity and understanding on such matters is one of the worthiest of objects. Surely no Englishman can be said to have accomplished more in this direction than Thomas Hardy.

In bringing home to the multitude the stupidity and inhumanity of current judgments on such matters this production should have an excellent effect. There is one respect, however, in which this picture-play is noteworthy and significant to Freethinkers. Readers of the novel will remember that portion of the book in which Tess, believing her baby to be dying, and accepting the Church's teaching that an unbaptised infant will suffer unending torments, seeks to have the state of affairs put right. The clergyman, however, in view of the circumstances of its birth, refuses to perform this office; and Tess, in her great distress of mind, herself performs a ceremony of baptism over the child, in the hope that it will conform to the divine specification. This pathetic incident is reproduced on the film, and, as an advertisement of the crude doctrine of infant damnation, serves a useful purpose. But the full force of the lesson is deliberately circumvented. Immediately preceding the amateur baptism, we are coolly told, by the letterpress, that the FATHER of Tess prevents her having the child baptised. This is outrageous enough to be ludicrous. We wonder whether the promoters, with a view to allaying the force of opposition to the Sunday picture show, have thought it expedient to prove their sympathy with religious sentiment (and methods) by doing the Church such a kindly turn? Or was it that the self-appointed Board of Censors, to whose dictates our picture firms appear to submit with laughable docility, asked for this amendment as a condition for their "fit for production" certificate? Whatever the reason, the presiding spirit over the fate of pictures has had his sport with *Tess of the D'Urbevilles*.

Freethinkers are too familiar with such happenings to be greatly irritated. On all sides we meet with evidences of a disposition to save Christianity from dangerous criticism at all costs. And criticism of the foregoing variety, which represents the Church's practice as an outrage on decent human feeling, belongs to a peculiarly effective type of criticism. The heart has a logic of its own, and when the Church comes into conflict with that, defeat is certain. The graveside scene in *Hamlet*, with its lashing the "churlish priests," who had refused the fair suicide "Christian" burial, has been doing its share towards disintegrating the Christian superstition for centuries. As the bigots may yet require further conciliation, we would suggest to the company exhibiting the Forbes Robertson *Hamlet* that this scene be prefaced with the explanation, "Laertes refuses to allow his sister to have Christian Burial." This, and a few other improvements on similar lines, would surely convince the most rabid opponent of Sunday pictures that they are capable, in judicious hands, of making for righteousness and assisting the cause of Jesus.

The Christian Church was never a pleasant institution; but once upon a time it had a little dignity. Their doctrines, they admitted, sounded brutal, but they were *true*; therefore, they couldn't really be as brutal as they seemed. So they put them forward in their nakedness, and were not ashamed. But nowadays they are very much ashamed, and the demand for fig-leaves and any kind of decent covering is extraordinary. The Oracles of God are up for alteration and repair.

T. H. ELSTOB.

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Acid Drops.

It is reported that the Pope will remove his embargo on the Tango if it is called something else. That reservation is supposed to save his infallibility.

Papa Sarto's opinion on photography will be solicited next, we presume. Ladies—most of them, no doubt, good Christians—are already having their bare backs taken; some for friends, and some for publication in the newspapers. It is difficult to see how they can go much beyond this. His "back parts" were all that Jehovah ventured to display to Moses. But you never can tell. Female enterprise is remarkable for great boldness nowadays. A word from Papa Sarto may save us from the "altogether."

What a way truth has of finding its way out! A very pious member of the Government—none other than Mr. Runciman, who became Minister of Agriculture after serving an apprenticeship as Minister of Education—the other day thanked heaven that "cows and swine had no religion." His meaning was that if they had there would be the same quarrels among them as among human beings. And in this we quite agree with him. If cows and swine had religious beliefs they would become a nuisance to everybody—even to Mr. Runciman. The reverse of this truth is that when human beings lose theirs they will probably behave themselves better.

The *Methodist Times* recognises the imputation, and resents it. It says that the questions at issue are hardly religious, but are restricted to the political questions that are raised by the State establishment of religion. Nonsense! The fundamental question *is* a religious one, and nothing else. It is the question of how to make the rising generation religious before it finds out what is being done. Religion cannot afford to wait. It must catch people young if they are to be turned out good Christians. Leave them alone till they reach years of judgment, and there will be more churches on the market for picture-palace investors.

It is astonishing how eagerly all the religious papers are pursuing the subject of the evil influence of the cinema on young people. One journal, the *Guardian*, remarks that the tendency is for young children to steal money to go to picture palaces; even members of Church Brigades spend their pence that way instead of contributing to the Brigade funds. Pictures are also bad for the eyes and generate a craving for excitement, clothe villainy in an attractive guise, etc., etc. Of course, the moving film may have an injurious effect on sight—we are not sure; but there is a deal of humbug about the rest. We fancy we have heard of children stealing money for sweets and marbles; and even adults occasionally steal for other purposes. And, of course, there are always chuckle-headed magistrates and other people who will put it into youngsters' mouths, when they have done wrong, to say that it was due to the cinema. We used to hear the same story about boys' books and other things. For ourselves, we always found "boys' bloods" painfully moral, and picture shows seem on the same line. The villain always gets badly used in the end, and virtue is rewarded in a way that doesn't always happen in everyday life. Really, however, the religious papers are not directly concerned about these things. There are plenty of causes for childish wrongdoing about which they remain silent. The real cause of offence is that the picture palace opens on Sunday. It is a rival to the Churches. That is the whole secret of the situation.

Mr. Edward Lovett, a member of the Folk Lore Society, has been investigating the extent to which charms are used for various purposes among Londoners. He finds love charms, charms against the evil eye, and various forms of ailments are still made and sold to an extent not dreamed of by many. Personally, we are not surprised at the result of Mr. Lovett's researches. There is a tremendous mass of superstition current and latent in our population, and, as Professor Frazer once reminded us, its being there provides all the material for a really dangerous revival of superstition. It was the growth of the kinds of superstition noted by Mr. Lovett amongst the people of the disintegrating Roman Empire that gave Christianity its opportunity, and it is not quite beyond the bounds of the possible that a similar thing might not happen again. The only safeguard is the growth of positive or scientific habits of thought, and against that religion in all forms offers the strongest opposition. Religion as it is taught in the Churches does not, it is true, directly encourage the use of charms and magical incantations, but it does keep alive the frame of mind that considers these things of importance.

There is a general agreement among those who ought to know that drinking amongst women is on the increase. A drunken man is bad enough, but a drunken woman is infinitely worse. And when all is said and done, drunkenness remains one of the peculiar vices of Christian countries. Mohammedanism has at least managed to keep its followers sober, and this appears to be true of the conversions made in Africa, while the Christian black convert takes to drink easily and quickly enough. We wonder what an intelligent Mohammedan would say to the increase of drinking amongst women in this Christian country? We know what some of them have said about drunkenness amongst Christian men, and their opinion of it among women would be worth hearing.

The following is from the *Daily Telegraph* (Jan. 28):—

> "Jerusalem is in the immediate future to be lighted by electricity. A tramway line is to be constructed from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, and a new water supply will be provided. These works will be undertaken by a French banking firm, which has received a forty years' concession under the new Vilayets Law."

If the "Holy City" had been blessed with electric lighting, tramway lines, and a filtered water supply, nineteen hundred years ago, there wouldn't have been a ghost of a chance for Christianity—which was founded on the story of a spectre. That sort of story never prospers in the densest civilisation. Ghosts never make a reputation in Cheapside, Fleet-street, or the Strand. They have to make it in the semi-rural suburbs of London. "The Charing Cross Ghost" is an absurdity. "The Finchley Ghost" has a possible career.

"There have been times in the world's history," says Prebendary Grane, "when Western civilisation practically meant the Church." Quite so; but Prebendary Grane omitted to point out that this was precisely the time when Western civilisation was at its lowest. Hallam pithily said that the darkness of the Dark Ages was darkest when the power of the Church was greatest. And no one who knows the period will seriously dispute the statement. And the generalisation is the more damning because the Christian Church inherited a civilisation. It took over the civilised Pagan world, with the result that one after another its social institutions decayed, its learning lost, its culture forgotten. And the change for the better began, not with a greater growth of religion, but with the development of unbelief and the rediscovery of all that the Christian Church had neglected for centuries.

A great deal of discussion is going on in the religious press as to whether the population of Wales is mainly Nonconformist or Episcopalian. From statistics collected by the Bishop of St. David's it appears that the Nonconformists number forty per cent. of the population. The Bishop apparently claims the remaining sixty per cent.—which is rather more than others will admit, as no allowance is made for those who have the good fortune to be outside both parties. The discussion is connected with the question of Disestablishment, and quite fails to touch the real issue. Churches were never established by a majority vote, and have never really been disestablished by one. Formally, the last statement may be said to be inaccurate, since it can be pointed out that votes are actually taken whether a Church shall be disestablished or not. This is correct, but does not touch the point we have in view, which is the real significance of an Established Church and of the vote that formally depose it.

Mr. Gladstone often said that the Church Established was the representative of the collective religious life of the nation. In this he was quite correct. But it is even more than this. It is a visible expression of the idea that religious belief is essential to the well-being of a nation, and that there is the same need for a government providing religious instruction as there is for providing schools or anything else. And so long as this belief continues an establishment of religion in some form is inevitable. That is why the earlier generation of Dissenters very rarely claimed that religion should be separated from the State. All they asked was that a particular Church should be removed. Even to-day this is all that a very large number of Nonconformists have in mind. Not the disestablishment of religion, but the deposition of a Church—which means, in practice, the establishment of some other Church, or of all Churches.

The growth of the more logical idea that the State should not interfere in any way with religion, and should treat

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Churches as it treats all organisations—that is, merely protect them in the exercise of their lawful rights—is really due to the conviction that a State, like an individual, can get on very well without religion. If we believe that religious belief is vital to human well-being, it would be nothing less than national suicide to insist that the State should leave it severely alone. And as a matter of fact, although only the minority have actually reached this conclusion, the majority *feel* that whether a man goes to church or stays at home, prays to God or does not pray, makes very little difference. The logic of facts are too strong for the logic of theory. Life is more powerful than doctrine. Civilised countries all over the world are slowly realising Disestablishment because they are being driven to realise the unimportance of religion to the work of understanding life or establishing a mastery over nature.

Dr. C. F. Aked, once of Pembroke Chapel, Liverpool, afterwards of Fifth Avenue Baptist Church, New York, and since of the First Congregational Church, San Francisco, is very likely put on his metal by the movements of the Oracle of the City Temple in London. He is reported to have just given his congregation a new "shocker" in a sermon "of extreme Modernist views," wherein he "avowed his disbelief in the doctrines of the Trinity and the Miraculous Birth." We didn't suppose that this would frighten any Church in the Californian Capital. Mr. Campbell went as far as that in his *New Theology*—which, by the way, was published some seven or eight years ago. We are afraid that Dr. Aked always had more brag than bravery.

The Papacy has just discovered Maeterlinck. After all these years! Just like it. Also just like it to put his books in the Index, and give the people who haven't already perused him an opportunity of doing so. Maeterlinck should give the Pope a bow and a smile for his advertisement.

Maeterlinck tells an interviewer that the Pope's ban is "a prehistoric phenomena without importance." Quite so. But the value of the advertisement remains.

Mr. Hubert Bland is asked a few plain questions in the *Sunday Chronicle* by a casual correspondent. One of them is the following. "Who are those 'prominent men of science' who are freely uttering doubts about Darwinism and the mechanical theory?" That is something for Mr. Bland to go on with. We hope Mr. B. T. Brierley, the writer of the letter, will jog "Hubert's" memory if the performance is needed, as it very likely will be.

Mr. Hubert Bland is an ex-military man and, we believe, a Roman Catholic. He is also a dilettante Socialist of the ultra-Fabian variety. His real value to progressive thought is easily estimated. His journalistic success depends a great deal on the "classy" people he is supposed to know. The English mob, of all parties, do so like the flavor of aristocracy. Any kind of aristocracy will do.

Mrs. Barclay, the sentimental novelist, who doesn't look it, tells an interviewer that "The Bible is true, not only in its theology and ethics, but ——." We may spare the rest. What is the use of reading on? The Bible is true. Mrs. Barclay says so. That settles it. Perhaps the lady will now tackle another topic, and tell us whether she has mended that Broken Halo.

The Bishop of Oxford, speaking at a Peace meeting in London, said that the first thing they must look to for the promotion of their object was "the spread of democracy"—the second was "the spread of intelligence and knowledge." Where does Christianity look in?

A muddle-headed Christian, who dates from Lower Edmonton, justifies the exclusion of the *Freethinker* from the local Free Library on the ground that he does not consider the National Secular Society deserves the first adjective in its name. The connection between his one-legged premiss and his two-legged conclusion is not descernible by secular logic. Nor has he any right to call this journal "a paper of the National Secular Society" at all. It gives the N. S. S. free publicity. That is all. It was never owned or controlled by the Society.

CARLYLE AND HELL FIRE.

Professor Tyndall, in his paper of "Personal Recollections of Thomas Carlyle," contributed to the *Fortnightly Review*, gave a very vivid and most interesting passage on the Abolition of Hell Fire, being the setting forth of a conversation he held with Thomas Carlyle. It is as follows: "I accompanied Carlyle to Melchet, the beautiful seat of Lady Ashburton, and rode with him through the adjacent New Forest. We drove to Lyndhurst to see Leighton's frescoes. We frequently walked together. One day, the storm being wild and rude, a refuge from its buffets was thought desirable. He said he knew of one. I accordingly followed his lead to a wood at some distance. We skirted it for a time, and finally struck into it. In the heart of the wood we found a clearing. The trees had been cut down and removed, their low stumps, with smooth transverse sections, remaining behind. It was a solemn spot, perfectly calm, while round the wood sounded the storm. Dry dead fern abounded. Of this I formed a cushion, and, placing it on one of the tree stumps, set him down upon it. I filled his pipe and lighted it, and while he puffed conversation went on. Early in the day, as we roamed over the pastures, he had been complaining of the collapse of religious feeling in England, and I had said to him, 'As regards the most earnest and the most capable of the men of a generation younger than your own, if one writer more than another has been influential in loosing them from their theological moorings, thou art the man!' Our talk was resumed and continued as he sat upon the stump and smoked his placid pipe within hearing of the storm. I said to him, 'Despite all the losses you deplore, there is one great gain. We have extinguished that horrible spectre which darkened with its death-wings so many brave and pious lives. It is something to have abolished hell fire.' 'Yes,' he replied 'that is a distinct and enormous gain. My own father was a brave man, and, though poor, unaccustomed to cower before the face of man; but the Almighty God was a different matter. You and I do not believe that Melchet Court exists, and that we shall return thither, more firmly than he believed that, after his death, he would have to face a judge who would lift him into everlasting bliss or doom him to eternal woe. I could notice that for three years before he died, this rugged, honest soul trembled in its depths at even the possible prospect of hell fire. It surely is a great gain to have abolished this terror.

EXIT CHRIST.

Since thou hast quickened what thou canst not kill,
Awakened famine thou canst never still,
Spoken in madness, prophesied in vain,
And promised what no thing of clay shall gain,
Thou shalt abide while all things ebb and flow,
Wake while the weary sleep, wait while they go.
And treading paths no human foot hath trod,
Search on still vainly for thy father, God.
Thy blessing shall pursue thee as a curse
To hunt thee, homeless, thro' the universe.
No hand shall slay thee, for no hand shall dare
To strike thy godhead, death itself must spare!
With all the woes of earth upon thy head,
Uplift thy cross and go. Thy doom is said.

—*Robert Buchanan, "The Wandering Jew."*

THE FAMILIAR GOD.

The manner in which all religions talk of God revolts me; they treat him with so much certainty, levity, familiarity. The priests, who have this name always on their lips, irritate me above all. It is with them a kind of chronic sneeze—"the goodness of God, the wrath of God, to offend God," these are their phrases. It is considering him as if he were a man, and, what's worse, a middle-class man. They are further wild to decorate him with attributes, as savages put feathers on their fetish. Some paint infinity blue, others black. Utter savagery, all that. We are still cropping the grass and walking on all-fours in spite of balloons. The ideal that humanity forms for itself of God does not go beyond that of an oriental monarch surrounded by his court. The religious ideal is, in fact, several centuries behind the social ideal, and there are heaps of mountebanks who make a pretence of falling down faint with admiration in its presence.—*Gustave Flaubert.*

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER.

A bishop was celebrating his golden wedding, and among the guests was a foreigner, who was puzzled over the term, so asked his hosts to enlighten him. "Well," said the bishop, "this good lady and myself have lived together for fifty years." "Oh! I see," replied the foreigner, "and you now get married."

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

March 1, Glasgow; 22, Manchester.

To Correspondents.

J. W. O'LEARY.—We fear it would not tell. Christians are licensed blasphemers; it is only Freethinkers in whom "blasphemy" is a crime. Besides, it is too late for an appeal in the Stewart case now.

J. BROCKBANK.—No doubt you would make a better and wiser editor of the *Freethinker* than we are, but we don't quite see how the change is to be effected.

W. P. BALL.—Much obliged for cuttings.

E. B., sending his weekly batch of cuttings, adds a note pointing out that the sixpenny edition of Robert Buchanan's *Foxglove Manor* is published by Chatto & Windus, and, not being a nett book, can be bought for 4½d.

W. C. T. J.—We cannot advise you or your daughter at all in the matter. She proposes to make herself a nuisance in public places in order to call attention to the falsity and wickedness of religion. We have nothing whatever to say on that proposal. It is no business of ours. When you ask "Would she get into trouble?" we can only reply, "Isn't that what she aims at?"

J. BREESE.—Enthusiasm is no substitute for business particulars. Will somebody be cool enough to send us details of Mr. Cohen's coming visit to Leamington to open a debate for Mr. Walsh? Shouting "hoorah" up our office staircase conveys no information.

W. BAILEY (Manchester).—We note that it is desired to close the Fund to which you are Treasurer by (say) February 16, so as to deal with it a few days later.

P. G. BARNFORD (Christchurch, New Zealand).—It is an ordinary newspaper letter on a local topic, and would hardly be of interest to distant readers.

C. A. TURNER.—Glad to hear that a copy of the *Freethinker* is presented weekly to the Battersea Public Library. Also that the Library contains "more books of advanced thought" than most.

NORTH LONDONER.—Christian Evidence speakers are never to be trusted. It is not true that the *Freethinker* pictures were dropped after our imprisonment. They were dropped *during* our imprisonment—and necessarily so. They were *resumed* as soon as we were at liberty again, and continued for several years. The file of the paper at that time speaks for itself.

W. PALMER.—Next week. The rank and file, as you say, might be a little brisker with their subscriptions. But they don't do so badly, after all. Small incomes have relatively great claims.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and not to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Changes go on in the *personnel* of the Freethought party, by death, removal, and the hundred and one happenings and accidents of life. Younger faces come forward at the Annual Dinner and older faces disappear. But some of the older faces are very obstinate in their defiance of time. We were delighted to see the veteran Mr. H. Side, of Walworth, once more. He was not able to attend the dinner last year owing to the very inclement weather, although the Side family (several generations of them) were well represented. They were represented again this year, and he himself took advantage of the milder spell of weather and looked in to see his old friends once again. He has just turned ninety, and has entered what we may call his last lap. "I don't suppose I shall see you often again now," he said, as he shook hands with us—perhaps, as he smilingly suggested, for the last time. But the smile rather belied the prophecy, and the hand was singularly firm for such a great age. We hope it was not for the last time that we wished him good-bye; but, in any case, nothing can alter the fact that he belongs to the small body of human beings who are venerable by age and by character—marked from first to last by courage, constancy, and conviction.

Sir Hiram Maxim was a welcome and pleasant figure at the dinner. His old age is not austere but jolly. Although he has lived in England so long he is still very American, with the twang and dryness of the seventeenth century puritan turned into the twentieth century humorist. We are able to give some extracts from Sir Hiram Maxim's speech on another page. He read from manuscript to make sure of what he was saying, for he is obviously very deaf, and he says that time is making inroads on what was once a capital memory. There was much laughter during his speech and much applause when he sat down.

Amongst the provincial "saints" at the Annual Dinner we noticed Mr. G. L. Alward, of Grimsby. Time is telling upon the color of his hair, but it hasn't diminished the breadth of his smile. Another that we noticed was Mr. W. Bailey, of Manchester, who has always been a bountiful friend of the Secular movement—we may say "at home and abroad," in the language of one of the toasts of the evening.

Mr. Foote regrets that he was unable to travel up from home to London in time for a chat with the "saints" in the anteroom before the Annual Dinner. Unfortunately the arrangement of the tables prevented his getting a chat with many of them afterwards.

The President's Honorarium Fund circular is delayed another week. We did not desire it to start in the new year early enough to conflict in any way with the completion of another fund to which we wish every success. Further postponement is neither necessary nor desirable.

Mr. Cohen pays Glasgow another visit to-day (Feb. 8) and delivers two lectures (12 noon and 6.30 p.m.) at the N. S. S. Branch's interim meeting-place (North Saloon, City Hall). We hope fine weather will be favorable to fine audiences. Nothing else is necessary.

There was a muddle of some sort, we forget exactly how, over the announcement of Mr. Heaford's last visit to Manchester. We have pleasure in stating now (let the printer look out!) that Mr. Heaford lectures to-day (Feb. 8) at the Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Manchester, in the afternoon at 3 and in the evening at 6 30, his subjects being "The Meaning of Freethought" and "Why Christianity Has Failed." We hope to hear of good audiences.

We desire to draw special attention to "An English Note-book of Voltaire" in the February number of the *English Review*. The document is said to have been recently discovered at St. Petersburg. Extracts from it are printed in Voltaire's own English, including the spelling. Here are specimens: "England is meething of all relligions, as the royal exchange is the rendez-vous of all foreigners." "When I see Christians cursing Jews, methings I see children beating their fathers."

"The Blasphemy Laws, of which a good deal has lately been heard, are, like the Vagrancy Act, one of those tyrannical Statutes which are odious in the judgment of all fair-minded men, yet still permitted to disgrace our civilisation. Why did a Liberal Government allow them to be revived and re-enforced, instead of consigning them to oblivion? It is noteworthy that Mr. McKenna, who has done so much to encourage the recrudescence of the flogging craze, should have also been the Minister to defend the recent operation of these atrocious laws—and by arguments as grotesque as those by which the lash itself is defended. How long is this weakest of Home Secretaries to be entrusted with such grave responsibilities?"—*Humanitarian.*

The conclusion of Mr. Foote's article on "Laws Against Religious Liberty" stands over unavoidably till next week. It is impossible to fit it in without breaking it—and at a very inconvenient point—which would largely defeat the writer's object.

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The Rev. F. Ballard on the Bible.

"And Agrippa said unto Paul with but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian."—Acts xxvi. 28 (Revised Version).

SEEING the advertisement of a "Great Christian Defence Mission," by the Rev. Frank Ballard, to be held at the Darlington-street Wesleyan Church, Wolverhampton, under the auspices of the Wolverhampton Free Church Council, I thought I would take the opportunity of hearing what this champion of religion had to say for his faith.

Choosing the subject "The Bible in Modern Light," which seemed more definite than the others, especially the previous one, "What is Christianity?"—to which a hundred definitions might be given—accompanied by a friend, I attended the church.

The lecturer is a man past middle age, with a close-cropped beard. To begin with, his voice was so low that the lecturer seemed to be talking to himself, and though it gained in volume later on, it was never loud.

Probably many came to the lecture with the idea of loading up with ammunition, to repel the infidel attacks upon the authority and truth of the Bible. My friend himself, whose position might be described—if I may say so without offence—as "sitting on the fence" with regard to the Bible, had been brought up in the old orthodox views, but had lately come in contact with the new gospel of evolution, and now declared that he wanted to know whether the Bible was true or false—and he did not care which. What he wanted was certainty. He had heard something of the Freethought attack, and now wanted, quite praiseworthily, to hear the best defence that could be put up on the other side.

Those who came for arguments to defend the Bible, soon had a rude awakening. Not only did the lecturer abandon the defence of the Old Testament, but he delivered a slashing attack upon the sacred volume himself!

He mentioned the names of Colenso, Ingersoll, and Bradlaugh, and evidently had all their arguments at his finger's end. Nor is the lecturer one of those who believe in tempering the winds of criticism to the shorn lamb. His attack upon the Old Testament was as vigorous and drastic as a Freethinker could desire, backed up by a somewhat rasping and supercilious bearing which he displays to two parties: to the believers in the inspiration and authority of the Old Testament on the one hand, and to Atheists and Materialists on the other.

The lecturer, holding the Bible in his hand, told us that it was not the Word of God. That in all the years of his ministry he had never spoken of it as the Word of God. There were hundreds of mistakes, errors, and contradictions in the Bible, he declared. And it was not true, as some defenders said, that these were introduced by the translators. There were as many errors in the originals as in the translations. Ingersoll had written a book on the *Mistakes of Moses*. What did he, the lecturer, care about the mistakes of Moses? The Old Testament was a Jewish book, and it was no part of the duty of a Christian to defend it. Let the Jews defend it, it was their book.

You walk into a Christian Church and you see the Ten Commandments on the walls, he continued; What are they doing there in a Christian place of worship? Nobody kept the Commandments. You haven't kept them, pointing an accusing finger at us. Nobody ever had kept them; nobody ever could keep them. Away with them from our places of worship. Nothing happened. The roof did not fall in. The blasphemer was not struck dumb or dead. He was not even rushed off to Stafford Gaol to join the last blasphemer who lectured in this town.

The lecturer then told us the story of Bishop Colenso and the Zulu. How the savage, pointing out one of the atrocities in the Bible, asked the Bishop if that was inspired by God; which opened the Bishop's eyes and led to his celebrated attack upon the Pentateuch.

He went on to say that he himself had been led to take up apologetics through going with a friend to hear Bradlaugh lecture. Bradlaugh, the lecturer said, challenged any Christian to come and read a certain chapter in the Bible aloud, and no one responded. No one could. The lecturer declared himself horrified at that meeting; but it opened his eyes; for which, by the way, he shows no gratitude, if we judge by the rough way in which he caricatured Charles Bradlaugh's voice and gesture.

Then we were told how many thousands of innocent women were burned as witches because the Bible declared, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" (Ex. xxii. 18).

The lecturer next pictured to us the slave owners of America defending slavery from the Bible; quoting texts to show it was a Divine institution, ordained by God himself, and making the Bible the bulwark of American slavery. If he had shown how the weapon of religious intolerance had been forged from the Bible, and given a short history of the obstacle this book has been to scientific progress, his lecture would have been a comprehensive indictment of the sacred book.

What would they have thought of all this at our chapel twenty-five years ago? Why, they discharged one minister because he uttered a few hesitating doubts as to whether the torments of hell were eternal.

Why this sudden change of front with regard to the Old Testament? Why this unconditional surrender of the citadel once so vigorously defended? Mr. Ballard proceeded to enlighten us upon this point, as follows:

In Sheffield, we were told, crowded open-air meetings are held, in which the contradictions, mistakes, and immoralities of the Old Testament are held up to ridicule. "And I cannot always be there to answer them," said the lecturer pathetically. Then the Rational and Secular press has flooded the country with millions of volumes of anti-religious literature, and it is getting into the hands of the man-in-the-street, and he is beginning to find these things out for himself; and he says "These ministers know all about it and say nothing." Then he loses confidence in them and stays away from their services, and that is why the Church membership falls away every year. So says Mr. Ballard, whom we will leave to fight it out with the religious papers, who are always declaring that Secularism and Atheism are dead and done with.

The lecturer was also very severe on those clergy who still teach the old orthodox view of the Bible, and who allow their followers to learn the truth from the enemy.

Mr. Ballard takes his stand upon the life of Jesus as portrayed in the New Testament. The Gospels he considers to be historical and authentic documents, and he thinks that by abandoning the Old Testament to its fate, and concentrating on the New Testament, he will be able to save the situation. Is that possible? Is it probable? It is not. Nothing can now prevent the man-in-the-street from becoming acquainted with the criticism of the New Testament, which is quite as drastic as that of the Old.

Mr. Ballard did not persuade the friend who accompanied me to come down on his side of the fence. But what time has one to consider such matters, with picture palaces springing up on every hand. Perhaps, when football is over, he will go into the subject; it does not do to be too hasty in such important matters.

In conclusion, we wish to offer our hearty thanks to Mr. Ballard, and hope he will continue to spread the glad tidings, and that his labors will be abundantly blessed. For his method seems, to a mere Rationalist, as hopeful as pumping in water to save a sinking ship, or using oil to extinguish a fire.

W. MANN.

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Walt Whitman.

HORACE TRAUBEL, in his delightful book, *With Walt Whitman at Camden*, has recorded many sayings and opinions of the sturdy old author of *Leaves of Grass* that must be as shocking to the unco' guid as they are refreshing and interesting to the reader of open mind. Traubel, who was on intimate and most affectionate terms with the old poet, played the *rôle* of Boswell during some months at Camden in the later years of Whitman's life. And, aware that Traubel would one day make public use of the material he was gathering, Whitman was anxious that the literary picture should be a faithful one, that his failings should not be excused nor his virtues exaggerated. "Be sure to write about me honest; whatever you do, do not prettify me; include all the hells and the damns." Such was the poet's charge to his young friend, who tells us that in the preparation of his narrative he never lost sight of that command.

Referring on one occasion to the gratuitous visit of a Christian minister, who had come a considerable distance to give him his opinion of *Leaves of Grass*, Whitman remarked: "The ministry is spoiled with arrogance; it takes all sorts of vagaries, impudences, invasions, for granted; it even seizes the key to the bedroom and the closet."

Traubel one day found a visitor with Whitman, a Mr. Corning, who was a candidate for the pulpit at the Unitarian Church on Benson-street. "And what may be the subject of your sermon to-morrow?" the old poet inquired. "My subject? Why the tragedy of the ages." "And what may be the tragedy of the ages?" "The crucifixion." "What crucifixion?" "The crucifixion of Jesus, of course." "You call that the tragedy of the ages?" "Yes. What do you call it?" "It is a tragedy. But *the* tragedy? O no! I don't think I would be willing to call it *the* tragedy." "Do you know any tragedy that meant so much to man?" "Twenty thousand tragedies—all equally significant."

They were speaking one day of newspapers, when he called Traubel's attention to a remark of a Methodist minister at a recent conference: "I propose to discuss this subject from a minister's point of view." "What in hell's name," he said, "is a minister's point of view?" If he did not approach life as a man, or as an American, or as a lover, or even as a hater, Whitman failed to see in what other way he could possibly deal with the subject.

In answer to the question put to him by someone: Do you think the Church could be safely destroyed? Whitman replied, "Yes, why not? Men make Churches; men may destroy Churches. I see no use for the Church; it lags superfluous on the stage." "I always feel," he said on another occasion, "that to one in the swim—in the swim of modern science, democracy, freedom—the atonement, the Mosaic records, are not worth the dignity of consideration, of a reply. To any man who thinks, to any man who is alive to the revelations of modern science—it is an insult to offer the doctrines of the Church; it is as if you approached him to say: 'What a damned fool you are, anyway!'"

Speaking once of his family history, he mentioned to Traubel the fact that his father knew Thomas Paine, remarking: "Did history ever more thoroughly victimise a man? The most of things history has to say about Paine are damnably hideous. A good deal that gets written once is repeated and repeated, until the future comes to swear by it as gospel. I have always determined that I would do all I could to help set the memory of Paine right." Something Joseph Cook had been saying about Paine, Traubel says, aroused Whitman's ire. "It is always so," he said; "the tree with the best apples always gets the worst clubbing."

One day, at their friend Harned's house, Whitman got hold of a San Francisco portrait of Ingersoll from the mantel and regarded it long and intently. "That is a grand brow; and the face—look at the face (see the mouth); it is the head, the face, the poise of a noble human being. America don't know to-day how proud she ought to be of Ingersoll."

Harned told Whitman that Gladstone had come out with a reply to Ingersoll. This excited Whitman's humor. He laughed gently, and said: "Gladstone is no match for Ingersoll—at least, not in such a controversy. Of course, he is a great man, or was—has had a past—but in questions of the theological sort, in questions of Homeric scholarship, he is by no means much. Oh! there will be a funny time of it." Here he put his hands together scoop-wise. "Bob will take him up this fashion, turn him over (all sides of him), look at him sweetly, ever so sweetly, smile, then crunch him!"—to illustrate which he worked his two hands together as if to crush their imagined burden—"yes, crunch him, much as a cat would a mouse, till there's no life left to fool with."

Someone present demurred somewhat to Ingersoll. "Ain't you exaggerating his importance, Walt?" "Not a bit. Ingersoll is a man whose importance to the time could not be over-figured; not literal importance, not argumentative importance, not anti-theological Republican party importance, but spiritual importance—importance as a force, as consuming energy—a fiery blast for the new virtues, which are only the old virtues done over for honest use again."

Traubel read to Whitman a letter written by Ingersoll to the friends of Leonard Whitney, dead. (Published in Unity, Chicago. Whitney was a Unitarian preacher. In the Civil War was Chaplain of Ingersoll's regiment.) Whitman said: "How graphic, touching, powerful that is! What a substantial, rounded fellow the Colonel certainly proves himself to be! He is in a way a chosen man. There always was something in the idea that the prophets are called. Ingersoll is a prophet—he, too, is called. He is far deeper than he is supposed to be, even by radicals; we get lots of deep sea fruit out of him. Read that once again: I want to hear it again."

He had been reading Gladstone's reply to Ingersoll in the *North American Review*. Whitman shook his head: "It won't do, Mr. Gladstone; you may try: you have the right to try—you try hard; but the Colonel carries too many guns for you on that line." On the appearance of a later article: "Gladstone is neither here nor there: he is long-winded and indefinite—he doesn't make his mark clear and then drive to it: he goes all over the country looking for his game. Ingersoll is every way different—knows exactly what he wants and gets it at once."

Whitman, strangely enough, had little taste for religious controversy. On one occasion he even returned unread a copy of Winwood Reade's *Martyrdom of Man* lent him by a Philadelphia Quaker. He said to Traubel: "I hate theological, metaphysical discussion so heartily that I run at the sight of a controversial book—always, of course, excepting Huxley and Ingersoll, as you know." He had been looking over a Huxley book just out—controversial. "It is far more crushing of its kind even than Ingersoll's—it is superb. It does seem as if Ingersoll and Huxley without any others could unhorse the whole Christian giant. They are master-pilgrims with a fighting gift that would appal me if I was in the opposition." His admiration of Ingersoll is seen in all his references throughout the book. "Ingersoll," he said to Traubel, "could not come to my reception in New York; was out of town or busy; but he sent a note containing excuses and some fine things (witty, beautiful things) better than excuses. The Colonel is always my friend—always on the spot with his goodwill if not in person."

Traubel incorporates in his book many interesting letters from literary celebrities which Whitman at different times gave to him. One of these is from Ernest Rhys, describing a round of studios, etc., with a friend in New York. They began by breakfasting sumptuously (fried shad, omelettes, tomatoes, buckwheat cakes, strawberries, coffee, etc.) and then turned in to see Colonel Bob Ingersoll. Referring to this letter, Whitman

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said: "I don't envy Rhys his big breakfast and dinners and all that—I only envy him his call at Colonel Bob's! I am told those nights at Bob's are halycon nights. Next to being lucky enough to be there yourself is being lucky enough to hear about them from others who have been there."

Whitman seems to have been a source of much anxiety to the pious, and was often pestered with their offensive attentions. When he related to Traubel the visit of the Christian minister already mentioned, and his insistence on a hearing, Whitman said: "I don't believe anybody but a minister of the Gospel would do such a thing—would have been guilty of so egregious an impertinence. I told him I had plenty of opinions of *Leaves of Grass* nearer home—all sorts of pros and cons, damns and hallelujahs. But he didn't even laugh or seem deterred, he went right on with his message." Having a suspicion that Whitman wasn't listening to him, the preacher said, "I don't believe you're hearing a word I say, Mr. Whitman." To which the old man replied: "I shouldn't wonder—I shouldn't wonder." Rising to take his leave, the minister again said, "I was told you wouldn't take any advice, even good advice." "I shouldn't wonder—I shouldn't wonder," added Whitman. He laughed as he related the incident, exclaiming, "That's a tale worth putting down in the book."

Traubel said he could match that story. His grandmother, who was well on to eighty, was one day sitting on the front step, quietly looking about at things. A clerical came along and saw her, stopped and sat down on the step at her side. "Madam," he said, "you are very old; are you prepared to die?" She was, of course, annoyed, and said to him tartly: "Sir, if you were half as well prepared to die as I am you would be a happy man!" Whitman was very much amused. "Yes, that's a good match; that's worth being put down in the same book."

And in this simple way did Traubel gather his material for a very interesting volume. Innumerable little items get "put down in the book" which show the homely and amusing side of Whitman's character, and form as pleasing and truthful a piece of biography as will be found in the realm of literature.

JOSEPH BRYCE.

London Freethinkers at Dinner.

THE Annual Dinner of the London Freethinkers, under the auspices of the National Secular Society, was held at the Restaurant Frascati, on January 28, and was remarkable for the extremely large number of ladies who graced the tables. The handsome dining-hall was filled comfortably, and many veterans in the movement were present. Mr. G. W. Foote, President of the N. S. S. and editor of the *Freethinker*, occupied the chair.

A graceful tribute to the popularity of the President was a singularly charming collection of artificial roses and greenery which graced the top table.

At the outset Mr. Foote put everyone in a good humor by quoting a sentence from Shakespeare in the way of "grace," and the dinner passed off splendidly, the catering leaving nothing to be desired.

In his "Chairman's address," Mr. Foote was extremely felicitous, his introductory remarks concerning his unhappy "immolation" raising much laughter. In a different vein he said he was getting rather tired of taking the chair, and yet when he went like an ordinary diner and filled a plebeian chair, it did not please everybody. Nobody could be quite sure of anything. He himself might turn Christian; nobody knew what softening of the brain might do. His contemporaries, he added with fine scorn, got softer and softer in that direction. So great a man as Swift "died from the top downwards." Swift's *Tale of a Tub*, by the way, ought to be reprinted for use in the Kikuyu controversy. Secularists like to make the most of the life left them, because when a man is dead he is dead a long time. There is always the great drama of life left even when one is weary of the fight, and he could always think of that man who lay on his bed of helplessness at Leamington, who was stricken down as a Christian, and yet thought himself into Freethought, and to-day found the highest pleasure in watching the fighting of others. The torch of progress did not drop into oblivion when it passed from the older hands; it was held aloft by younger hands and gained greater brilliancy from the increased rapidity of its flight. Remember great men. Shakespeare, Cæsar, Cromwell, Darwin, Shelley, Meredith, Bradlaugh, Ingersoll; these great men redeemed the world from commonplace. They are our greater brethren. "Our loftier brothers, but one in blood." Refreshment was to be found in the biographies of great men. If Shakespeare could be so great and Bradlaugh so brave in this very world, victory was bound to come in the end. The next day was the birthday of Thomas Paine. Conway's *Life* was a masterpiece of industry, but Paine's life had yet to be written. Paine was a cosmopolitan by nature before he was a cosmopolitan by principle. When a boy of eight he was shocked at hearing a sermon on the atonement. At eighteen he was a finished Freethinker, and at the close of his career a sublime example for the world. Born in England, the only thing this country ever did for him was to try to hang him. America gave him his first task. Whether a tax is eighteen shillings or a pound is an unworthy subject to engage the genius of a nation; but not the question as to the rights of the men demanding the tax. Pym, Hampden, and Cromwell fought for a principle. The English people had cut off the head of a king. There have been kings since full of divine right, even to the Kaiser, but they have walked gingerly. Paine was the first voice in America that was imperial, and he told the Americans to call themselves the United States. There will never be peace in Europe until Victor Hugo's words of fire, "The United States of Europe," is realised. It was the pen of Paine as much as the sword of Washington that founded the United States of America. Never listen to the cackle of the old monarchies concerning the great republic across the Atlantic. The republic is laying the bases of a great civilisation. Every man of genius in England, for a hundred years, has found his first real supporters in America. Bradlaugh was the lineal descendant of Paine. Paine was the penman and Bradlaugh was the great orator of Freethought. He went one step farther than Paine, because he came a hundred years after. Bradlaugh was an Atheist, and was brought to Freethought through the Carlile family, who had passed years in prison championing the right to print the *Age of Reason*. Genius was a question of foresight. Bradlaugh and Paine both saw that the world had been cheated, the baby in the cradle and the boy and girl in the school had been deceived. Paine found out that the Age of Reason must precede the Rights of Man. Bradlaugh's name is as sure of immortality as any name in the century he adorned.

To Mr. Arthur B. Moss fell the toast of "The National Secular Society," which he described as the oldest society of its kind in the world. He said that a book had been published with the title, *What are the Churches Doing?* He knew, however, what they were not doing. They were not converting Freethinkers to Christianity. The Freethought aim was to dispel superstition from men's minds, and all the great educational forces were on the side of Freethought. The more men knew of the universe, the less they believed in gods. It was the fault of Freethinkers that lecturers were not always at work. That great organ, the *Freethinker*, ought to be read by every man and woman in this country. He desired to make the National Secular Society one of the greatest organisations in the country.

Mr. C. Cohen responded in a humorous and philosophical speech, in which he said the toast of the Society was an equally old toast with the Chairman's address. It was difficult to say anything fresh on the subject. He looked forward to an encounter with some parsons at Leamington, who belonged to the same Society as Mr. Walsh, who was bedridden. He had rashly promised to go and lecture on the trifling subject, "The Existence of God," and, if he could get the door locked before he began the debate, he anticipated a really pleasant evening. If he disappeared towards the end of the month, his friends would know what had happened to him. Life itself was the greatest enemy of the Church. Christians might stamp out the National Secular Society, but they could not stamp out life, and the force pulling the Churches to pieces was life. An idea that depends on a man can only be galvanised into life by a man. Freethought is independent of men. Ideas use men more than men use ideas. He had had a quarter of a century's battling against religion, and there was no better work than fighting for an idea. One thing comforted him. Where the great Catholic Church failed to arrest Freethought, the petty, mean, little Churches of to-day were not likely to succeed.

Mr. J. T. Lloyd also responded. He stated that religion was dying, and the Churches were being weakened year by year. At the Islington Conference all the clergy agreed that the religion of fifty years ago was no longer preached to-day. Christianity was dying before Christians have discovered what it was, and nobody will ever know that now.

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Freethought is destined to conquer and to bring reason to its throne.

The toast of "Freethought At Home and Abroad" was in the hands of Mr. Heaford, who said that metropolitan Freethinkers did not confine their attention to Londoners, but thought of the countless workers under the noblest banner that ever waved over the heads of humanity. Such a toast put them into communion with thousands throughout the world who were working to emancipate humanity from the thraldom of priestcraft. There were heavier clouds overhead than a year ago. An English Freethinker was languishing in prison, and he feared he would not be the last. A wave of reaction had set in, and who knew but that next year Sir Hiram Maxim and Mr. Foote might not both be deported to Africa as undesirables? Reaction was sweeping throughout the world, and the attack against the Freethought Republic of Portugal was an example. The clergy were doing their utmost to prevent the 1915 Freethought Congress taking place at Prague, which it was hoped to hold on the five hundredth anniversary of the death of John Huss. Wherever the Freethought flag waves the principles of Freethinkers are being defended. The message was that all should work, strive, and educate for the dawn of a better day.

At this point Mr. Foote introduced Sir Hiram Maxim to the company, and Sir Hiram immediately responded to the toast. He said that Lord Salisbury had remarked that he (Sir Hiram) had prevented more men from dying of old age than any other man; but although his inventions had commended themselves to people, his ideas had not. At Worthing the local vicar did not like his sermonettes; and when he was in the Bosphorus, and his boat bumped a Turk's, the Oriental cursed him as a miserable, unbelieving dog of a Christian. As a fact, there was no religion that did not make the believer an infidel in three-quarters of the world.

A selection of passages from Sir Hiram's speech appears in another part of this week's *Freethinker*.

During the evening a fine program of music was rendered by Miss Haidee Hamilton, and Messrs. E. W. Harrison, Keith Woods, and Will Edwards, jnr. Madame Lucie Thomas was the accompanist, and also played selections.

C. E. S.

Sir Hiram Maxim's "Remarks"

AT THE LONDON FREETHINKERS' ANNUAL DINNER.

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—I do not know why I, practically an outsider, should be called upon to speak to the toast of "Freethought at Home and Abroad" when there are so many others present who are much better able to deal with the subject.

I, however, have received instructions from Miss Vance—"God bless her!"—who tells me that speakers generally wander from their subject and spin it out too long. This, of course, is a hint that I should not occupy too much of your time.

I think we may say that Freethought is booming at the present time—not so much on account of what we are doing ourselves as from what our religious friends are doing for us. There have been several cases in the United States where parsons and priests have gone to the extent of murdering their sweethearts in order to get rid of them, and one murder of this kind does more for our cause than a thousand lectures in favor of Freethought. There are also numerous cases in Europe where the priests and parsons have gone wrong, and all these count in our favor.

Recently the Bishop of Madagascar has been pitching into the Bishop of Bungleboo because Bungleboo placed little wafers of bread on the tongues of people who did not belong to his particular brand of religion. The Bishop of Madagascar looked upon this transaction very much as railway officials would look upon passengers who are travelling with bogus tickets. These people, who did not belong to the Episcopal High Church, of course had no right to get into heaven at all; but it appears that, by having this little bit of bread placed on their tongue, they swallowed a part of the body of Jesus Christ, and therefore were able to slither into heaven without paying for their tickets. This underhand way of getting into kingdom-come was not approved of by the Bishop of Madagascar, and the result is a devil of a row. All this does a lot for Freethought.

A very pious Roman Catholic priest, with the appropriate name of Furniss, has written a little book entitled *A Sight of Hell*. I have bought hundreds of these books, and circulated them where they would do the most good. Of course, the good priest thought he was doing a lot for his Church by bringing out this publication, but as a matter of fact the whole idea is so ridiculous that it does a great deal more for Freethought than it does for superstition.

Only a relatively short time ago the French nation was so intensely religious that their priests were able to murder seventy-five thousand heretics in one day. This, however, did infinitely more for Freethought than for religion, and to-day France is the leading Freethought country in the world.

A few years ago, when I was travelling in Northern Italy, I found that the large crucifixes erected at the corners of the roads were nearly worn out by being stoned. There were bushels of stones about each of them, and it would appear that nearly everyone in passing picked up a stone and had a fling at the image on the cross, or what there was left of it. This indicates that the Italians, especially in the north, have commenced to think. The very fact that the Pope has been deprived of his temporal power shows that some advance is being made even in the Holy City itself.

Every little thing that sets people thinking on religious subjects brings grist to our mill.

I have not, and do not, in the least dispute the efficacy of the bit of bread that the Bishop of Bungleboo placed on the tongues of the people. I am quite satisfied that none receiving this bit of bread will ultimately find a place in the lower regions to be burnt for all eternity, but I do dispute that the Bishop of Bungleboo or any other bishop, has any more power to prevent people from going there than I possess myself; I am also of the opinion that bread is no more effective than many other substances. Having made a profound study of this subject, I now propose to administer the Holy Communion myself.

I have here a new form of wafer that is a great improvement on the old one; they have been duly consecrated by a machine driven by a steam engine, and I can assure everyone present that if those who are only moderately wicked will take one and swallow it in the ordinary way, they will never get even a smell of burning brimstone, they will surely be saved, and that is what we are all after. I would, however, advise who are very wicked to take more than one wafer; take three or four, just in proportion to their wickedness; take enough so as to make a good job of it.

[*The wafers were chocolate creams.*]

GENERAL GRANT ON SECULAR EDUCATION.

The following is from what is perhaps the most famous speech ever delivered by General U. S. Grant. It was made at a soldiers' reunion at Des Moines, Iowa, in 1876: "In a Republic like ours, where the citizen is the sovereign and the official the servant, where no power is exercised except by the will of the people, it is important that the sovereign—the people—should possess intelligence. The free school is the promoter of that intelligence which is to preserve us as a free nation. If we are to have another contest in the near future of our national existence, I predict that the dividing line will not be Mason and Dixon's, but between patriotism and intelligence on the one side, and superstition, ambition, and ignorance on the other. Now, in this centennial year of our existence, I believe it a good time to begin the work of strengthening the foundation of the house commenced by our patriotic fathers one hundred years ago at Concord at Lexington. Let us all labor to add all needful guarantees for the most perfect security of free thought, free speech, and free press, pure morals, unfettered religious sentiments, and of equal rights and privileges to all men, irrespective of nationality, color, or religion. Encourage free schools, and resolve that not one dollar of money appropriated to their support, no matter how raised, shall be appropriated to the support of any sectarian school. Resolve that neither the State nor nation, nor both combined, shall support institutions of learning other than those sufficient to afford every child growing up in the land the opportunity for a good common-school education, unmixed with sectarian, pagan, or Atheistical tenets. Leave the matter of religion to the family altar, the Church, and the private school, supported entirely by private contributions. Keep the Church and State forever separate. With these safeguards, I believe the battle which created the army of the Tennessee will not have been fought in vain.

Obituary.

We regret to record the death, which occurred on Thursday night, January 29, of Mr. Wordsworth Donisthorpe, the well-known Freethinker, philosophic Anarchist, and Social Economist. Mr. Donisthorpe's writings were brilliant and incisive, but they were somehow or other far less influential than they once promised to be. Despite his great abilities he did not find a "career." Perhaps he found something better.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workman's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, J. J. Darby, "The Teachings of Jesus."

OUTDOOR.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, Mr. Marshall, a Lecture.

COUNTRY

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (King's Hall, Corporation-street): 7, E. Clifford Williams, "Superstition."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (North Saloon, City Hall): C. Cohen, 12 noon, "Religion and the Breeding of a Better Race"; 6.30, "The Challenge of Unbelief."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): Wm. Heaford, 3, "The Meaning of Freethought"; 6.30, "Why Christianity has Failed." Tea at 5.

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THE
Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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The simple diminution of the freedom of the press is is enough to diminish the stature of a people.
—VICTOR HUGO.

Certainty.

AGNOSTICISM is a term that is open to all sorts of misunderstanding. To many people it signifies simply the doctrine of nescience, or the theory that no real knowledge is acquirable. Freethinkers are often described colloquially as *nothingarians*, that is, people without belief, knowledge, aim, or purpose. It is conveniently ignored that, as originally employed by Huxley, Agnosticism applied only to the supernatural. In point of fact, however, Freethinkers are earnest seekers after knowledge, knowledge being to them the staff of life. Even in relation to the supernatural, perhaps the majority of them are not willing to be called Agnostics, because they are so sure that there is no supernatural. An Atheist is the opposite of a Theist. It is the latter term that gives to the former its signification. A Theist is one who believes in God, and whose belief is sometimes so strong and blind that he is emboldened to say, "I know God." An Atheist believes that there is no God, and his belief, too, occasionally runs away with him until he is tempted to exclaim, "I know that there is no God." His claim to knowledge is, to say the least, quite as valid as that of the Theist. But in the absence of knowledge can there be any certainty? By certainty is meant assured conviction, conviction so strong that it completely shuts out all doubt. It is incontrovertible that without certainty life would be scarcely worth living. As Bonar, in *My Old Letters*, so aptly says:—

> "That which is certain can alone set free;
> It is uncertainty that makes us bondsmen."

It is a notorious fact that Christians are often in a state of the profoundest uncertainty. Their sky is frequently overcast with dark and heavy clouds of doubt and despair. At experience meetings the disciples are always bemoaning the weakness of their faith. Usually they put all the blame upon the Devil. Being a liar and the father of lies, he is openly accused of constantly trying to make them forget God and turn away from the Savior. There are very few Christians who are not at times tormented by unbelief, doubt, and fear. We have again and again heard the cry: "O! if I only knew; if I could but subdue this monster, doubt; if I were quite sure!" The religious life is generally full of such uncertainty. We find it sorrowfully expressed in the works of the most illustrious saints. Freethinkers, however, are entirely free from this mental torture. They have fought their doubts, "and gathered strength"; they have "faced the spectres of the mind and laid them," with the result that they now dwell in an atmosphere of serene peace and rest. It is customary to speak of them as Sceptics, but taking that word in its etymological meaning it cannot legitimately be applied to them. A genuine Freethinker is in no sense a doubter. With him certitude has become "a habit of mind," and certainty "a quality of propositions."

Take the existence of God. Atheism is the negation of every form of Theism. A Theist is not merely a person who believes that there is a God, but rather a person who believes in and has a doctrine of God. Correspondingly, an Atheist is not simply one who disbelieves in the existence of God, but one who rejects every doctrine of God. When a man says, "I believe in God," he gives expression to no intelligible idea. As we listen to him we do not know what he means. Before we can either believe or disbelieve we must ascertain what definition he attaches to the word God. As everybody is aware, Greece had sixteen Gods and Goddesses, all of whom were supposed to be supernatural beings, which is equally true of such Oriental deities as Osiris, Adonis, Attis, and Mythra. No doubt all Christians are convinced that all those divinities were purely mythical; and we fully share their conviction. But when they repeat their own creed, saying, "We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible," we beg to ask them, "Wherein does the God you believe in differ from those deities you reject as myths?" Time was when this Supreme Being, too, was one of many, when he was small enough to be carried about in a wooden chest, when he was known as "a man of war," and when his moral character was a disgrace to the tribe to which he belonged. In the Old Testament we find numerous instances of his anger, injustice, cruelty, and immorality. As a sample of the orders that came from him we take the following:—

> "Of the cities of these people, which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth; but thou shalt utterly destroy them; namely, the Hittites and the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee" (Deut. xx. 16, 17).

When we point out that Jehovah, who was once believed to be capable of perpetrating the darkest and most criminal deeds, and the Christian God are one and the same being, it will be seen that in all the stages of his career he was a human creation. His worshipers have always been busily engaged on the task of reforming his character, or of bringing him up to the standard of the age. In reality the task is incapable of accomplishment. The consequence is that the divines are everlastingly making futile apologies for the object of their worship. Well, clearly, a Deity for whom his devotees have to be offering endless excuses cannot be an object of sane belief. Of his non-existence we are in no doubt whatever. We are absolutely certain that he is a myth. His very name is mocked at by the world he is said to have created.

We are equally certain that mankind are children of the earth. They are differentiated from the earth's other children only by the size and educability of their brain and the faculty of speech. In all other respects the resemblance between us and the higher animals is of the closest kind. The belief that we possess a soul or spirit, which all other animals lack, is utterly groundless. We are born, we grow and develop, and then decay and die in precisely the same manner as all other living things. The so-called desire for immortality is only a theological interpretation of the natural love of life which we share with all the animals. When we cry for help to some unknown, mysterious Power we only make fools of ourselves in Nature's eyes. Metaphorically speaking, she pities the man who is

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entangled amongst "the fables of the Above":—

"She hears his wailful prayer,
When now to the Invisible he raves
To rend him from her, now his mother craves
Her calm, her care."

How well Meredith understood this great truth, and how beautifully he expresses it. One can easily realise of what enormous value the soul-theory has been and is to the Churches. Soul-saving and soul-feeding have proved their most profitable line of business. Special soul-catching campaigns are every now and then resorted to, when professional soul-catchers give exhibitions of their powers. When a revival is in progress everybody in its vicinity is asked, "Is your soul saved?" or "Is it well with your soul?" People brought up in the Churches take it for granted that they are endowed with souls which are naturally lost, and that their most pressing duty is to go and get them saved. After they have found their souls and got them saved, they will certainly lose them again unless they attend churches and chapels two or three times a week to have their requirements seen to by specially appointed soul-nourishers. Pastors of churches are shepherds of souls, and, judging by innumerable pulpit utterances, souls are as fond of wandering as sheep, and as difficult to find. At the present time they are extraordinarily wayward and perverse. They disappear from the fold in crowds, and the majority of them positively decline to be coaxed back. The truth is that the soul-theory is breaking up with great rapidity. People are beginning to perceive that the Buddhist no-soul theory is much truer to the facts of life. When Wordsworth sang—

"The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting
And cometh from afar,"

like Plato, he was only drawing upon his imagination. Both men believed that as long as the soul is in the body she is undergoing punishment of some sort, with the result that she loses her pristine purity and loveliness. That neither of them knew anything about the subject is proved by the fact that they flatly contradict each other. Plato maintains that after her incarnation the soul is trying hard to remember the life she lived and the things she knew prior to it, while Wordsworth is equally sure that whilst in the body pent she is quickly forgetting all about her previous existence. Well, we are quite as certain that man, in the totality of his being, is a child of the earth; that he begins his existence at birth and ends it at death; and that his chief duty is to make the most and best of his present life. On this point we do not cherish even the shadow of a doubt. All possible knowledge lies between birth and death. So far as the individual is concerned, birth begins and death ends all. With Freethinkers this is an absolute certainty.

God and the unseen world are creations of the fancy alone. Even ardent believers are often by no means sure of them, and they are nearly always aware of the possibility that their beliefs are not well founded. We are never worried by such misgivings, because we know that this earthly life, in proportion to its degree of conformity to Nature's laws, is well worth living; and its value depends, in each case, upon the benefit it confers upon the race. According to Meredith, Nature says to every one of us, "Live in thy offspring as I live in mine." In other words, we are instructed so to live as to leave the race a little stronger and richer than we found it. That this is man's chief end is an undeniable certainty; and as for Nature—

"Meanwhile on him, her chief
Expression, her great word of life, looks she."

J. T. LLOYD.

The Failure of Science.

WHEN someone remarked to Douglas Jerrold that the winters were not like they used to be, Jerrold replied "they never were." One is reminded of this story when one reads long rigmaroles about the present being a time of change, or that the foundations of civilisation are threatened, etc. To those who lament that things are not now as satisfactory as they used to be, one feels inclined to reply "they never were." Was there ever a time when a certain number of people were not remarking that all things were changing, and looking back mournfully at the more settled times that had gone? You can find the same alarms, the same fears, the same doleful prophecies, any time during this last five hundred years at least. They are due, perhaps, to a want of perspective, perhaps to an over-developed egotism, perhaps to a want of grasp as to the real nature of national growth and intellectual development. Most probably all these things have something to do with the phenomenon.

Mr. Raymond A. Coulson has just brought to a conclusion a series of articles on the general failure of everything—including, one may observe, that of Mr. R. A. Coulson. For all that Mr. Coulson has made clear is that there is unrest—which has always been the case; that moral ideals are being questioned—which also is no new thing; that politics have not solved all our social problems—which, in the nature of the case, it can never do, and never really claims to do. We should all come very much nearer failure if there did not exist unrest, or if we were quite content that we had reached perfection in any of the directions noted. Change is one of the indications of life, and dissatisfaction with things as they are does not necessarily mean that all that has been done is a failure. It may mean, and often does mean, no more or less than the possibility of still further improvement. And there is nothing easier, cheaper, or less helpful than to dwell upon the shortcomings of science, or art, or sociology as though we had reached a state of intellectual bankruptcy. I admit it is a popular plan, because it requires no great penetration on the part of writers, and no great mental strain on the part of readers. One could point out more than one playwright or writer who has managed to achieve considerable popularity by these means.

Mr. Coulson's concluding words on the failure of everything in general is concerned with the failure of science. And his words here are just those of the average journalist who, because his business is to write glibly of any subject that turns up, has come to take himself quite seriously as an authority. Mr. Coulson explains that "about thirty years ago there was a tendency to imagine that science could give man an explanation of the universe," and "it was popularly supposed that 'scientific fact' and 'scientific proof' were the most unassailable of things, and that what science gave us we might at least be sure of." This turns out to have been quite a delusion. "Science is very useful as a tool by which we may take hold of the universe, but when it comes to presenting us with an idea of what the universe really is, there is no pea under the thimble."

> "Modern science confesses that it does not know what light is, what heat is, what electricity is, what magnetism is, what matter is, what life is, what anything is. Radium, and subsequent discoveries of the the radio-activity of many bodies, have played havoc with Dalton's Atomic Theory, which was the foundation of chemistry. Biology knows nothing of the origin of life. Physics has lost the laws of matter in a new world of doubt.....The great laws of Nature, which up till a a few years ago were regarded as unassailable and proved beyond question, are now held in doubt. For example, it is now admitted that Newtonian mechanics, on which our system of astronomy and much more of our knowledge is based, may not be absolutely true for the universe as was once thought, and that things may really work on a quite different system of laws."

Now, here is a style of writing that is very common, very mischievous, and quite false or misleading. It is the kind of chatter that results from knowledge that is only half digested, and gives ill-informed readers the impression that they are acquiring useful information. Above all, it gives a helping hand to those who are only too ready to

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seize upon an assumed scientific failure as grounds for encouraging pure superstition. Let us take as an illustration of half-digested knowledge the statement that "Radium, and subsequent discoveries of the radio-activity of many bodies, have played havoc with Dalton's Atomic Theory." Mr. Coulson may be surprised to learn that this conclusion is pure nonsense. Dalton's Atomic Theory—the foundations of modern chemistry—remains exactly where it was and is quite unaffected by the discovery of radium. Dalton's laws of definite, multiple, and equivalent proportions are as true now as ever, and are not questioned by a single chemist. The statement that the Daltonian Atomic Theory has been upset by radium or by anything else, is simply absurd. What has been disturbed is the notion that the chemical atom was ultimate. Dalton thought it was; but his thinking so did not affect the laws of atomic action propounded by him in the slightest degree. Just as science advanced from the molecule to the atom, so it now advances to a still finer form of matter—the corpuscle, which builds up the atom as the atom builds up the molecule. As one of our foremost scientific writers remarks, the foundation of the atomic theory "is none the less firm because it is now realised that these indivisible atoms.....are themselves composed of smaller particles." If Mr. Coulson had submitted his article to the judgment of a friend with a little scientific knowledge, he would certainly have advised the deletion of the passage criticised.

And this brings me to another very common fallacy which Mr. Coulson popularises in his article. There are no "great laws of nature" that were a few years ago regarded as unassailable, but which are now held in doubt. A scientific "law" once established is true, *so far as it goes*. It may turn out, and sometimes does turn out, that other laws are discovered of a wider and more comprehensive character. It may also happen that the value of certain generalisations is at first over-estimated. This seems to be the case, for instance—although the point is not yet demonstrated—with the theory of natural selection. In this case, all that happens is that the operation of natural selection has to be supplemented by other processes. And even though it were true that the "Newtonian mechanics" may not be absolutely true for the whole universe, this would not affect the value of the "Newtonian mechanics" so far as they do extend. There is no proof of failure in any one of these instances. Scientific men are not at sea, and physics has not, as Mr. Coulson suggests, "fallen through the bottom of the cosmos." All it really means is that scientific generalisations are being continually enlarged. One stage is reached, and some people hastily conclude that it is ultimate. Then a further step is made, and the assumed ultimate is seen to be only a stage in a process. But this is not failure, and no one who understands scientific methods and appreciates scientific ideas considers it as such. It is only part of the growth of scientific certainty. The generalisations left behind are not discarded; they are usually the foundations on which wider ones are built.

One gets a little tired of correcting the delusion that science is ignorant on matters that admit of neither knowledge nor the opposite, but it must be done. Where is the modern science that confesses "it does not know what heat is, what electricity is, what magnetism is, what life is, what anything is"? Of course, I know that this is continually being said by all kinds of people; but it is sheer folly, nevertheless. It is all a question of "What went ye out for to seek?" If anyone goes about looking for light and heat and electricity, etc., apart from the special group of phenomena covered by those terms, it is certain his search will not be rewarded, and science will be unable to help him. And this for the simple reason that light and heat are not things apart from the phenomenon thus called, they are the phenomena. All that science means by light is vibrations that exceed a certain rate per second. And when we have been told what this rate is, under what conditions it occurs—in other words, when we have the laws of the phenomenon stated—we really know all there is to know about it. Light is not something apart from vibratory phenomena, it *is* vibratory phenomena. There is no "is" apart from this. The question of what light is, or what heat is, apart from laws describing their occurrence, is not a scientific question at all; it is not even an intelligible question. It is a survival of metaphysics, which in turn was only a survival of the animistic theory of things. There is more to learn, true, about light and heat and other things, but to say we do not know what light and heat are, is downright nonsense.

It is, in brief, quite useless coming to science with a number of manufactured conundrums, and expecting an answer. To such questions no answer will be forthcoming. When a man like Sir Oliver Lodge says that even though the chemist were able to manufacture living beings, and describe accurately all the conditions under which vital phenomena are manifested, this would not be saying what life is, only describing the conditions under which life manifests itself, he is not talking science, but nonsense. The statement is scientifically unintelligible. It is exactly equal to saying that when we know under what conditions H_2O produces water, we have not shown what water is, but only described the conditions of its manifestation. Speculation on these lines is exactly equal to speculating as to what will happen when an irresistible force encounters an immovable object. It is easy to spend time on this question, but it is much more profitable to realise that it is downright nonsense. So also with talk such as has been noted concerning the failure of science. It is easy enough, but it is sheer futility. Its only positive consequence is the encouragement of frames of mind that are simply fatal to the spread of rational thought and orderly progress.

C. COHEN.

Science and the Soul.—III.

(*Continued from p. 84.*)

"Consciously or unconsciously, most men are influenced in all their general views, and, therefore, in their theory of life, by the dogma of personal immortality; and to this theoretical error must be added practical consequences of the most far-reaching character. It is our task, therefore, to submit every aspect of this important dogma to a critical examination, and to prove its untenability in the light of the empirical data of modern biology." — PROFESSOR ERNST HAECKEL, *The Riddle of the Universe* (1900), pp. 192-3.

"The idea of a future life is supported by not a single fact, while there is much evidence against it.....It is easy to see why the advance of knowledge has diminished the number of believers in the persistence of consciousness after death, and that complete annihilation at death is the conception accepted by the vast majority of enlightened persons."—PROFESSOR ELIE METCHNIKOFF, *The Nature of Man*, pp. 161-2.

"The thoughts to which I am now giving utterance, and your thoughts regarding them, are the expression of molecular changes in that matter of life which is the source of other vital phenomena."—PROFESSOR HUXLEY, *Lay Sermons*, p. 138.

"In the eye of science *the animal body* is just as much the product of molecular force as the stalk and ear of corn, or as the crystal of salt or sugar."—PROFESSOR TYNDALL, *Fragments of Science*, p. 417.

MODERN science knows nothing of the soul; it teaches that the mind is a product of matter, and that the higher intellectual faculties are a function of the grey matter of the brain.

No mysterious spiritual being lurks within us, forcing us to obey its imperious will, and surviving the decay and destruction of our bodily frame. Man's mind, like his body, is the outcome of the blind evolutionary forces of nature, and we can trace the path by which it evolved. As Professor Calderwood has observed:—

"The novelty of the situation lies in this, that man's alliance with all animal life has been established with a clearness and fullness of representation never before

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possible in the history of the world. The long-hidden secrets of nature are disclosed, and behold! man has his heritage among the beasts of the field. The discovery is indeed a large one; the demonstration has been worked out in minute detail till no place is left for doubt."*

Or, as Lester Ward, the American evolutionist, puts it:—

"One revolution of the wheel of organisation evolved the living vegetable world; another culminated in the creation of sentient beings. Higher and higher has arisen the type, finer and finer has grown the product, till brain has become the ruling force, and man has emerged from that darkness which hitherto had never permitted Nature to contemplate herself."†

Mind, the highest product of evolution, which, he says, has been described as that which "sleeps in the stone, dreams in the animal, awakes in man."

The brain depends for its working upon the blood supply. If the blood circulates too rapidly, as in the case of drunkenness or fever, the ideas become confused. If a drop of water passes into the cranium, loss of memory follows. If the brain is flooded by the bursting of a blood-vessel, we have an apoplectic fit. Dr. Buchner asks:—

"If the mind, as spiritualists contend, be a thing independent or self-existing, and controlling or utilising matter, why is it so little able to defend itself against or repel these attacks? Why does it yield or succumb to a blow on the head, the commingling of a few drops of blood with the substance of the brain, a sunstroke, a few inhalations of chloroform, a few glasses of wine, or a few drops of opium, prussic acid, or other poison?"‡

Mind is a purely material product; more blood is supplied to the brain than any other organ. One-fifth of the blood in the body is constantly traversing the brain; and Professor Bain tells us that "thought exhausts the nervous substance as surely as walking exhausts the muscles."§ Gavarret found that "the blood which comes to the brain red and oxygenated, returns by the capillaries black and charged with carbonic acid."‖

The ingenious researches of Dr. Byasson have shown that every brain cell in working expends its phosphorised materials, and that wearisome intellectual labor is followed by the presence in the urine of sulphates and phosphates, the waste products of the brain at work, "which serve as a chemical measure of the intensity of cerebral work done in a given time."¶ Dr. L'Heritier has also shown that "in old age and in a state of idiocy, the phosphorus contained in the brain is but one-half in quantity of what it used to be, and recedes in point of fact to the proportion contained in the brain of an infant."** These facts were summed up in the famous phrase of Moleschott, "Without phosphorus no thought!"

Then, again, the brain generates heat, when at work, just the same as the muscles do, although it never exceeds the twentieth of a degree Centigrade. Lombard, who was the first to experiment in this direction, gave reasons for thinking that "Every cause that attracts the attention—a noise, or the the sight of an object or a person—produces elevation of temperature," which also occurs under the influence of an emotion, or during an interesting reading aloud.†† These experiments were conducted outside the cranium. The brain was not directly investigated. It remained for Professor Schiff, by directly experimenting upon the brain itself inside the skull, to demonstrate by means of thermoscopic instruments of extreme sensibility, that Lombard was right. Dr. Luys says:—

"Schiff, in his recent experiments, as ingeniously contrived as delicately executed, succeeded in demonstrating in a precise manner, that in the animal under experiment, the cerebral substance was subject to local increase of temperature, according as it was successively excited by such and such kinds of sensorial impressions, and that thus, in the brain of a dog, which was made to hear unexpected sounds, such or such a region of the cortical substance was heated, and that in another, in which tactile, olfactory, or gustative sensations was excited, other regions of the brain were reciprocally erethised and heated in an isolated manner."*

Which, being interpreted for the plain man, means that a different part of the brain was brought into action, and rose in temperature, for every sense that was exercised. Thus, one part of the brain was brought into action by hearing, another by seeing, another by feeling, another by taste, and another by smell; which proves, as Luys remarks, that this inward labor of the mind reveals itself by sensible signs, and "the brain, like a muscle in action, manifests its dynamic power by a local increase of heat, appreciable by the instruments of the physical laboratory" (p. 76).

Thus we understand, says the same writer, how prolonged efforts of the mind, and "sustained intellectual work is accompanied by a loss of phosphorised substance on the part of the cerebral cell in vibration, that it uses it up like an ignited pile which is burning away its own essential constituents." He points out that "Sleep is to the brain what needful repose is to our fatigued limbs, the necessary condition of its health," and numbers have sown the seed of brain disease "who through reiterated vigils and exaggerated expenditures of activity, have thus passed the physiological limit of the resources at their disposal, and incurred expenditure above their receipts." The same author cites the case "of a celebrated lawyer, who lost his memory in consequence of too-long-continued intellectual work"; and of "a similar case which occurred in a German savant, after an intense concentration of mind"†

When the brain becomes weary, its energy diminishes, the flow of blood to it becomes less, and the brain tissue becomes insensibly bloodless. The condition of comparative bloodlessness in the brain during sleep, says Dr. Luys,—

"has been directly proved by different observers; thus Coldwell, in the case of a wound in the head, with loss of substance in the bones of the cranium, observed that when the patient was plunged in deep and peaceful sleep, the brain remained almost immovable in its envelope, but that when he was dreaming it increased in volume, and when the dream was vivid it protruded through the opening. Blumenbach, in an analogous case, similarly remarked that the brain subsided during sleep, and that waking was accompanied by a more or less considerable afflux of blood, and an augmentation of volume" (p. 75).

The same writer records a case which came under his personal observation. "In a patient affected with melancholia, with prolonged stupor ending with death, I succeeded in discovering a most characteristic condition of anæmia of the cerebral substance, which was as it were washed clean and deprived of sanguine material" (p. 248). Now, the crucial question arises—Why, if our thoughts are due to an immaterial soul, or spirit, should they be affected by the quantity, or quality, or rate of circulation of blood supply to the brain? Why should the power of thought, and the intellectual faculties, cease altogether with the withdrawal of the blood from the brain?

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

Hope Deferred.

RECENTLY, in my portion of the country, the solemn-faced gentlemen have been greatly distressed. Not that this deserves comment: they are easily perturbed by the fluctuations of the pew rents; but some of the mental margarine they produce while in this state is of the well-advertised, heavy-weight quality, and gives occasion for the presence of an inspector.

* Professor Henry Calderwood, *Evolution and Man's Place in Nature* (1893), p. 261.
† Lester Ward, *Dynamic Sociology*, vol. ii., p. 74.
‡ Ludwig Buchner, *Force and Matter*, p. 291.
§ Bain, *Mind and Body*, p. 80.
‖ Luys, *The Brain and its Functions*, p. 70.
¶ Luys, *The Brain and its Functions*, 70.
** Buchner, *Force and Matter*, pp. 272-3.
†† Luys, *The Brain and its Functions*, p. 76.

* Luys, *The Brain and its Functions*, p. 63.
† Luys, *The Brain and its Functions*, pp. 78-79.

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It seems that the majority of the people, who are factory workers and miners, are gradually becoming more and more demoralised. Pleasure is eating into the heart of their life, like a cancer germ; and the pastors would like to operate and destroy it. There is too much frivolity; too much demand for excitement; too great a request for amusement nowadays. This, we are told, leads to a social instability directly antagonistic to the teachings of Christianity. It means that the serious aspect of life as an aviation garage and training field is being very sadly neglected. It means that the vision is dulled with tears, and the heart crinkled with care, and only ignorance mistakes those tears for the pearls of the laughter of fools, and the crinkles for the physical contortions of merriment. It means that Religion is losing its supremacy.

Of course, we do not accuse Christianity of being responsible for this social demoralisation; not at all, despite its supremacy. We are only now discovering what *real* Christianity, and *real* Religion, are. Hitherto, the people have been blinded by sectarian prejudice. Although convinced of the truth of their beliefs, our forefathers had not the educational resources afforded us, and consequently their attitude towards the divine wisdom was rather constrained, and, in many cases, led to a false interpretation of the Word of God. Logically, therefore, one cannot very well impute to the *true* Christianity of to-day the responsibility for the existent social evils.

Anyone who suggests that the Christianity of contemporary life and that of yesterday are practically the same is a monstrously bad logician, and the truth is not in him. Should he assert that the religion of our grandparents exercised so powerful a mental influence in favor of social conservatism that it delayed progress, he becomes a suspicious character. And if he assert that this *real* Christianity of the present is no more than divine "swank" of the ordinary Christianity of the past, and is as much responsible for the continuation of social degradation as anything else, economic or otherwise, he is a man who should be treated like a naughty child: hunger look-out.

Suppose you say that dirty horrible work coarsens the mind, and that the rough mind seeks rude pleasures. Suppose you say that ten hours' hideous monotony demands fleshly excitement, and that the cravings of an ill-educated mind can only be appeased by a glare and glitter the cultured mind would despise. Suppose you say that the child brain is moulded by its environment, and if the surroundings, mental and material, be unrefined, the child brain will become like them. And suppose you say that Christianity has flirted with, and fawned upon, in the past and in the present, nearly every influence that tended to prolong the coarseness of human life. Moreover, suppose you prove, as the Freethinker can prove, that the vaunted power of Christianity is indictment enough; then can you honestly say that Christianity is not in the least responsible for the very demoralisation its prating professors bemoan?

All this verbal whip-cracking about social demoralisation on the part of priests is so much sound, proving they are the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Hope deferred invariably gave the religionist delirium tremens of the tongue if that organ happened to be loosely hung in the making, or creating, by God. Jesus Christ, according to modern interpretation, suffered from this deferred hope of an earthly paradise. So suffered they all, down through the centuries, *viâ* Savonarola to Mr. Campbell. Not contented with the prospect of an eternity of woodbines and threeha'penny, they wished cigars and champagne here; and they all took the same way in their irrational methods of ridding the world of its demoralisation.

Emphasising a good thing is, psychologically, an excellent procedure if one desires the ultimate realisation of it. Dwelling persistently on a bad thing accentuates it. Every priest who agonised under this deferred hope foolishly commanded the people to fling off long-accustomed habit, as one flings off an overcoat. In other words, his dream of regeneration could only be accomplished by a social miracle, absolutely impossible. Every tongue-twitching priest has laid all his verbal weight upon the bad thing, sublimely ignorant of the fact that only a long course of educational emphasis upon the advantages of the good thing will elevate the social mind to its level.

Society is only a child yet in many respects. Perniciousness over a fault evokes doorness, stubbornness. Emphasise evil and you manure it by increasing its influence; but emphasise the good and simultaneously the bad is relegated to desuetude and the influence of the good develops. The social mind can only be successfully treated in a similar manner.

Sometimes we are inclined to the belief that the religious idea of a sudden and complete conversion of the individual is responsible for the opinion of the possibility of a lightning-like removal of social degeneration by the grace of God. Ministers of the gospel seem to imagine the only requirement to be a turning to God. They forget that the customs of centuries are stronger than the power of deity. God may rule angels; he does not rule humanity. He may reorganise the population of paradise by a wave of his mighty arm; but the same method is useless with the people of the earth.

It is an extremely difficult thing to aver that the typical representative of the "Have-nots" of contemporary times is rougher in the grain than the Chinese peasant of the year 9999 B.C., or the Egyptian carpenter of the same year, or the Assyrian tent-dweller of 2345 B.C., or the Roman slave, or the Gallilean fisherman of the time of Jesus Christ. It is an extremely dangerous assertion to say that the masses of to-day are more demoralised than the masses of any other semi-historical period in the evolution of society. It is futile to dogmatise on the subject in the absence of sound knowledge.

The ministerial rumpus concerning the "Materialism" of the people is as ancient as the first fully credentialed medicine-man, who, very probably, used the wickedness of his fellow-barbarians as an excuse for surrounding himself with legions of bad spirits. It is a trick of the trade, a survival of religious savagery.

Priestcraft has always aspired to be socially dominant. When it discovered inimical forces in operation, immediately it endeavored to raise a dust around them to distract attention. And what was more convenient at any time in the world's history than the social degradation of the "Have-nots"? The Holy Bible is prolific in examples of this religious characteristic. Every prophet was missioned to lead the people to a land flowing with milk and honey. Christ is the best instance of all. His estimation of the people's Materialism was concentrated in the opprobrious phrase "generation of vipers." Like them all, he suffered from hope deferred. Like them all, past and present, his mission in life was miraculously to cure the masses of their Materialism. And, like them all, he failed.

If the name "Have-nots," and its inevitable social coarseness, have to disappear from the memories of man, the change will certainly not be accomplished successfully by emphasising the black places; nor by painting a fancy heaven on the skies of poverty's hope; nor by keeping men's minds supernaturalistic; nor by enshrining autocracy on a purple throne in paradise. But the change may take place after centuries of the application of materialistic science, after centuries of the teaching of Humanism, when the average mind has been taught to honor human justice, when it has been taught to be rational.

ROBERT MORELAND.

Rev. Caller: "Well, Mrs. Mangles, and is the good man any better?"

Mrs. Mangles: "Oh, yes, sir. 'E's nearly all right agen, sir. 'E don't say 'is prayers no more of a night now, sir."

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Acid Drops.

The *Pall Mall Gazette* says that "Mr. Balfour has laid the country under an obligation by the delivery of his Gifford Lectures." We should have thought that he was fairly well paid by the £500 he received for the "delivery." Besides, he ought to feel easier after it.

Mr. Balfour is back from his Glasgow lectures on "God" and once more engaged in fanning the flames of religious bigotry in Ireland. The "classes" have always used the "masses" in this way. Comte was right when he said that "God" was the figure-head of a hypocritical conspiracy against mankind.

Drop religious bigotry and what "Irish question" would be left? "To hell with the Pope!" and "To hell with King William!" cover the whole wretched situation.

Without arguing the question of Home Rule, which is a political question, and outside the scope of this journal, we once argued that it was a mistake, in any case, to assume that "Home Rule meant Rome Rule." That aspect of the case is quite within our province. If it isn't we have no province at all. We have no time to argue the point again now, but we abide by what we wrote then. Imagine our astonishment at finding this made almost an excuse, by a "saint" we should never have expected to take up such an attitude, for not attending the recent Annual Dinner under the auspices of the N. S. S. The gentleman's language was sufficiently emphatic. We overlook that fact, however, for it is really not Freethought but politics that breeds too little regard for what the late Lord Chief Justice Coleridge called "the decencies of controversy." What we wish to say is that the "saint" in question is quite wrong in stating that the N. S. S. has committed itself in any way to any solution of the Irish or any other problem of party politics. It has been one of the President's most difficult duties to maintain this neutral policy, but he has always been supported at critical moments by the good sense of the party. Secularists are not all of one way of thinking in politics, sociology, and ethics; and if they are to keep together and work together as Secularists it must be exclusively upon the grounds on which they are not only practically but necessarily agreed. Humanism as opposed to superhumanism—understanding the words in a fairly wide sense—is the basis of combination amongst Secularists. There are other Societies for the promotion of other objects, and Secularists are free to join them individually just like other citizens. This is the only sensible and successful policy in a complicated life of modern civilisation.

It cannot be deduced, however, from this wise principle of action that the editor of the *Freethinker*—which, by the way, does not belong to and is not in any way controlled by the N. S. S. or any other Society—is debarred from holding and stating a view of what is but incidentally an aspect of the Home Rule question; holding that view *as* a Freethinker and stating it to his readers *as* Freethinkers. The purely religious and ecclesiastical part of an Irish problem is as open to our criticism as the same part of an English problem is. Supppse a Secularist who happened to be a Conservative called upon us to abstain from hostile criticism of the Church of England. Suppose a Secularist who happened to be an orthodox Liberal called upon us to abstain from hostile criticism of a Government Education Bill. Suppose the same person rebuked us for speaking more or less contemptuously of Mr. Lloyd George's excursions in the region of Nonconformist religion. What should we say in reply? We should say, of course, that these things were what the *Freethinker* existed for—that we were strictly attending to our own business—and that it might be as well if such correspondents tried to do the same. We fight religion, we fight churches, we fight priesthoods, and we are really not going to be warned off our work by apprehensive political partisans of any variety whatsoever. We may displease even friends now and then, but that is the highest form of courage. Displeasing your enemies is rather a luxury.

The Government promises a new Education Bill in the present session. Four bills have already been introduced and either lost or dropped by Mr. Asquith's lieutenants who have occupied the Education Ministry. Another lieutenant is to be responsible for the fifth bill—which will almost certainly share the fate of its predecessors. This is well known to the Government, but it is bound to do something to keep the Nonconformists quiet. The new measure is to be something short and sweet, dealing with single-school areas only, and virtually giving the Nonconformists control of the Church schools—and, indeed, all other schools—in such districts by establishing "Cowper Temple Teaching" and making Anglicans, Catholics, Jews, Freethinkers, and all other bodies, fight or finesse for any other kind of education they may prefer. Dr. Clifford is not ashamed to patronise this detestable swindle. And the Government is not ashamed to patronise Dr. Clifford.

A correspondent advises us to test Dr. Clifford's shibboleth of "no tests for teachers" by getting an Atheist teacher to apply to give the Bible lesson and then to tell the children the plain truth. If the Nonconformists mean what they say they would let him go on without interference. Quite true. But we know they don't mean what they say, and that the teacher who tested their honesty would soon be out of employment. If he could afford it, or others could afford it for him, he might try the experiment. Not otherwise.

How stupidly people will talk when religious ideas dominate their thinking! Here is Mr. Lloyd George assuring a Glasgow audience that "one deep, underlying principle" of all sound land laws is that "the land in all countries was created by Providence for the benefit of all those who dwell therein." Providence means one thing, but the Dukes determine another! What a Providence! What a Chancellor! How presumptuous to think that, if the Dukes can get the better of God Almighty, they can't get over the Liberal Government! Really what Mr. George is saying is, "It was all very well while these great landowners only had God Almighty to bother about. Then they did as they liked. But now they have *me*; and God *plus* Lloyd George is a combination they will not so easily get over." And it is these men who complain of Freethinkers treating God disrespectfully!

Over a hundred years ago the French people found that the aristocracy had also overcome Providence, as Mr. Lloyd George says that our own aristocracy has done. So they put Providence on one side, rightly deciding that that kind of Providence was not worth bothering about. And they settled the land question in the name of *Man*. We are still lagging behind, troubling our silly heads about the designs of Providence. As though the Dukes are not as much part of those designs as Mr. Lloyd George.

"Many a Christian minister," says Dean Inge, "found in politics a welcome refuge from preaching dogmas in which they no longer actively believed, and which bored their congregations." This is only a polite way of saying that Christian preachers are being paid for preaching what they don't believe, and that some of them evade this by preaching what they are not paid for. And Dean Inge, being one of the trade, ought to know. Of course, everyone knows this to be the case; but is there any other profession save that of the ministry about which such a confession would be made? People in other professions may be equally dishonest, but they do not openly admit it. The striking thing is that the dishonesty of the clergy in this direction is accepted as something that is part of the established order.

Dean Inge added that "a man must be either a saint or a humbug to preach the gospel in its pure unalloyed form." "Either a fool or a liar" is the plain English of this sentence.

We wonder under which class of parsons Dean Inge himself comes when he says that the groan of horror that went up over the loss of the *Titanic*, and the question how one could reconcile that with the belief in a good God, carried humanitarianism "to an unmanly absurdity. Christianity was, after all, an austere creed. It taught them to be ready to suffer, and was not always reluctant even to inflict pain for a higher good." Well, will Dean Inge tell us what "higher good" was achieved by the loss of the *Titanic*? Does he really believe it did good? If so, why not arrange for a few more ships to be wrecked in the same way? As a matter of fact, no one believes the loss of the *Titanic* was a good thing. Dean Inge himself does not believe it. And such unadulterated nonsense could find a place nowhere but in the pulpit.

Truthful James once asked the question, "Is Our Civilisation a Failure?" and Dean Inge, the gloomy follower of the Man of Sorrows, laments that laymen think for themselves instead of obeying their pastors without question, and that

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the pulpit is invaded. Worse remains, for all this means fewer threepenny-bits in the collection plates.

New York Spiritualists are claiming to have received messages from the late Mr. W. T. Stead. It refers to the "beautiful and touching tribute to his memory paid by those who strewed flowers on the waters of the Atlantic at the spot where the *Titanic* went down." We should hardly have thought that so trivial a thing would be occupying Mr. Stead's attention; and the flowers squandered on the Atlantic might have been more sensibly and humanely bestowed upon hospitals or other public institutions, where a gleam of beauty may lighten even the load of pain. Besides, messages of this kind are easily made up on the present side of "the great Beyond." Mr. Stead's ghost should communicate something more original. But this is the worst feature of all the messages in the world from "the bourne from whence no traveller returns." They reveal nothing—they inform us of nothing we did not know before—they give us no real tidings of the alleged future life. They leave unbroken the silence and the darkness of the tomb.

Not one of the occult people has been able to throw a ray of light upon the recent murder mysteries. They and their supposed instructors in the spirit world are just as ignorant and helpless as other people. Yet it ought not to be so. If the late Mr. Stead can see flower-strewing on the Atlantic, some other spirit could see the murder of the little boy Starchfield in a railway train. But the police get no help from that quarter. They have to rely upon their own researches. And if they fail a murderer is allowed to walk about freely in human society.

It cannot be too often mentioned that the late Mr. Henry Labouchere kept a £1,000 Bank of England note locked up in a safe for many years, and publicly offered to give it to any Spiritualist, Theosophist, or other "occult" person who could discover its identity. None of them could read it. None of them had a "spirit" friend who could supply the requisite information. "Labby" knew his note was safe.

A lady, seeing a portrait of the Bishop of London in full episcopal rig-out in a shop window, said, "How original." Her husband, who was with her, rejoined, "You mean aboriginal."

We have the Bishop of London's word for it that 243 churches have been consecrated in his diocese during the last fifty years. We beg to remind his lordship that there has been a great increase in lunatic asylum accommodation during the same period.

The Bishop of London appears to be about to imitate St. Simon Stylites. Speaking at a Temperance Demonstration at the Queen's Hall, he said he "was not going to sit down with a £161,000,000 drink bill and a public-house at the corner of nearly every street." He may resume his seat almost immediately by advising churchpeople to discontinue the use of "Communion Port" at one and-three a bottle. Something at about ninepence would enable believers to take up their crosses and follow their Savior.

At a recent concert in a provincial town the program included "Star of Eve" and "Adam's 'Comrades' Song of Hope.'" The latter should have been written as a duet, unless the talking snake volunteered to make it a trio.

Lecturing at Forest Hill, a returned Congo missionary told the audience how to be a witch-doctor, assuring them that a man must be cunning, unscrupulous, and have a knowledge of human nature. He need not have troubled about the recipe, for we are plagued with 50,000 of the creatures in England.

An ex-South African missionary writes in the *Christian Commonwealth apropos* of the Kikuyu controversy:—

> "Next to the importation of 'Christian' vices and immorality, and 'Christian' ardent liquor, the worst evil that Christianity has imported is its 'sectarianism.' Tribal jealousy and rivalry were innocent enough in days when the different Bantu racial sub-divisions clubbed each other in dispute of the possession of the earth, compared with the rivalry that sectarian Christianity has brought into the hearts of the black people of Africa."

This missionary, Mr. H. E. Sampson, describes at length the quarrels, the ill-feeling, and the exclusiveness of rival "kraals," the denizens of which have been converted by missionaries of different sects. One thing appears plain. In general good fellowship the natives can give the proselytising Christians "points."

Rev. Professor D. S. Cairns is delivering a course of lectures at Aberdeen on "The Reasonableness of Christian Faith." Their value may be gauged by his laying great emphasis on the fact that "Science has once and for all established that religion was practically a universal thing." This is what one may call an example of the pulpit art of telling the truth while suggesting its opposite. Of course, science has shown religion to be universal. But it is not the universality but the truth of religion that is denied. And Professor Cairns carefully abstained from telling his hearers that while science had shown religion to be universal, it had also shown that it was based on pure delusion, and that, with the removal of the delusion, the basis of religion crumbles. Universality proves nothing—except universality. Lying is universal, so is theft, so are various diseases. These things have always been, they are still, and will remain for a long time yet. All we can hope to do is to diminish their range. And this is really what the world is doing all the time in the case of religion.

We are surprised it doesn't strike thoughtful religionists that the universality of religion is a much stronger argument for its falsity than for its truth. God and the soul, heaven and hell, ghosts and goblins, are not things that man discovers as he increases in knowledge. He finds them while he is steeped in ignorance. He does not doubt them while he is ignorant; doubts only begin as he acquires solid knowledge. The savage who blunders everywhere else, is assumed to be on the right track here. He could not understand his body, but he knew all about his "soul." He could not understand this world, but he knew all about the next. Now, if the savage were ignorant of religion, and the civilised man discovered it, or invented it, a much stronger argument could be made out on its behalf. Religion is only universal because the majority of the world's inhabitants are still uncivilised or only partly civilised. And it is least universal—if the expression be permissible—where learning and civilisation are greatest.

Mr. Bob Sievier says that "The Disestablishment of the Welsh Church is a sin." We may take his word for it. He is considered to be something of an authority on that subject.

What a dear little word is "more" in uncertain accents from the lips of baby when she (by preference *she*) appreciates something you have given her. Poor Oliver Twist was not allowed to ask for "more" of anything he liked, and that was one of the worst signs of the child's misery. But it mustn't be supposed that Mr. Bumble and his fraternity are dead even yet. A film of scenes from *Oliver Twist* has been prohibited by the Censor. The gentleman is afraid that Charles Dickens would corrupt the good people of Munich and give any amount of trouble to the authorities—not to mention the clergy.

Tit-Bits—of all papers!—has been collecting opinions as to whether picture palaces should open on Sunday or not. Father Vaughan replies, "Why not?" He adds that no place of amusement should open on Sunday morning, that "ought to be left sacred for Church services." Quite a charming reservation in favor of a special trade interest. Besides, to do the Catholic Church justice, it has always favored a more "human" Sunday than the other Churches. Sir John Kirk, representing the other Churches, thinks they ought to be closed, because of their "probable influence upon the morals of the country." As though they could exert a worse influence than Church and Chapel. Mr. William Le Queux, Mr. John Hassal, and the Manager of Pear's Soap, also favor their opening. So does Sir Joseph Lyons, although, as he happens to be a Jew, we do not see what status he has in the matter. It is a funny world! A Jewish Lord Chief Justice had to decide recently a religious dispute between two sections of the Christian Church, and might even be called upon to sentence a Freethinker for ridiculing the Christian religion; and another Jew is asked his opinion about the Christian Sabbath. Oh for a sense of humor among the people! Most of our troubles would soon be at an end.

Meanwhile, we are surprised that some journal does not collect the opinions of the proprietors of picture shows as to the opening of Churches on Sunday evenings. We feel certain they must keep a lot of people away from the cinemas. And we are also convinced that a very strong case could be made out for presentation to the Home Secretary.

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The Chosen People have for a good many years been deserting the old world for the new. There are said to be nearly a million Jews in New York. It is calculated that 40,000 mourners walked in the funeral procession behind the corpse of a Jewish comedian named Mogulesco the other day. A choir of 1,000 voices sang funeral dirges. Evidently the conversion of the Jews to Christianity is too tough a job for the present machinery and its operators. Jesus will have to pay them another visit, and even that won't be of much use unless it is a great deal more successful than the first appears to have been.

Fashionable Paris is running after Bergson. Ladies faint in the panting crowd. One knows what the end of this must be. And it is never very long between "Hosanna!" and "Crucify Him!"

It appears that the latest heresy of the Rev. Dr. Aked—first of Liverpool, then of New York, and now of San Francisco—has aroused the ire of the Presbyterian Association, which has intimated that his resignation would be acceptable. What will he do next? He might leave the pulpit altogether if he took Freethought in less homœopathic doses.

The Dean and Chapter of Canterbury have sanctioned the holding of a musical performance in the Cathedral with a charge for seats. The Free and Open Church Association calls it a "desecration" of the holy edifice "thus to convert it into a music hall." But suppose it gets used by-and-bye for a cinema show? It may. You never can tell.

Mackirdy's Weekly, a new periodical, has exalted aims, among which is to preach "that God is just, and to show that Christianity is good to work on, good to rest on." The first proposition is, we fear, beyond the powers of a lady journalist, and our dear friends, the clergy, have shown their flocks how to rest on the Gospel very comfortably.

The latest Gentle Jesusite wills run small. Rev. Oliver Raymond, rector of Middleton, Essex, left £6,180. Rev. Walter Henzell Gough, of Horsham, Sussex, left £6,759. Rev. Canon George Harrison Ross-Lewin, of Benfieldshire, Durham, left £10,048. Rev. Dr. Edward Maguire, of Ardmora, Bangor, Co. Down, left £8,559. But the aquarium boasts of one whale to several fish. Rev. Dr. Frederick Preston-Joy, of the Close, Winchester, left £42,985.

February 1 was a "go-to-church Sunday" in the United States. Invitations to attend were accompanied by milk-bottles, bread, and other gifts of eatables, and the result was the Brooklyn worshipers rose from 300,000 to 500,000 and the Chicago worshipers from 500,000 to 1,500,000. America seems to beat India in the matter of "rice Christians."

According to the Berlin correspondent of the *Christian World*, Otto Boruska, a Protestant watchmaker in Austria, was recently sentenced to a week's imprisonment for not falling on his knees at the passing of the "host," carried by a priest through the streets. The sentence was appealed against, and the heretic won his case, because the Court of Appeal considered that he had done nothing which was offensive. The revival of persecution is not confined to England.

According to orthodox apologists, civilisation is itself owing to the prevalence of the Christian religion. What do they make of the fact that during the few years of its existence the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children has dealt with two and a-half millions of cases of cruelty against little ones, very many of whom were under two years of age? The putting in force of the Blasphemy Laws by the authorities is a clear proof that the Government is a religious one.

It is stated that Canon Fleming's sermon, *Recognition in Eternity*, has realised £1,760 since its publication in 1892. The clergy, who have made millions out of the Sermon on the Mount, will not think much of the canon's little explosion.

Although some of the daily papers have discreetly avoided mentioning the fact, the trouble in the Herefordshire schools has arisen in Church schools, where the staffs are as wretchedly underpaid as organists, bellringers, choirboys, and pew-openers. Strikes have caused the closing of over sixty schools, but in a few cases the dear clergy have attempted the *rôle* of strike-breakers with the assistance of lady friends, whose only qualification seems to be that they are "over fifteen and vaccinated."

A woman fortune-teller has been sentenced at Guernsey to eight days' imprisonment for witchcraft. What with blasphemy prosecutions in England and a recrudescence of trials for witchcraft, "God's Englishman" seems to be slipping back to "chaos and old night."

The *Daily Mail* recently devoted a column to Voltaire, and wound up by declaring "that he was the greatest master of irony the world has ever known." Exactly! And he wouldn't have thought much of the scrap-irony of Carmelite House.

Reviewing the newly-found notebook of Voltaire's, published by the *English Review*, the *Daily Mail* says that "there are also touches of the boyish blasphemy which justified the hatred that all believers cherished for the philosopher." Voltaire lived to be over eighty years of age, and he was profane most of the time, and we believe that Christians liked the profanities of the master less than the efforts of his 'prentice days.

Some of the passages from Voltaire's private notebook are strong enough; the following, for instance, which embodies an old story about a tough piece of the "body of Christ" in the holy communion—and which it must have taken a good deal of courage to print in the *English Review*:—

> "There was a parson in France, who for to saunter away the time was playing one day in the morning at piquet, with his own whore. In the meantime, some good countrymen, and great many devotious women were at loss round about the altar, in order to communicate, and waiting upon their kneels for their parson. The clerc of the church comes in a great hurry to his master. Make haste, says he, good sire, come to administer god to your people. The parson rises on a sudden, leaves off his game, kiss his whore, takes up his wafers box, but by mistake, he puts in some counters of ivory of the same figure wherewith he plaid, and he runs to the altar as he was distributing god in wafers to the people. He gives to one old woman an ivory counter instead of a wafer. This old jade, after having received her portion of god, sneaks into a secret part of the church to pray and collect herself; she wonders at first she can't swallow up the host. She endeavours to chaw it, but in vain, at last she goes to the priest in the vestry: Good sir, sais she, I believe you gave me god the father, so he is tough and hard."

There are many variants of this pious old story, but they are all essentially similar. The unchewable wafer is, as the Dutch communicant said, "de ole man himselben."

Bedford brewers attempted a 'cute bargain and failed. They applied for a full licence for a house to be erected on a new estate, and they let it be known that if it were granted they would give a site for a church on the same estate. But the magistrates were not to be caught so easily. Perhaps they concluded that one church was a poor offset to one public-house.

Adversity makes strange bedfellows, and newspapers make strange companions. There were two headings and two portraits in contiguous columns of the *Daily Chronicle* on February 7. One heading was "Sack Murder Verdict"—the other was "Three New Bishops." One portrait was George Ball, the Liverpool murderer—the other was the Rev. Watts-Ditchfield, the new Bishop of Chelmsford. So singular are the methods of the "great Creator" that the murderer was the better looking of the two.

For the first time in the history of Winchester Prison, a confirmation service has been conducted by the Bishop of Winchester, eight candidates being presented. The Bishop of Rochester conducted a similar service at the Borstal convict establishment. It will be a pleasant distinction not to be a Christian presently.

Evan Roberts's poor old mother is dead at last. The operation she underwent a short while ago could not save her life. She wanted to see her boy before she died, but he would not see her. He had the impudence to tell her that her sin had separated her from him; her sin being no more than her inability to believe the spiritual claims he set up on his own behalf. The vain creature hugs himself still as God's favorite. And if the New Testament be true he is a thoroughly sound Christian. He realises the terrible text about hating one's father and mother for Christ's sake.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

March 1, Glasgow; 22, Manchester.

To Correspondents.

W. PALMER.—We have friends enough, if the deed were as good as the will, to be free from all financial worries.

J. D. JOHNSON.—Received. We are writing to you on the matter.

P. M. W.—Acknowledged as desired. Thanks for personal good wishes.

A. E. WILLIAMS.—See paragraph.

R. WALLIS.—May your good wishes be realised.

E. W. COOPER.—Your subscription is passed on to our publishing department. Glad to hear you "look forward eagerly" to the *Freethinker* every Thursday and "consider it an intellectual treat." We don't see what can be done in the lecturing line in South Wales at present. People care there for little else than party politics, prize-fighting, and football. Another revival might give Freethought another opportunity.

W. DAVIDSON.—It seems impossible for these Christian Evidence people to quote anything correctly.

E. B.—Much obliged for cuttings.

D. C. DRUMMOND.—Thanks for your warm good wishes.

"LEMINGTON."—It has been a difficult "tiller" to hold, but we have done our best, as Bradlaugh knew we would when he passed over to us the President's hammer.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

F. S. L.—Mr. Foote's booklet *Darwin on God*, price 6d., contains what you want. Pleased to hear you like this journal so much that you wish it were published oftener.

JAMES NEATE.—With Mr. Quinton as M.C. you should have a good time on March 1.

R. OGILVIE.—We have read your encouraging letter with pleasure.

A. WELLS.—Your efforts to promote our circulation must surely have had *some* success; if not, they deserved it.

P. C. H.—Thanks for your pleasant message through Miss Vance.

W. H. MORRISH.—Glad to see your signature after "Your old chum." Good old comforting word used in our boyhood!

S. B.—Thanks for "best wishes and keen appreciation" of our work.

BRANDON T. BRIERLEY.—Acknowledgment may not be "necessary," but we prefer it when not forbidden—for many reasons. "No better literature than our *Freethinker* ever enters my doors" is good reading at this end.

J. BREESE.—No one gave us a hint that publicity was not desired. That would have prevented all the trouble. We are sorry that you think we meant to be personally offensive. You are one of the last men in Birmingham that we should have chosen to insult.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

The President's Honorarium Fund.

To the Freethinkers of Great Britain.

January, 1914.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—

We renew our appeal on behalf of the above Fund, which is now so well known to the Freethought party that its object may be stated in a very few words. It is sought to relieve Mr. G. W. Foote—President of the National Secular Society, Chairman of the Secular Society (Ltd.), and Editor of the *Freethinker*—of his worst financial worries, so that he may be as free as possible to devote his time and energies to his work as the leader of the militant Freethought movement in this country. We suggested that £800 a year might be raised in this way and placed at his disposal. We are happy to say that the average has reached that amount.

A generous subscriber made up the deficit of some £20 in 1912, and another friend offered to make up any deficit in 1913. Happily but £8 odd was necessary. Perhaps it will become a fashion for the £800 to be made up fully in this manner.

Mr. Foote's income from other sources at present is more restricted than ever. He intends to explain this matter himself very shortly. In the meanwhile we have to assure the Freethought party that the time has not arrived when they might think of diminishing their subscriptions to this Fund.

With regard to the *Freethinker*, we are sorry to learn from Mr. Foote that it still yields him no salary. The business of the Pioneer Press (including the *Freethinker*) has turned the corner from loss to profit; but the latter is as yet scarcely worth a mention.

All subscriptions received have been acknowledged week by week in the *Freethinker*, and will continue to be acknowledged in that way.

Subscriptions for 1914 can be forwarded to either of the undersigned. Those who prefer to do so can send, as before, direct to Mr. Foote himself, at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, London, E.C.

Subscribers who do not wish their names to appear in print should state the form of acknowledgment they prefer.

We are aware that all subscribers cannot conveniently respond to this appeal at once, but we hope a great many will do so as early as possible.

Yours faithfully,

J. W. DE CAUX, J.P.,
92 St. Peter's-road, Gt. Yarmouth.

R. T. NICHOLS, M.D.,
28 Park-road, Ilford.

A. J. FINCKEN,
66 Mount Grove-road, Highbury, London, N.

First List of Subscriptions.

J. M. Gimson, £2; D. C. Drummond, 10s.; A Friend, 1s.; "Lemington," £1; L. Gjemre, £2; W. H. Morrish, £1; A. C. Brown, 5s.; W. Dodd, 10s.; W. Palmer, 2s.; P. M. W., £1; F. G. Margetson, 5s.; A. W. Hey, 10s. 6d.; J. Hurcum, 10s. 6d.; — Rantell, 4s. 6d.; Col. H. H. Hart and Wife, £5; Wolverhampton Friends (per R. Wallis), 5s. 6d.; A. Harvey, 10s. 6d.; J. F. Flood (Pittsburg), £1; J. F. Shoulto, 5s.; T. Sutcliffe, 5s.; C. Harding, 2s. 6d.; Harriet Baker, 11s. 6d.; Robert Gibbon (Gainsborough), £1 6s. 8d.; Robert Miller, 2s. 6d.; C. J. Simpson, 10s. 6d.; T. H. Elstob, 10s.; E. B., £1 1s.; F. C. H., 2s. 6d.; S. B., £2; Brandon T. Brierley, £1 1s.; Dr. R. T. Nichols, £5 5s.

Sugar Plums.

A military officer, writing to us from India, says that "Freethought could be advanced much more rapidly if there were a few rich Freethinkers among us who would give money when it was urgently needed." Of this journal he says: "The *Freethinker* interests me more than any other paper. If you will allow me, I wish to say that I think it improves from month to month. Writers appear to me to be bolder, and more pronounced, in their statements." A personal passage is very welcome. "I might mention," our correspondent adds, "how sorry we were to hear of your being ill last year. Every week we followed the accounts of your health in the *Freethinker*, but thought it better not to worry you with any letter. We are glad to know you are nearly restored to good health." May we observe that letters at such a time are not a worry. It is good to find that many readers are friends.

Mr. W. Heaford lectures this evening (Feb. 15) at the Secular Hall, Humberstone-Gate, Leicester, on "War, Religion, and Rationalism." The subject should prove attractive and provoke discussion.

Our attention is called to the fact that Mr. Cluer, whom we referred to as an esteemed London magistrate, gave up

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his work at the Police-Court some time ago and became a County Court Judge. "Curiously enough," our correspondent adds, "one of the Courts over which he presides is Shoreditch County Court, which is also situated in Old-street."

The Bethnal Green Branch holds a social party on Sunday evening (March 1) at the King's Assembly Rooms, Cottage-grove, Mile-end-road. Tea on tables at 5.45. Concert and Dance at 7. Tickets for both 1s.—for latter only 6d.—can be had of Mr. James Neate, 375 Bethnal-Green-road. Profits go to the Branch fund for further work.

Lady lecturers are all too few on the Freethought platform. There are reasons for this, which we do not enter into at present, but they are entirely honorable to the ladies who do venture to speak publicly for our cause. Miss Kough lectures for the West Ham Branch this evening (Feb. 15) at the Workman's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford. "Christianity—a Relic" is a challenging title. We hope to hear of a full house.

It must have been my bad illness in the spring of last year. Somehow or other it fastened itself in my memory that my old friend, Mr. H. Side, was not present at last year's Dinner on account of the weather. I find I was mistaken. There is a paragraph of mine in the "Sugar Plums" of the *Freethinker* for January 26, 1913, referring to the pleasure I had of seeing him at the Dinner. I repeat that it must have been that bad illness that muddled my memory, which has always been a pretty good one, but, of course, far from infallible. Friend Side will accept my apology for representing him as absent even once from the great festive function of our Freethought year.—G. W. F.

I am writing on this matter at my office on Thursday afternoon, February 5; I am ahead of the corrections that I daresay will pour in upon me from many sources. I am chuckling at being in front of them for once. Correcting your own mistake is a luxury in the world of journalism. You generally get put upon a pin, like an entomological specimen, by somebody else.—G. W. F.

Goethe.—IV.

(*Continued from p. 86.*)

ON his return from Italy, Goethe resolved to dedicate his life to science and literature. He resigned most of his public offices, but he retained his position as State Minister, and continued to direct the working of the Ilmenau mines.

Goethe was fully determined upon the maintenance of his friendship with Charlotte von Stein, but her old warmth had died down. And now an event occurred which gave the death-blow to their former relations. In 1788 the poet was strolling through the Park at Weimar when a young and pleasing woman presented to him a petition on behalf of her brother. The poet was more interested in the girl than in her message, and she entered his house as his true and faithful wife. No priest blessed their union; society was scandalised at Goethe's conduct in treating as a wife a woman so much below him in the social scale. He loved her dearly; the Duke stood as godfather to their son, and Goethe's mother received his chosen companion as her "dear daughter." For a time Goethe and his spouse—Christiane Vulpius—kept their union to themselves, but the secret soon leaked out. When she heard the story, the Frau von Stein was incensed beyond measure, and never forgave Goethe for his shameful conduct. Goethe meanwhile was happy with his Christiane, and they remained unmarried until 1806, when they received the perfunctory blessings of the Church.

Whatever may be thought of the poet's domestic arrangements, the period that succeeded his union with Christiane Vulpius was rich in literary production. The *Roman Elegies* rank among the supreme poems of the world's literature. Although they may be "Italian and pagan in form, in color, in sensuality," and would certainly have been placed on Mr. Podsnap's black list, as works of art they are above and beyond date.

Goethe now turned his attention to *Tasso*, and evolved from his prose fragment a stately masterpiece of poetic art. In the language of a discerning critic—

> "In *Tasso* Goethe reached a simplicity and limpidity of form which makes the words disappear behind the ideas they convey, and transforms the metrical movement of the language into a melody of the thoughts; and thus he succeeded in representing the most refined and delicate movements of the human soul with perfect clearness and great dramatical impressiveness."

One's interest in the story increases as the poem proceeds, and one is dimly conscious that the scene of action is that of picturesque southern beauty.

The tragedy of *Egmont* was now given to the world in its finished form. Despite much adverse criticism, this drama, in the writer's opinion, is a magnificent triumph. The characters of Egmont and Clärchen are as Shakespearean as George Meredith's immortal Richmond Roy. It is probably the most popular of Goethe's dramas, and still occupies the German stage. Nor does it detract from its merits to admit that the music which Beethoven composed for it has added to its original attractiveness.

"The first and last thing demanded of genius," said Goethe, "is a love of truth"; and this noble saying dominates the poet's ever-present interest in the wonders of nature. Recoiling in disdain from the sophisticated arts of mere word-spinning and mist-creating metaphysicians, Goethe sought to solve the secrets of Nature through a study of her phenomena. Constitutionally a realist, he never forsook reality for ideality. "Everywhere in Goethe," wrote Horn, "you are on firm land or island; nowhere in the infinite sea." No understanding reader of his works can dispute the justice of this verdict. The real, the living, and the concrete stand out in firm outline; the vaporous and vague are invariably rejected with something akin to repugnance. Nor was he sympathetic with the mystic religiosity of his friends. He said of Lavater that "When a great man has a dark corner in him, it is terribly dark." He looked upon Jacobi's metaphysical kink as something the gods had thrust upon him as a set-off against the blessings of "house, riches, children, sister, friends." "God," smiled Goethe, "has punished you with metaphysics like a thorn in your flesh; me he has blessed with science that I may be happy in the contemplation of his works."

"The achievements of modern science," wrote G. H. Lewes,

> "and the masterpieces of art, prove that the grandest generalisations and the most elevated types can only be reached by the realistic method; and that what is called the 'ideal school,' so far from having the superiority which it claims, is only more lofty in its pretensions; the realist, with more modest pretensions, achieves loftier results."

The foregoing passage is one that Goethe would have enthusiastically endorsed; Nature to him was objective and real, not subjective and ideal. From this materialistic standpoint the poet put his questions to Nature, and the excellence of his method is demonstrated by the richness of his discoveries. With Spinoza, he regarded the Universe as the sum-total of existence, and within that Universe he placed all that was, or is, or is to be. Nature is neither kernel nor shell, but is all-in-all at once. Her varying garments bear no traces of manufacture, but everywhere present the evidences of growth. Over the mind of Goethe the idea of evolution exercised a constant sway, and the poet is to be numbered among the very greatest of the pre-Darwinian philosophers and scientists.

When quite a youth, Goethe's scientific bent manifested itself, and this interest in science never deserted him throughout his long life. His studies were very various, but it was in osteology that he made his first discovery. He had long been convinced of the oneness of human life, and he was deeply interested in the resemblance between the human skeleton and that of other vertebrate animals. Among anatomists it was the accepted view that the intermaxillary bone (mid-jawbone), which is

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present in the upper jaw of most animals, is absent in man. In the presumed absence of this bone, Camper erected man into an order entirely distinct from other living creatures. This distinction proved in the sequel to be very unfortunate; for so far as the mid-jawbone is wanting in man, it is equally absent in the chimpanzee.

While working in the laboratory at Jena in 1784, Goethe noticed what appeared to be the intermaxillary bone in a human jaw. After carrying out a series of careful comparisons, Goethe established the truth of his discovery beyond all doubt. He wrote an essay on the subject which is a model of clear exposition, and this was submitted to several contemporary men of science. It was not published to the world, however, until some thirty years later.

Of far-reaching consequence was this discovery, as it completely overthrew the cherished dogma of man's select superiority to lower animal existence. When acquainting Knebel with his discovery, Goethe wrote :—

> "Indeed, man is most intimately allied to animals. The co-ordination of the whole makes every creature to be that which it is, and man is as much man through the formation of his upper jaw as through the form and nature of the last joint in his little toe. And thus is every creature *but a note of the great harmony*, which must be studied in the whole, or else it is nothing but a dead letter."

Goethe was now led to the further view that all organisms of the same class are formed on a general plan which Nature adapts to meet the requirements of varying conditions of life. This conception constitutes an epoch in the evolution of scientific thought; for, by directing attention to the verity that organisms of the same class, no matter how widely their organs may appear to differ from one another, nevertheless display a fundamental agreement in structure, it prepared the path for the evolutionary revolution of the succeeding century.

Animated by the idea of organic development, Goethe had long pondered over the problem of the genesis and evolution of foliar structures in plants. In his celebrated essay, *The Metamorphoses of Plants*, Goethe enunciated the doctrine that the foliar organs of flowering plants are to be regarded as various modifications of the simple leaf. These were not the idle thoughts of an empty day, but were the outcome of prolonged and patient study. With certain reservations, this doctrine has long since been accepted, and now forms part of the philosophy of evolution. That Linnæus and Wolff to some degree anticipated Goethe's discovery in no way detracts from the poet's merits as a botanical reformer. In every department of human philosophy we discover that our new thoughts have thrilled dead bosoms. To Goethe the circumstance that his theory had commended itself to other minds was additional evidence of its truth.

When Goethe had penned his treatise on Plants, he found that contemporary botanists regarded the excursion of a celebrated poet into the realms of science with as much astonishment and amusement as the wise men of Weimar when it was suggested that a man of letters could fulfil the functions of a successful statesman.

> "Had an obscure professor published this work, its novelty would have sufficed to render it unacceptable; but the obscurest name in Germany would have had a prestige greater than the name of the great poet. All novelty is *primâ facie* suspicious; none but the young welcome it; for is not every new discovery a kind of slur on the sagacity of those who overlooked it? And can novelty in science, promulgated by a poet, be worth the trouble of refutation? The professional authorities decided that it could not. The publisher of Goethe's works, having consulted a botanist, declined to undertake the printing of *The Metamorphoses of Plants*. The work was only printed at last because an enterprising bookseller hoped thereby to gain the publication of his other works. When it appeared, the public saw in it a pretty piece of fancy, nothing more. Botanists shrugged their shoulders, and regretted that the author had not reserved his imagination for his poems. No one believed in the theory, not even his attached friends. He had to wait many years before seeing it generally accepted, and it was then only accepted because great botanists had made it acceptable."*

In the light of the foregoing facts, the spiteful charge of brazen plagiarism which was brought against Goethe becomes as false as it is absurd.

While on his second visit to Italy in 1790, his stay in Venice was made memorable by yet another scientific discovery. He was walking with his servant Seidel in the Jews' cemetery, when the attendant took up a sheep's skull, and, handing it to his master, remarked that it was the cranium of a Jew. While steadily regarding it, the idea suddenly flashed across Goethe's mind that the bones which form the skull are of the same nature as vertebræ, and are in fact vertebræ transformed to meet a special need. Although this theory, in common with Oken's and Owen's speculations concerning the origin of the skull, is hardly to be accepted in the form advanced, it nevertheless occupies a high place in evolutionary science.

Goethe's physical inquiries were not so successful, and he appears to have lost his habitual self-command in his unfortunate attempt to overthrow Newton's theory of colors. Nevertheless, Goethe's *Farbenlehre* (Color Teaching) is a remarkably well-written and closely reasoned work, and contains much valuable matter relating to light and color which science even now has not completely explained.

No account of Goethe's career would be complete without some reference, however brief, to his friendship with Schiller. When first they met, each poet regarded the other with marked reserve. Goethe looked upon Schiller as a writer whose talents were exercised on behalf of the storm and stress school, whose ideals the greater poet had long outgrown. Schiller, on his part, derived the impression that he and Goethe were so dissimilar in nature that any genuine friendship between them was impossible. Still, Goethe was constantly on his mind, and he could not resist the temptation of enviously comparing Goethe's easy circumstances with his own abject poverty. The intimacy of the two poets began when Goethe secured Schiller his professorship at Jena, and remained unbroken until the author of *Wallenstein's* early death in 1805. Goethe's Freethought was part of his very being; Schiller's youthful piety slowly disappeared, until he was almost as completely emancipated as his greater contemporary. The realism of Goethe, combined with his incomparably higher genius, presented a striking contrast to the imaginative idealism of Schiller. They acted and reacted on each other; they took the greatest delight in each other's achievements; neither manifested the slightest jealousy, and Schiller spurred on Goethe to the triumphant completion of works which threatened to remain mere fragments.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be concluded.)

Stock in Trade.

ATTEND, my children! We have here a book entitled *Life After Death; or, Reason and Revelation on the Immortality of the Soul.* It is a popular treatise by the Right Rev. Monsignor John S. Vaughan, and we now take a second breath. In the author's introduction to this, the twelfth edition, he embarks on a joyous excursion in the barren fields of rhetoric; and, aided by the use of many capitals, he prepares us for a feast of divine consolation. "For Death [capital, please], to a faithful soul, is not the terrible ordeal that some imagine." Lest the reader may think that we are quoting from Ingersoll, we would remind them that the author is a good Catholic. Has it not been, in the past, the Christian cry that the last hour is the worst? Are not the most beautiful aphorisms on this phase of life gathered from the sayings of those partly or wholly unchris-

* Lewes, *Goethe*, p. 331.

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tian in their attitude to life? Yet we have here a distinguished member of the Catholic Church stealing our arguments. Not content, however, with this exhibition of theft native to a religion which can boast of body-snatching, the author proceeds to say that "on the contrary, the death of the just is 'precious in God's sight,' and something to be looked forward to with longing, and even with a holy impatience." Remembering the ripe old age to which some divines live, it leads us to think that the good die young; at least, our opinion is somewhat strengthened after reading about the just and their impatience to die. But there are better things to come in this Arabian Nights' entertainment.

"Do not added years," the author asks, "often mean only added guilt and added responsibilities? If we are not now prepared, shall we be more ready, and better fitted, and less imperfect, in ten or twenty years' time? Such results cannot be guaranteed." We like the finish to this remarkable view of life; it reminds us of the jargon of shopkeepers about cheap articles. The only logical conclusion to arrive at is, that Christians should commit suicide with all speed and leave the world to those simple people who are content with one life at a time. With a fine peroration, the preface concludes with capitals well sprinkled, with the usual fustian about Death, Divine Summons, Angels, Saints, and a wish that "we, dear readers, one day, may meet in mutual charity." This traffic in death is almost too mean for words. The high priests of theology have worked this theme in a terrible manner; and now, when that fails, they turn and use the arguments the other way. We are inclined to believe in immortality, that is, immortality of the black brood of mankind that cajoles and threatens, that persecutes when powerful, and wheedles and insinuates when weak. When Rome rules the world, life after death will go begging.

Here we pick a plum. "As long as the Catholic Church is the guardian of Faith, so long must she continue to be the defender of Reason." We should be glad, as Freethinkers, to know when Rome *began* to defend Reason. Then we might examine her claim to the continuation of its defence. Did it commence after the Edict of Toleration? Did it start in the time of St. Augustine, who adopted that beautiful Christian attitude contained in the five words, "Compel them to come in"? Or was it really in full bloom in the year 1600, when Bruno was burned? We seek knowledge of the inception of this noble virtue in the history of a faith which in the present day is actively engaged in baiting Jews. Jew and Catholic ought to embrace if only through mutual reverence for their respective relatives who founded their religions, and Judas Iscariot ought to play no small part in the admiration of each.

We will not weary readers of this journal with further quotations. The author has advanced into new territory. We find that Byron, Shelley, Carlyle, and Buffon are all appropriated to fill out his book; we were rather surprised that the names of Rabelais, Balzac, and Voltaire were not included. It is significant that what these religious creatures cannot kill they annex; and who knows but that the name of our editor may not in the dim future back up some such similar work? Catholic impudence is always on the grand scale, and their industrious mischief on this earth only renders the idea of everlasting life revolting to those who are not swayed by sentiment and religious fear. For our part, we deny the cant that certain men are on speaking terms with a God who strives to hide himself from his children. We deny this sentimental rubbish about heaven colored to suit each individual's taste, and substantiate our denial by saying that priests have added terror to man's life to such an extent that he is in this respect worse than animals, and that the healing balm of heaven cannot compensate for a life lived in the shadow of religion from the cradle to the grave. Furthermore, heaven has no attraction for us; we should not be happy there. The unspeakable villain who lit the fire to burn Bruno would be there, so also would the dastards who ordered Ferrer to be shot, so would —— But why particularise? The riffraff and scum of the earth would all be there, and it is possible that we should ask awkward questions about thumbscrews and other beautiful instruments of the Catholic faith. Besides, we should want to see Omar Khayyam, Lucretius, and Swinburne.

As a constructive delusion, this Christian heaven will not do. It falls short in many respects; it is flyblown with inconsistencies, and will not even satisfy children, who would want to romp and play and have tea-parties. Take it away, ye black-robed desecrators of the earth, ye spoilers of human happiness, ye ghouls of existence! Black are your coats, and adders are black. And black is the most repulsive color in nature; if we did not know you, our natural abhorence of black would warn us.

As we write there is a west wind blowing, and the sun is shining in a blue sky beautified by banks of white clouds, and there is the promise of spring in the air. There are a few golden tulips in bloom near to us, and we find that we have waded through this book untouched by any sentiment of fear or hope, or even depression. The forces of life are stronger than those of death, and we are tempted to speculate on the religious position if man was in a physical sense immortal. As Robert Buchanan says in *The Book of Orm*:

> "I heard a voice from out the hollow ether,
> Saying, 'The thing ye cursed has been abolished—
> Corruption, and decay, and dissolution!'"

There would be such a rumpus in the rabbit-holes of religion that the end of the world would be as child's play compared with it, and the earth would not be afflicted with such works as the one under consideration. To its author we would say, "Hail and farewell!" Make hay while the sun shines, for as sure as the night follows day the time will come when all men will laugh at your descriptions of a place called heaven, and only believe you when you have been there and returned along with reliable witnesses.

WILLIAM REPTON.

Laws Against Religious Liberty.—II.

SIR JAMES STEPHEN, in his *Digest of the Criminal Law*, among alternative definitions of Blasphemy, gave the following: "A denial of the truth of Christianity in general, or of the existence of God, whether the terms of such publication are decent or otherwise." The same high authority, in a later magazine article (*Fortnightly Review*, March, 1884) held that the crime of Blasphemy consists in the mere expression of heterodox opinions; that it is only an *aggravation* of the crime to express them in "offensive" language; that "a large part of the most serious and most important literature of the day is illegal"; and that every bookseller who sells, and everyone who lends to his friend, a copy of Comte's *Positive Philosophy*, or of Renan's *Life of Jesus*, commits a crime punishable with fine and imprisonment.

Sir James Stephen detested this Law of Blasphemy. He even went to the length of drafting a Bill for its total abolition. He said that he preferred "stating it in its natural naked deformity to explaining it away in such a manner as to prolong its existence and give it an air of plausibility and humanity."

This view of the law is borne out by the language of indictments for Blasphemy. In the abortive prosecution of Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, and the successful prosecution of Messrs. Foote, Ramsey, and Kemp (1883), it was alleged against them in their indictments that they wickedly and profanely attempted "to bring the Holy Scriptures and the Christian religion into disbelief and contempt," not only "against the peace of our lady the Queen," but also "to the great displeasure of Almighty God."

Lord Coleridge, however, in summing-up at the trial of Messrs. Foote and Ramsey in the Court of

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Queen's Bench, while admitting that the law of Blasphemy "is undoubtedly a disagreeable law," let humanity get the better of the legal tradition. Against the decision of all previous judges, he laid it down that "if the decencies of controversy are observed, even the fundamentals of religion may be attacked without a person being guilty of blasphemous libel."

"Such a law," said Sir James Stephen "would never work." You cannot really distinguish between substance and style; you must either forbid or permit all attacks on Christianity. Men cannot discuss doctrines like eternal punishment, for instance, as calmly as they do questions in philology. When they feel deeply they will express themselves strongly; and "to say that you may discuss the truth of religion, but that you may not hold up its doctrines to contempt, ridicule, or indignation, is either to take away with one hand what you concede with the other, or to confine the discussion to a small and, in many ways, uninfluential class of persons."

John Stuart Mill expressed the same truth in an article on "Religious Prosecutions," in the *Westminster Review* of July, 1824: "To declare that an act is legal, but with the proviso that it be performed in a gentle and decorous manner, is opening a wide door for arbitrary discretion on the one part and dissatisfaction on the other. The difficulty is greatly increased when the act itself is offensive to those who sit in judgment upon the manner of its performance."

Such a law is a downright absurdity. It means that twelve Christians are to be put into a jury-box to decide whether a Freethinker has attacked Christianity in a "becoming" manner. What is the Freethinker's liberty worth in such circumstances? Would Liberal writers like to be tried by their opponents for attacking Conservatism without a proper respect for the "decencies" of controversy?

"There is one reflection," said Sir James Stephen, "which seems to me to prove with conclusive force that the law upon this subject can be explained and justified only on what I regard as its true principle—the principle of persecution. It is that if the law were really impartial, and punished Blasphemy only because it offends the feelings of believers, it ought also to punish such preaching as offends the feelings of unbelievers."

Unbelievers do not ask to have their feelings "protected." They demand—and sooner or later it must be conceded—that religious questions shall be discussed as freely as political and social questions. What has truth to fear from the wildest storms of controversy? "Let Truth and Falsehood grapple; whoever knew Truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter?"

Freethinkers will never be satisfied until the odious Blasphemy Laws are swept out of existence. A beginning has already been made. The late Charles Bradlaugh introduced a Bill to abolish them, and, in the face of acrimonious bigotry, forty-seven members of the House of Commons voted for the measure.

* * * *

Sir James Stephen was right as a matter of logic. Bradlaugh and almost everybody else agreed with him. We took the same view in the Preface to our *Prisoner for Blasphemy* published in 1886. We joined in the opinion that Lord Coleridge had acted generously as a man but weakly as a judge. We lived to recognise, however, that he was wiser than all of us; wise with that practical wisdom which is so necessary in human affairs. He plainly said it was "a disagreeable law" he was called upon to administer; it was pretty clear that he would have abolished it if he could; but he made up his mind to rationalise and humanise it as far as possible, and in one sentence he revolutionised the Law of Blasphemy. This he did by separating the *matter* from *manner*. Henceforth it was perfectly legal to attack the fundamentals of religion; blasphemy consisted entirely in outraging the decencies of controversy in discussing it.

This was illogical, of course; one must adhere to that judgment still. But it was all that Lord Coleridge could do, and he did it. It was worth doing—well worth doing; and at this distant date we thank him with all our heart. He was a great man—and he was a good man—and he was a wise man.

Years passed before we quite understood what had happened. Bradlaugh never understood it at all,—the sole reason being that his mind was too full of other matters. Other people never understood it—partly because they were incapable of doing so, partly because they could not understand any man's discovering what Bradlaugh had missed—and partly, we are sorry to say, for less respectable reasons. Holyoake would not admit to the day of his death that we were right. Everybody was against us. We had to convert them one by one, and always by the logic of fact. Lord Coleridge's judgment was not a temporary break in the legal definition of Blasphemy; it was final—it was revolutionary—it inaugurated a new epoch.

The more we looked at the matter the more we felt convinced that no single judge, in any future trial for blasphemy, would go behind the deliberate and reasoned decision of the Lord Chief Justice of England sitting on the bench in his own court in London. Lawyers were against us on that point, right up to the Boulter case in 1908. But they were wrong, and we were right. Judge after judge has since quoted Lord Coleridge's judgment as *the* Common Law of Blasphemy. The Home Secretary, in his reply to the petition for Stewart's release, was careful to remark that he was not imprisoned for the advocacy of his opinions. And in the latest memorial to Mr. Asquith, with regard to the abolition of the Blasphemy Laws, it is admitted that this view of the law "has prevailed"—the confessors of this fact including some whose conversion is only very recent.

G. W. FOOTE.

(*To be concluded.*)

PRIESTCRAFT.

The fundamental cause of all evil in the world is ignorance, and its yoke-fellow is superstition. As priestcraft is the promulgator and perpetuator of both these malign elements in human life, the one question which mankind has to solve is the superseding of priestcraft by something better. I make the assertion, and I wish to give it all possible emphasis and solemnity at this time, that the law of evolution would absolutely banish priestcraft from the world if the minds of men could be informed and convinced even to the extent that they have been informed and convinced that the earth is a globe instead of a flat plane, and that the earth revolves around the sun instead of the sun around the earth.

The priestcrafts which affect and afflict our generation are the heirs and successors of all the priestcrafts that have ever been since the mind of man began to reason, and since man himself emerged from a condition closely resembling that of the anthropoid ape. Evolution does not say that man descended from a monkey—but that priestcraft has made a monkey of him for several thousand years.—*J. A. McKnight, New York "Truthseeker."*

VACUUM THEOLOGY.

A colored Baptist was exhorting; "Now bredden and sistern, come up to de altar and hab yo' sins washed away."

All came but one man.

"Why, brudder Jones, don' yo' want yo' sins washed away?"

"I done had my sins washed away."

"Yo' has? Where yo' had yo' sins washed away?"

"Ober at de Methodis' church."

"Ah! brudder Jones, yo' aint been washed away; yo' has jes' been *dry cleaned*."

This has been the fatal curse of man to cherish
Customs that his better life no more demands;
In the dust of generations dead we perish;
We are strangled in our race's swaddling bands.
—*Allen Upward.*

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Notices of Lectures etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workman's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, Miss Kough, "Christianity—A Relic."

OUTDOOR.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, Wm. Perry, "A Few Plain Questions."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (North Saloon, City Hall): Dennis Hird, M.A., 12 noon, "Nietzsche's Life and Message"; 6.30, "The Secret of Evolution as applied to Man's Development."

LEICESTER (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, W. Heaford, "War, Religion, and Rationalism."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Sidney Wollen, "Blasphemers in Black and White."

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Great is the debt of humanity to whomsoever can free it from the accumulated burden of its past.

—ALLEN UPWARD.

"Spoof."

A WELL-KNOWN journalist wrote a play, which he called *Magic*. But the play lacked the kind of magic that draws the public and gladdens the heart of author and manager. So the journalist's friends on the press came to his rescue. They "wrote up" the play. They told the public that it should go, and a good number went, and the hearts of author and manager were gladdened accordingly. Then as the play was called *Magic*, and dealt in some way with miracles, a debate was arranged on the subject of miracles in the theatre itself. Speakers were selected who might be trusted to say nothing very startling; the terms of the discussion were drawn up so that they might be called to order if they ventured on anything so reprehensible; and they talked, and talked, without ever coming within reasonable distance of the question at issue. Lastly, a journal published a report of the proceedings—24 pages, which would ordinarily have been sold at a penny or twopence—at the price of sixpence. And some bought it because of the well-known names that took part in the discussion, while others purchased because, like the present writer—perhaps as an expiation for sins committed in a previous incarnation—they *must* read the nonsense talked by present day defenders of superstition. No doubt *Magic* has reaped the benefit of all this advertising.

Such seems to be the real inwardness of the discussion on "Do Miracles Happen?" held recently at the Little Theatre. The participants were Mr. G. K. Chesterton, Mr. Joseph McCabe, Mr. H. Belloc, Dr. Warschauer, Mr. J. A. Hobson, Mr. A. P. Sinnett, and Mr. Cecil Chesterton. Mr. Kenelm Foss occupied the chair, and he was evidently struck by the odd arrangements made. He pointed out the difficulty of debating the subject of "Do Miracles Happen?" without discussing whether they ever did happen. In a discussion that really meant business this could not be done. Still, it would have been possible, even within the ridiculous terms of the discussion, to have presented the Freethought case against the belief in the miraculous in such a way as to shatter the Christian claims. But even this was not done. The Christian speakers were away back in the Dark Ages, and those who represented the Freethought view never seemed to get nearer contemporary times than the eighteenth century. It was, from this point of view, a noteworthy discussion; it served to show how solemnly an absurdity can be carried to a conclusion.

Mr. G. K. Chesterton contributed the first speech to the discussion, and for a moment or two touched bottom by pointing out that when a miracle did happen you were brought face to face with the result of a personal God. But he soon wandered away on to the question of evidence for and against, in which he was promptly followed by Mr. McCabe, who also spent his time discussing evidence—as though that has, or ever had, much to do with the belief in miracles. Dr. Warschauer, whose besetting fault is a desire to be scientific with hopelessly unscientific beliefs, also laid it down that the question "resolves itself simply and solely into a question of evidence," and pointed out, although it has little connection with this topic, that "the quantity and quality of the evidence required to prove any event varies in inverse ratio to the probability of the event." Quite a good rule in its proper place, but quite inconclusive here. Anyway, the one point upon which all the disputants were agreed was exactly the point that had least to do with the question. Evidence did not establish the belief in miracles, and the absence of evidence did not disestablish them.

Let us be quite fair to the Supernaturalist. Mr. Chesterton practically accepted the definition of a miracle as given in the Oxford English Dictionary: "A marvellous event occurring within human experience which cannot have been brought about by human power or by the operation of any natural agency, and must therefore be ascribed to the special intervention of the Deity or some supernatural being." This is a quite good definition. It is what miracles have always meant to everyone who really believed in them. A miracle must be something marvellous, that is, it must be unusual, and it must not be even conceivably explainable in terms of the operation of natural forces. If it is admitted that it may be so explained, those who make the admission concede the point that ignorance and miracles are convertible terms. This criticism is not removed by its being urged that some being greater than man may so control natural forces as to produce a miracle. The distance between man and his assumed superior being may not be greater than that which divides Edison from a Hottentot, and what this superior being does man himself, given the knowledge, may one day do. A miracle must not act in accordance with natural laws, known or unknown, it must contravene them.

So far Mr. Chesterton was correct in saying that a miracle is difficult to prove (he added it was also difficult to discuss, which it is not), and the request of his critics—Christian and Rationalist—for evidence, or their complaints that miracles could not be reperformed for their benefit, shows that they had not grasped the real point at issue.* The reply of the believer in miracles to such criticism is obvious. He says, A miracle is by its nature a rare event; it is performed under special circumstances for a special purpose. Where, then, is the sense of asking that this miracle shall be reperformed in order to convince certain people that it has already occurred? To arrange for the performance of a miracle is an absurdity. For it to become common is to destroy both its character as a miracle and the justification for its existence. A miracle must carry its own evidence, or it is not a miracle at all. Discussion on those lines must end in a stalemate for the Supernaturalist.

Fundamentally, the question is one of the belief in a God of the kind described by Dr. Warschauer—

* The exposure of spiritualistic mediums has really nothing to do with the question of miracles. Spiritualists do not claim to perform miracles, and their performances, even if genuine, are only wonderful, not miraculous. All the Spiritualists claim is the ability to demonstrate the operation of certain forces not at present recognised by science. And that *is* a question of evidence. But with miracles it has nothing to do.

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personal, purposing, intelligent, causal, creative, and almighty. I do not know how this is done—he might just as well have added a square, circular, eternal, evanescent being—but once a man professes to believe this a suspension or a contravention of natural laws, or uniformities, becomes always a possibility. There is nothing in our thinking or in our philosophy of things to prevent our believing in them. The personal, purposing, intelligent, causal, creative, almighty monstrosity believed in should be capable of anything. And if he exists, I, for one, am quite willing to believe he is. The man who believes this is capable of believing anything.

In the next place, miracles, as I have already said, are not established by evidence nor disproved by evidence. Evidence of a kind there may be (the ink mark on the wall caused by Luther throwing an ink pot at the Devil is evidence to some that the Devil really appeared), but nothing really worthy of the name exists. What amount of evidence does a Christian missionary produce to make a number of savages believe in the miracles of the Bible? What amount of evidence did the early Christian missionaries produce to convert the various tribes within the Roman Empire? What evidence was offered to make people believe in witches flying through the air on broomsticks? And, on the other hand, how many people have disbelieved in miracles because they set themselves down to weigh the evidence in their favor and found it wanting? I never heard of any such case, and can't easily conceive its having happened. The man who begins to weigh evidence for and against the possibility of miracles has already begun to disbelieve in them.

Look at young children. What evidence do they require of the existence of fairies, or of Santa Claus? What evidence is ever produced to make them give up the belief in fairies? At one stage of life it is there, at another stage it has gone. Not reasoned out, not "evidenced" out, but simply outgrown. In infancy the child's conception of life is so inchoate that there is room for all kinds of fantastic beliefs. In more mature years certain things are automatically ruled out by the growth of a conception of things that leaves no room for what during childhood seemed perfectly reasonable.

This is quite on all-fours with the question of miracles. The question here is essentially one of psychology. It is determined by the character of the psychological medium in which one is born and in which one lives. Given an intellectual medium which is, scientifically, at its lowest, and the belief in miracle flourishes. At the other extreme, miracle languishes and decays. Tell a savage that you can raise a man from the dead, and he may—other things equal—believe. Tell that to an educated person in the twentieth century, and he calls you a liar or a fool. Tell a peasant in some parts of our own country that an old woman has bewitched somebody's cattle, and he merely marvels at the wickedness of people. Tell a city dweller the same story; he does not inquire what evidence there is—he simply marvels at some people's ignorance. We do not reject the story of Jesus turning water into wine merely because there is a lack of evidence in its support. Evidence has nothing to do with it. We reject it because, with our knowledge of the constituents of water and wine, we know it to be a sheer impossibility; and because, with our knowledge of psychological evolution, we know the conditions that generate such beliefs. People who accept miracles believe in them before they happen. They would not happen if they did not so believe. People who reject miracles do so because their whole conception of nature forbids even the possibility of their occurrence. That is the sum and substance of the matter.

Of course, people go on talking about miracles long after they have ceased to believe in them. But they do not *trust* them. They will not fit in with what they know to be true. And so they bemuse themselves with much talk about our still extensive ignorance of nature, about the operation of higher and undiscovered "laws," and a dozen other things that have little or nothing to do with the question. The whole ground for the rejection of miracles, and the impossibility of their occurrence, might have been pointed out in a five minutes' speech at the Little Theatre had the people there meant business. But the promoters of the discussion knew what they were about. They know the public; and that is the high water-mark of journalistic and dramatic wisdom.

C. COHEN.

God's Risks.

GOD is represented as being the maker and governor of a Universe the fortunes of which are so uncertain as to be a source of perpetual anxiety to him! He does not know what may happen next. The possibilities of the future terrify him while the events of the past fill his heart with unspeakable grief. To be a God is thus to be at the mercy of the products of his own omnipotence. We do not even pretend to make such a statement on the authority of our own personal knowledge; but we do make it on that of one of the best-known of God's professional spokesmen. The Rev. Thomas Yates, of Kensington, is reported to have said, a Sunday or two ago, that the Divine Being is always running tremendous risks. He waxed exceeding bold and exclaimed: "There is not one of us who is not one of God's colossal risks." The report proceeds thus:—

> "He did not believe that God could be defeated, and if the Church fails in this great hour, which is a decisive hour of the world, Christ would shape for himself a new home, make for himself a better Church, but there is a risk that the great opportunities opening before the Church will fail to be used."

Mr. Yates had already referred to the fact that he and his hearers "believed in human freedom, and that the human will has a very real share in the making of history." Now, if man is free it necessarily follows that he is capable of defeating God. The assumption is that there are two wills at work in the Universe, the Divine and the human, and there is no possible escape from the conclusion that the latter has proved itself to be considerably stronger than the former. The Church also, it appears, is in possession of the same perilous freedom, with the result that the Church is another of "God's colossal risks." The utter fallaciousness of this argument is clearly seen the moment we begin to examine it. The Church is spoken of as the creation of Christ, but since it has failed to win the world for its Maker, we must infer that it was somewhat badly made, and Mr. Yates assures us that Christ could make for himself a better one. We venture to affirm that the reverend gentleman ran some risk in giving that assurance, because if the existing Church is Christ's institution we have no evidence that he can frame for himself a more efficient one.

This is a point which we must press. Father Wright, S.J., speaking at an important meeting of the Catholics of Preston, lately, sorrowfully admitted that there are thousands in this country who lose the Faith every year. There was an article in the *Month* some years ago in which it was stated "that in England and Wales there were 188,000 Catholics under twenty-one years of age needing different degrees of care in the matter of their religion, of whom 97,000 were practically lost to the faith." Father Wright continued thus:—

> "A well-known London priest gave it as his opinion that nine-tenths of the boys educated in Catholic elementary schools absented themselves from Mass and the Sacraments when they left school. It was worth while to see what this really meant. Statistics showed that there were in attendance at Catholic elementary schools in England and Wales 358,000 children; of these they might take it that about ten per cent., *i.e.*, 35,000, left the schools annually. According to the statement of the London priest, then, over 31,000 of these were lost to the faith."

The same general statement might be made in regard to the various Protestant Churches. In these

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also there is annually a very serious leakage, in spite of the amazing perfection of the machinery and the ideal fidelity to duty of the officials. This has been the case for many years; yet there is no indication that Christ is about to make for himself a new and better Church. He prefers to run the risk of seeing it universally discredited and discarded.

Another of God's great risks is the present missionary situation. In point of fact missions have always been most risky enterprises. Indeed they were never successful on any large scale except when the alternative to conversion was death by the sword. Mr. Yates's treatment of this subject is commendably frank. He implies that Mohammedanism might never have been heard of had there been a decent Christian missionary in the fifth century to tell the boy Mohammed what Christianity really is; but it does not seem to have occurred to him that, in a God-made and God-governed world, the rise of a false religion, like Mohammedanism, as a dangerous rival to the true one, would have been entirely impossible. We conclude, therefore, that the absence of that decent Christian missionary in the fifth century shows that God, if God there be, was quite as favorable to Mohammedanism as to Christianity. Surely, from a religious point of view, there can be no other rational explanation of the appearance of Mohammed, on the one hand, and of the non-appearance of the Christian missionary on the other. Mr. Yates suggests, further, that "there may be in some obscure village in China or in India one whose career will alter the whole current of history." Very likely; but there is nothing whatever to show that he need be a Christian missionary. On the contrary, if and when he comes the probability is that he will be Nature's prophet, preaching a higher system of morality in the sole name of science. Both East and West have had more than enough of supernatural religion, and are yearning for that intellectual and moral emancipation which will bring them close to Nature's heart.

The idea of a God of infinite power, wisdom, and love running colossal risks is altogether too funny. To run a risk is to incur hazard, to encounter harm or danger. When an author publishes a new book he runs the risk of injuring his reputation. A soldier on the field of battle incurs the risk of losing his life. According to Mr. Yates, the risks God runs are "colossal"; but to say that is to put the Deity on a level with ourselves. Most certainly a being of infinite power, wisdom, and love would of necessity be absolutely above all risks. And yet, on the assumption, however inconceivable, that such a being created the Universe, or superintended its gradual evolution, reason drives us to the conclusion that by so doing he both risked and lost his title to the attributes of infinite wisdom and love, which is equivalent to saying he never had them, or, in other words, that such a being never had anything to do with the creation, evolution, or government of what we call Nature. The God-idea, in its Christian form, and Nature heartlessly give each other the lie at every point.

In reality, it is the theologian, not God, who runs risks. A theologian is one who confidently theorises in the total absence of knowledge, and then offers his wild theories as revealed truth to be fervently and devoutly held by the credulous. The preacher is a man who undertakes to speak for a Deity who has never uttered a word for himself, or afforded the slightest token of his existence. Nothing in the world is easier than to be oracular as the spokesman of an imaginary being. But the messengers of the Cross are impertinent as well as dogmatic. What greater insult can be inflicted upon the Jews, for example, than to organise a society the one object of which is to convert them to Christianity? Those of them who are religiously inclined are quite satisfied with their own religion, and resent the attempt to induce them to substitute Christianity for it. After cruelly persecuting them for so many ages, scornfully denying them the common rights of citizenship, it is nothing short of a piece of gross impudence to send missionaries to them, thus still treating them as inferior people. Are they not, on the average, as well-educated, as intelligent, honest, honorable, and socially well-behaved as Christians, and have they no teachers of their own who are fully as competent for their work as the Christian clergy? Well, particularly as regards the Jews, and generally with reference to all other nations, the proselytising policy pursued by the Christian Church only exposes its own narrow-minded and selfish bigotry. A growing realisation of this truth is the only thing that accounts for the persistent decay of interest in home and foreign missions. Thousands of Christians even are beginning to see the utter absurdity of endeavoring to Christianise China, India, and Japan, with the result that they no longer contribute to missionary societies.

Even Mr. Yates, Christian minister though he be, is not blind to the fact that foreign missions are in a parlous condition. He trembles as he peers on the threshold of the future. The signs of the times are by no means encouraging. It is true that the history of civilisation might have been very different had Mohammedanism never appeared, and there are those who even think that civilisation might have been in a more advanced state to-day had Christianity never arisen; but what the attitude of the East is likely to be to Christianity is a problem that puzzles the Church a great deal just now. Mr. Yates is of opinion that "the present missionary situation presents the aspects of one of God's great risks." If there were a God we would feel profoundly sorry for him because of all he suffered at the hands of his vicegerents. As we believe neither in him nor his colossal risks, we avail ourselves of the present opportunity to remark that the risks run by his champions are so colossal as eventually to inflict upon them fatal injuries. Escape is impossible. Such is the rush of modern knowledge that all supernatural claims are doomed to extinction. At last their days are numbered. At last the fruit of the tree of knowledge, so long sternly withheld, is being freely offered to all who have an appetite for it. The forbidding cherubim and the flame of a sword which turned every way have vanished, in consequence of which the life-imparting and life-nourishing tree is easily accessible to all. And they who enter and partake and grow strong RUN NO RISKS.

J. T. LLOYD.

Science and the Soul.—IV.

(Continued from p. 100.)

"Physiology declares itself decidedly and categorically against individual immortality, as against all theories in general which include the special existence of a soul. The soul does not enter into the fœtus, as the evil spirit does into the possessed, but it is produced by the development of the brain, just the same as muscular activity is produced by the development of the muscles, or secretion is produced by a development of the glands."—CARL VOGT, cited in Buchner's *Force and Matter*, p. 402.

"Instead of mind being, as assumed, a wondrous spiritual entity, the independent source of all power and self-sufficient cause of all causes, an honest observation proves incontestably that it is the most dependent of all the natural forces. It is the highest development of force, and to its existence all the lower natural forces are indispensably requisite."—DR. MAUDSLEY, *The Physiology of Mind*, p. 125.

"Unless arterial blood circulate in the brain, mental activity ceases. Not only is the blood needful for repairing the waste of tissue which follows cerebral activity, but arterial blood seems to be a necessary factor along with the nervous tissue in all manifestations of cerebral activity. The blood stands to the brain action as the acid does to the zinc and copper plates in a galvanic pile."—DR. W. IRELAND, *The Blot upon the Brain*, 321.

IF the thinking faculties are due to some unseen, immortal, spiritual being secreted in the brain, what becomes of this mysterious ruler when a person falls into unconsciousness?

M. Richerand, a French physician, had a female patient, who, in consequence of disease, had lost part

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of the bone of the skull, leaving the brain exposed. One day, while washing this part, M. Richerand—

> "chanced to press with more than usual force; and instantly the patient, who the moment before had answered his questions with perfect correctness, stopped short in the middle of a sentence, and became altogether insensible. As the pressure gave her no pain, it was repeated thrice, and always with the same result. She uniformly recovered her faculties the moment the pressure was taken off."*

Combe also cites another case, as follows:—

> "Professor Chapman, of Philadelphia, mentions in his Lectures that he saw an individual with his skull perforated, and the brain exposed, who used to submit himself to the same experiment of pressure as that performed on Richerand's patient, and who was exhibited by the late Professor Wistar to his class. The man's intellect and emotional faculties disappeared when pressure was applied to the brain: they were literally 'held under the thumb,' and could be restored at pleasure to their full activity."†

A still more remarkable case, as Combe rightly remarks, is that of a sailor named Jones, recorded by the famous surgeon, Sir Astley Cooper. This man was rendered unconscious by a wound in the head, while on board a vessel in the Mediterranean. He remained unconscious at Gibraltar for several months, and was subsequently removed to St. Thomas's Hospital, London, where, says Combe,—

> "Mr. Cline, the surgeon, found a portion of the skull depressed, trepanned him, and removed the depressed part of the bone. Three hours after this operation he sat up in bed, sensation and volition returned, and in four days he was able to get up and converse. *The last circumstance he remembered was the capture of a prize in the Mediterranean thirteen months before.*"‡

What was this man's soul, or spirit, doing during those thirteen months? Did it go on a journey, and arrive back just in time to take possession of the body again directly the surgeon lifted the piece of bone from the skull?

Not a thought was evolved in this man's mind since he received his wound; for he took up the thread of his life just where it became a blank, thirteen months before. Is not this a proof that mind is a product of the brain, and that when the brain is thrown out of gear, intelligence ceases until the brain is restored to its natural functions? To expect the mind to survive the existence of the brain is as reasonable as to expect an electric battery to continue to generate electricity after its destruction.

How much mind is there in a child during the first few days of its existence? None at all: it has only the rudiments of one or two of its five senses; it has not so much mind as a dog. The mind commences to evolve and passes through successive phases of development; it follows by slow degrees the successive progress of the evolution of the nervous apparatus which are its basis. The average weight of the brain of man, among Europeans, is 49 oz. If the brain of a grown person, says Gratiolet, falls below 31 oz. the mind fails to develop; it is impossible for him to attain to ordinary human intelligence—in other words, he will become an idiot. Carl Vogt puts it somewhat higher. The result of investigations, he says,—

> "enables us definitely to assert that a certain weight of brain is requisite for the manifestation of intellectual faculties; that idiocy and mental weakness begin below this weight, and that this weight, as regards the white race, or central European nations, is about a kilogramme for the male, and about 900 grammes for the female."§

That is between 34 and 35 oz.

Dr. Marshall examined the brains of two idiots of European descent, and he found the convolutions to be fewer in number, less complex, and smoother than in the ape. In this respect, he says, "the idiot's brains are even more simple than that of the gibbon, and approach that of the baboon."

Dr. Wilder records the weight of the brain of an idiot woman, 42 years of age, as 10 oz. Says Buchner:—

> "Persons whose heads are less than 16 in. in circumference, are invariably imbecile or weak-minded. 'An exceptional smallness of head is always found in idiocy' (Valentin). The famous poet Lenau became insane and died in idiocy; his brain, atrophied and ruined by disease, weighed only 2 lb. 8 oz."*

To quote the same author again: "The convolutions of the brain of Beethoven, the great musician, were, according to Dr. J. Wagner's report, twice as deep and numerous as usual." On the other hand, Longet shows that in the brains of idiots, or creatures who are born imbeciles, the convolutions are less deep and the grey matter is less thick than in normal brains. A child, also, despite the large size of his brain in comparison with that of his body, has but very imperfect convolutions, and only develops these after reaching a certain age. Prior to the ninth month of pregnancy, the convolutions are not even visible; until then, the human fœtus has a smooth brain, like that of the lower vertebrates.†

The contents of the brain consist of nerve-cells, the grey matter of the brain, and fibrous tissue, dead white in color. The function of the fibrous, or white, matter is to carry messages to and from the nerve-cells—the grey matter—which has been termed the brain-mantle, because it covers the folds and windings of the convolutions of the brain. There are also islands of grey matter in the interior of the brain. There is not the slightest doubt whatever that it is the nerve-cells, or grey matter of the brain that must be regarded as the seat of all intellectual and mental activity, of mind, thought, and imagination. It varies in depth from the thickness of a pin to that of a pencil. It also varies greatly in thickness and quantity in different individuals. Says Buchner:—

> "Thus Dr. Jessen perceived to his great surprise that the brain of a female idiot, called Nasmer, 23 years old, showed numerous well-developed convolutions on the surface, but he soon found the solution of the difficulty when, on dissecting the brain, he saw that the grey matter had become atrophied, apparently from disease contracted in early childhood, and thence it had become very thin and narrow."‡

Therefore, a man may possess a very large brain, but if it has few, and shallow, convolutions, and is lacking in grey matter, it will be of no advantage to him; whereas a man with a comparatively small brain may make up the deficiency in the convolutions and excess of grey matter. But, as we have seen, there is a limit of weight below which the brain may not fall and the owner possess reason and sanity.

The average weight of the brain of civilised man is 3 lb. The brain of Cuvier, the famous naturalist, weighed 4 lb.—a proof that it combined weight with quality. As Dr. Maudsley remarks:—

> "It is strangely overlooked by many who write on this matter, that the brain is not a dead instrument, but a living organ, with functions of a higher kind than those of any other bodily organ, inasmuch as its organic nature and structure far surpass those of any other organ. What, then, are those functions if they are not mental? No one thinks it necessary to assume an immaterial liver behind the hepatic structure, in order to account for its functions. But so far as the nature of nerve and the complex structure of the cerebral convolutions exceed in dignity the hepatic elements and structure, so far must the material functions of the brain exceed those of the liver."§

Why should we place an immaterial soul, or spirit, behind the brain, any more than we require to place a spirit behind the liver to make it perform its functions? A shrewd thrust that.

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* George Combe, *On the Relation Between Religion and Science* (1872), p. 291.
† Combe, p. 291.
‡ Combe, *On the Relation Between Religion and Science*, p. 292. The italics are ours.
§ Carl Vogt, *Lectures on Man*, p. 87.

* Ludwig Buchner, *Force and Matter*, p. 27
† *Force and Matter*, p. 269.
‡ *Force and Matter*, p. 271.
§ Dr. Maudsley, *Body and Mind*, pp. 215-16.

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From the foregoing we can see how it is that the ape and the chimpanzee cannot attain to the speech and reason of man, because a brain weighing only 15 oz. cannot attain the intelligence of one weighing 49 oz. It should also be borne in mind that the descent of man cannot be traced to any existing simian types, such as we see them to-day in the gorilla, the ape, the chimpanzee, or the gibbon. All these types branched off from the ancestral tree from which also man had his origin more than a million years ago.

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

The Flight of the Gods.

ONE Saturday afternoon in June, two or three years ago, I met my old school chum again, this time in Greenwich Park by appointment. We had a glorious time in the Park before we began to discuss any topic of interest to Freethinkers. There were hundreds of children in the Park, some poor, ragged, ill-fed urchins, shoeless and unkempt, from the poverty-stricken neighborhood of Deptford or the waterside population of Greenwich, and a goodly number of children from more prosperous districts, better cared for by their parents, who had come to spend the afternoon in innocent amusement in this grand, natural, old Park, on the hills or under the shadow of the trees, on this beautiful day in June. Children are very democratic and do not attach too much value to the philosophy of clothes.

It was, therefore, very pleasant to watch them at play on the hills. My friend and I could remember, too, the time when we had been brought to this Park as children on a day's excursion, and enjoyed our outing as much as though we had been taken many miles away into the country. What glorious sport children can have in Greenwich Park! And grown-up people, too, for a matter of that. Every form of enjoyment can be had there, or on Blackheath—which adjoins it—at holiday times.

And so we plodded our way through the Park, stopping now and again to take note of some particular object of beauty, until we came to the great avenue of trees and carriage-drive up to the Observatory. We looked at the quaint old twenty-four hour clock, and explained to some intelligent children who were anxious to learn the meaning of fifteen minutes past seventeen. I showed my friend many places of interest along the winding river, which we could see so well from our position on the famous hill. And then we sat down and talked.

For some time we spoke only of the great shipping trade that is still done on the banks of the Thames between Woolwich and London Bridge, and then we gazed at the Observatory, and began to talk of the wonders of astronomy.

At length I remarked, "Astronomy has always seemed to me to be the most atheistic of sciences. When I used to go to hear (the late) Sir Robert Ball lecture on the stars and the immense distance that divided them in the heavens, and the billions of miles that many of them were away from this little planet, I could not help wondering what point in space the Christian God, or the God of the Deist, occupied, from which he directed all the operations of these celestial bodies."

"Ah, but," said my friend, "Thomas Paine was of opinion that astronomy was *the great science* which unmistakably revealed the wisdom and goodness, as well as the omnipotence, of Deity."

"Yes," I replied, "but Thomas Paine never defined in precise terms what he meant by God. He used the word to express his belief in some intelligent kind of being, at the back of phenomena, who caused all the happenings in the universe as observed by man. But he did not seem to realise that in giving his God intelligence like unto man he was really making his God an anthropomorphic being, and that his conception of God was open to the same kind of objections that he himself applied to the old Jewish God, Jahveh."

"I suppose," remarked my friend, "that you believe that all the heavenly bodies move by virtue of their own inherent properties?"

"Certainly. They move with mathematic precision, which can be calculated with extraordinary accuracy by astronomers. For instance, they can tell, as you know, the precise day and hour upon which the next transit of Venus will take place."

"But, surely, you do not think that the material universe originated without some intelligent being to call it into existence?"

"The matter of the universe seems to me to be eternal—I can neither imagine it beginning to be or ceasing to be."

"Then you do not think much of the argument for a great 'First Cause'?"

"No. I cannot conceive of a First Cause. Cause is a word which represents that which precedes an effect, and which consummates itself in the effect; but every cause is an effect of some previous cause, in an endless chain of causes and effects, and in an infinite regression there can be no First Cause. But in what sense can God be said to be the 'First Cause'? To know whether he is 'first,' we must carry the inquiry further back, as the child frequently does, and ask, 'What caused God?' and if the theologian says that God is without cause, may we not ask whether it is not far more reasonable to suppose that nature—which appears to be infinite, and which it is impossible to conceive either as beginning or ceasing to be—is without cause—that is, infinite and eternal, than to say that God is the uncaused causer of nature without defining what is meant by God?"

"Thomas Paine and other Theists conceived of God as an infinite and intelligent being who created the universe and man, and who rules and governs the movements of the whole planetary system, including the little globe upon which we dwell," responded my friend.

"Yes, I am aware of that; but I do not understand what is meant by an infinite being—especially an infinite being who exists apart from the material universe, which is also infinite as far as we know. Moreover, in my judgment no man can have an idea of God, if by God is meant an infinite being."

"Why not?"

"Let us consider for a moment. What is an idea? It is an image of the mind. As an illustration, let me say that the human mind is a mirror upon which nothing is reflected but the external objects of nature. Man has never had any ideas but those which result from the study and observation of nature. For instance, if I were to say to a man, 'Think of a horse, or an elephant, or a man,' he would at once get a picture on the mirror of his mind of these beings; but if I were to ask him to picture some being he had not seen or heard described, he could not do it. In like manner, man can never give an intelligible idea of God, because in point of truth he has no idea of God. His highest conception is that of a big man, with amplified human qualities."

"I do not agree with you," said my friend, "that man cannot picture on his mind's eye, Horatio, things that he has not seen. What about ghosts?"

"Hundreds of human beings believe that they have seen ghosts, and if they have not seen them they certainly have heard them described. But most of the ghosts when they do appear come like the Ghost of Hamlet's Father, clothed in fine raiment, and, in his case, armed from top to toe."

"So that," responded my friend, "what you say is that all the gods are but ghosts—in other words, figments of the human imagination?"

"Precisely."

"What do you think of the 'Design argument'? I remember that John Stuart Mill said in his posthumous essay on *Theism* that he considered the design argument a very good one."

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"Not quite that. He said it was a good argument of its kind, but he did not think much of the kind, otherwise he would have accepted it. Paley's argument from design is full of defects. First, it is alleged that things wrought by human ingenuity show marks of design; but they only manifest these marks to persons who know something of human workmanship. An intelligent man can see that a watch has been designed; he judges that its mechanism is arranged by an intelligent being to effect a certain definite purpose, but then he invariably concludes thus, because he knows something of the designers of watches. A savage would not conclude that a watch was designed by an intelligent being: he would be more likely to think it was alive. But what analogy is there between something made out of materials by man and a product of nature? Who would ever conclude that a blade of grass had been designed, or a tree, or a mountain? Surely, no one. Nature's process of growth is different altogether from the manipulation of some object of nature into a new form by the work of man."

"Yes, I agree to all that," said my friend; "and yet I cannot understand how all the races of mankind have come to some idea of a being whom they call God, who produces all the wonders we observe in the universe."

"You are not quite right there. Some races are so low down the scale of development that they have never yet formed any idea of a God; but when the savage man did for some idea of a being behind phenomena, he did not get into his untutored mind the idea which the cultivated Theist formulates today. No; what you have to study is the evolution of the God idea. You will see that it is all a matter of growth. It begins in the primitive ideas of our savage ancestors, who thought there were beings behind each and every occurrence; then from fetish worship up to the anthropomorphic conception of some of the writers of the Bible, and then through various stages up to the pure Theism of the late Professor Newman or the 'Social Deity' of Mr. Arthur Balfour. And so, one by one, the gods vanish—disappear—take their flight, so to speak, out of the human mind."

"That, then, is the end of the gods, according to your view," said my friend, after a pause.

"Yes, that is the end. After that, man finds nature performs all her wonders 'without the meddling of the gods,' as Professor Tyndall said in his address at Belfast as far back as 1876."

As the sun went down we walked over Blackheath to Morten College and on to New Eltham. In the evening, on our way home, my friend looked up into the heavens and remarked that the stars looked particularly brilliant that night. "Yes, I said, look at the millions of them. There *are millions*, my friend. As Sir Robert Ball used to say: 'there are millions. If you doubt it, they are up there, count them.'"

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

THE LATEST CHRIST.

Not Baal, but Christus Jingo! Heir
Of Him, who once was crucified!
The red stigmata still are there,
The crimson spear wounds in the side,
But raised aloft as God and Lord,
He holds the money-bag and sword.

A wondrous god! Most fit for those
Who cheat on change, then creep to prayer;
Blood on his heavenly altar flows,
Hell's burning incense fills the air,
And death attests in street and lane
The hideous glory of his reign.

—*Robert Buchanan.*

Acid Drops.

Mr. Phillip Carr, who is connected with the Little English Theatre in Paris, being interviewed by the *Daily News*, delivered himself as follows:—

> "I could not help seeing the extremely insular point of view taken by the French in regard to the achievements of other countries. The English are accused of insularity, but the French are a thousand times more so. Until quite recently they did not recognise the existence of the works of art or literature outside their own country. Even of Shakespeare they know little or nothing."

Clearly the speaker is talking from a plentiful lack of knowledge.

Some of Shakespeare's plays have always held the French stage—notably *Hamlet*, *Othello*, and *Romeo and Juliet*. Later years have seen the production of *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, and *Julius Cæsar*. Victor Hugo's son made a complete translation of Shakespeare into French, and his notes are often of the finest quality. Victor Hugo's own book on Shakespeare is one of extraordinary power. No such tremendous eulogy of Shakespeare was ever written in any other language. The tributes to Shakespeare from Diderot down to Flaubert and Taine are simply astonishing from that "insular" people. Diderot said of Shakespeare that the greatest of other writers might walk under him without bending. Flaubert said "this man overwhelms me." A hundred golden sentences of glowing praise might be quoted from Victor Hugo. Does Mr. Carr imagine that these great French authors are not read in France?

When it comes to translations the French show a better muster than the English do. France has, and has long had, good translations, not only of the great German philosophers such as Kant, Schopenhauer, Hartmann, and Haeckel, but also of the great English philosophers such as Locke, Berkeley, Mill, Spencer, Hamilton, and Huxley. She had able and accurate translations of Darwin thirty and forty years ago. No such translations of French thinkers existed in England. But why pursue this refutation of Mr. Carr's absurd statements?

We have said as much as we have on this point, not as a piece of literary criticism, but because we don't want to see the British philistine encouraged in his silly old notions of superiority over "infidel" France.

Our prophetic soul is not as good as Shakespeare's, but it has its merits nevertheless. Ever so many years ago, when we ceased to respect Christianity and took to ridiculing it, we remarked that Jesus Christ fed thousands of people on five penny loaves and a few sardines. The penny loaves are still hypothetical, but the sardines seem fairly well established—unless the *Daily Mail's* other name is the only appropriate one. Our contemporary's correspondent at Jerusalem telegraphs that a sardine factory is being established on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. Sardines abound there and are of the finest flavor.

By the way, if the sardines are as satisfying as those used in the Gospels to feed the five thousand, they should command good prices.

A lady writer in the *Vineyard* says that "religious Freethinkers," no less than Romans, Anglicans, and Puritans, need a Saints' Calendar. As it happens, Freethinkers have a better one than the Christians, and it includes such names as Giordano Bruno, Richard Carlile, and Ferrer.

"Some race-quality in the English blood, which escapes any risk of contamination by foreigners, differentiates the British from the rest of mankind." So says "Vanoc" of the *Referee*. And if "Vanoc" is a fair sample of the race quality in the English blood we should say it is profoundly (and sadly) true.

"Dagonet" of the *Referee* has annexed "God" to the "Unionist" party. He speaks of "Ulstermen who are loyal to their King, their country, and their God." It is a fairly practical demonstration that there is no God, that Mr. Sims is allowed to take his name in vain in this fashion. "Dagonet" writes this hypocritical stuff with his tongue in his cheek. He believes in it as much as we do.

"Breathings on the Glass" is one of "Dagonet's" subheadings. "Bleatings on the Grass" would be better.

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The *Christian World* is responsible for the statement that at Beirut two gendarmes prevent women entering the picture palaces to see the *Quo Vadis!* film. This is because of the picture of Christian heroism in the arena, and the uplifting influence of Christian conversion has such a striking influence on the women who see it. We are greatly inclined to take the story with a grain of salt. By this time Mohammedans have had enough to do with Christians to know that when it comes to persecution Christianity can hold its own with anyone or anything. And these particular pictures are all "fake" in a double sense. First, because it is mere acting, and attendants at cinema shows know it. Secondly, because the alleged persecutions of the Christians are very largely part of an elaborate "fake" that Christian writers have foisted on the world. Most recent critical writers have been puzzled to account for the stories, and have invented more or less ingenious theories to account for the absence of evidence. Of course, for those who take their Roman history from Sunday-school tracts and cinema films questions of probability scarcely exist.

It is peculiar that Sienkiewicz should be known in this country chiefly by *Quo Vadis!* which is positively one of his worst and least trustworthy books. This is, of course, due to the fact that the author was here exploiting the Christian portion of the population. The same thing was seen with Wilson Barrett and the *Sign of the Cross*.

The Salvation Army—inspired by the profits made by its emigration business—is still booming Canada, and encouraging poor people to go out. It admits, now that it can no longer be denied, that there is a deal of unemployment in the towns and cities, but points out that the demand for farm labor is keen. Probably so; but it should also be pointed out that farm labor is only required during a few months in the year, and then the laborer is left stranded. For sheer self-preservation he drifts into the towns, and so helps to swell the already large number of unemployed. The official emigration agencies have for some months been warning people *against* emigration. The Salvation Army continues to cater for business. "We find you a situation," they say. Perhaps so, for a time. It is what happens afterwards that supplies the tragedy.

The *Alliance News* also booms the Salvation Army's temperance work in a recent issue. The information, we expect, is supplied by the Army itself, although to those unacquainted with the way in which the press is worked, it appears like independent testimony. As it is, the information is delightfully vague. About the Hadleigh Colony we are told that "many inebriates have been received, and these transformed into sober men." So also with other places. Bearing in mind the Army's fondness for statistics, when they serve its purpose, the vagueness of the above is instructive. What one would like to know is how many the Army get hold of, under what conditions they remain, and what proportion is cured? In New Zealand, we learn that the Army has control of two islands in the vicinity of Auckland Harbor, which are practically prison settlements. The residents are committed for from one to two years. Even under these conditions the Army only claims to make thirty per cent. cures. But why this should be placed to the credit of the Army is more than we can discover. It seems only part of the prison administration. We wonder how much per head the Army charges for the people it receives?

Rev. J. Cyril Walter has built and equipped a model theatre, costing about £700, at Averham, near Newark. It will accommodate 160 people. All that is wanted now is the appearance of J. C. and the Twelve Apostles on the stage. Prayer ought to be able to manage that.

Hans Schmidt, the Roman Catholic priest, at New York, who murdered Anna Aumuller in such brutal circumstances, is sentenced to be electrocuted. The press reports say that "He heard the sentence with apparent satisfaction." Many other people have heard it with similar sentiments. The wretched creature is now trying to turn poet. Here is a verse he handed to the newspaper reporters before leaving for Sing-Sing:—

> "Beyond this vale of tears
> There is a life above,
> Unmeasured by the flight of years,
> And all that life is love."

He overlooks the "life below." Pious people are generally egoists.

What with a large—and compact—Roman element, and its black population, the United States has two pretty problems for the future to deal with. And it is significant that two of the greatest dangers in the future may be closely connected with Christianity. For black slavery in the States was of distinctly Christian origin. It was taken there by Christians, developed by Christians, for the profit of Christians. When we are considering the influence of Christianity on civilisation, this should never be forgotten.

Noticing the new edition of the memoir of the late Very Rev. Sir James Cameron Lees, D.D., the *Westminster Gazette* printed the following:—

> "After Cameron Lees was 'called' to Edinburgh he had a stormy time for a number of years, but he kept a brave heart and a smiling face to all his troubles. He was a great traveller, and paid a visit to Australia, which he enjoyed exceedingly. On leaving Melbourne a stalwart farmer handed him a piece of bog-oak as a memorial. On the homeward voyage he looked over his treasures—for he had got many gifts at the Antipodes—and on examining the oak case found it had a screw lid, and when it was unscrewed a thousand Australian sovereigns glittered inside, and a card with the inscription—'A thank-offering for restoring the faith of Christ.' That money he unfortunately invested, with additional sums, in some of the Australian banks before the crisis, which many still remember, and lost it all."

We wonder if our contemporary saw the joke. It was in the land where he had restored the faith of Christ that the reverend gentleman lost all his money in rotten banks—including the money he got for the work of "restoration."

The London County Council is supplying a bowdlerised version of Charles Reade's *Cloister and the Hearth*, but it still allows little children to read the unexpurgated Bible, which contains accounts of unnatural vice, rape, and other abominations.

Our readers know that we have a great respect for the English language. We hate to see it abused, and it is that feeling, rather than mere pedantry, which prompts us to protest now and then against conspicuous instances of that offence. There is the word *aggravate*, for instance; it really means to increase the weight of a thing. It is possible to aggravate a crime or its guilt, but it is impossible to aggravate a human being,—there and then, we mean, though one of the advertised fattening processes might do it in a reasonable time. Yet people will say they are aggravated when they mean that they are annoyed, exasperated, or incensed. Charles Dickens himself, great writer as he was, used *aggravation* in that slipshod way. And now we see his son, Mr. H. F. Dickens, K.C., using it in the same manner. "Were you annoyed?" he asked a witness lately at the London Sessions. "I had no cause to be," the witness replied. "Was Atkinson's behavior aggravating?" was the next question. We know that this is very common slipshod, but a K.C. ought not to be guilty of it in an open court of justice.

There are so many dull, solemn, or pompous speakers in the House of Commons that a wit or humorist is thrice welcome, at least by a reader of the parliamentary reports in the morning newspapers. One likes to see Mr Birrell's name in the discussion; and he is none the less wise for being witty. He has to apologise to his more owlish fellow members now and then. This occurred during the recent Home Rule debate. Mr. Birrell begged pardon for having said that "a collision between a Catholic and a Protestant mob had no more religion in it than the impact of billiards." He was wrong—he ought not to have said it. But he could not resist adding, "You would not call such a collision a religious service." The knife was in and he turned it round. One likes to see the jester stab. It gives the fools a lesson.

Essentially, of course, we should agree with Mr. Birrell. Technically, we should differ. No religion in the collision of Catholic and Protestant mobs? That is just what there is. It is apt to be the sincerest of religious services. They mean what they say then. Yes, and what they do. And more.

The death of the Rev. J. Brierley—"J. B." of the *Christian World*—deprives Nonconformity of one of its ablest and most tolerant writers. He was not advanced enough to do much good in the outside world, but his influence in a good direction within orthodox circles must have been considerable. It is pleasant to admit that he was thoroughly opposed to the Blasphemy Laws. And not unpleasant to add that many of his articles have been dealt with in the *Freethinker*, particularly by Mr. Lloyd. We remember dealing with some of "J. B.'s" articles in the old *National Reformer* (Bradlaugh's journal) as far back as the eighteen-'seventies.

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"J. B.'s" last article in the *Christian World* was on "Life's Loose Ends," and contained the passage: "You are in a world of loose ends—but the farther ends are not loose. They are gripped by a Hand, that is Love and Omnipotence." This is writing down to the lowest intelligences, for such religious teaching is vastly popular in the Gold Coast. As the Christian Evidence lecturer once said, "Everywhere you find the footprints of an Almighty Hand."

Mr. G. K. Chesterton says that he begins to believe in witch-burning. In time Mr. Chesterton ought to be a perfect Christian. But he'd have to train down a bit for the part of Messiah.

"The cricketing parson," it is announced, has accepted the living of Bermondsey. A theatrical parson lives at Brixton. Why are the clergy picked out for the bestowal of labels outside their duties? One never hears of a "golfing general" or "tennis-playing admiral." Is the soul-saving profession falling into disrepute?

Miss Edith Durham's recent lecture at Essex Hall was honorably plain-spoken. She said she was convinced by bitter experience that no Red Cross aid should ever be sent out in a war. Men's wounds were healed, and they were sent back to the front again as soon as possible, only to prolong the war indefinitely. All the "liberators" in the Balkan war were selfish and cruel. As for the cruelty of the Servians, she said, they burnt, in one outburst, twenty-six villages with petroleum, and prevented the people's escape with bayonets. Soldiers of the Cross!

Horribly cold and blusterous weather has increased the death-rate in New York. People have even been frozen to death in their beds. President Wilson has been confined to his bed, but his illness is not serious.

Rev. Henry Lewis, rector of Bermondsey, left £3,774. It isn't a big fortune in itself, but it is a lot for a Christian, and it must make Councillor A. B. Moss's mouth water. Mr. Moss, of course, is an Atheist, and Atheists are not quite as good as the "blessed-be-ye-poor" people at making money.

Rev. Arthur Thomas Chapman, Cambridge, left £12,195. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth."

Mr. H. G. Chancellor, M.P., is a nephew of Mr. Charles Chancellor who was such a help to Mr. Foote and the *Freethinker* in the difficult days, early in the present century, when a gang of pretended friends and open enemies did their best to ruin both. We are glad to see the nephew as good a Radical as his uncle was, and especially glad to see him sound on the question of the Blasphemy Laws. But we regret to see him contracting a certain taint from the Nonconformist and other religious company he keeps. He spoke at Chatham Town Hall recently with the Bishop of Croydon in favor of Sunday Closing. We can understand a bishop playing that pious game. He has an interest in filling churches somehow, although he is mistaken in supposing that shutting public-houses will do it. But when a man like Mr. Chancellor plays this pious game we can only see the baneful influence of partisan politics on a capable and honorable public man.

Public-houses are already closed altogether on Sunday in Scotland. They are closed during most of the day in England. We defy anybody to show why they should be closed during the rest of the day except as a concession to the self-interest, the bigotry, or the fanaticism of the Churches. We are serious in saying that we should be very glad if a competent advocate of Sunday Closing would take up this challenge. Why not Mr. Chancellor himself?

Mr. Andrew Carnegie, after giving £2,000,000 to the Peace cause, is now supplementing it with a gift of £400,000 to promote the cause through the churches of the various denominations throughout the world. It looks like magnificent generosity. But it will be observed that Mr. Carnegie's gifts are always calculated to produce the greatest possible advertisement of his noble self. The Churches will all be talking about him now.

Rev. J. Scott Lidgett is one of Shakespeare's puritans who think "because they are virtuous there shall be no more cakes and ale." He voted (and spoke, of course) for the non-sale of intoxicants in the Crystal Palace grounds in the interest of "good order." Good order is the rule at the Crystal Palace already. Why then stop the sale of what Jesus Christ enjoyed? He was no teetotaler.

According to the *Daily Chronicle*, writing on Mr. Hardy's remarriage, he is "the only novelist on whom has been conferred the coveted Order of Merit." What of the late George Meredith? We may be mistaken, but we understood that he was a recipient of the "coveted Order." Perhaps the writer had only *living* novelists in his mind.

It takes two to make a marriage. That is presumably the reason why Thomas Hardy married his lady secretary in a church, when his own views of church doctrines and ceremonies are so well-known. And the deed was done a long way from *his* home and very early in the morning.

One sign of the decadence of religion is the altered form and tone of what we may call the benediction at the end of the King's Speech. Listen to the latest specimen:—

> "Your labors upon these and all other matters I humbly commend to the blessing of Almighty God."

Could anything be more formal and perfunctory? "Almighty God" in the House of Lords is just about as real and vital as the Speaker's Mace on the table of the House of Commons. Cromwell called the latter "a bauble." He might call the former so if he lived now.

The wish is often father to the thought in pious people. The authors of a book on the *Churches and London* tells us that "Agnosticism, which seemed to be gaining some hold on the working-man 10 or 15 years ago, appears, in London, at any rate, to have had its day. Blatchfordism is a spent force." How exact! Secularism captured the working-man, not Agnosticism, which appealed only to the classes. The National Secular Society is the oldest organisation of its kind and the *Freethinker* is the doyen of Freethought journals, both being secularistic. As for "Blatchfordism" (whatever that may mean) Mr. Robert Blatchford edits a Socialistic, not a Freethought paper. There are more Freethinkers and less Christians in the world than ever before.

American papers state that the bridge which is being constructed at Hell Gate, New York, will be the largest in the world. If Christianity be true it will need to be a record size.

It is rather amusing to find the *Church Times* presenting Christians as suffering from the intolerance of Freethinkers. In a recent pamphlet—which we hope to notice at some length later—Mr. George Trevelyan expresses his belief in a "society of sincere Christians and sincere heretics, living in friendly social intercourse with each other, working together for the innumerable objects that good men have in common, and sharing together not a few spiritual emotions." On this the *Church Times* observes, "We could so live with Mr. Trevelyan. But can he give us any guarantee that the heretics will tolerate us? They must have changed their temper strangely if they do." We are not aware that Freethinkers have declined either meeting or working with Christians on behalf of any objects they have in common. Quite the contrary; they have been ready to efface themselves almost to the point of censure, and allowed Christians to secure a credit that did not properly belong to them, so that the desired object should prosper. On the other hand, there are many cases on record of prominent Christians declining to meet Freethinkers on the public platform, and in private life this feeling is carried very much farther. It is really too late for the *Church Times* to convincingly portray the Christian as one whose humane and social sympathies overpower his religious and sectarian feelings.

A religious reviewer of the two concluding volumes of Professor Frazer's *Golden Bough* decides that the work is not a scientific study of man's religious ideas, because "it is not a critical investigation of the problems of Religion." We wonder what this writer would consider a scientific study of religion? Probably an examination of the validity of Anglican Orders, or a study of vestments, or some similar fantastic foolishness. In showing the roots of religious beliefs in savage ideas and practices, Professor Frazer gives us the only possible scientific religion, since he affiliates religious beliefs to frames of mind that are inevitably generated by the savage's ignorance of the nature of his surroundings. And this is certainly the only line of study that is of real value. That is, perhaps, the reason why professional religionists so carefully boycott it. They feel that if the truth of the analysis conducted by men like Frazer is admitted, the whole structure of religion is blown into the air. So the safest policy—for a time—is to pooh-pooh these investigations as of no value.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

March 1, Glasgow; 22, Manchester.

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £29 15s. 8d. Received since:—R. B. Harrison, 2s. 6d.; Robert Avis, £1; James Moffat, £1; G. T. Hart (Canada), 4s. 1d.; George Smith, 10s.; N. M. X., £1; Thomas Robson, 10s.; John Sumner, £3 3s.; W. H. Harrup, 10s.; J. Burns, 15s.; F. M. (Ficksburg), 10s. 6d.; A. H. Deacon, 2s. 6d.; Edward Snelling and Wife, £1;

R. H. CHANDLER.—Glad to have your wife's good wishes as well as your own. "Exposure of G. W. Foote" is, as you say, amusing. Your hope that we may survive it is likely to be realised. Our "neglect" of Richard Carlile is quite a comical accusation. We have praised him hundreds of times. Scarcely any other man has been more the object of our eulogy. But we have praised him, not so much on account of what he said—for he was not a poet or a seminal thinker—but on account of what he did. He fought the battle of the free press like a hero—like a super-hero. He was as firm and tenacious as the oak and the granite of his native county.

C. W. THOMAS (New Zealand).—Quite right. We have passed it over to the treasurer.

E. B.—Thanks for cuttings.

JAMES MOFFAT.—We remember you in connection with Yeovil very well, and are pleased to hear from you again. We were afraid you had joined the majority.

W. P. BALL.—Cuttings are always welcome.

W. DAVIDSON.—They can safely be left to you.

E. SCHMIDT.—Glad to hear that Hamburg, at least, is civilised enough to let the children of Freethinkers be withdrawn from religious instruction in the public schools. Glad also to have your thanks for "the hours of pleasure the *Freethinker* gives you."

G. T. HART (Canada).—A secular (that is, a civil, non-religious) marriage is easily arranged in England. You give the legal notice on both sides, then you go to the registry office, and go through the usual ceremony of taking each other as husband and wife, in the legal sense of the words. That is all which concerns the public officials. The morality and the poetry concern yourselves only—except as the world is all the better for such things being present.

J. TOMKINS writes: "Will Mr. Mann kindly give the date of the *Times* containing the review of Sir Hiram Maxim's book which he (Mr. M.) referred to in his article?"

EDWARD SNELLING.—Obituary appears. We remember the family well.

S. BRANDALL.—There are other readers of the *Freethinker* than yourself in Nottingham, though they don't deal at your newsagent's. Still, we should like a good many more.

J. PARTRIDGE.—Tuesday is late, but we have strained a point in the circumstances. We had a paragraph already in type at Mr. Walsh's suggestion.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Haeckel (we drop other designations as unnecessary) celebrated his eightieth birthday on Monday (Feb. 16). We do not choose to fill our columns with useless matter. Haeckel's name is enough for the present occasion. We salute the Grand Old Man of science and Freethought, and offer him our profound homage.

Mr. Foote's long postponed visit to Glasgow takes place next Sunday (March 1). There is pretty sure to be a rally of his friends from all parts of the South of Scotland. His subjects, also, are now—as far as Glasgow audiences are concerned, and should prove specially attractive in themselves.

Perhaps we had better announce Mr. Foote's subjects on this occasion. They are "Shakespeare's Humanism in the *Merchant of Venice*," and "Mr. Balfour on God." The local "saints" wish Mr. Foote to deal with the Gifford Lectures that Mr. Balfour has been delivering at Glasgow.

Mr. Foote will probably be lecturing again at Queen's Hall before the present winter season closes.

Mr. Lloyd lectures at the Failsworth Secular Sunday-school this evening (Feb. 22). District "saints" will please note.

Miss Kough lectures at the Manchester Secular Hall to-day (Feb. 22) both afternoon (3) and evening (6.30). This arrangement looks as though it might clash with Mr. Lloyd's lecture at Failsworth; but, after all, there are plenty of Freethinkers in the district to provide them both with good audiences.

We have not received any news from Liverpool lately. We should be glad to hear that the local "saints" are still doing good work.

The Secular Education League holds its Annual Meeting at Caxton Hall on March 25. After the formal business is transacted there will be a public meeting, addressed by various speakers, including Mr. Halley Stewart, the Rev. Dr. Walsh, and Mr. G. W. Foote. Fuller details will appear later in our columns.

Mr. Frederic W. Walsh, of Leamington, of whom our readers have heard lately, being physically incapable, as they well know, of delivering a public address himself, has arranged for Mr. Cohen to take his place at a projected meeting on Tuesday evening next (Feb. 24) at the Café Royal, Bath-street. The chair is to be taken at 8 o'clock by the Rev. Leslie G. Berrington, and admission is free, without a ticket. Mr. Cohen's subject is "God and the Soul in the Light of Science." Discussion will be allowed after the lecture. The arrangements are in the hands of the Leamington Literary and Philosophical Institute, of which Mr. Walsh is a member.

A party of "saints" are going over from Birmingham to Leamington, leaving Snow Hill Station at 6.20. Tickets (return fare, saloon) 2s. 8d., obtainable of J. Partridge, sec., 245 Shenstone-road, Rotton Park.

"Why Christianity Has Failed" is the subject of Mr. W Heaford's lecture for the West Ham Branch this evening (Feb. 22). There should be a good audience.

Mr. John Sumner, a constant Birmingham subscriber to the President's Honorarium Fund, sending his cheque for the new year, says:—

> "It is sometimes with mixed feelings that one signs one's cheques, but in writing mine for this excellent object, I only experience pleasure at being able to respond. Three hundred pounds is a poor enough sum at which to aim. Fortunately your rich natural endowments compensate to no small extent, enabling you to extract more from life than usually falls to the lot of wealthy men."

Once a year one may print these things. They show the perhaps too generous spirit in which one is regarded by one's friends.

Mr. William Repton pleaded for the insertion of some rather personal lines which appear from his pen. "I wish," he wrote, "you were not the Editor, for a time at least. If you can conquer that pride in yourself which I admire, you may perhaps let it appear; if not, please accept it as something in the nature of thanks for the joy of having read your paper for twenty years." We felt puzzled what to do, but good nature at last said "Print it." The writer's praise is not fulsome, but rational, even if exaggerated; and why should he not enjoy the innocent pleasure of expressing it? We have never suffered from a surfeit of eulogy, and at our age we are not likely to get the staggers.

There are special reasons for postponing the conclusion of Mr. Foote's article on the Blasphemy Laws. It must include considerations depending on things that may happen during the present week (Feb. 17 to Feb. 24). The explanation will appear in our next issue.

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Goethe.—V.

(Concluded from p. 107.)

IN the tragedy of *Faust*, the godlike genius of Goethe transformed an old puppet-play into one of the eternal glories of literature and art. The first part of the poem was not published until 1806. It was the outcome of thirty years' study and reflection. The folk-story was familiar to Goethe's childhood, and it was in 1770 that he began to think of embalming his life experiences in a modernised legend; and a few years later he sketched various scenes of the tragedy. During his tour in Italy he added the Witches' Kitchen, the Cathedral episode, and the opening monologue. In 1797 the entire work was reconstructed, and the two Prologues, the Walpurgis Night, and the Dedication were added.

Despite the fact that *Faust* is Goethe's supreme masterpiece, it is, and has long been, his most widely appreciated work. Its exuberent variety is to some extent responsible for this, but its overpowering fascination more largely resides in the circumstance that it is concerned with problems which compel and command universal interest and attention.

The reader is given a broad hint of the coming exuberence in the Prologue to the Theatre, in which he is introduced to a company of strolling actors which has come to delight the motley multitude with a play depicting the joys and sorrows of human life. The Poet, the Manager, and the Merry Andrew then hold high discourse concerning the general bearings of the drama. The Manager dwells on the importance of a good pay-box; the Poet is anxious to produce nothing that posterity will condemn, but the Manager thinks the receipts of greater consequence. The Merryman tells them both that the main thing is to please the public. The Manager agrees; the Poet places his art above all else, so the Merryman shrewdly advises him to prove himself a practical artist by amusing the audience. The Manager decides that something of a nature both dazzling and delightful is what is wanted. The spectators must be conducted "From heaven to earth, and thence thro' earth to hell."

After this Prologue of Earth comes the Prologue in Heaven. This last has been termed a parody of a similar scene in the Book of Job, and dull pietists have censured it as such. It has been reprobated as irrelevant and outrageous, as a blot on an otherwise irreproachable work, and as gratuitously insulting to God. A few translators have omitted it as "unfit for publication." Coleridge (not the living judge of that name, but a defunct relative) asked himself "whether it became his moral character to render into English, and so far certainly lend his countenance to, language much of which he thought vulgar, licentious, and blasphemous."

That dash of devilry in Goethe's nature to which reference has already been made was doubtless to some extent responsible for the impish coloring which characterises the Scene in Heaven, and one can picture the poet's smile as he penned it, just as one can imagine the sardonic appearance on the face of Anatole France when writing that similar scene in his *Penguin Island*. For all that, however, it must be borne in mind that the wager between the Lord and Mephistopheles formed part of the old folk-story, and Goethe's handling of the legend was entirely in accord with the spirit of the mediæval miracle plays. That the play-writers and actors of the Middle Ages were no respectors of divinities the following quotation from a popular miracle play abundantly proves. In this play God the Father dozes on his throne during the Crucifixion. An angel rouses him from his sleep, and the following dialogue ensues:—

> "*Angel.* Eternal Father, you are doing what is not right, and will cover yourself with shame. Your much beloved son is just dead, and you sleep like a drunkard.
> *God the Father.* Is he then dead?
> *Angel.* Ay, that he is.
> *God the Father.* Devil take me if I knew anything about it."*

It is thus seen that the Prologue in Heaven is a faithful rendering of the spirit which permeated mediæval legend, to which has been added the magical touch of genius. It is in perfect keeping with the Witches' Kitchen, the Brocken, and the supernatural characteristics of Mephistopheles.

When the play opens Faust is in his study, surrounded by his books and instruments of mystic lore. To the common mind, the master of those that know, he is to himself a learned ignoramus who is compelled to turn to the magic arts for the solution of the secrets of existence which have so far completely baffled his inquiries. The moon shines through the casement and causes his mind to return to the world of life outside.

> "Beautiful moon! Ah! would that now,
> For the last time, thy lovely beams
> Shone on my troubled brow!
> Oft by this desk, at middle night,
> I have sat gazing for thy light,
> Wearied with search through volumes endless,
> I sate 'mong papers—crowded books,
> Alone—when thou, friend of the friendless,
> Camest smiling in, with soothing looks.
> Oh, that upon some headland height
> I now were wandering in thy light!"†

In despair, Faust opens a volume of magic to summon a spirit to his aid, and, book in hand, he utters with a mysterious air, the sign of the spirit; and then from the red flame which rises, the spirit appears. Faust is appalled at the spirit he has called up, and turns away in affright. The spirit scorns the momentary fear into which Faust has been thrown, and asks him what has become of his soul's proud call now shrunk into a piteous cowardice?

> FAUST.
> "Creature of flame, shall I grow pale before thee?
> 'Twas I that called thee—Faustus—I, thine equal!
> SPIRIT.
> In the currents of life, in the tempests of motion,
> Hither and thither,
> Over and under,
> Wend I and wander—
> Birth and the grave—
> A limitless ocean,
> Where the restless wave
> Undulates ever—
> Under and over
> Their toiling strife
> I mingle and hover,
> The spirit of life:
> Hear the murmuring wheel of time, unawed,
> As I weave the living mantle of God!
> FAUST.
> Spirit, whose presence fills the wide earth,
> How near akin to thine I feel my nature!
> SPIRIT.
> Man, thou art like those beings which thy mind
> Can image, *not like me!* (Vanishes.)
> FAUST (overpowered with confusion).
> Not like thee!
> Formed in the image of the Deity,
> And yet unmeet to be compared with thee!"

Faust's pupil Wagner knocks at the door, but brings his master no comfort. Once more in solitude, Faust gives way to despair, and, seizing the poison resolves to die. He is about to drain it when he hears the Easter bells and the distant singing of the choir. These sounds awaken the remembrances of his youth; the natural longing for life returns and vanquishes his despondency.

> "And now am I once more a little child,
> And old Remembrance, twining round my heart,
> Forbids this act, and checks my daring steps—
> Then sing ye forth—sweet songs that breathe of heaven!
> Tears come, and Earth hath won her child again."

The scene changes for the beauties of an early day in spring. It is Easter Sunday, and the people are abroad to dance and drink and sing. Faust and Wagner come to gaze upon the people as they enjoy their holiday. They are intensely happy in the present; the high problems of origin, existence, and

* Quoted by Lewes from Scherr's *Geschichte der Deutschen Cultur*, p. 71.
† Anster's translation.

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destiny which baffle Faust mean nothing to them. The philosopher sees in the people's happiness an asset of life which he has been denied. He mentally enters into their simple pleasures, and yearns to possess the happiness they enjoy. His companion Wagner, however, looks down with the loftiest pedantic contempt on the antics of the vulgar crowd.

The folk gather round Faust, "paying him the reverence always paid by the illiterate to the 'scholar.' Wagner sees it with envy; Faust feels it to be a mockery. Reverence to him, who feels profoundly his own insignificance!" Faust sits on a stone and watches the setting sun; the shadows of evening gather, and master and pupil quit the scene, a black poodle at their heels. Faust, accompanied by the dog, makes his way to the study. His mood is serious and solemn, and the poodle becomes restless and uneasy. Faust opens the Bible, and begins a translation of the sacred Word, at which the poodle is agitated beyond all endurance. Faust suspects that mischief is lurking in the animal, and performs mystical ceremonies, and the Devil himself makes his appearance. Faust's mood of disillusion prepares him for his compact with Mephistopheles, and he consents to barter his soul for the realisation of earthly happiness. Mephistopheles and Faust visit Auerbach's cellar, where they see the sots in the highest heaven they know—a condition of maudlin or quarrelsome drunkenness. This pleasurable sight exhausted, they pass to the Witches' Kitchen. From purgatory they have passed to hell. On the hearth a large cauldron is over the flames, and in the dense smoke are various weird figures. A female ape watches the cauldron, skims it, and sees that it does not boil over. The male ape, with the young ones, warms himself at the fire. A witch's potion is prepared, which, when drunk, Mephistopheles assures Faust, will make him see Helen of Troy in the first woman he meets. The old Faust is rejuvenated into a handsome youth, and all the passions of adolescence appear in full force.

The meeting with Margaret soon follows. A simple and devout girl returning from church is accosted by Faust, and she meets his advances somewhat curtly. But love triumphs over all obstacles; by fair means and foul the innocent girl's ruin is accomplished, and when Faust bitterly reproaches Mephistopheles and himself, he is coldly told that "She is not the first."

Margaret is one of the most beautiful and bewitching creations in the entire realm of poetic art. She stands in strong contrast with the worldly-wise Martha, and the charm of her character is in this way accentuated. As Lewes says, "The poverty and inferior social position of Margaret is never lost sight of; she never becomes an abstraction; it is Love alone which exalts her above her lowly station, and it is only *in* passion that she is so exalted."

The scene at the Well, where Margaret and Lizzy are filling their pitchers, is supremely touching. Lizzy asks Margaret whether she has heard of Hannah's trouble, and she answers "No."

LIZZY.

"Kate told me so to-day—there's not a doubt
Of its truth. This comes of airs and impudence:
I always said her pride would be her ruin.

MARGARET.

What mean you?

LIZZY.

What I mean all know but you—
Why, when she eats and drinks she's feeding two."

Lizzy points the finger of unpitying female scorn at her fallen sister. Margaret pities her from the bottom of her heart, and hopes that Hannah's lover will make amends by marrying her. Lizzy says he's no such fool, but if he should—

"'Twill be almost as bad,
We will so plague her—if she get the lad;—
The wedding garland, should she think to wear it,
From the mock virgin shall the children tear it:
And, at her door, what fun shall we have spreading
Chopped straw, to greet the promise of their wedding.
(Exit.)

MARGARET (returning home).

How I would rail when some poor girl went wrong!
How, when it was another's sin and shame,
Words of reproach would rise up to my tongue!
Oh, this was then a black offence, and I
Made it in thought more black; no words of blame
This virtuous scorn of mine could satisfy—
Others might fall, but I more proud became,
And I—who thus could feel—am I the same?
But could I—who could—have resisted here?
All was so good—all was so very dear!"

In the following scene Margaret is praying brokenheartedly before an image of the Mother of Sorrows. She places fresh flowers in the bowls standing in front of the image. Margaret's unanswered supplication to the Blessed Virgin is chokingly pathetic even in translation. She implores the benign Mother to remember her own grief for the death-agony of her Divine Son. The Virgin alone can pity and forgive a fallen and forsaken girl.

"The flowers upon my window sill,
Wet with my tears since dawn they be;
All else was sleeping, while I was weeping,
Praying and choosing flowers for thee.

Into my chamber brightly
Came the early sun's good-morrow;
On my restless bed unsightly
I sate up in my sorrow.

Oh, in this hour of death, and the near grave,
Succor me, thou, and save!
Look on me with that countenance benign,
Never was grief like thine,—
Look down, look down on mine."

Margaret's brother Valentine returns home; he discovers Faust serenading his sister, and attacks him with his sword. Mephistopheles stabs Valentine, who falls mortally wounded, and he dies bitterly reproaching and reviling Margaret. From this scene of slaughter we pass to the Cathedral, where, in the dim light, Margaret supplicates heaven amid the congregation—the Spirit of Evil by her side. This scene is the most terrible in the tragedy. There is something appalling in the poor grief-stricken sinner seeking comfort in the church only to experience a deeper and a deadlier despair. As the solemn words of the *Dies irae* are sung by the choir, the kneeling worshipers hear what they have so often heard before, but to the distraught Margaret they are pregnant with impending doom. The Spirit of Evil interprets the solemn words in their most dreadful sense, and the wronged girl shudders and faints with fear.

Passing over the Brocken scene, we find Faust remorsefully reviewing the past. Margaret has murdered her babe, and she is condemned to die. Three deaths lie at his door—Valentine's, Margaret's, and her infant's. Faust reproaches Mephistopheles for having kept him in ignorance of Margaret's misery. They ride over a dismal plain to rescue the girl from the executioner's hands, and as they approach they hear the men at work on the gibbet they are preparing for her death. Faust finds his love on a heap of straw, her mind wandering and her voice raised in wild song. All Faust's endeavors prove unavailing; the penalty must be paid, and the poor mad creature passes to her fate.

At intervals during many years Goethe was working at the Second Part of *Faust*, and in 1831 it was at last completed. Leaving behind him his first unhappy passion, Faust passes through all conditions of culture to a final state of noble service to humanity. Goethe's creed is summed up in Faust's reply to Care when she asks him whether he has ever known her:—

"'I have gone through the world,' he answers, 'seized every enjoyment by the hair—that which did not satisfy me I let go, that which ran away from me I would not follow. I have only wished and realised my wish, and wished again, and thus have stormed through life: first great and mighty; but now I take things wisely and soberly. I know enough of this life, and of the world to come we have no clear prospect. A fool is he who directs his blinking eyes *that* way, and imagines creatures like himself above the clouds! Let him stand firm and look around him here; the world is not dumb to the man of real sense. What need is there for him to sweep eternity? All he can know lies within his grasp.'"

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Of Goethe's other works there is no space to speak. The barest mention must suffice for his *Wilhelm Meister*, *Elective Affinities*, *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, and his *Hermann und Dorothea*.

The poet's activities were not dimmed or diminished by age. The powerful intellect of the old man glows in his *Conversations with Eckermann*. As the evening darkness came on, sorrows crowded upon him. His older friends dropped one by one. Karl August died in 1828; the Duchess soon followed him to the grave. Goethe's sole surviving child, his much-loved son, died at Rome in 1830. Tended by his son's wife, and reverenced by all, Goethe lived till the spring of 1832. After a short illness, he passed peacefully to his death while sleeping in his chair. The body of this marvellous, many-sided man lies by that of Schiller in the Royal vault at Weimar.

T. F. PALMER.

The Church and Literature.

MUCH has been written of the services of Christianity to literature. The monks, we are told, were the preservers of ancient learning, and to their devotion must be ascribed our knowledge of the classics of Greece and Rome. How comes it, then, that so large a portion of those classics are lost? What became of the vast libraries collected by the Romans? Is it but a casual coincidence that the decline of learning and the triumph of Christianity went side by side?

In the Augustan era the library was as essential to the completeness of a house in Rome as the eating or sleeping room. Such men as Julius Cæsar, Crassus, Cicero, and Lucullus were renowned for the beauty and value of their collections of books. Authors were treated with the utmost respect, and rich men vied for their patronage. Asinius Pollio is said first to have formed a public library in Rome. The great Freethinker, Julius Cæsar, had in view a large scheme of this kind, which was defeated by his assassination. Trajan, Vespasian, and Domitian founded vast libraries. Books were common in Rome, and sold at comparatively low prices, for slaves were taught to write, and it has been calculated that in a librarian's shop a hundred copies of a work could have been written off by dictation as quickly as a compositor would set one in type. The great bulk of works then famous are now lost. Histories, epics, dramas, orations, books of philosophy and education, verses almost without number, have perished. We have but slight specimens of even the best known Latin authors. Take but the historians. Of Livy's history, once containing one hundred and forty books, all but thirty-five have disappeared. Pliny's history of his own time, in thirty-one books, is entirely missing. Of the thirty books of Tacitus we have but four and a part of the fifth. Of the Greco-Roman histories, the works of Polybius, which originally comprised forty-five books, now contain but five. Dio Cassius, once in eighty books, now shows but twenty-five. Of the history of Ammianus Marcellinus the first thirteen books are missing. Similar instances might be given in other departments of literature. The allegation that all that was of value has been preserved is sufficiently refuted by the instance of Tacitus, coupled with the fact that the five books we have are from one single manuscript, whereas we know that the Emperor Tacitus (275) ordered copies of the works of his illustrious namesake to be placed in all the libraries of the empire, with a special direction that ten copies should be made each year at the public expense. It is usual to ascribe the loss of these works to the invasions of the barbarians, but it must not be forgotten that these barbarians were remarkably amenable to the authority of the Church, and it was not until Christian asceticism had sapped the patriotic virtue of the Roman empire that the irruptions took place.

When Christianity came to power it found no young and vigorous civilisation to combat it, but an effete and decaying civilisation that had run its course. The polytheistic superstition was universal, yet the tolerance of Rome had done much to destroy the exclusive claims of any particular deities. Culture and freethought were the property of the few. Such a civilisation was the only one which Christianity could have overcome, the only one it could safely assimilate with itself. This it only did after smothering the few pulsations of life and freethought which it contained. Christianity did not triumph by its superior culture. On the contrary, it was despised by philosophers as the pernicious superstition of slaves and fools. It triumphed by its organisation, which could utilise and assimilate the credulity and fanaticism of its followers. Its very intolerance was a means of success. The indifferent polytheist, admitting it might possibly be true, was led by mere prudence to embrace a faith declaring that it alone possessed salvation. From the primitive ages a dislike of Pagan learning was general among Christians. Warned by their spiritual guides to beware of philosophy and the knowledge which puffeth up, they despised the vain learning of a world soon to pass away. It is true those of the early Fathers who were converted from Paganism did not at once quit the philosophic temper of mind. Such men as Origen, Clement of Alexandria, Augustine, and Synesius brought heathen learning to combat heathenism. But the victory once achieved, the philosophic temper declined. Claiming exclusive possession of truth, the Church was its enemy in all external learning. Physical science especially was held in avowed contempt as inconsistent with revealed truth. The Fathers exhorted the faithful to avoid all contact with Pagan culture. St. Antony, called the founder of Monachism, refused, when a boy, to learn letters, because it would bring him into too great intercourse with other boys. Under Theophilus, primate of Alexandria, the magnificent library of the Serapion was destroyed by the monks, and at a Synod held under this bishop all the works of Origen, the greatest glory of the early Christian Church, were interdicted. The fourth General Council of Carthage went so far as to forbid the reading of all Pagan books; and, says Jortin, "the bishops soon began to relish this good advice, and not to trouble their heads with literature." Mosheim also records that in the fourth century, although the emperors tried to cherish learning, their intentions were defeated by a numerous and powerful party in the Church, who "considered all learning, and especially philosophical learning, as injurious, and even destructive to true piety and godliness." The efforts of men like Julian were in vain. As Christianity extended, the number of works produced became fewer, and their merit less, so that from the sixth to the twelfth century there is scarcely an author of even the fourth or fifth rank.

Theodosius made a law (448) that the works of Porphyry should be burnt, and that all other works the doctrine of which did not conform to that of the Nicene Council, and of the Council of Ephesus, and to the decisions of St. Cyril, should be destroyed, and the concealers of them put to death. The original works of all the early opponents of Christianity, as well as of the heretics, are lost, and we have to trust to such representations of them as are found in the works of their opponents. Jortin remarks that many bishops in the General Council of Ephesus and Chalcedon could not write their own names. The learned Jerome condemned the study of profane authors, except for pious uses. He relates how, for having been too much addicted to such study, he fell into a fever, and was taken up in the night to the tribunal of Jesus, who severely reprimanded him for being rather a Ciceronian than a Christian, and for this offence he was flagellated by an angel.

Hallam, in his *Introduction to the Literature of Europe*, says: "A prepossession against secular learning had taken hold of these ecclesiastics, who gave tone to the rest; it was inculcated in the most extravagant degree by Gregory I., the founder, in a great measure, of the papal supremacy, and the chief

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authority in the Dark Ages." Saint Gregory is said by Brucker to have given orders that the collection of books formed by the Roman emperors, and kept in the temple of Apollo, adjoining the palace, should be burnt. In a letter to a teacher of grammar he severely censures him for polluting with hymns to Jupiter a tongue that ought to be employed in celebrating the praises of Christ. Gibbon is disposed to acquit Saint Gregory of the charge of burning the library, but certainly he was unfavorable to classical learning. Leo the Iconoclast is also accused of burning the library of the Basilica at Constantinople. One chronicler relates that he, not being able to gain the professors over to his views, imprisoned them in their college, and reduced them and their books to ashes. This improbable story has been doubted, if not disproved, by historians. Gibbon, however, believes that the library, which contained over thirty-six thousand volumes, was burned during the religious wars. Gregory VII. is also said to have burned a great number of ancient manuscripts. Even if these are only stories, their invention serves to throw some light on the spirit of the times.

Towards the close of the seventh century the manuscripts in the Papal library at Rome were so few that Pope Martin requested the Bishop of Maestricht to supply this defect from the remotest parts of Germany. Lupus Abbot, of Ferrieres, in a letter to the Pope (855), beseeches him to lend him copies of Cicero's *De Orators* and Quintillian's *Institutions*, "for, although we have parts of these books, there is no complete copy of them in all France." The monks, too, became careless as to preserving their collection of books intact. They allowed their libraries to dwindle away under their eyes. They sold their books, gave them away, or allowed them to be stolen. It was asserted, at a council held in Rome in 992, that scarcely a single person was to be found in Rome itself who knew the first elements of letters. Not one priest of a thousand in Spain about the age of Charlemagne could address a common letter of salutation to another. In England, King Alfred declared that he knew no single priest south of the Thames (the most civilised part of England) who, at the time of his accession, understood the ordinary prayers, or could translate Latin into his mother tongue.

(The late) J. M. WHEELER.

(To be continued.)

Correspondence.

"TESS."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—If your contributor, Mr. T. H. Elstob, had, before writing, reread the intensely pathetic episode of the midnight baptism in Mr. Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, his article, "Poor Old Father," which appears in your issue for February 15, would doubtless have taken another form. It really is Tess's father who prevents her from sending for the parson to christen her child. These are Mr. Hardy's exact words: "No parson should come inside his doors, he [Tess's father] declared.....He locked the door and put the key in his pocket." Mr. Hardy, with his intimate knowledge of the clergy, many delicate hints of which are found in this very chapter, could not possibly have made the mistake of introducing a clergyman who refused to baptise the child because it was illegitimate. On the contrary, he says later on, "Hearing of the baby's illness, he [the vicar] had conscientiously come to the house after nightfall to perform the rite." Tess's interview with the vicar, and the latter's refusal to give the child a Christian burial, are doubtless introduced to lead up to and explain the intensely affecting conclusion of the chapter. Even in discussing the vicar's refusal, Mr. Hardy exhibits his full knowledge of the nicities of the theological distinctions made by the clerical mind when he says, "Unaware that the refusal to admit him had come from Tess's father and not from Tess, he could not, or would not, allow the plea of necessity for its [the baptism's] irregular administration." Of course, the moral which Mr. Hardy wishes to draw is found in the vicar's concluding words: "It will be just the same."

I am afraid that all films must be inadequate to represent the subtle beauties of Mr. Hardy's writings, but Mr. T. H. Elstob may take heart. The very episode of the midnight baptism was omitted from the *Graphic* as unsuited for its columns when *Tess* was first published, and had to find a place in the more liberal *Fortnightly Review*.

A. J. LYLE.

Rosemary and Rue.

DEDICATED TO G. W. FOOTE.

For years now close upon a fleeting score
Gone but remembered with deep gratitude,
I have, with eager eyes and mind attuned,
Turned to the light that ever glowed from thee;
And here do I essay to pay my debt,
And would, with words touched by the Muses' fire,
Sing out thy praise, and scorn the epitaph,
The Christian sop, that moulders on the tomb.

Yet I must tread the winding path of praise
With wary feet; with careful footsteps light
Must I, this road of prickly, stinging thorns
Now travel to my goal of victory.
Gibbon hath said that praise from certain men
Would be an insult to his very soul;
Yet I shall hope that my sincerity
Will haply here escape such rough, rude words.
Nigh twenty years ago my mind did lie
In priestly bondage; I did hear thy name
And from that time the jaded Christian God
Receded, crumbled, vanished like a dream;
And thou did'st lead me on to walk with those
Whose names are visioned splendor in the sky
Of Truth's fair world, where all her fragrant flowers
Are nourished by the blood and tears of men.

And who are they? The hungry wolves of hate
Have set their prey in Nature's brightest sphere.
Shelley and Byron will now shine serene
In that one Heaven, the one we know and feel;
And Swinburne, too, shall join them with his song
That scorched the robes of priests and burnt all Gods.
The realms of Truth are not so limited
That one more star could not find space to shine.
I'll mention not his name, but only say
I hate an epitaph, I hate smooth speech
When ears are closed for ever and a day;
I hate; yet stay, there are some things I love,—
The open sea, the smiling yellow fields,
Music of Brahms, the Poet's fiery song
That girds at wrong; all these things do I love,
And linked with golden chain is thy own self.

WILLIAM REPTON.

OUR HEAVENLY FATHER.

Our love and hate have aims, but Thine
Are idle bolts at random hurled;
Impotent, hidden, yet divine,
Brood o'er Thy broken-hearted world.

Cold to the prayer of human sorrow,
Deaf to the sob of human strife,
Thou workest grandly, night and morrow,
On Thy great masterpiece of life!

For Thine own pleasure is it done,
Since art's delight is in the doing;
Thine own enjoyment, slowly won,
Is the sole end Thou art pursuing.

—*Robert Buchanan.*

Obituary.

At Nutley, Sussex, on February 8, in his eighty-eighth year, passed away William Barralet, an early friend of Charles Bradlaugh. He was one of the brothers Barralet, mentioned by Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner in the Life of her father, of whom one still survives, who, jointly with other Freethinkers, established the Warner Place Society, to which Mr. Bradlaugh was attracted in 1848. A disciple of Robert Owen in his earlier years, though he never weakened in his Freethought opinions. He was for many years a member of the South Place Society. Cremation took place at Golder's Green on Thursday, February 12.—E. S.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workman's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, W. Heaford, "Why Christianity Has Failed."

OUTDOOR.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, W. Davidson, "Twice-Told Tales."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (King's Hall, Corporation-street): 7, Debate, J. G. Briggs and F. E. Willis, "Can We Follow Jesus?"

FAILSWORTH (Secular Sunday School, Pole-lane): 6.30, J. T. Lloyd, "Our Heavenly Origin."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (North Saloon, City Hall): Mrs. T. Billington-Greig, 12 noon, "Foreign Mission Frauds"; 6.30, "Faith Founded on Fear."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): Miss K. B. Kough, 3, "Christianity—A Relic"; 6.30, "Humanity Greater Than Christianity." Tea at 5.

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CONTENTS.

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THE

Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXXIV.—NO. 9 SUNDAY, MARCH 1, 1914 PRICE TWOPENCE

Truth is but Justice in our knowledge; and Justice is but Truth in our practice.—MILTON.

The Burning of Heretics.

De Haeretico Comburendo; or the Ethics of Religious Conformity. By G. M. Trevelyan, late Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. An Address delivered to The Heretics in October, 1913. Published for the Society by W. Heffer and Sons, Ltd., Cambridge. Price 6d.

MR. G. M. TREVELYAN, who is honorably known in the world of literature, has launched this bold outspoken lecture on broader seas than those of the "Heretics" at Cambridge. We believe the "Heretics" are a liberal-minded body of students, who give "advanced" ideas a hearing, if not always a welcome; and that is a good deal in connection with an English university. There was once talk of getting the editor of the *Freethinker* to address the members, with a view to a good evening's discussion, but the idea never attained to realisation. We are agreeably surprised, therefore, to see that Mr. Trevelyan's lecture, now published for the world at large, is quite refreshingly honest and explicit.

Mr. Trevelyan's lecture had, of course, as a mere matter of chronology, no reference to the Stewart case. He refers to it, however, in a footnote:—

> "Since I gave this address, the latest Blasphemy prosecution has developed into a huge State advertisement for a particularly offensive man engaged, among his other activities, in a particularly offensive trade."

We neither endorse nor question this judgment. We print it as one which is widely held in educated circles, and will probably occasion some future controversy. Mr. Stewart must not suppose that people who maintain his right to free speech agree with all he says; nor can he expect that imprisonment alone will raise a man to a pinnacle of virtue.

What is left of the spirit of the old statute for the burning of heretics is more disgusting than dangerous. It must be very painful to be burnt alive, but there is no indignity about it. The victim is given a certain distinction and elevation. But to dress him in felon's clothes, and put him in prison with the scum of the earth, and subject him to every kind of humiliation which does not impair his health or shorten his life; this is a meaner and more contemptible bigotry than that which flamed from the fires of the stake; just as spitting in a man's face, for a difference of opinion, is a dirtier intolerance than cleaving him in two with a sword.

It is well to remember in these rather unheroic days that the "religious peace," as Mr. Trevelyan calls it, which is distant though in sight in England to-day, was bought with a great price; it "has been purchased for us by the blood of martyrs, men who died friendless and unhonored that we might have liberty."

Mr. Trevelyan congratulates his fellow men, including his fellow Freethinkers, on the progress they have made in toleration. But what is toleration? Goethe smiled cynically at the word, Thomas Paine denounced it as insulting, and it never has meant strict justice between majorities and minorities. Mr. Trevelyan puts it in this way:—

> "For real toleration is only brought about when people have got accustomed to the idea that the other side exists, and contains quite the average number of good people."

But is not this rather an effect than a cause? Does not "toleration" really mean the growth of confidence on the part of the minority, and a growth of indifference on the part of the majority? "Christian toleration" is a phrase that is often in use, but is it not simply another illustration of Johnson's dictum that the adjective is the natural enemy of the substantive? Is it not patent, both from logic and history, that toleration only increases as the dogma of salvation by faith decays?

It seems to us that Mr. Trevelyan is rather too optimistic. He notes that disbelief had gained the day, amongst the priests themselves, as well as among the educated classes in ancient Pagan society:—

> "The aristocratic Roman augurs used, for reasons of State and for the benefit of the multitude, to practise rites in the efficacy of which they themselves did not believe. No two augurs could meet without smiling. So, at least, we used to be told at school, as proof of the decadence of Rome. Yet by English standards there was nothing decadent about the business,—except the smiling."

Yet the Christian deluge came and overwhelmed all that insecure civilisation. The multitude were ignorant and credulous. They are so still. And a second deluge of superstition is not exactly unthinkable. Some of us never forget Clifford's warning.

The Blasphemy Laws are reduced to something like comic opera at present. But they still exist. That is the trouble. Who knows, if they are not repealed, what victims they may find in a time of general reaction? For "blasphemy" is not a definite crime: no man knows whether he has committed it or not until a jury tells him; and as their verdict is irresponsible and absolute there is no more real safety for scholars, with any vivacity of mind and style, than there is for the lecturer at the street-corner.

But it is from Mr. Trevelyan's own standpoint, not from ours, that his lecture must be judged. He warns Freethinkers against what may be called the bigotry of anti-bigotry:—

> "The belief in some quarters that heretics were intolerable bred in others the belief that Christians were despicable. Both were lamentable errors springing from the same evil root—the spirit of *De haeretico comburendo*. In a healthy society mutual relations are extremely little affected by religious opinions. Christians and non-Christians, we must all learn to recognise that an ever increasing variety of religious experience and belief is the rule of the modern world, that we have got to live side by side as friends, and that nothing save bad old traditions inherited from the middle ages makes difference of religious opinion a bar to friendship, even close friendship. My exhortation to you to-night is, *first*, to stand up for your rights of conscience and practice as matters of course, and not of favor, and, *secondly*, to be friends with those who believe more than you do and not to think that a barrier divides us from the orthodox. So far from being contradictory, these two duties are parts of one duty. For only where freedom of conscience is completely recognised as a matter of course, not of tolerance, only there are friendship and peace possible."

We shall criticise the main idea in this passage presently; it occurs again and again in Mr. Trevel-

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yan's pamphlet. Meanwhile, we wish to thank him for replying to the upper-class argument that the lower classes want religion as a crutch for the weak legs of their morality and a tonic for their mental debility:—

> "The argument from the 'lower orders' is based upon two assumptions: first, that only the highly educated can thrive without dogmatic religion, and, secondly, that, unless the upper and middle classes set the example, the rest will in fact cease to be practising Christians. There are rich people who, in logical accordance with this view, seldom attend church in London, where their presence, being unnoticed by the masses, would be of no sort of use. But in the country the same persons attend the village church, where the presence of the gentlefolk is noted, and their absence might be remarked."

Mr. Trevelyan argues that Freethinkers should be more outspoken. If they were so they would be astonished at their own strength. He asks for honest treatment for young people:—

> "If people are brought up to suppose that the only reason for not lying and stealing is that God sees them, when they come to doubt the actuality of God's presence they will, perhaps, be more likely to lie and steal. The time of life when faith in a personal God is most often shaken corresponds to the age when temptation of all sorts is strongest and freshest to men and women, the time when life is new and untried before experience or routine have given safety. Just at that time the old beliefs are likely to be breaking up. But, fortunately, in many cases, there are other motives for morality at work besides cosmological creeds. The fear of the better aspects of public opinion is a deterrent much more real and effective with most people than the fear of God, and not really less noble. But the instinct towards morality is the noblest and most effective motive of all. At the ultimate moment of choice we feel that right is right, and wrong, wrong. This fundamental instinct, whether naked or draped in the form of a creed, alone saves the world,—so far as it is saved. This firm foundation of moral instinct is endangered by those who dig under it, striving to make it rest on a cosmological system, of which millions, even of Christians, are not at heart perfectly and constantly sure."

Our readers will see that Mr. Trevelyan's lecture is interesting and important, and will be glad to meet with it again next week.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

Why We Laugh.

THE other day I was asked why we Freethinkers took a delight in laughing at the religious beliefs of other people. As a matter of fact, I was not at the time laughing at religion or anything else, but simply arguing that religion was untrue, and pointing out, by the way, the absurd character of some of the beliefs in question. But I replied, offhand, that as I hadn't any religion of my own to laugh at I was compelled, if I wished to laugh at religion at all, to do so at the expense of other people. To this my questioner retorted, "But why laugh at religion at all?" and that I countered with the return, "Why not?" And the questioner gave it up as hopeless. He probably felt that with such a person as myself further argument was useless. Evidently he had been accustomed to people treating religion as something too solemn to be spoken about in the ordinary way, and in ordinary tones. And it was quite obvious that, so far as he was concerned, the removal of the conviction that religion was to be dealt with quite differently to the way in which we deal with other subjects, was essential to a rational consideration of the subject.

And this conviction was really at the bottom of my reply. It was not hasty, but deliberate. It is far too often taken for granted that one must not discuss questions of religion as one talks about politics, or science, or literature. Of course, this is all very well so far as the religionist himself is concerned. It is part of his mental outfit. His fear of religion is traditional, and even though that fear be modified by modern influences, there still remains the dregs of the feeling. But why should he expect those who do not share his beliefs to manifest the same mental inclinations? On the face of it, the Freethinker, because he is a Freethinker, does not consider religion to be either useful or truthful. To him it is something that began in falsehood, and has been perpetrated by methods more or less blameworthy, and which he is convinced, rightly or wrongly, is still responsible for a deal of evil in the world. Why should he, then, be asked to deal with religion in a way that all honest men and women reserve for that which they really respect? Actually the religionist is asking the Freethinker to treat religion as though he believed it were true, or might be true. He is to sacrifice *his* convictions in order to gratify the irrational demands of other people.

What is there about a belief in religion that should protect it from ridicule? In primitive times there does exist a *primâ-facie* case for such a demand. The gods are then believed to be without discrimination in the giving of benefits or the infliction of punishments. It is the tribe that benefits by God's pleasure, or suffers from his anger. If one person offends he may punish all. Under these conditions, and while this belief is actual, the rest of the community is so far entitled to demand that no single member shall act so as to injure all the rest. All being collectively responsible, each must act with a view to this collective responsibility. But we no longer have this belief. We do not believe, that is, religious people do not believe, that God will punish the whole of the nation because one person does wrong. Each is, as far as God is concerned, responsible for his own actions. My laughing at religion, my ignoring God, or speaking disrespectfully of God, is entirely a matter between myself and him. Anybody may be justified in pointing out to me the error of my ways, but no one is warranted in taking it as a personal affront because my ways are not his ways.

As a matter of fact, we all of us laugh at one another's beliefs, and in many directions it is considered quite legitimate that we should do so. I once knew a man who carried a potato about in his trousers pocket as a cure for rheumatism. I laughed at his belief in the virtue of the potato; he knew I laughed at it, and never questioned my right to be amused. There are plenty of people who will not sit down with thirteen at table. To them it is no idle fancy, but a matter of life or death. Yet they are laughed at, and there exists a club somewhere in London that sets itself deliberately to break down this and similar superstitions by holding a periodical dinner at which these things are ridiculed. The diners walk into the room under a ladder, they cross their knives, they upset their salt, they "outrage the feelings" of believers in every possible way. Yet no one ever blames them for their tactics; on the contrary, many who resent the Freethinker laughing at religion think they are doing a useful and much-needed work. And there exists, in addition, a whole host of superstitions—which really form the raw material of religion—at which the world generally laughs, and no one complains.

When one comes to think of it there are few beliefs at which some people do not laugh, and without their right to laugh being challenged. It is only in connection with religion that the right to laugh is seriously questioned. And even then it is a question of geography. We may all, in this country, laugh at Mohammedanism, or Hinduism, or the religious beliefs of primitive people. In other countries we might just as freely laugh at Christianity. The Christian forgets that the Freethinker is exercising a privilege of which he freely avails himself. I fully admit that people take their religious beliefs seriously. But so did my friend with the potato cure for rheumatism take his belief seriously. To say that we must not laugh at religious beliefs because other people take them very seriously is really stating the cause of laughter, not furnishing

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a reason for gravity. If they did not take them seriously there would be no occasion for laughter. It is not the belief itself, but its setting that causes mirth. A potato is a good thing in its way, and not at all a subject for mirth. Rheumatism is a reality by no means to be despised by those who are favored with its presence. There is no cause for mirth there. It is the conjunction of the two in the mind of a professedly civilised man that makes one smile. And this is equally true of religious doctrines. We do not smile at the doctrines but at people believing them. Oliver Wendell Holmes said that many people were saved from insanity by their stupidity, and therefore one ought to go mad once in a way to prove one's intelligence. So one might say of religious beliefs. Not to be able to laugh when one finds them taken seriously shows a lack of humor perfectly reprehensible in a civilised community. One *ought* to laugh at them—at least occasionally, to prove that one is free from thraldom. It would really be a much saner policy to lock a man up who could not laugh at religion than to imprison him for holding it up to ridicule.

It is very suggestive that we only laugh at what are called "living" religions. Dead ones are quite safe. No one wishes to laugh at them, and people would be astonished if one were to. The religious stories of the Egyptians, or the Greeks, or the Romans may be recited or read without causing any amusement. Nay, we even forget that they are religious stories, once believed in as fervently as any current Christian doctrine, and become interested in them as material for psychologic study, as poetry, or as yielding a lesson for moral guidance. We read all these ancient legends, and none of us laugh. We hear the Christian legends preached and many of us cannot forbear smiling. Why this distinction? Egyptian, Greek, Roman, and Christian legends all belong to the same class. Well, the answer is that we do not really laugh at the legends, but at those who believe in them. We do not laugh at the story of Jesus walking on the water or casting devils out of lunatics, or at the story of his ascension to heaven; we laugh at people believing these to be historical events. There is really nothing in the stories, as stories, to cause laughter. It is the Christian who is ridiculous, and he is never more ridiculous than when he is engaged in pointing out that other people must discuss him and his beliefs with a gravity that neither of them deserve. If the Christian were only out of the way, we could treat the Biblical legends exactly as we treat the legends of other people. It is the believer who blocks the way. He is the only obstacle to intelligent people getting out of the Christian legends all the interest and instruction that they might be made to yield.

Suppose the legends of the Greek gods and goddesses were believed in by twentieth-century men and women? In that case, there would be the same cause and the same need for laughing at them that there now exists for laughing at Christian doctrines. Nay, we know that when these stories were believed, people did laugh at them, and we also know that these laughers are now recognised as the liberators of their day. Turn back to Aristophanes, and you will find him driving people into Rationalism by a thousand and one digs at popular beliefs. Or, better still, read Lucian, and you will find him pouring ridicule upon the religious doctrines of Paganism. And Lucian knew perfectly well what he was about. He knew that the only way to cure people of a ridiculous belief is to make it appear ridiculous. When a belief is no longer capable of serious intellectual defence it is impervious to serious intellectual attack. And then the only weapon left, and the only weapon it dreads, is ridicule. That is why Christianity nowadays, through the mouths of parsons and judges, says, "By all means argue solemnly with us, if you will; but do not laugh, lest we die."

The last time I heard the late W. T. Stead speak at a public meeting, he said he had come there to uphold the right to blaspheme. He was a genuine believer, and was content to leave the matter between the individual and God—who are the only parties really concerned. We, likewise, uphold the right of man to laugh at anything he pleases. If he is laughing at anything good, the world will soon be laughing *at* him, not *with* him. A good thing will outlive laughter, a bad thing will succumb sooner or later. Laughter is the great cure for fools—and the fools know it. There is nothing healthier than laughter. Physically, it aids health. Mentally, it makes for sanity. It is the world's great purifier, not only in religion, but in social and political matters likewise. So long as a people cannot laugh at an absurd practice or a ridiculous belief, they are never out of danger. They are like Madame de Staël, who had given up the belief in ghosts without ceasing to be afraid of them. The world has had many different sorts of religions, but it has never had one that taught its votaries to laugh. To have taught laughter would have been to encourage suicide. And they who understand the nature of religion among a civilised people will not lightly forgo the use of a weapon that can be wielded with such deadly effect.

C. COHEN.

The Blindness of Christian Prejudice.

IT is the custom of the Pulpit to make special appeals to the young, particularly to young men. Preachers imagine that they, and they alone, can serve as competent guides to the rising generation. The Rev. R. J. Campbell, for example, in a sermon which appears in the *Christian World Pulpit* for February 18, poses as such a trustworthy guide for the young men who attend the City Temple. It is the object of this article to furnish proofs that he seriously misleads them on several most important questions. At the commencement of his discourse, the reverend gentleman admits that "there is a good deal to be said in support of the contention" that "a Christian profession in no way argues that the person making it is superior in character to others who make no such profession." He alludes to the late George Jacob Holyoake as "one of the finest men I ever knew." In spite of his confessed unbelief, there are few men to-day, or in any other day, who, "for sheer uprightness, nobility of aim, moral courage, and generosity of soul," can be said to equal him. "His magnanimity, conscientiousness, and earnest devotion to what he considered the public good could not well be surpassed." This testimony to the exceptional excellence of Holyoake's character is more significant than Mr. Campbell imagines. On the assumption that this testimony is true, the following question inevitably forces itself upon us: If a Secularist, pure and simple, can blossom into an exceptionally good and efficient citizen, of what conceivable benefit is a Christian profession when the overwhelming majority of those who make it are morally his inferiors? Naturally, Mr. Campbell deplores the fact that the celebrated Freethinker neither possessed nor adequately appreciated what the preacher calls spirituality; but the fact remains that the supposed lack did not prevent him from standing out among his contemporaries as one who could not well be surpassed. Consequently, spirituality is not essential or indispensable to the best and noblest character.

Mr. Campbell gives copious extracts from an article in the *Hibbert Journal* by Mr. J. Arthur Hill, the gist of which is that professing Christians are not, on an average, the best people. The following passage is eminently worth transcribing:—

> "I go on to affirm without hesitation or doubt, that the definitely twice-born people known to me are not specially admirable characters, as compared with the once-born. The obvious retort is that this opinion is due to my own unregenerateness; sinner does not appreciate saint; a hero is not a hero to his valet; not because the hero is not a hero, but because the valet is a valet. And so on. But it is not a matter of mere subjec-

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> tive likes and dislikes. It is a matter of objective fact. I find that the twice-born—the converted ones, the saints, the 'professors'—are less trustworthy in carrying out promises, in telling the scrupulous truth, in punctilious justice and honesty in the minor affairs of life, than the once-born.....Consider the converted. Among these brethren I find great (yea, even smug) respectability, great regard for externals, regular attendance at public worship, much emotion at revivals and prayer-meetings, much quoting of Scripture, and much spiritual pride. But exceptional honesty and veracity I do not find.....It seems to me that their deviations, their little meannesses and unveracities and dishonesties, are the result of their general build. Their religious temperament carries with it moral instability."

Such has been the persistent contention of this journal from its first number down to the present one, and it is exceedingly refreshing to find it so vigorously and cogently defended by a man of Mr. Hill's position. Now, having fully cited Mr. Hill's argument, how does Mr. Campbell proceed to demolish it? As a matter of fact, he completely evades it, contenting himself with assuming, without even attempting to prove it, that "the morality of to-day in this country is largely Christian morality, though tainted and perverted to some extent by other influences, such as commercialism, which are not Christian." The utter groundlessness of this assertion is proved by Mr. Campbell himself when, later on in the sermon, he makes this remarkable but true admission:—

> "Christianity, pure and simple, has never yet been tried at all. What we have is Christianity mixed with a far less desirable inheritance from other sources."

How, in the name of reason, can the morality of to-day in this country be largely Christian morality when Christianity itself, in its pristine purity, has never yet been tried at all? Take the inhabitants of Christendom as they are to-day, and you will soon learn that they are not conspicuous exemplifiers of the moral maxims embodied in the Sermon on the Mount. The beatitudes pronounced by Jesus have never yet been verified in history, and they are as far from verification now as ever they were. The meek have never adorned powerful thrones, nor has the lot of the poor been blessed. Whatever the peacemakers may be in a hypothetical kingdom of heaven, upon this real earth they have always been a miserable minority, scarcely ever listened to. Like other people, Christians lay up for themselves treasures here below which, when they go above, they are obliged to leave behind them, often to be fought for in the courts by their surviving relatives and friends. The truth is that the religion of the Gospel Jesus has never yet been tried at all, and that the morality of Christendom has always been more Pagan than Christian.

What is the use of summoning the late Henry Ward Beecher and Dr. Horton as authorities on a subject in relation to which it is impossible to regard them but as hopelessly biased judges? According to them, outside Christendom and Christian influence cruelty and lust hold sway, while tenderness, honor, respect for womanhood, and consideration for the weak do not exist, and are not even understood as we understand them. Dr. Horton is stone-blind with prejudice when he says that if those who are lukewarm on the question of the necessity for foreign missions would only go and see with their own eyes the state of Heathendom they would soon change their attitude. Is not the reverend gentleman aware that many entirely unprejudiced European scholars have gone and lived for years in closest touch with Indian, Chinese, and Japanese Pagans, and afterwards have borne unmistakable witness to the fact that what those nations need is, not conversion to an alien religion, but undisturbed freedom to work out their own salvation in their own way? Dr. Horton saw India in the light of his Christian upbringing and long-cherished Christian prejudices, as well as through the eyes of the Christian missionaries there whom he so ardently admires. We prefer to trust the judgment of Lord Curzon, Professor Giles, Chester Holcombe, Eugene Simon, A. Smith, G. E. Morrison, and Fielding Hall, who have devoted many long years to the study of Paganism on the spot, as to the true condition of Heathendom, rather than that of a Christian minister or layman who pays a flying visit to a Pagan country and looks at it through colored spectacles, with a view to promoting fresh zeal for foreign missions on his return.

Extremely unfortunate is Mr. Campbell's allusion to John Stuart Mill because of its inaccuracy. Here it is word for word:—

> "The late John Stuart Mill, for example, declared that he could not imagine a better ideal of conduct for a man than so to live that Jesus Christ would approve his life."

What Mill did say on this point is contained in his famous essay on "The Utility of Religion," and is as follows:—

> "The thought that our dead parents or friends would have approved our conduct is a scarcely less powerful motive than the knowledge that our living ones do approve it; and the idea that Socrates, or Howard, or Washington, or Antoninus, or Christ, would have sympathised with us, or that we are attempting to do our part in the spirit in which they did theirs, has operated on the very best minds, as a strong incentive to act up to their highest feelings and convictions" (*Three Essays on Religion*, p. 50).

Mill did not exalt Christ above all other teachers, but distinctly declared that the Gospel Jesus at his very best was equalled by Marcus Aurelius, whom "we have no ground for believing to have been in any way indebted to Christianity" (p. 46). Indeed, John Stuart Mill taught a totally opposite doctrine to that set forth in Mr. Campbell's sermon. The main point of his Essay is that, however necessary and useful belief in the supernatural may have been in the dark ages of ignorance and inexperience, it is no longer required in order to achieve the very highest moral results. Mr. Campbell does not adduce a single fact in support of his wild assertions. It is the merest tomfoolery to exclaim that "Atheists, Agnostics, Materialists, Indifferentists, and all who for one cause or another are out of touch with the Christian Church, are yet the debtors of Jesus Christ." It is not what Christ brought into the world that we acknowledge as the standard for imitation, or as the goal to be aimed at both by the individual and society. Mr. Campbell knows as well as we do that the Gospel Jesus brought absolutely nothing new into the world. Moral principles are as old as the race, magnificent expressions of which were abroad and working in the world thousands of years before Jesus Christ was ever heard of. All that is true in Christianity is as old as the hills, and good men and true have lived by it in all ages and countries; but whatever is peculiar to it is notoriously false, and has been, on that account, quietly ignored, even by Christians.

We close this article in Mr. Campbell's own words, which occur, strangely enough, in the very sermon we have been criticising:—

> "To live together in anything like order there has to be give and take. If Christianity had never been heard of, we should still have been insisting on certain kinds of conduct as meritorious, and others as objectionable, the meritorious, in our view, being that which promotes social welfare, and the objectionable being the opposite, namely, anti-social in tendency."

Two or three sentences further on, however, the reverend gentleman deliberately contradicts himself by saying that if you take faith in Christ out of society you will destroy what has lifted it to its present level, and that it will only be a matter of time before it gradually reverts to its original savage state. And yet we are assured by those who know, that Pagan China is morally not one whit behind the best country in Christendom. We are quite aware that, as Emerson says, "a foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds"; but there is a wise, logical, and scientific consistency which a popular saying calls "a jewel," and this higher consistency the sermon under discussion repeatedly disregards.

J. T. LLOYD.

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Science and the Soul.—V.

(*Continued from p. 117.*)

"The effect of science upon philosophy is to simplify it, to bring it down from the clouds to the earth, to incarnate it, to dispel the mysticism that enshrouds it, and establish it upon the basis of reality—in a word, to materialise it. The facts of science are multitudinous and hard to find out, but when obtained they are always simple, rational, intelligible. So plain and homely are they that, when acquired by long and diligent labor, the world is not satisfied with them. They do not come up to its ideal standard reached by pure intellectual contemplation. The ideas of things before the facts have been worked out are always tinged with many-colored hues and trimmed with a golden border. This comes of poetic imagery common to mind itself. It is this that makes all truth so unwelcome when it is first announced. Truth comes unadorned. It is straightforward, plain, and reasonable. Therefore it does not satisfy."—LESTER WARD, *Dynamic Sociology*, vol. i., p. 422.

"The true rulers of men are the thinkers who advance knowledge; for just as it is through his superior strength that man bears rule over the rest of the animal creation, so among men themselves it is knowledge which in the long run directs and controls the forces of society. Thus the discoverers of new truths are the real though uncrowned and unsceptered kings of mankind; monarchs, statesmen, and law-givers are but their ministers, who, sooner or later, do their bidding by carrying out the ideas of these master-minds."—PROFESSOR G. FRAZER, *Psyche's Task*, p. 167.

WHEN you have explained, to one who has been brought up in the orthodox belief, how science dispenses with the soul, his first question is to ask how it is that so many people—including such distinguished men as Russel Wallace, Lord Kelvin, Sir Oliver Lodge, and Mr. Balfour—believe in its existence? This is easily answered. They believe it because the belief was instilled into their minds before they were capable of reasoning upon the subject. Their reasoning powers are like loaded dice—they always fall one way. As we have seen, the Buddhists, who are more numerous than the Christians, have no belief in an immortal soul, any more than they have a belief in the Bible, simply because they were not taught the belief during childhood.

Moreover, the beliefs of our intellectual aristocracy are not the same as those of the ordinary unlearned man, the plain man, the man-in-the-street. It is nothing less than a fraud, when apologists for religion compile lists of distinguished men who are said to believe in a God, a soul, and a future life, in order to keep in countenance the unlearned man in his superstitions. The names of the beliefs are the same, but the ideas they stand for are as far asunder as the poles. Upon this point listen to the testimony of a master of science. It is Dr. J. G. Frazer, the famous author of *The Golden Bough*, who speaks. Dr. Frazer, Fellow of Cambridge University, and Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of Liverpool, whose works are discussed in every quarter of the world where learned men are gathered together. He is addressing the highly educated classes; students of universities, people who can afford five pounds—the price of the last edition of *The Golden Bough*—for a book, as easily as a working man can afford sixpence for one. Dr. Frazer has been exploring the religious recesses of the popular mind. With bated breath he enlightens his audience upon the true state of affairs among the lower strata of society—that is, among those who have not been educated at colleges and universities.

The Professor observes that the reason why superstitions survive is that the better ideas always forming in upper classes of society are so slow in filtering to the bottom, if indeed they ever get there, that they are often obsolete and superseded by others at the top. He proceeds:—

> "Hence it is that if we could open the heads and read the thoughts of two men of the same generation and country, but at opposite ends of the intellectual scale, we should probably find their minds as different as if the two belonged to different species."*

* J. G. Frazer, *Psyche's Task*, pp. 168-9.

And, as he further remarks:—

> "The reason why the higher forms of superstition or religion (for the religion of one generation is apt to become the superstition of the next) are less permanent than the lower is simply that the higher beliefs, being a creation of superior intelligence, have little hold on the minds of the vulgar, who nominally profess them for a time in conformity with the will of their betters, but readily shed and forget them as soon as these beliefs have gone out of fashion with the educated classes. But while they dismiss without a pang or an effort articles of faith which were only superficially imprinted on their minds by the weight of cultured opinion, the ignorant and foolish multitude cling with a sullen determination to far grosser beliefs which really answer to the coarser texture of their undeveloped intellect. Thus while the avowed creed of the enlightened minority is constantly changing under the influence of reflection and inquiry, the real, though unavowed, creed of the mass of mankind appears to be almost stationary, and the reason why it alters so little is that in the majority of men, whether they are savages or outwardly civilised beings, intellectual progress is so slow as to be hardly perceptible. The surface of society, like that of the sea, is in perpetual motion; its depths, like those of the ocean, remain almost unmoved."*

That is how a Professor, speaking to the intellectual few at the surface of society, thinks of the religious beliefs of the millions beneath. It will be noticed that Dr. Frazer speaks of "the higher forms of superstition or religion" as though superstition and religion were convertible terms.

The result of the researches into the folklore of the peasantry of Europe, commenced by the brothers Grimm in Germany, are still more disquieting. They reveal, says Dr. Frazer:—

> "the astonishing, nay, alarming truth that a mass, if not the majority of people in every civilised country is still living in a state of intellectual savagery; that, in fact, the smooth surface of cultured society is sapped and mined by superstition. Only those whose studies have led them to investigate the subject are aware of the depth to which the ground beneath our feet is thus, as it were, honeycombed by unseen forces. We appear to be standing on a volcano which may at any moment break out in smoke and fire to spread ruin and devastation among the gardens and palaces of ancient culture wrought so laboriously by the hand of many generations."†

Dr. Frazer also cites the testimony of Renan, who in a letter to Berthelot, declares that, after contrasting the Greek ruins at Paestum with the savagery of the Italian peasantry, "I trembled for civilisation, seeing it so limited, built on so weak a foundation, resting on so few individuals even in the country where it is dominant." Was it not Professor Clifford who declared that:—

> "Every rustic who delivers in the village alehouse his slow, infrequent sentences, may help to kill or keep alive the fatal superstitions which clog his race. Every hard-worked wife of an artisan may transmit to her children beliefs which shall knit society together, or rend it in pieces. No simplicity of mind, no obscurity of station, can escape the universal duty of questioning all that we believe."‡

After being defeated on the field of science in his search for facts to establish the existence of the soul, the true believer retreats into what he considers to be an impregnable fortress, and from which he defies the Rationalist to oust him. He says, "Oh, yes, no doubt you have all the facts on your side, but you will never convince me that I am on the level of the animals." And, placing his hand over his heart, he triumphantly declares, "I feel, I know that I possess a soul. You cannot get over that."

Now, by the very action of placing his hand over the heart, he unconsciously revealed the irrational source of his conviction. For the ancients believed the source of the emotions and feelings lay in the heart; and among savage tribes the same theory prevails. The savage will eat the heart of the lion or tiger he has slain; or, among cannibals, the heart

* *Psyche's Task*, pp. 170-1.
† *Psyche's Task*, p. 170.
‡ W. K. Clifford, *Lectures and Essays*, pp. 343-4.

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of his enemy, so that he may assimilate the qualities of strength and courage which he thinks have their origin in the heart. But, as we have seen, the seat of the emotions and feeling lies in the brain. Therefore, believers, when indicating the seat of the soul, should smite the head and not the chest.

And here, again, science is not at the end of its resources. The fortress is not so impregnable as the true believer imagines. Science shows incontestably how man arrived at the idea of a soul. It shows that religion, like the body and mind of man, has had a natural origin; that it was not revealed by God from some cloudy mountain top, but has evolved from the dreams and delusions of primitive man.

It has taken thousands of years for man to reach his present position of civilisation. But let us try and place ourselves in his position, shortly after he evolved from his brute ancestors. Nature would present innumerable pitfalls to his childish intelligence. As Lecky, the historian, remarks:—

> "We speak of the Divine veracity. What is the whole history of the intellectual progress of the world but one long struggle of the intellect of man to emancipate itself from the deceptions of nature? Every object that meets the eye of the savage awakens his curiosity only to lure him into some deadly error. The sun that seems a diminutive light revolving around his world; the moon and the stars that appear formed only to light his path; the strange fantastic diseases that suggest irresistibly the notion of present dæmons; the terrific phenomena of nature which appear the results, not of blind forces, but of isolated spiritual agencies—all these things fatally, inevitably, invincibly impel him into superstition. Through long centuries the superstitions thus generated have deluged the world with blood. Millions of prayers have been vainly breathed to what we now know were inexorable laws of nature. Only after ages of toil did the mind of man emancipate itself from these deadly errors to which by the deceptive appearances of nature the long infancy of humanity is universally doomed."*

To show the steps by which primitive man arrived at the idea of a soul, or spirit, will form the subject of our next article.

W. MANN.

(*To be continued.*)

*Lecky, *History of European Morals*, vol. i., pp. 54-55.

Acid Drops.

The *Staffordshire Sentinel* thinks it necessary to print the truism that "Atheists don't know everything." Neither do the editors of pious newspapers. The editor of the *Sentinel* commits himself to the statement that "the late Charles Bradlaugh never condescended to call himself an Atheist." That is precisely what he did call himself. The very last number of the *National Reformer* that appeared in his lifetime contained, right under its title and his name, the statement that its policy was "Atheistic."

The British Board of Film Censors last year examined 1,444 miles of pictures. They should feel like the Second Person of the Trinity after he had seen all the nations of the earth at a glance, at the invitation of the Devil.

The British Board of Film Censors enumerates the following amongst the films rejected during the past year:—"The irreverent treatment of sacred or solemn subjects." "Materialisation of Christ or the Almighty." "Holding up a minister of religion to ridicule." The last takes the cake. It appears that only ministers of religion require protection against laughter.

"Lord Radstock, the evangelical preacher, left £64,604," says a daily paper. From a Christian point of view, it is good that he "left" the money, otherwise his chances of climbing the golden stairs were very remote.

Rev. Edward Paterson Anderson, vicar of St. John the Evangelist, Paddington, left £3,870. Rev. John Robinson Porter, 10 Vanbrugh Park, Blackheath, left £13,838. Rev. Robert Male, vicar of Wychbold, Droitwich, left £8,849. All three had good reason to sing "I love my Jesus, because he first loved me." Evidently.

Mr. R. J. Campbell recently paid quite a handsome tribute to the late George Jacob Holyoake, in the course of which he said that "for sheer uprightness, nobility of aim, moral courage, and generosity of soul there are very few men today, or in any other day, to equal him." Of course, such praise could not be given without some qualification, otherwise there would be no room at the top for the Christian. Consequently, we learn that what Holyoake lacked was "spirituality"; he had no sense of fellowship with God. Well, if a man can be all that Mr. Campbell says Mr. Holyoake was, it seems to us that he can get along very well without "conscious fellowship with God." It is quite certain that this "spirituality" does not always make those who possess it either upright, noble, generous, or morally courageous. And it is little less than insulting to praise a man for possessing all these qualities and then to conclude with a sanctimonious whine, "But, alas, my dear friend, you lack spirituality." Such impertinent cant leaves a bad taste in one's mouth.

In an article in the *Hibbert Journal*, from which Mr. Campbell gives citations, Mr. J. A. Hill compares the Freethinker generally with those who have attained this "conscious fellowship with God." He affirms the "exceptional trustworthiness of those Freethinkers of his acquaintance." He says "They are as reliable as the force of gravity, both in their fulfilling of promises, the justice of their actions, and the veracity of their statements." On the other hand, among those "spiritually" alive,

> "exceptional honesty and veracity I do not find. I do not charge them with deliberate lapses, though it needs a robust charity to give them so large benefit of the doubt, in many cases known to me. It seems to me rather that their deviations, their little meannesses and unveracities and dishonesties, are the result of their general mental build. Their religious temperament carries with it moral instability."

This is precisely what we have said times out of number. Religious belief of the stronger emotional type is quite consistent with abstention from what the world reckons as vices from the legal point of view. But it is also commonly consistent—when it does encourage—with the manifestation of a hundred-and-one petty vices of character, which, while not legally reprehensible, do far more than legal offences to lower the general tone of private and public life. Veracity, for example, lies at the root of many virtues, and is an important constituent of nearly all; and it is precisely the one that counts for least in the "spiritual" scale of virtues.

Finally, Mr. Campbell declares that "what made Mr Holyoake, that is, what makes the goodness of every good man who lives amongst us," is the fact that our morality is Christian morality. This is a very stale plea, but it is quite false. There never has been a society on the face of the earth where the morality was Christian, and there never will be. Morality comes from life, not from creeds, and any good that Christianity teaches, or has taught, is to be placed to the credit of human association, not to religion. What has the love of parent for child, of friend for friend, what the conception of duty, the feeling of sympathy, the conception of honor or honesty to do with the fantastic doctrines that constitute the essence of Christianity? Why man's greatest work, from primitive times onward, has been to moralise his religion. And the proof of this is seen in that doctrines and teachings are only abandoned as wanting in morality when the moralised social sense has made them no longer possible. Gods are moralised by man, they never moralise man. It is far nearer the truth to say that Christians owe their improved character to Freethinkers than the other way about. For ourselves we prefer to have it that improved morality results from a keener intelligence, a livelier sympathy, and a better social environment. Freethinkers are apt to express this tendency earlier and better than Christians, simply because their freedom from superstition makes them more likely subjects.

The parish church of Haverhill, Suffolk, was recently restored. Services were held on Sunday morning and afternoon, Feb. 15, and although no fire had been lighted for more than a week, the place was burnt out by a fire starting in the organ loft. Incendiarism is suspected. Was it Jehovah, who rules the lightnings—or Satan, who is able to bring blazes from Hades? We pause for a reply.

Rev. T. H. Senior, vicar of Holy Trinity Church, Aldershot, attended a jubilee meeting of the local Presbyterian Church. He thought it necessary to explain his position—after nearly two thousand years of Christianity.

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It is so strange for one Church to give another a leg up. What a religion!

Will those gilt-edged Agnostics who are always declaring that the war with Christianity is over kindly ponder the following figures? The cutting is from the *Daily Mail* of February 20:—

> "The following is a summary from the 'Official Year Book of the Church of England' of the voluntary offerings of the Church for the year ending last Easter:—
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | "For Home work ... ... | £814,808 |
> | ,, Foreign work ... ... | £933,981 |
> | ,, Philanthropic work ... ... | £609,010 |
> | ,, Parochial clergy ... ... | £863,802 |
> | ,, Elementary education ... | £573,647 |
> | ,, General parochial purposes ... | £3,829,118 |
> | Total ... ... | £7,900,230" |

The battle over—is it? Why with figures like these it hardly seems to have begun.

We don't answer for these *Daily Mail* figures. They are clearly wrong. But just as clearly they stand for an immense total.

"Mr. Roosevelt at Large" is the wording of a half-column notice in the *Daily Chronicle*. We are glad to hear it, and we may hope for that apology from the ex-President for his perfectly false and gratuitous insults to Thomas Paine.

The Paul Pry attitude of some of the puritanical United States officials towards the private affairs of Marie Lloyd is ludicrous. Probably the popular comedienne will retaliate on the Benighted States on her return to civilisation.

Lord Weardale should have the respect of all Freethinkers for his life's work on behalf of all sorts of "advanced" causes. He is still active in the International Peace movement. He was of great service to the Secular Education League in taking the Presidency for the first two years. Some of the Freethought members of the League will remember his admirable address as chairman of the fine St. James's Hall meeting, at which Mr. J. Ramsay Macdonald, M.P., the leader of the Labor Party, was one of the speakers—with Mr. George Greenwood, M.P., Mr. G. W. Foote, Mr. Cohen, and the Rev. Father Hole. Lord Weardale's face is one of great intelligence and refinement. He is sixty seven years of age, and his physique is not powerful. One could hardly have imagined him as the victim of a deliberate bodily assault. Yet such has been the fact. A female hooligan, twenty-four years of age, took a dog-whip with her to Euston Station, where she found him on his way to attend a family wedding. She struck him on the head from behind, and the blow, with others after it, brought him to the ground. The result was a visit of all the parties concerned to Clerkenwell Police-court. The female hooligan is in the prime of her young womanhood, and will not encounter unbearable suffering. Her victim is at a time of life when such assaults cannot be borne with impunity. It is positively sickening that such a man should be the object of such an outrage.

It appears that the female hooligan thought she was assaulting Mr. Asquith—as if that were a condonation of her offence. But she did not utter the least apology for her blunder. One of her leaders, Mrs. Dacre Fox, went to the length of calling this act of hooliganism "a magnificent protest." If Lord Weardale bears a resemblance to Mr. Asquith, that is *his* look-out. A suffragette with a dog-whip is not to be stopped by such a trifling question as to whether she is striking the right person. After all, somebody in the shape of a man gets it—and is barred by the laws of civilised society from giving it back, which is a comforting reflection to these members of the "downtrodden sex." Mrs. Dacre Fox suggests that Lord Weardale, and other men who resemble Cabinet Ministers, should "change their appearance." Otherwise they "must take their chance of being assaulted." These are the ladies who denounce the dominance of man. Fortunately, they form but a small, though noisy, portion of their sex.

It is not the cause of woman suffrage that makes certain women assaulters and incendiaries. It is their violent natures that are attracted by the violent section of the woman suffrage movement. They gain an opportunity of gratifying their personal inclinations in the name of their principles. They are the Thugs of their cause.

How some women resent having their own code of manners turned upon themselves! A pious American lady—for no reason whatever, except his public lectures against Christianity—called Ingersoll "a dog." He replied by asking her how she would like him to return the compliment, only changing the sex to suit the circumstances. The lady didn't relish that sort of "equality."

The old notion of the sentimental novel that man is usually a sort of a devil and woman almost always a saint is as far as possible from the truth of the case. In some things man is better than woman; in some things woman is better than man. Both the resemblance and the difference are the result of evolution—of the position and history of both in the life of the race. In some respects woman is better and worse than man. She is more tender-hearted and more cruel. It was noted in the Roman gladiatorial shows that the male spectators were kinder to the defeated gladiator than the females, who generally turned their thumbs down for the unfortunate man's slaughter. It is noticeable even now that nearly all the most abominable cases of cruelty to children, except, of course, where sheer lust is concerned—are the work of women. The latest case is that of Sarah Savage—an extraordinarily appropriate name!—of George's-road, Holloway, who has been sentenced to six months' imprisonment for keeping her three girls in the most inhuman conditions in a small room for sixteen months, so that they became half-imbecile, and the doctor thinks that they will never quite recover from the effects of their treatment for that length of time. That the woman was poor is true, but that is no excuse for her crime. It was not in any way necessitated by her poverty. It is here, indeed, that we come to a critical point of the discussion. Woman's maternity—and nothing else—clothes her with a certain sacredness. It is at the root of all her virtues, and of man's respect for her sex—which is otherwise only associated with his own egoism. And the perversion or frustration of woman's racial instinct is generally connected with her most odious failings. Once more the old Roman proverb is justified. The corruption of the best is the worst.

A New York Theatre is advertising its bill of six plays as ranging "from laughs to blushes." There are plenty of "laughs" in the Bible. As for "blushes" they swarm, and some of them are quite purple.

Dr. Charles Aked, president of the Californian Church Federation, is not to resign after all. He tendered his resignation, but it was not accepted. It is open, therefore, to any preacher connected with that body to deny both the miraculous birth and the miraculous death of Jesus Christ. All that is left is his sermons, which are praised and—neglected.

What *is* Christianity? This question is puzzling the ministers of religion as well as laymen. The Bishop of London has presented to Convocation a petition signed by 676 clergy of the London diocese expressing their grave anxiety at this present time "in consequence of the unrebuked denial of certain fundamental truths of the Faith by some who hold office in the Church, and in consequence of the widespread tendency to approach the problem of reunion among Christians in a way that is clearly inconsistent with the belief that episcopal ordination is essential to a valid ministry of the Word and sacraments." The petition proceeded as follows:—

> "We are driven to ask our spiritual fathers, first to repudiate the claim of some clergy to reject the miracles of our Lord's birth of a virgin and the actual resurrection of his body from the tomb, because we believe that these truths lie at the very centre of the faith, and that the statements of the Bible and the creeds with regard to them are perfectly plain and unambiguous.
>
> "And, second, to make it plain that, in accordance with the teaching of the Church in all ages, the Church of England has already taught, and must continue to teach, the necessity of episcopal ordination as a condition of exercising the ministry of the Word and sacraments."

"Our spiritual fathers," as the Bishops are called, are not likely to take this stiff job in hand. The safest course nowadays is to join hands with Mr. Facing-Both-Ways.

The *Daily News* hopes that Mr. Watts-Dunton's reluctance to publish his personal reminiscences of Swinburne may be overcome. We hardly know whether to say "Ay" or "No" to this. Mr. Watts-Dunton betrayed Swinburne at his funeral by allowing a clergyman to officiate at the graveside. What if he betrayed the Atheist poet in his reminiscences too? We are afraid that is what would happen. So perhaps it is best, after all, that Mr. Watts-Dunton should potter along peacefully now to his own last rest.

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Some discussion has taken place in the pages of a contemporary as to whether Baron Munchausen, the famous author, was the most mendacious of writers. Surely the championship belongs to the Oriental scribe who wrote the account of Noah's Ark, although some of his imaginative colleagues run him very close.

Sir Owen Seaman, editor of *Punch*, says that "the true parodist must be reverent." Sir Owen is far too respectable to have read Hone's clever parodies of the Athanasian Creed; but a deal less reverence would make *Punch* less like a parish magazine.

Sir Oliver Lodge has predicted a very severe winter. We do not know if this is based on "spiritual" advice; but the weather has not justified the prophet so far. If Sir Oliver's forecasts concerning a future existence are not more exact, we may regard the prophecy as something like Old Moore's.

A provincial paper recently announced the death of a person as occurring on July 14, 1914. That is certainly previous; but on the Gold Coast, medicine-men prophesy deaths, and see to it that the corpse is ready for the funeral.

It appears that a sum of £3,000,000 was subscribed last year in the United Kingdom for Foreign Missions. It is a pity that this money was not applied to a better purpose at home, and it would be if only the mass of subscribers knew the truth about the movement. Such a sum spent on such a cause is enough to make one despair of human sanity.

Some few years ago one of the President of the British Association warned Englishmen that the German danger was not in either fleet or army, but in its more efficient educational system. He added that the German public had reached a far higher educational level than our own, and that it would take two generations of hard work for us to overtake them. The other day Lord Haldane repeated the warning. There is, he said, "a deadlier peril menacing these islands than any foreign army or foreign navy. It is the peril of ignorance, of mental inertia, of slipshod ways of thinking and acting, of a depressed average of intelligence." Lord Haldane added that when he went to the War Office he found that thirteen per cent. of the recruits could neither read nor write. They had passed through elementary schools, and had then forgotten even this small modicum of education.

These are striking statements, and we believe the root of the trouble is to be found in the fact that the English people have never taken seriously the idea of education. They have assented to its being rather than desired it. The public at large places small value on intellectual attainments, even while professing an admiration for them. Moreover, the squabbles of the sects to gain control of the schools in the interests of Church or Chapel have been a powerful factor in hiding from the public the importance of the subject. "The Education Question" has come to mean little more to a large number of people than the quarrel over the subject of religion. It is this that has perpetuated inefficient sectarian schools, and, as the late Lord Salisbury once said, induced sectarian leaders to obstruct improvements in State schools in order to diminish expenses in their own establishments. Lord Haldane must be fully aware of these facts, and it will be a great pity if he lends his support to any Government measure that promises to still further prolong the struggle of the Churches for the control of the children of the nation.

Miss Betham-Edwards' *Home Life in France*, just added to Methuen's shilling library. The lady, who may be depended upon for accuracy as well as impartiality in writing of French affairs, has words of praise for both Catholic priest and Protestant pastor. Within their own Churches they are often excellent men, poor but honest and paternal; but when it comes to other Churches than their own they are intensely bigoted. Miss Betham-Edwards says:—

> "Although the Catholic and Protestant population live harmoniously side by side, intermarriages are rare, and the rival churches neither gain nor lose adherents to any appreciable extent. Between Protestant pastor and Catholic priest in any part of France there is no kind of intercourse whatever."

No kind of intercourse whatever. What a terrible spirit! And this in genial, joyous France—the country of Rabelais and Voltaire. What is to be expected, then, of Orangemen and Puritans?

One cannot help thinking of the calm but awful statement of the great implacable Swift, that most men have religion enough to make them hate each other.

Gentle Jesus, A Book for His Little Children is a recent publication for the young. We never knew that the Man of Sorrows was a father. But you never can tell, and we are willing to learn of the clergy in these matters.

A new magazine has just been published under the quaint title, the *Trinity Magazine*. It has nothing to do with the popular three-headed Deity, but emanates from Cambridge University.

God's Own Country is the title of a new book on Australia. A land with such a name should have a Bible of its own. Should the humorists of the *Sydney Bulletin* have a hand in its production, it would prove a very interesting volume.

Religious statistics are often amusing reading. One of the funniest examples is that to be found in the current issue of *Whitaker's Almanac*, where the total population of the world is given as 1,623,000,000, and the population, divided as to religions, is totalled as 1,646,491,000, or 23,491,000 in excess of the world's inhabitants. A still more humorous result of the figures is that not a solitary Freethinker is included in the total. The pious statistician might have allowed a baker's dozen of sceptics to save his face; but maybe he thought thirteen an unlucky number.

An elderly woman collapsed and fell dead while Mass was being celebrated at the Roman Catholic Cathedral at Kirkdale, Liverpool. Was it a judgment or an accident?

The Bishop of Gibraltar has written a book on *The Glory of Going On*. There is a good deal of "glory" on the "Rock" at a bishop's salary; but some of the "stony" parsons elsewhere will have difficulty in perceiving it.

"One of the Christian doctrines I never had any difficulty in believing was that of original sin," says the genial Mr. Birrell, the Irish Secretary. Has he heard the peripatetic patterers of the Christian Evidence Society?

The strike habit has penetrated the Christian fold. Recently, at a large chapel in the Midlands, the choir "downed" hymn-books over the appointment of a new choirmaster, and a choir of "blacklegs" had to be recruited from the congregation. When these Christians get to heaven, they will be throwing each other over the battlements.

That sage person, the Bishop of London, considers that "The Church is becoming more human." It was about time.

We take the following news item from the *Midland Evening News* (Feb. 21):—

> "CIRCULATION OF 'LIFE OF CHRIST.'
>
> "At Festiniog Town Council, last night, Councillor Cadwaladr Roberts gave notice of motion in favor of withdrawing from circulation in the public library Renan's *Life of Christ*. A book of that nature, he said, tended to undermine the work and influence of the ministers of religion in the town. If a book like that was circulated in the public library, what was the good of paying scores of pounds weekly in salaries to ministers? It was the duty of the Council to see that the tone of all books circulated in the library were healthy. Councillor Evan Jones: I shall second the motion."

We hope to receive a report of the sequel—which ought to be interesting, especially in view of the age of Renan's book.

The *Daily Mail* recently had a column article on "The Value of the Street Mouth." It contained no references to the amiable babblers who, in company with a harmonium and several female friends, make the streets of our towns hideous on Sundays.

The *Tailor and Cutter* has fallen foul of some prominent statesmen for their laxity in dress. It would be interesting to hear our contemporary's views of the bizarre dresses of the twelve apostles.

"Kikuyu Tracts," a series of screeds on a live theological controversy, will soon be published, and will be written by a Bishop and some Nonconformists. Let us hope that they will not kick each other too much.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

Sunday March 1, North Saloon, City Hall, Glasgow; 12 (noon), "Shakespeare's Humanism in the *Merchant of Venice*"; 6.30, "Mr. Balfour on God."

March 22, Manchester.

To Correspondents.

E. B.—Thanks for cuttings and paper. There is a difficulty in the way of our noticing the latter—as we think you will have seen.

J. F. AUST.—See paragraph. Thanks.

WALTER DAVIDSON.—You are getting along all right. The Edmonton bigots have found a Tartar. We will see about the Lincoln matter and let you know.

Z. A. 2.—Your Italian postcard is no good at this end. Your personal trouble commands our sympathy, but we are not able to help you in the way suggested.

T. H. ELTON.—Mistakes on matters of fact are easily made if the memory is not refreshed with regard to books one has not read for many years. That you tried to refer to *Tess*, but failed to get a copy in time, was unfortunate; yet the essence of the matter, after all, seems unaffected.

W. MANN.—Tuesday morning; had to shorten.

R. STIRTON.—Thanks again for your constant service in this matter.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

The President's Honorarium Fund.

To the Freethinkers of Great Britain.

January, 1914.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—

We renew our appeal on behalf of the above Fund, which is now so well known to the Freethought party that its object may be stated in a very few words. It is sought to relieve Mr. G. W. Foote—President of the National Secular Society, Chairman of the Secular Society (Ltd.), and Editor of the *Freethinker*—of his worst financial worries, so that he may be as free as possible to devote his time and energies to his work as the leader of the militant Freethought movement in this country. We suggested that £800 a year might be raised in this way and placed at his disposal. We are happy to say that the average has reached that amount.

A generous subscriber made up the deficit of some £20 in 1912, and another friend offered to make up any deficit in 1913. Happily but £3 odd was necessary. Perhaps it will become a fashion for the £800 to be made up fully in this manner.

Mr. Foote's income from other sources at present is more restricted than ever. He intends to explain this matter himself very shortly. In the meanwhile we have to assure the Freethought party that the time has not arrived when they might think of diminishing their subscriptions to this Fund.

With regard to the *Freethinker*, we are sorry to learn from Mr. Foote that it still yields him no salary. The business of the Pioneer Press (including the *Freethinker*) has turned the corner from loss to profit; but the latter is as yet scarcely worth a mention.

All subscriptions received have been acknowledged week by week in the *Freethinker*, and will continue to be acknowledged in that way.

Subscriptions for 1914 can be forwarded to either of the undersigned. Those who prefer to do so can send, as before, direct to Mr. Foote himself, at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, London, E.C.

Subscribers who do not wish their names to appear in print should state the form of acknowledgment they prefer.

We are aware that all subscribers cannot conveniently respond to this appeal at once, but we hope a great many will do so as early as possible.

Yours faithfully,

J. W. DE CAUX, J.P.,
92 St. Peter's-road, Gt. Yarmouth.
R. T. NICHOLS, M.D.,
28 Park-road, Ilford.
A. J. FINCKEN,
66 Mount Grove-road, Highbury, London, N.

Third List of Subscriptions.

Previously acknowledged, £40 3s. 3d. Received since Isaac Jackson, £10; John G. Dobson, 5s.; E. A. H., 5s. J. F. Aust, 5s.; Robert Stirton and Friends (Dundee)—quarterly, £1 5s.; Lt.-Col. Stuart Graham, 9s. 6d.; Henry A. Lupton, £10 10s.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote pays his long-expected visit to Glasgow to-day (March 1) and lectures for the local N. S. S. Branch at the North Saloon, City Hall (not far from the old Hall in Brunswick-street that was destroyed by fire). The first lecture is timed for 12 o'clock (noon)—the subject being "Shakespeare's Humanism in the *Merchant of Venice*." The second lecture is at 6.30 p.m.—the subject being "Mr. Balfour on God." This will be a criticism of Mr. Balfour's recent Gifford Lectures; one of the very few honest criticisms they are ever likely to receive.

It will be a great pleasure to Mr. Foote to meet his Glasgow friends once more. It is not the lectures that make him lose some of the old zest in these visits, for he takes nearly as much delight in them as he did twenty years ago. It is the ever-growing distaste of travelling, with its tiresomeness and frightful waste of time. Some people dread the speed of express trains. Mr. Foote wishes they went a thousand miles an hour. That would certainly prolong his work upon the Freethought platform.

Mr. J. T. Lloyd attends the anniversary meeting of the Leicester Secular Society at the Secular Hall, Humberstone-gate, to-day (March 1).

The National Committee for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws has engaged Essex Hall for Friday evening, March 20, when a public meeting will be held, of which a detailed announcement will follow.

The Secular Education League holds its annual Members' meeting on Tuesday evening, March 24, in Room I of the Caxton Hall. The chair will be taken at 7.30. This will be followed by a public meeting at 8.15. It is hoped that Mr. George Greenwood will be able to preside, and the list of speakers includes Mr. Halley Stewart, Sir Henry Cotton, Lady Byles, Mr. Arthur Henderson, M.P., Rev. Dr. Walter Walsh, and Mr. G. W. Foote.

Mr. Henry A. Lupton, one of the "old guard" in North London, who did good work many years ago at Milton Hall, has done a thing which other Freethinkers might imitate. Sending us his regular subscription of 10s. to the President's Honorarium Fund, he adds £10 to it for the present year. He has had a stroke of luck, and he had made a vow that if it arrived he would remember Mr. Foote. He concludes that, as vows are registered in heaven, the Lord has something to do with this matter. "God can favor me in this way as often as he likes," he says, "and I will send you a contribution every time." We cordially concur.

Mr. Isaac Jackson, the friend in Burma who offered to make up any deficit in the President's Honorarium Fund for 1913, was agreeably surprised to find that only £3 17s. 5d. was wanted on the thirty-first of December. To cover this he has generously remitted £5, with another £10 towards the 1914 Fund. We cannot ask every intending subscriber to be as liberal, but we might wish them—or all who can—to be as prompt. It would be a considerable gratification to us if the Fund could be subscribed up fully, and removed from our pages long before the end of the year.

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Mr. W. Bailey, the treasurer of a Fund that has been subscribed privately throughout the Freethought party, asks us to announce that the total amount collected was £278 16s. 8d.; that printing, stationery, and postage cost £5 13s. 11d.; and that the net balance of £273 2s. 9d. has been handed over to the recipient. This is a very bald announcement, but to say more would only violate the privacy which we were asked to regard as a *sine qua non* at the outset. Mr. Bailey, and all others concerned, will understand.

Mr. Allen Upward's very able and interesting book, the *Divine Mystery*, which was the subject of an article from Mr. Cohen's pen some time ago in our pages, contains many references to matters and persons with which our own readers, and especially the older ones, are more or less familiar. We note a reference (on p. 200) to the late Mr. R. M. Morell "the worthy founder of the National Sunday League." Mr. Morell was *a* founder of the Sunday League, but not *the* founder. There were others, though he might be called the principal one. The truth is that he lived to such an old age that he stood to a later generation as *the* founder, by subsuming, as it were, all his colleagues who had died. But that is by the way. Mr. Upward's point is in Mr. Morell's confession of his and his colleagues ill-treatment by religious bigots in the earlier days of the League's existence. "We struggled for over thirty years," Mr. Morell said, "against calumny, vilification, and even threats before we got our petition sanctioned by Parliament for the opening of the museums [on Sundays]. We were called atheists, Sabbath-breakers, and I don't know what." Being called these names is reckoned a serious part of their ill-treatment. Yet these names did them very little, if any, injustice—except as they may have been pronounced in a sneering or malicious way. Mr. Morell and several of his colleagues *were* Atheists, *were* Sabbath-breakers, and so on. Mr. Upward is invited to take notice of this point. We knew Mr. Morell rather intimately in the eighteen seventies, when he kept a newsagent's shop in Francis-street (we believe), off Tottenham-court-road. We often called in and had a chat with him,—sometimes with James Thomson ("B. V.," the poet) who lodged round the corner in Huntley-street. Mr. Morell might then have been called a "Holyoake-ite," and he was interested in the *Secularist* which we started with Mr. Holyoake, and to which James Thomson was a chief contributor. We can hardly agree, therefore, that Mr. Morell and his colleagues were badly persecuted by being called names which were quite accurate and really deserved. If they were not Sabbath-breakers, for instance, what on earth were they? Sabbath-breaking was the very head and front of their offending.

The third section of Mr. Upward's twelfth chapter is headed "The Good Tidings of Damnation." And a very good heading it is too. But if Mr. Upward had used such language, notwithstanding its accuracy, some thirty years ago (as we did) he would have been thought guilty of blasphemy (as we were). The real crime for which we suffered twelve months' imprisonment was that of being in advance of the time,—one of Whitman's "Pioneers! O Pioneers!"

Mr. Allen Upward—with our benediction, if he cares to have it—is presenting to a ten-and-sixpenny public much that we presented all those years ago to a penny public in Joseph Mazzini Wheeler's sound and learned articles in the *Freethinker*, and in the penny numbers of our own *Bible Heroes* and *Bible Romances*. We had convictions; we had boundless health and strength of body, and some, at least, of mind; we had read and studied in the right direction, that of evolution; and we were born for the fight. Where the guns roared, and the rifles pinged, and the smoke half choked the combatants, and the bayonets gleamed in the fierce attack, and swords clashed with the sound that always thrills those who have some of the old fighting instinct of the race in them—an instinct which reason should direct, and not destroy; *there* we found our place. And we do not regret it—though we have paid the price. For it is not in voyaging over halcyon seas that man feels most himself, and the pride and power of his nature, and his possible worth to the world, but in struggling with the storm when the sails split, and the masts go by the board, and the sky is a black abysm, and the sea a blacker one, save for the white-foaming wolves of the ocean driven on by the thundering storm. To live then is to live indeed. It purges a man of trivialities for ever.

Mr. Thomas William Stewart was liberated on Feb. 20 from Stafford Prison, where he had suffered three months and several days' imprisonment under the infamous Blasphemy Laws.

Christian Myth and Legend.

Mythes et Légendes. Etude sur l'origine et l'évolution des croyances religieuses par la comparaison des textes originaux. Par Edouard Daanson. (Bruxelles, 1913. 89 Avenue des Rogations.) Published by the Author, and sold by subscription at 10 francs. Pp. 412. (First edition of 1,600 copies, separately numbered.)

M. EDOUARD DAANSON, whose earlier work,* so full of pungent satire of Christian doctrine, is already known to readers of the *Freethinker*, has now enriched the literature of Rationalism with an admirable study of Myths and Legends in relation to the origin and evolution of religious beliefs. By comparison of the original texts with the myths and legends of Christianity and other religions he enables us to see the contact of creed with creed and the continuity and variation of myths and cults which form the subject-matter of the several religions which have figured on the world-wide stage of superstition and priestcraft.

M. Daanson has supplied a felt want, for his beautifully printed and lavishly illustrated book is an invaluable anthology of pre-Christian and other texts scattered through a vast body of specialist works dealing with the growth of religious ideas. Our author brings and compares these texts together in order to illustrate the march and development of doctrine and dogma from one world-religion to another. When, a few years ago, he wrote his *Livre du Bien et du Mal*, he had no idea of denying, or even doubting, the historical existence of Christ. His new and richly documented book, the fruit of assiduous research in the interval, shows how his conception of Christ passed away from the ideal man whom Renan and Loisy depict for us, to linger awhile for a temporary flirtation with the ideas of Dr. Binet-Sanglé, in order ultimately to adopt its present attitude, which regards the figure of Christ as a religious romance formed by the accretion or modification of many myths.

M. Daanson's book clearly shows that the minds of our ignorant forefathers were simply dustheaps for the reception and intermingling of heterogeneous myths and legends of gods, goddesses, demons, kings, heroes, poets, and saints. The miraculous was so inextricably blended with the natural processes of life that nobody could tell for certain how soon an ordinary mortal would become deified or how the ordinary man in the street could escape meeting the miraculous round the corner or evade the performance by his own act and deed of prodigies of supernatural import. It is not known, for instance, whether Homer was a real man or a myth; but this uncertainty did not prevent the Greeks from elevating him amongst the gods. In that respect the reputed author of the *Iliad* stands in the same ambiguous position as the alleged preacher of the Sermon on the Mount. The Greek poet and the Palestinian peasant met the same fate: they became gods. In ancient times, to have died and become immortal, it was not necessary to have ever lived at all. It is certain that no evidence can be shown of the historical existence of Christ; but the fact that nothing is known of his birth has not prevented the formation of an elaborately detailed legend concerning his tragic death, his sensationally miraculous resurrection, and his glorious ascension to heaven—to somewhere far beyond the regions where our unmythical contemporary Vedrenne and his numerous rivals, aided only by atheistic science, have yet been able to reach.

All this, and much beside, is treated with elaborate detail in the special chapter which purports to tell us "how legends are formed." This chapter sheds a flood of light upon the nature of legend, and especially of religious legend, without, however, doing more in most cases than presenting to us the legends as finished articles ready for sale or circulation for the exploiting of pious ignorance. In many cases, no

* *Le Livre du Bien et du Mal.* See my *Freethinker* article of January 8, 1911.

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doubt, M. Daanson does enable us to see the legend grow, notably in the case of the Poisson d'Avril and the legend of Dr. Faust. In these instances the problem is of comparative simplicity, inasmuch as here we are dealing with legends which start into being during well-known periods of modern history, during which the stages of legendary growth are clearly traceable. But when the hero of legend belongs to the twilight of history, as in the case of Attis, the Phrygian god, who was a cognate celestial with Jesus Christ, or in the legend of Orpheus, the deified poet, who is supposed to have taken part in the expedition of the Argonauts, and to have descended into hell, as Jesus Christ did (or did not) some hundreds of years afterwards—in these and similar cases we come face to face with legends fully grown. The parallels shown between the legends of Bacchus, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, and the other savior-gods or deified men of antiquity are striking enough, but they would be more convincing if more were known or indicated of the points of culture-nexus between these varying types of legend and myth. Where (as on page 46 *et seq.*, dealing with the manner in which the Vedas were composed) the learned author attempts a reasoned statement of the origin of the sacred books of the Brahmans, the explanation is evidently too severely summarised to enable us to perceive the successive steps in the evolution of the Indian Bible.

These and various other impressions of an attentive reading of this excellent repository of documents relating to the historical criticism of religion incline one to the view that the book itself is mainly a collection of data or preparatory notes in anticipation of a larger work wherein a fuller discussion and examination of religious origins would be attempted. But the richness of these data and the suggestive nature of these "notes" make M. Daanson's delightful and instructive volume a very encyclopædia of the facts and documents which cluster around the ever-fascinating subject of the early beginnings of culture and creed.

Whatever may be the foundations of faith at the dawn of history, whether based on the conscious fraud of priests or on the abject fears and superstitions of the pious, certain it is that the more modern developments of religion, as seen in the multiplication and exploitation of religious relics, are obviously based on deliberate fraud and imposture. The absurd and sometimes indecent nature of Christian relics (see pages 58-60) would alone suffice to impeach the sanity or honesty of the Church which waxed fat by exploiting the holy prepuce, of which a large quantity once pertaining to Our Blessed Lord is scattered throughout Christendom.

One of the most striking sections in this indispensable *vade-mecum* on religious origins is the very full and splendidly illustrated chapter (pages 66-136) on "the evolution of myths." These are chiefly the creation-myths of Egypt and Chaldea, but the whole literature relating to myths of creation is brought under contribution in order to show the developments of these myths under every variety of religious experience throughout the Old and New World. An enormous body of texts and documents is thus assembled in a handy form which is quite unique in Rationalist literature. The circumstantial detail with which the myth-makers of the prehistoric past ventured to described the precise *modus operandi* of God Almighty (or of confederated groups of God Almighties) at every stage in the creation of matter and life is here set forth in a series of extracts from the sacred documents of the old-world hierophants, who nearly all are in a position to record the exclamations of the Creator at the time or his conversations with his associated partners in the work of creation. The labor of collating the vast literature of this subject is not an inviting task, and the students of religious origins are under deep obligation to M. Daanson for the rich harvest of documents which he has so admirably collected in this intensely interesting chapter, which closes Book I. of this great work.

Book II. deals with the Jesus myth in relation to modern historical and scientific criticism. After passing in review a vast number of modern treatises on this theme, M. Daanson expresses his view that "this personage of whom no trace is found in the history of his country is merely a character invented and placed on the scene in surroundings more or less historic." His thesis is to show that the life of Jesus was a romance created by Greeks, and Jewish Cabbalists and Judaising Copts of Alexandria under the influence of the historic writings of Josephus and of the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament. In support of this theory a special chapter is devoted to the Egyptian analogies of cult and doctrine with the Jesus legend of the Christian Gospels, and though, as I think, some of these "analogies" are strained and stretched beyond the due limits of their natural significance, they are certainly indicative of many pre-Christian adumbrations of Christ in Egypt, as elsewhere in the Pagan world. It is especially in Egypt, that "paradise of legends," as M. Daanson calls it, where myths and superstitions of Savior-Gods and Holy Trinities were strewn in abundance in readiness for manipulation into Christian form and similitude. Many of these myths and superstitions are illustrated by a copious catena of exceedingly interesting documents, but I cannot quite convince myself that the Christian legends are historically affiliated, in every case cited, to the alleged Egyptian or other antetypes. On the other hand, the early outcrop of Christian heresies, and especially of Gnosticism and its numerous variants, point unmistakably to Egypt as one of the most fertile seed-plots of Christian mysticism, as the place, in fact, out of which God called his Son.

The ample materials of comparison furnished in the last two chapters of M. Daanson's book leave no manner of doubt in the mind of any reasonable student of Christian origins that all the root-ideas of Christian theology and ethics were current coin of the realm of speculation and belief in the Pagan world for ages prior to the date fixed for the miraculous birth of Christ.

I shall probably reopen later on the discussion o the intensely suggestive theories and conclusions contained in M. Daanson's excellent treatise. In the meantime let me say that the sumptuous illustrations (fifty in number) and the typographical beauty of the volume with which we have been dealing will naturally enhance the value and attractiveness of its appeal as a work which explores the whole ground of Christian origins with extraordinary erudition. M. Daanson is still a comparatively young man (he is a brand, once very pious, snatched by Freethought from the fires of a monastic career), and has already become one of the rising orators and men of letters in the ranks of Belgian Rationalism. His latest contribution indisputably stamps him as a fine scholar and fearless thinker whose fertile pen and encyclopædic learning are destined still further to enrich the literature of Freethought.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

The Church and Literature.—II.

(Continued from p. 125.)

DURING the period rightly known as the Dark Ages the clergy were supreme. Proclaiming that the Church had the authority of God, they claimed control over minds and estates, and they demanded that their claims should be accepted without reasoning. To deny, or even to doubt, was to be a heretic, and to be subject to excommunication, fine, imprisonment, exile, and perhaps torture and the stake.

The Church only kept up so much of classic learning as was necessary for a literary education, and to give the clergy an elevated and imposing position among the barbarians. These tactics were especially successful with the northern tribes, who

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had a humble veneration for the Science of the Runes. Von Hartmann says:—

> "If, therefore, mediæval Christianity cultivated the study of the Greek and Latin authors, it was not from any appreciation of, or sympathy with, that culture which is to be derived from them, but solely in the pursuit of external and hierarchical interests. The old Pagan writings were looked upon as a necessary evil to which the Church submitted in order to give to the clergy a literary and theological training, but which, undoubted productions of the devil as they are, no man should take in his hands without first making the sign of the cross and trembling for his soul's salvation."

Lecky's testimony in his *History of European Morals* is that the literature of Christian asceticism "surpasses in its mendacious ferocity any that the world has seen." The Christians habitually spoke of those who deviated from the orthodox belief as demons, and exulted over the tortures which they believed were reserved for such miscreants. Lecky continues:—

> "The study of the Latin classics was for the most part positively discouraged. The writers, it was believed, were burning in hell. The monks were too inflated with their imaginary knowledge to regard with any respect a Pagan writer, and periodical panics about the approaching termination of the world continually checked any desire for secular learning. It was the custom among some monks, when they were under the discipline of silence, and desired to ask for Virgil, Horace, or any other Gentile work, to indicate their wish by stretching their ears like a dog, to which animal it was thought the Pagans might reasonably be compared."

Buckle declares that the learning of the Middle Ages only ministered to ignorance. He says:—

> "From the sixth to the tenth century there was not in all Europe more than three or four men who dared to think for themselves; and even they were obliged to veil their meaning in obscure and mystical language. The remaining part of society was, during these four centuries, sunk in the most degrading ignorance. Under these circumstances, the few who were able to read confined their studies to works which encouraged and strengthened their superstition, such as the legends of the saints and the homilies of the fathers. From these sources they drew those lying and impudent fables of which the theology of the time is principally composed."

Of course, the supply of literature was only proportionate to the demand. The classic works of the Pagans having fallen into disrepute, their manuscripts were erased and re-written with Christian legends. Copies of Cicero, Pliny, or Homer were valueless, and the parchments used for them were prepared by washing or scraping in order to make room for the ridiculous fables of the saints. These palimpsests or *codices rescripti* form a curious commentary on the zeal of the monks. Frequently the most valuable works were covered over with others now of no account. The long-lost treatise of Cicero, *De Republica*, was discovered written over with St. Augustine's *Commentary on the Psalms*. Within the present century Niebuhr discovered the *Istitutes of Gaius*, a work throwing much light on Roman Law, and which was believed to have perished in the confusion of the Dark Ages, beneath a second and even a third writing consisting of the epistles of St. Jerome. Hallam, in his *Middle Ages*, says: "So gross and supine was the ignorance of the monks, within whose walls these treasures were concealed, that it was impossible to ascertain, except by indefatigable researches, the extent of what had been saved out of the great shipwreck of antiquity."

The scarcity of books rendered their price so enormous during the palmy days of Christianity that even persons of fortune could not indulge in the luxury of reading. Private persons seldom possessed any books, and even monasteries of note had only one Missal. Persons who bequeathed a pious book to the library of a monastery were deemed thereby to obtain complete remission of sins. The Rev. Joseph Barrington, the Catholic author of the *Literary History of the Middle Ages*, admits that "in the most wealthy convents, where libraries were chiefly formed, a short catalogue was sufficient to comprise the number of their books; and the price to those who were disposed to purchase was exorbitant." Hallam tells us that contracts were made verbally for want of notaries capable of drawing up charters, and these, when written, were frequently barbarous and ungrammatical to an incredible degree.

At this time, be it remembered, the Mohammedan caliphs were giving every encouragement to literature and science. Bagdad in the east, and Cordova in the west, were the seats of learning and culture, and the dawn of the renaissance of letters arose from the contact with Arabian civilisation. The Jews also cultivated literature, and produced many of their brightest lights during the long night of the Dark Ages. Their works were, of course, proscribed. St. Louis ordered the Talmud to be burnt. All the Jewish libraries were destroyed, and twenty-four cartloads of valuable manuscripts committed to the flames. All Jewish books, Bibles excepted, were ordered to be burnt because filled with the blasphemies against Christ, and it is alleged that, at one time, twelve thousand copies of the Talmud were burnt at one holocaust in Cremona—a feat throwing into the shade the destruction of five thousand copies of the Koran by Cardinal Ximenes. All heretical works were hunted out and burnt. As early as the twelfth century, Pope Innocent III. prohibited the reading of the Bible in the common tongue. The Council of Toulouse (1229) forbade the reading of the Bible in any vernacular tongue, and decreed that no layman should have in his possession any of the books of the Old or New Testament. The Council of Terragona orders that any priest or layman who possesses a translation of the Bible, and does not surrender it within eight days to be burnt, shall be deemed a heretic. The famous Council of Trent affirmed that no Bible should be held or read except by priests, and this canon remains unrepealed. The Council condemned wholesale the works of the most notorious heretics—*i.e.*, reformers. In 1557, Paul IV. published at Rome the first official *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*. His Index includes all Bibles in modern languages, enumerating forty-eight editions chiefly printed in countries still under the jurisdiction of the Church. Sixty-one printers, among whom are Stephens and Oporinus, are put under a general ban—all works, of whatever description, from their presses being forbidden.

The Roman Catholic Church has taken the trouble to register its relationship to literature by publishing lists of the works it forbids to its followers. For a long time the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* was itself a forbidden work. It showed not only the nature of the forbidden fruit, but made manifest what it was the Church really feared. Since, however, bibliographers have published unauthorised lists, the society for the propagation of the faith has issued an Index from which, since it has the Papal *imprimatur*, there can be no appeal.

(The late) J. M. WHEELER.

(To be concluded.)

Voltaire Once More.

> "Of all the intellectual weapons which have ever been wielded by man, the most terrible was the mockery of Voltaire."—LORD MACAULAY.

VOLTAIRE'S name has ever been a terror to Christians, and, with the exception of Thomas Paine, none has been more hated, none more reviled. The reason is simple. A very great writer, he attacked Christianity, not in the dry-as-dust fashion of professors writing for the dozen superior persons scattered throughout the universe, but with wit and pleasantry which survive the winnowing of generations. He made bigots and tyrants appear ridiculous as well as odious, and those who felt the sting of his satire denounced him as a literary Mephistopheles, whose writings all should avoid as they would a plague.

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A notebook of Voltaire's, written in English, has been discovered at St. Petersburg, and the *English Review*, to its own credit and the delight of all lovers of literature, has published it in its current issue.

The pages, now set forth in print for the first time, are of absorbing interest, for they give an insight into the mind of the young Voltaire, and they form the notebook of one of the most myriad-minded of men. "Monsieur Multiform" was his witty name for D'Alembert, and he himself had an equal right to it. In the eighty volumes of his collected works he has proved his mastery as historian, essayist, thinker, humorist, tale-teller, letter-writer, critic, and humanitarian. So strong is his appeal to literary men that Macaulay, one of the most omnivorous of readers, selected Voltaire's works for his reading on his lengthy sea-voyage to India.

It was in 1726 that the young Voltaire came to England on his release from the Bastille, where he had been imprisoned for challenging the Duc de Rohan. He looked across the Channel towards the country of Congreve, Pope, Bolingbroke, Swift, and other renowned authors, and he hastened to make their acquaintance. A true Frenchman, he only cared for the society of men of reputation. When he visited Congreve, the English dramatist hinted that Voltaire should visit him as a man of fashion. "I answered," said Voltaire, "that had he been so unfortunate as to be a mere gentleman I should never have come to see him."

The notebook is written in English, which Voltaire learned during his three years' stay in the country. With characteristic nonchalance he said, "I have done what we do every day at school when we write Latin and Greek"; but he had done what few of his fellow countrymen had achieved, and he was as notable in this respect as Gibbon, Hume, and Beckford were across the Channel. Many of the reflections in the notebook were afterwards used in his famous "English Letter," although the wit was more polished in the later version. As may be expected, the iconoclastic note often reverberates through the pages, as in the sarcastic remarks, "dunces are the founders of all religions, men of wit founders of heresies; men of understanding laugh at both." In another mood, recalling the quips and cranks at Bolingbroke's house, or Pope's villa at Twickenham, he compares the two men: "Pope is a dark lanthorn, and Bolingbroke is an ordinary lamp." A suggestion of his later style is found in the scathing lines: "A Carthusian kneels and prostrates himself before me; a Quaker speaks to me covered; both do so to follow the Gospel in the most rigorous sense." Thus, the notebook gives the first promise of that superb irony which made *Candide* the wittiest book in the world, and the *Philosophical Dictionary* more deadly to priests than regiments of artillery.

The abuse to which Voltaire was subjected by Christians was awful. Dr. Johnson, by no means a bad-hearted man, voiced this terrible prejudice. In a conversation with Boswell, he said: "Rousseau, sir, is a very bad man. I would sooner sign a sentence for his transportation than that of any felon who has gone from the Old Bailey these many years. Yes, I should like to have him work in the plantations." "Sir, you do not think him as bad a man as Voltaire?" inquired Boswell. "Why, sir, it is difficult to settle the proportion of iniquity between them." In artistic circles one meets the same insults. Sir Joshua Reynolds, in one of his most popular pictures, introduced Voltaire as the personification of sophistry. The clergy, naturally, out-Heroded Herod, and made Voltaire the helot of countless homilies, and lied to such purpose that whole generations of Christians firmly believed that Voltaire was responsible for the French Revolution.

The reason is not far to seek. Voltaire's crystal-clear understanding saw the absurdities and abominations of Christianity. His aim was straight to the fact, and he brought orthodoxy to the test of truth and common sense. Was it true or not that God had chosen Jewish savages as his chosen people? Was Omnipotence born of one parent only, and that one a virgin? Did God feed five thousand people with a few loaves and fishes, and did he come back from the grave? To ask these questions, and to press for answers, was to provoke inextinguishable laughter.

Voltaire was more than a sceptic, and his exquisite wit was employed as his principal weapon. His humanity was whole-hearted and sincere. He did not jibe at men being tortured and murdered for their opinions. At the legal murder of Jean Calas he was indignation personified, and he never rested till the foul wrong was undone. Voltaire not only fought intolerance and oppression, he protected the oppressed. His championing of the Servens and La Barre will never fade from the memory of men. A true humanitarian, he did more than any other man to put an end to judicial torture. This would alone suffice to prove how intense was his detestation of violence and fanaticism.

For sixty years Voltaire waged unrelenting war against the Great Lying Church, and when this eminent Freethinker died the Church refused him burial, hoping that he would be thrown into the gutter like the famous actress, Adrienne Lecouvreur. But he had carved his name too deeply on his country's roll of honor, and his remains now rest beneath the dome of the Pantheon, with its front glowing with the splendid words: *Aux grand hommes la patrie reconnaisante.* Here he sleeps undisturbed, and by his side rest the ashes of Rousseau. Shoulder to shoulder, these great soldiers of the Army of Liberty rest under their magnificent tombs:—

> "With the sound of those they wrought for,
> And the feet of those they fought for,
> Echoing round their bones for evermore."

MIMNERMUS.

Correspondence.

"TESS."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—After Mr. Lyle's complete statement, my first impulse is to let judgment go by default, for there is obviously nothing to say by way of excuse for the confusion which has existed for years in my mind as to the attitude taken by the Vicar on the two points of the baby's baptism and burial. And yet I feel as if something more were necessary, and I would like to express my contrition for having misled any of your readers, and for any criticism of parties unknown based on the above confusion.

Mr. Lyle's remarks are too restrained, in fact, in view of the circumstances, and I hope I can thank him in the best possible way by telling him that his graceful note has impressed me with a heavier sense of responsibility.

T. H. ELSTON.

MAXIM'S BOOK AND THE "TIMES."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In reply to Mr. J. Tomkins' request *re* Sir Hiram Maxim's book, I wish to say that there was no review of the book in the *Times*; but in the *Times Literary Supplement*—published every Thursday as a supplement with the *Times*—it appeared in the columns of books received, with a few lines—which are sometimes given when the book is not reviewed—giving a fair and unbiased summary of its contents. I did not make a note of it, or of the date; but when writing the article in question I remembered it, and mentioned it.

W. MANN.

BIBLE MORALS.

How little good and bad conduct were associated in thought with the intrinsic natures of right and wrong, and how completely they were associated in thought with obedience and disobedience to Jahveh, we see in the facts that prosperity and increase of population were promised as rewards of allegiance; while there was punishment for such non-ethical disobediences as omitting circumcision or numbering the people.—*Herbert Spencer*, "*Principles of Ethics.*"

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workman's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, R. H. Rosetti, "Man: A Divine Bungle or Nature's Masterpiece?"

OUTDOOR.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (North Saloon, City Hall): G. W. Foote, 12 noon, "Shakespeare's Humanism in the *Merchant of Venice*"; 6.30, "Mr. Balfour on God."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, E. Egerton Stafford, "Was Jesus a Myth?"

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Secretary—MISS E. M. VANCE.

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It is the misfortune of worthy people that they are cowards.—VOLTAIRE.

The Fear of Death.

TO religious people death is the King of Terrors, not because it puts an end to life, but because it does not. The continuity of life is a fundamental doctrine of theology. The only thing that death ends is man's duality. According to Plato, death signifies the soul's emancipation from the bondage of the body. In the Christian creed, it means the spirit's departure from earth into the immediate presence of God in the unseen world. Now, it is the dismal doctrine of sin that has made death so terrible. An unsaved soul is doomed to eternal damnation. On its arrival in eternity it goes down straight into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. Milton informs us that death is the offspring of sin, and is "black as Night, fierce as ten Furies, terrible as Hell." It is not death, however, but "the dread of something after death," that puzzles the will and unnerves the heart. To die is to fall into the hands of the living God, who "is a consuming fire," than which nothing can be more terrifying.

What a fearful weapon death has been in the hands of the preacher. How often has it been brandished, with shuddering effect, over the heads of timid children. "If you were to die to-night, where would you be?" "As this may be your last day on earth, make your peace with God this moment, and so be ready to meet him as your judge." Such was the language in which young people were addressed fifty and sixty years ago. Tracts were issued, with lurid titles, such as *Are You Afraid to Die? Everlasting Damnation. Straight to Hell.* Well do we remember being asked, on one occasion, "Do you not know that the Lord is angry with you because you forget him and neglect his house, and that unless you repent and turn to him he may cast you headlong into the Bottomless Pit, there to be in torment for ever and ever?" Death was thus the twin-keeper with sin of hell-gate; was indeed sin's offspring, her "inbred enemy." Milton represents sin as thus describing death's birth:—

> "At last this odious offspring whom thou scest,
> Thine own begotten, breaking violent way,
> Tore through my entrails, that, with fear and pain
> Distorted, all my nether shape thus grew
> Transformed; but he my inbred enemy
> Forth issued, brandishing his fatal dart,
> Made to destroy. I fled, and cried out *Death!*
> Hell trembled at the hideous name, and sighed
> From all her caves, and back resounded *Death!*
>
> . . . . .
>
> Grim Death, my son and foe."
>
> —*Paradise Lost*, ii., 781-789, 805.

It should be borne in mind that the Miltonic interpretation of death is simply Paul's expressed poetically. You will find the central idea in Romans v. 12:—

> "Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned."

Now, Dean Alford, a pre-Darwinian commentator, who took Scripture as it stood, candidly admits that by death, in that passage, is meant "primarily, but not only, physical death; and thus (by this entering in of sin and death—*i.e.*, in fact, by this *connection of sin and death*) death spread through unto all men." Alford's exegesis is undoubtedly accurate. Paul verily believed that prior to the Fall death was unknown in the world, and came in only as the penalty of sin. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews shared that belief, for he refers to Satan as having the power of death, to bring whom to naught was Christ's object in coming into the world. The curious fact in this connection is, that the Devil is brought to naught not by the annihilation of death, which sin brought into existence, but by the deliverance of believers from the fear of it. From physical death there is absolutely no escape, believers being as subject to it as unbelievers; but it is falsely supposed that from spiritual and eternal death the Savior graciously releases all who put their trust in him.

At this time it is scarcely necessary to point out that both Paul and Milton were radically mistaken. Death is an immutable law of Nature. All living beings, whether vegetable or animal, are mortal. This is now a truism, to attempt to prove which would be a culpable waste of time. Knowing this, the newer theologians assure us that the death spoken of in Genesis does not denote physical, but spiritual, death. Nothing can be more certain, they allege, than that Adam did not physically die on the day he sinned, though spiritually he most assuredly did. At this moment all who do not believe in Christ are spiritually dead in trespasses and sins, and doomed to eternal death in the world to come. What makes physical death so great a terror is that it translates the soul into a realm in which, if unsaved, it becomes the victim of eternal death. This is the fear of death through which the majority of people are all their lifetime subject to bondage. Even believing Christians are slaves to it, because they are never absolutely sure that they are among the elect. There are very few so-called people of God who are quite free from it. But this modern interpretation of death was adopted by the divines in consequence of the fact that geological and biological discoveries had completely discredited the Pauline and Miltonic theory. That death can be treated metaphorically is true enough. It may legitimately be said of a man that he is poetically or artistically dead, or that he is dead to the higher feelings and instincts of humanity; but to describe us all as being by nature dead to spiritual and eternal realities is to build upon a rotten fabric of guess and speculation. Spiritual and eternal realities exist only in the imagination of speculative theologians. The Great Beyond, as it is called, is Shakespeare's "undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns"; that is, the country of which positively nothing is known, not even that it exists. This being clearly the case, it follows that the religious fear of death is utterly irrational. "The dread of something after death" is as groundless and absurd as any castle in the air, because, judging by all the evidence in our possession, death ends all for individuals.

Mark the fundamental inconsistency of Scripture in its references to God and the future. The author of Hebrews says that to die is a fearful thing because

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it is equivalent to falling into the hands of the living God, who is a God of vengeance. St. John tells us, on the contrary, that God is love, in whom is no vengeance. The truth is that both God and the future are unverifiable assumptions, while to die is the most natural thing in the world. Death is simply a return to the inorganic state whence all living beings have issued. Generally speaking, life is organisation, and death disorganisation.

We now confidently ask with Lucretius :—

> "What is there left for us in death to fear?"

for the only answer is :—

> "When once that pause of life has come between,
> 'Tis just the same as we had never been."

There is really nothing more to be said, because there is nothing left for us in death to fear. To anyone who still fears to die we can say, again in the words of the great poet, Lucretius :—

> "The worst that can befall thee, measured right,
> Is a sound slumber, and a long good night."

Dying, it is maintained by those who have studied the process most closely, is practically painless, almost like falling asleep, or being born. There has been a correspondence on the subject in the *Times* lately in which almost all the writers agreed that the fear of death is entirely groundless. On February 21, Professor J. Cook Wilson contributed a most interesting letter in which he described his father's death which occurred twelve years ago :—

> "My father, a hale old man, was struck down in his eighty-eighth year by influenza which ended in failure of the heart. In the last stages there began the rapid labored breathing which is a familiar feature of such cases. It was most distressing to hear and watch, but the doctors assured me that the patient knew nothing of it. One did not doubt that there was some ground for the medical opinion, but one could not help reflecting that it was at best a probable inference, and that the only decisive proof could be an experience which, in the nature of the case, it seemed impossible to have. However, my father, being an exceptionally strong man, survived the dreadful night. In the morning his breathing became much quieter, he recovered consciousness, and became able to speak a little. Knowing the doctor was coming, he managed to say quite clearly, 'Tell the doctor that I have had a very comfortable night.' I was astonished and grateful beyond measure to have the best evidence possible in the patient's own testimony."

Such a letter is bound to do much good. An eminent physician says that it will convince people that the medical profession does not deceive them when it gives the assurance that there is no such thing as the Death Agony. "The death rattle," he adds, "is a purely automatic and reflex action. The explanation of it is just this: In the dying moments the windpipe cannot deal with the secretions; it is merely a mechanical noise."

Thus, from every point of view, the fear of death is seen to be totally without excuse. The thought of leaving loved ones behind to mourn one's loss cannot in the nature of things be pleasant, and their keen sense of deprivation must be painful; but in death itself there is nothing to fear. The time is coming when science shall have banished disease from the earth, with the result that in every case death shall be perfectly natural, coming neither a moment too soon nor a moment too late, but only when life, and the desire to live, are physiologically at an end.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Revival of Religion.

A GERMAN preacher, at present on a visit to England, recently informed a representative of one of the religious papers that there were signs of a spiritual revival in Germany. He admitted that Christianity had lost its hold on the "intellectuals," and also on the working classes; also that the influence of Nonconformity was very slight; still he discerned—probably with the eye of faith—an awakening of religion in the near future. This kind of statement is not at all uncommon, in this country at least, and one has therefore the better means of seeing just what it is worth. When Dr. Clifford delivered his last New Year's address, he also discovered signs of a spiritual awakening in England. Dr. Horton reported the same tidings from America; and in ordinary matters one would take this concurrent testimony of, and from, different countries as being good evidence. But in this respect religion is not an ordinary matter. The testimony is itself suspect. We have heard it so often, and we have so much of it. And there is so much evidence on the other side. We see the Churches steadily emptying. We see the best brains, and the best character, steadily disassociating itself from religion. The slump in belief continues in spite of all the prophecies of a great spiritual awakening.

The very proofs advanced in favor of a revival of religion are evidence to the contrary. The German doctor referred to, for example, said there had been a decrease in Materialism in Germany because the younger generation have abandoned the belief in the efficacy of legislation, and are now inclined to place more emphasis on personal influence, and to "regard social reform from a more human point of view." That means, he says, "that religion will play a larger part than it has done in the past." Really! There is no mention that the younger generation is believing more fervently in a God, or a soul, or in supernaturalism generally; only that it is more inclined to regard reform from a human point of view. Well, if that is all, and nothing else is given, it looks suspiciously as if the new generation will be more deeply tinged with Freethought than the older one. For that is precisely what Freethinkers have been striving for, and precisely what the Churches have declined to do. Let us test everything from the human point of view, and we are quite content to abide the result. We may make mistakes even then; we probably shall do so. But our mistakes will be due to our want of knowledge, and our blunders will in time supply their own corrective. We shall not have our blunders hedged round with dogmas and doctrine, and worshiped as the outcome of a wisdom that passes human understanding.

This German gentleman had fallen into the cant of which all religious preachers—particularly when they call themselves "advanced" thinkers—are so fond. In this country we are perfectly familiar with the breed. Because there is a growing interest in social reform, because people are more alive than they were to the necessity of decent homes and decent lives, these things are made part and parcel of the religious revival. Any passing popular cry—an eight-hours' day, a living wage, the nationalisation of the land, old age pensions, the Insurance Act, are all made to do duty as proof of the revival of religion. One wonders why all these things were not accomplished facts during the days when religion was really strong. One wonders whether the scheme of Christianity really involves these things, and if so why none of the Christian leaders of the past ever found this out. It is quite an affecting series of pictures. Jesus Christ—very God of very God—coming to earth, being crucified, and rising from the grave, so that an Old Age Pension Act might be passed some eighteen centuries after he was dead Think of the early Christian martyrs dying in order that we might realise the importance of a living wage! Or the great historic Christian Churches, with all their legends of miracles and saints and martyrs, existing solely that we might look at things from a human point of view!

It is all cant, sheer cant! And unless we credit many of these preachers with almost miraculous stupidity, they must know it is cant. What aspect of religion is it that promises a revival? Is it the belief in God? How many of those who do not believe at present are likely to have a belief created?

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Why even professed believers are busily engaged in so stating this belief that the God presented is hardly worth while anyone troubling about. He is no longer a God who does things, but a Deity who leaves things severely alone—and one must confess that if we must have a God that is the most desirable sort to possess. And, meanwhile, the number of people who disbelieve is unmistakably on the increase. So with the belief in the soul, so with the belief in all those forms of supernaturalism that were once universal. Does anyone seriously believe that any of these things are on the increase, or that they are likely to increase? If they do, where is the evidence? If they do not, what is the good of talking about a coming revival of religion? Morality is not religion. Social reform is not religion. These things have only been accidentally associated with religion, and their separation means the death of religion is every civilised community.

What we can observe in this and other countries is a continuance of the historic tactics of the Christian clergy. Ever since Christianity—essentially an Eastern creed—was forced upon the West, it has only managed to maintain itself in an unmodified form during those periods when it was able to exercise absolute coercion. Forced upon an alien population, its subjects have been more or less in revolt against it; and, what is more important, the forces of social growth have inspired the revolt. Even though outwardly submissive, the Western world has time after time modified Christian teaching, much as China has more than once seized and conquered its nominal conquerors. This was the case when the Church was compelled to accept the Copernican for the Ptolemaic system of astronomy. It was the case when it compelled the Churches to reject witchcraft as an idle superstition, or, in our own day, to reject the literal inspiration of the Bible, and to accept the general doctrine of evolution. The present is only another phase of the same movement. Living at a time when large numbers of people are beginning to realise the essential stupidity of theological questions, and also to realise the importance of social and ethical problems, leaders of Christianity are shrewd enough to see that they must accommodate themselves to the new spirit or disappear. Accordingly, they discover that Christianity contains a social gospel, just as the Church found scientific teachings in the Bible when it was no longer possible to suppress them, and no longer paid to denounce them as untrue. These concessions may deceive some—undoubtedly they do—but this does not prevent others recognising these for what they are—theological fool-traps.

There is a well-known passage in Gibbon's *Roman Empire* in which he speculates as to what might have happened had Charles Martel been beaten by the Mohammedans in the eighth century. He says that Mohammedans would then have overrun Europe, and we might have had the Koran preached in Westminster Abbey instead of the Bible. Very likely; but it by no means follows that by this time things would have been much different to what they are. We should, in all probability, have had much the same modification of Mohammedan teaching that we have had of Christian doctrines, with the same process of obstruction and final acceptance. Beliefs are as much subject to social selection as organisms are to natural selection. A society acts on any belief that is introduced into its midst much as food is acted on by the animal organism. It selects, assimilates, and rejects. And this selection, assimilation, and rejection is largely determined by forces that are beyond individual control. Force an alien belief upon a society, and what it cannot assimilate it rejects, and what it retains is inevitably modified to a larger or smaller degree. The whole history of Christianity proves the truth of this. The history of its successive modification is not, as apologists say, the discovery of a truer form—the truest form is the oldest and the deadest—it is the registration of the effect of social forces upon a religion that had to be modified or altogether perish.

There is at hand no revival of religion, still less is there a probable revival of Christianity. There is, it is true, an immense mass of superstition still latent in the community, and that always represents an element of danger. But religion in general has never been at so low a point as it is to-day. There is not a single department of life in which it can be said that religion is recognised as possessing genuine authority. It is not only that the leaders of thought, the "intellectuals," do not recognise the authority of religion; it is true of others. The average man does not go to the Churches for his science, his philosophy, or his sociology. He recognises for the best in these departments he must look elsewhere. All he can get in the Churches is a faint echo of the best that can be got outside. And he is so accustomed to look at the Churches from this standpoint that he has ceased to see in it anything peculiar. He does not realise that religion once ruled life, and that the Churches once laid down laws for guidance where it now begs for a word of patronage. But if he does not recognise the profound nature of the change that has taken place, he cannot avoid its consequences. He develops in a freer, healthier atmosphere than did preceding generations. Instead of religion being the controlling influence in his life it sinks to the level of a mere speculation or theory. If he reads, he discovers that he can get more benefit from an hour or two with a good book than from a score of sermons. If he thinks he realises what a game of make-believe the whole thing is. Religion loses it coercive power because daily experience drives home the lesson that the vital issues of life are being decided without the least reference to its teaching. Religion in social life is suffering from the fate that overtakes a disused organ in the individual body. It is a pure case of atrophy.

This talk of the revival of religion is, I repeat, pure cant. It belongs to the same gender as the fantastic reports of wholesale conversions published by evangelists of the Gipsy Smith type. It may soothe the dwindling faithful, but imposes on no one else. It may even keep up the courage of the leaders. Donkeys are said to lash themselves into a temper by the free use of their tails, and where tails are wanting tongues may perform the same service. But you cannot revive Christianity unless you can undo all that has been done during the past three centuries. If the united action of the Churches can convert the globe into a plane, if it can set the sun travelling round the earth instead of the earth round the sun, if it can destroy medical science and re-establish demoniacal possession, if it can destroy evolution and enthrone special creation, if education can be abolished and heaven and earth repeopled with an army of supernatural beings—if, in short, all the knowledge and discoveries and inventions of the last three centuries can be wiped out—then indeed will there be some hope for a revival of Christianity. But if these things cannot be done, then the case of the Churches is hopeless.

C. COHEN.

"He Ascended Into Heaven."

So he did. There was absolutely nothing else to be done if the Gospel were to be carried to its logical end. For the kingdom of Christ could not be established in the first century, is not established in the twentieth, and never will be established in any future century.

"India will never become Christian," I heard the late Romesh Chunder Dutt say. Dutt was a poet, a statesman, and, at one time, occupied the position of Prime Minister to the Gaekwar of Baroda. He observed, he reflected, and he knew.

If India, which is the most religious country on earth, will not accept the Christian faith, the refusal is an indication of the attitude of the whole world. But the loyal orthodoxists are very slow to recognise

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the hopelessness of the prospect. I rode in a train the other day with a simple-minded companion, shrewd at business but very wanting in acumen when he came to things theological. He had beamed with pride as he showed me one of the wonders of the United States,—the horseshoe curve in the Pennsylvania Railroad near Altoona. But when he fell to discussing the future of Christianity, and asked me if I did not think India would accept Christ, and I said "Certainly not!" his countenance fell, and I seemed to feel the chill of his atmosphere. What is one to say to the ignorant and unreflecting mind which knows so little of the world outside a narrow commercial circle as to imagine that scientific Europe and the proud old soul of Asia are going to dance in the train of the Salvation Army, or join in a Presbyterian rally, or march, to the sound of "Onward, Christian soldiers," to the Anglican or Roman baptismal font? Ask the leaders of the Chinese republic; ask the Indian passive resisters in South Africa; ask Mr. Gokhale and the Indian Nationalists, if Asia is likely to take up the cross and follow Jesus, and you will receive a most emphatic reply.

My Pennsylvanian friend had just come from a little city, which I had myself visited, in a remote corner of the Appalachian mountains. There had been a whole week of Revival services, and the hymns had proclaimed the triumph of Christ. Hundreds of hearts glowed with anticipations of the world-dominion. Already, the map of the world seem flagged all over with tokens of battles won for the martyr of Calvary. I had a glimpse of one or two meetings. A voluble mulatto from Porto Rico was telling of the victories achieved my missionaries in that West Indian island.

"Even the chickens fight no more," he cried; meaning, in his somewhat imperfect English, that the spread of humane feeling had put an end to cock-fighting. Indeed, I would heartily applaud any Christian, or anti-Christian, who assisted in fostering kindness to animals.

An hour or two later, I observed a group of young men,—well set-up and manly Americans,—listening to a fervid evangelist, not older than themselves, and as cocksure as he was ill-informed in his history and psychology.

"Fellows," he exclaimed, "send in your prayers to Christ. If wireless telegraphy can despatch messages to far-distant points, why should not the message of prayer reach the throne of God?"

The lads he addressed were destined to become engineers and farmers, and to do splendid service to the American commonwealth. I have met many such eager young spirits, who are the backbone of the commercial prosperity of the United States. I have met elder business men, whose genius for finance and law and organisation is eminent, and whose energy is the pride of their country. Yet I cannot help remarking that the American mind, taken as a broad average, moves on a lower level when it deals with the great intellectual and religious questions of the day. I remember the Moody and Sankey revival in London in 1873, and I believe that unwholesome scene is impossible of repetition in England. But such excitements are still feasible in the United States, where enormous material enterprises absorb so much thought-power, and leave inadequate capacity of judgment for the more delicate issues of religion and philosophy.

In the small city referred to, I attended service at a Methodist church, the windows of which blazed with colored pictures of Christ agonising at Gethsemane, Christ appearing to Mary Magdalene on Easter morning, and Christ ascending into heaven. I noticed with much pleasure that the preacher followed the beneficent trend of the times: he made no allusion to the mediæval doctrine of the Blood-atonement, and no allusion to the doctrine of Hell-fire. When the story of our age is penned by posterity, the record will tell, on the positive side, of the development of the Education movement, the Labor movement, and the Woman movement; and, on the negative side, of the happy decline and fall of these unwholesome and barbaric faiths. As a matter of fact, there is a correlation between the positive and negative movements.

Nevertheless, though an improvement on Spurgeon's low-plane creed, the Methodist preacher's message had no dynamic. I listened as a politician. My politics is an instrument that grips pretty hard. It grips at the evils of the factory and hovel, the mine and the slum, the docks and the foundry, the haunt of the prostitutes of the West, and the huts of the Mahars and Chandálas of India. These are my test cases. Whoever comes to me with a revelation or a program must show me how, in some reasonably effective manner, these evils will be assuaged. Whoever you are, O prophet, you must declare your thought about these infernal horrors of Benares, of Paris, of Pittsburg, of Johannesburg. Asquith or Woodrow Wilson, Jaurès or Christ, speak!

Well, I waited in patience while the Methodist preached on the alternative,—Either one must take sides for Christ, or against him. Very good. There was apparent value in the presentation, just as there was undoubted color,—most vivid red and blue and green—in the stained-glass pictures of Gethsemane, and Joseph of Arimathea's garden, and the Mount of Olives, and the ascending God.

Once, I thought my pulpit friend was becoming dynamic. His speech waxed warm; his phrases became crisper; he seemed to approach a proclamation; and presently, he cried out in a loud voice, and told us how the forces of Christ in the State of Pennsylvania were gathering for a grand attack upon.....*the liquor traffic.*

Was that all? The manifesto might or might not stir the brewing-trade. It made no impression upon me, though I have abstained from alcohol about forty years, and detest it as much as I detest (O smokers! pardon) tobacco. I glanced at the congregation. Those pretty American misses, those demure tradesmen and professional men, those feathery and silken mammas,—no! I swear they were little likely to succumb to the deviltry of rum or beer. Perhaps that was one reason why the pulpit carried on this holy war.

We doubters are so impatient. Why not give the good Methodist another chance,—twenty chances? I did; for I sat out the sermon and contributed to the collection. Once again, the volume of menace gathered; the eyes of the apostle sparkled; the fist was clenched; surely, the gates of sin will tremble at the word that is coming! It came, and it summoned all the chivalry and virtue of Pennsylvania to sally forth to the annihilation of.....*the liquor traffic.*

The sorrows of Benares, Paris, Pittsburg, and Johannesburg must, therefore, go on indefinitely so far as this Pennsylvanian cares. If this is the outcome of many centuries of theological and Biblical study of social needs and possibilities, I count it an excessively mean show; and, as a politician, I can rise to no enthusiasm on this platform. It is a miserable disappointment. I make no remarks on the questions that involve the future of art, of literature, of science. I just select the most obvious and the most tragic of human problems,—the problem of poverty; and I affirm, quite simply, that the gospel of Christ has not met it, and does not give any valid token of meeting it, and the people cannot wait. Whatever its merits may have been, the Christian system has not adapted itself to the terrible needs of earth.

"He ascended into heaven."

Of course.

F. J. GOULD.

U. S. A., *February* 14, 1914.

Concealment regarding a question of such vital importance as the truth of Christianity is to be deplored; while an attitude of indifference on a subject that should be of surpassing interest to us all can only be characterised as amazing—unless, indeed, the real explanation be that men have ceased to believe.—*Philip Vivian.*

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Science and the Soul.—VI.

(Continued from p. 134.)

"Civilisation has always and everywhere been evolved out of savagery. The mass of evidence on which this assumption rests is, in my opinion, so great as to render the induction incontrovertible. At least, if anyone disputes it I do not think it worth while to argue with him. There are still, I believe, in civilised society people who hold that the earth is flat and that the sun goes round it; but no sensible man will waste time in the vain attempt to convince such persons of their error, even though these flatteners of the earth and circulators of the sun appeal with perfect justice to the evidence of their senses in support of their hallucination, which is more than the opponents of man's primitive savagery are able to do."—PROFESSOR J. G. FRAZER, *Psyche's Task*, p. 162.

"The soul has given up its ethereal substance, and become an immaterial entity, 'the shadow of a shade.'.....There has arisen an intellectual product whose very existence is of the deepest significance, a 'psychology' which has no longer anything to do with 'soul.' The soul's place in modern thought is in the metaphysics of religion, and its especial office there is that of furnishing an intellectual side to the religious doctrine of the future life.....Yet it is evident that notwithstanding all this profound change, the conception of the human soul is, as to its essential nature, continuous from the philosophy of the savage thinker to that of the modern professor of theology."—E. B. TYLOR, *Primitive Culture*, vol. i., p. 501.

As we have seen, primitive man, in his first outlook on nature, was the prey to a multitude of deceptions, from which it has taken him ages to emancipate himself. Not only was he deceived by the workings of nature outside of himself, but also by the inward workings of his own mind.

His interpretation of the phenomena of dreams, of visions, of his shadow, of his reflection as shown in water; his interpretation of swooning, epilepsy, delirium, madness, unconsciousness, and death, were all wildly wide of the truth, and gave birth to the innumerable host of superstitions which have scourged mankind with whips of scorpions ever since.

No God guided the childish footsteps of primitive man, groping in the darkness and mists of ignorance. As Herbert Spencer has somewhere remarked, man has taken all the wrong roads before he found the right.

"In the eyes of the evolutionist—and we are all evolutionists nowadays—man springs from beast, humanity from animality," says that cultured Frenchman, M. Salamon Reinach,* and he adds, "We must look for the origin of religions in the psychology, not of civilised man, but of man the farthest removed from civilisation." But of this primitive man, before history, we have no direct knowledge; so, continues M. Reinach, "to supplement our information, three other sources have to be tapped: the psychology of the present-day savage, the psychology of children, and the psychology of the higher animals."

It is the glory of the English nation to be the pioneers in the work of explaining the origin of religious ideas. M. Reinach, with the modesty of true greatness, observes:—

> "Had I been the first to formulate them, I should rank with the first thinkers of my day, and modesty alone would preclude me from saying so on the housetops. As a matter of fact, I do not exactly know who made the discoveries. The names of Tylor, MacLennan, Smith, Frazer, and Jevons suggest themselves; but the one thing certain is that it was not myself. Mine has been a lowlier part,—to grasp the ideas of my betters, and to diffuse them as widely as I might" (p. 12).

On the next page, M. Reinach gives "thanks to the diffusion of the English works which have inspired me." Further on (p. 2) he also mentions the names of Lubbock and Herbert Spencer. This is a high tribute from one who is equally distinguished in art and science.

It falls to the lot of exceedingly few to be a pioneer in a new department of science; and forty-six years later, in face of the vast accumulation of new facts—mainly through the interest aroused by his book—and in the face of the most drastic criticism, to be able to claim, as Lord Avebury (Sir John Lubbock) does, "In the main it seems to me that the conclusions which I ventured to put forward have received additional support from the evidence which has since accumulated."† If a brand-new scientific theory runs the gauntlet, and survives for forty-six years, you may depend that it has a pretty solid foundation.

For this work, which required the study of the ideas and modes of thought of innumerable savage tribes and communities, our nation was peculiarly well qualified. Our travellers, explorers, and merchants had penetrated every part of the globe. Our colonies and dependencies, especially in Australia and Africa, had brought us directly in contact with the most primitive savages yet surviving, whose manners, customs, superstitions, and modes of thought had been minutely described in books, journals, letters, and communications to the various learned societies, thus accumulating a rich store of social facts, which only awaited the illumination of genius to marshal them into order and deliver up their secret.

To Sir John Lubbock—after Lord Avebury—must be awarded the palm of priority, with his *Prehistoric Times*, first published in 1865, and his *Origin of Civilisation*, in 1870. This was quickly followed, in 1871, by Dr. E. B. Tylor's great work, *Primitive Culture*. Tylor, however, was not in any way indebted to Lubbock, his important discovery that "Animism" was the clay, as it were, out of which religions evolve, was entirely original. As Darwin himself truly remarked, it is "a most profound work," and he added, "It will make me for the future look at religion—a belief in the soul—from a new point of view."‡ Herbert Spencer's powerful and masterly work, *Principles of Sociology*, also dealing with religious origins, was published in 1877. These works caused as great a revolution among men's ideas of the origin of religion as Darwin's works did, in their ideas of the origin of man and the different species of animals and plants.

Take, for instance, the origin of the idea of a soul. The savage has great difficulty in distinguishing between sleep, trance, swooning, unconsciousness, and death. A man falls asleep, to wake after a while refreshed; another time he, or one of his companions, falls into a swoon or trance, or is rendered unconscious by a blow; he cannot be awakened, he lies deadly pale and insensible, perhaps, for hours or even days, and yet, after all, he revives. Savages say that "such a one died for awhile, but his soul came back again," says Tylor; and—

> "they have great difficulty in distinguishing real death from such trances. They will talk to a corpse, try to rouse it and even feed it, and only when it becomes noisome and must be got rid of from among the living, they are at last certain that the life has gone never to return. What, then, is this soul or life which thus goes and comes in sleep, trance, and death? To the rude philosopher, the question seems to be answered by the very evidence of his senses. When the sleeper awakens from a dream, he believes he has really somehow been away, or that other people have come to him. As it is well known by experience that men's bodies do not go on these excursions, the natural explanation is that every man's living self or soul is his phantom or image, which can go out of his body and see and be seen itself in dreams."‡

The waking visions and hallucinations, which some men are subject to, would help to confirm this explanation.

Moreover, as Tylor further remarks:—

> "That men have such unsubstantial images belonging to them is familiar in other ways to the savage philosopher, who has watched their reflections in still water, or their shadows following them about, fading out of sight to reappear presently somewhere else, while sometimes for a moment he has seen living breath as a faint cloud, vanishing though one can feel that it

* M. Reinach, *Cults, Myths, and Religions*, p. 5.

* Lord Avebury, *Marriage, Totemism, and Religion* (1911), p. 7.
† G. W. Foote, *Darwin on God*, p. 42.
‡ E. B. Tylor, *Anthropology*, p. 343.

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> is still there. Here, then, in a few words is the savage and barbaric theory of souls, where life, mind, breath, shadow, reflection, dream, vision, come together and account for one another in some such vague confused way as satisfies the untaught reasoner. The Zulu will say that at death a man's shadow departs from his body and becomes an ancestral ghost, and the widow will relate how her husband has come in her sleep and threatened to kill her for not taking care of his children; or the son will describe how his father's ghost stood before him in a dream, and the souls of the two, the living and the dead, went off together to visit some far-off kraal of their people. The Malays do not like to wake a sleeper, lest they should hurt him by disturbing his body while his soul is out."*

This is not a theory evolved, like the German metaphysician's camel, out of the scientist's inner consciousness. It is founded upon a solid and indestructible basis. Williams, in his book on *Fiji and the Fijians* (p. 208), says: "I once placed a good-looking native suddenly before a mirror. He stood delighted. "Now," said he, softly, "I can see into the world of spirits."

Mr. Howitt, one of the best authorities on the Australian aborigines, says that the Kurnai believe every person has within him a spirit called Yambo; one of the Kurnai was asked if he really thought his Yambo could go out during sleep, and said, "It must be so, for when I sleep I go to distant places, I even see and speak with those that are dead."

Im Thurn, speaking of the Indians of Guiana, writes:—

> "The dreams which come to him in sleep are to him as real as any of the events of his waking life. He regards his dream acts and his waking acts as differing only in one respect, that the former are done only by the spirit, and the latter by the spirit in the body. When the Indian just awake tells the things which he did whilst asleep, his fellows reconcile each statement by the thought that the spirit of the sleeper left him and went out on its adventures."†

(*To be continued.*) W. MANN.

AND SO THEY WERE MARRIED.

Minister (to a man wishing to be married): Do you wish to marry this woman?
Man: I do.
Minister: Do you wish to marry this man?
Woman: I do.
Minister: Do you like the city as a place of residence?
Man: No, I prefer the suburbs.
Minister: Do you like the suburbs?
Woman: No, indeed; I prefer the city.
Minister: Are you a vegetarian in diet?
Man: No; I hate vegetables. I live on beef.
Woman: I can't bear meat. I am a vegetarian.
Minister: Do you like a sleeping room well ventilated?
Man: Yes; I want the window away down, summer and winter.
Minister: Do you like so much fresh air?
Woman: No; it would kill me. I want all windows closed.
Minister: Do you like a light in the room?
Man: No; can't sleep with a light; want the room dark.
Minister: Are you afraid in the dark?
Woman: Indeed, I am. I always have a bright light in the room.
Minister: Do you like many bedclothes?
Man: All I can pile on.
Minister: Do you?
Woman: No; they suffocate me.
Minister: I hereby pronounce you man and wife, and may the Lord have mercy on your souls.

CONFIDENCE.

A motorist, stopping his car at a country hotel, called to a man who was passing to look after the car. With much dignity the man replied, "Do you know that I belong to the Salvation Army." "Oh!" replied the motorist, "that doesn't matter. I'll trust you."

* E. B. Tylor, *Anthropology*, p. 344.
† J. H. King, *The Supernatural*, vol. i., pp. 168-9.

Acid Drops.

What a wonderful story of efficiency and success is that of the submarine A 7 which sank in Whitesand Bay on January 16. First of all, the "rescuers" couldn't find her at the bottom; and after spending a lot of time in searching for her, they found her—just below the spot where she disappeared. Ever since they have been trying to shift her, but her stern part is well embedded in some twenty or thirty feet of mud and sand, and naturally she refuses to stir a single inch. They tried to shock her out of her stubborn inertia by putting a battleship going full steam ahead on to a hawser to which she was attached; but she stopped where she was, and the hawser it was that went. This is all that Admiralty science can do at present, and it might have been recognised before. The play is not all over, however; for religion has got to have its look in before the curtain is rung down. The "last rites" over the quiet dead in the ship which remains their tomb are to be performed on board H.M.S. the *Forth* two days after we pen this paragraph. Much good the hocus-pocus will do them! The performance has been delayed two months. Suppose it were delayed for ever. Who would suffer? The answer to that question is "The clergy." They must be regarded as indispensable. If they are not that, they are nothing at all.

Profanity spreads even in unlikely directions. The *London Teacher* prints a story of a boy who constructed a cardboard church. Over the portal he inscribed what he thought a suitable text: "Thou wilt be done."

The Salvation Army is holding a "Self-Denial" Week. As their female soldiers beg money from all and sundry, it would be more correctly described as "Other People's Self-Denial," under the auspices of the Salvation Army.

The Birmingham magistrates have imposed a fine of £5 and costs for "improper patter" at a music-hall. If those J.P.'s attend a place of worship, the parson will have to be careful when reading from "God's Word."

Two new bishoprics have just been added to the Church. The poor fishermen-apostles put their nets into the seas; their wealthy disciples to-day draw their sees into their nets.

A Bill has been introduced into the House of Representatives, Washington, which aims at regulating the tide of immigration. Mr. Burnett, who introduced the Bill, told the House that it aimed at those aliens who have "no God, no law, and no master"—a rather comprehensive program. As the main provision seems to be a money qualification, we must assume that having a God, etc., is thought to be a question of dollars. Anyway, we do not see how any Bill is going to keep these people out. Certainly, if a confession of faith is required, it can only keep out those who are honest. Dishonest ones will lie just as much and as strongly as is needed. And that is the usual effect of religiously inspired legislation. It almost invariably sets a tax on honesty and a premium on humbug. Our own laws against freedom of thought and speech have never made a single man or woman honest, but they have manufactured liars and hypocrites by the thousand.

Nonconformists are explaining the Welsh Nonconformist protest against the Disestablishment of the Church in Wales on the ground that the signatures were obtained under pressure. People were afraid they might lose something if they refused to sign, or hoped that they might gain something if they did. We do not dispute this for a moment; on the contrary, we are quite prepared to admit that many signatures have been obtained in this way. But this is not a method that is confined to upholders of the State Church, and we are quite sure that the Disestablishment of the Church will not put an end to it. It is exactly the policy of all Christians when their position enables them to follow it. We know of scores of newsagents who are prevented displaying the *Freethinker*, for example, by the threat of boycott held out by their Christian patrons. And this is more or less true of all Freethinkers in a business that is susceptible to boycott. There are very few Christians who understand the meaning of fair play. They naturally squeal when this kind of unfair pressure is brought to bear upon them, but the experience never prevents their dealing in exactly the same manner with others when occasion offers.

The Bishop of London says that for every step a man takes to find God, God takes a step to find the man. We do

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not know on what Bishop Ingram bases his arithmetic, but it is evident that there is going on a fine game of holy hide-and-seek.

"Country Services Now Running," reads a big advertisement in the daily press. It does not refer to a revival of Christianity, but to omnibus trips, Sundays included.

Pancake carnivals are among the amusements of followers of the Man of Sorrows. Let us hope that the chefs employed do not use Ezekiel's memorable recipe for cakes.

A correspondent of a daily paper writes to say that at the church he attends the offertories amounted to precisely the same sum on two different Sundays. Buttons and bad coins included, we presume.

Truth (New Zealand) dated December 20, 1913, contained the following paragraph:—

> "*Truth's* representative was travelling from Christchurch to Rangiora a short time ago, and heard two men talking of bullock-driving as done at the Christchurch show. After a while a wiry-looking, tall old man chipped in. 'Driving bullocks. Not one of them knew how to drive—didn't know the language—none of them could get a team of lazy bullocks out of a bog. Bah!' The representative listened with interest, because he knew 'the language,' and knew that every bullocky in Australia in the old days had a pet name for each bullock—'Strawberry,' 'Creamy,' 'Milky,' 'Spud,' and what not. One day a well-known driver, noted for his animal vocabulary, got his team stuck in a bog-hole. His whip cracked and the surrounding air was lurid with language. A country parson rode up, halted, listened in horror to the volley of oaths, and watched, with pain, the cruelty of the whip. Unable to contain himself longer, he said, 'My good friend, it is painful to witness your cruelty to those poor, dumb animals! Why cannot you be more patient and trust in Providence?' The bullocky looked at him and retorted, '"Providence" be b——; "Providence" is the worst o—— bullock I've got in the whole b—— team!'"

Evidently they want Mr. McKenna out there.

One of the religious weeklies discovers that a great many people in these days think that they do not believe in Christianity when the real truth is that they do not believe its literal and historical interpretation. There is nothing startlingly new about this deliverance, and all it means is that modern thought has made many Christians more or less ashamed of the only Christianity that has ever existed. If historical Christianity is not genuine Christianity, what is it? If it has never yet existed, why claim anything for it? Nothing could be more ridiculous than to elaborate one moment the benefits that Christianity has given to the world, to dwell upon the value of this Church and that Church, and then turn round and say that these Churches did not teach Christianity, and that Christianity has never existed except in the mind of an enthusiast here and there. That Christianity will do great things in the future because it has done great things in the past is an intelligible proposition. But to argue that it will do great things because it has hitherto done nothing is a form of reasoning that it takes a "liberal" Christian to appreciate.

Of course, it may be said that it is all a matter of interpretation, and with this we agree. And it remains this whether we are dealing with the first century or the twentieth. To say that Christianity is a matter of interpretation is only to say that there is a doctrine and a man, and the former is what the latter understands it to be. Those who lived at the beginning of the Christian era, and who had the advantage of living in an intellectual environment in which Christian doctrines were fashioned, understood Christianity to involve a belief in a literal heaven and hell, in angels and devils, in miracles and vicarious atonement, and a number of other things that are now very generally rejected. That was the original interpretation, and in the main it was an essential part of the Christianity that ruled the world. Afterwards other interpretations were offered, not due to a better understanding of that religion, but entirely due to the need of squaring Christianity with its changed knowledge and sentiments. The twentieth century interpretation of Christianity is another stage of the same process. It is the pastime of such as have wit enough to see some of the faults of the old creed, but who lack the courage, or the insight, or both, to base their philosophy of life upon modern knowledge and needs.

Ball, alias Sumner, the Liverpool murderer, made a confession to the Bishop of Liverpool, who confirmed him as a penitent—so that's all right. Peter very likely welcomed him with a brass band. His sister told him not to cry; he would be better off in heaven. Nothing seems to have been said about the poor lady who was brutally murdered, and trussed up, and thrown into a dock. Her fate, of course, is too insignificant for consideration.

Mdlle. Gaby Deslys, the famous comedienne, has lost her pet monkey. Will she now adopt a tame clergyman?

Professor T. W. Gregory has assured the Royal Geographical Society that the earth is not drying up. The same thing may be said of the popular preachers.

During a recruiting week at Glasgow the clergy were asked to preach special sermons to enlist the sympathies of their congregations. As the majority of worshipers are women, we cannot see how that could help the Territorial Forces, unless it is proposed to raise regiments of amazons.

The following is from the Montreal correspondent of the *Daily News* (Feb. 26):—

> "Colonel Samuel Hughes, the Dominion Minister of Militia and Defence, has provoked a lively discussion by expressing the opinion in a public speech that more wars are caused by clergymen than by soldiers. The Minister, who declares that he has nothing to retract, says that he did not suggest that all churchmen were quarrelsome or aggressive, but merely called attention to the fact that more controversies have been caused by religious differences than by disputes on any other subject."

The black army don't have it all their own way, after all; not even in Catholic Montreal.

A play on the Biblical subject of Samson and Delilah has been produced in Berlin. In England, we fear, its career would be as short as Samson's hair after the lady had used the scissors.

Canon Rawnsley has left his self-imposed censorship of literature for the moment, and is busying himself with the tone of the picture exhibitions. He quotes some American teachers as saying that some pictures contain incitements to grossness, illicit passion, and homicide. The Canon ought to train his guns on the Old Testament, which children are compelled to read, and which contains many stories that dare not be filmed.

Apparently the *Christian Commonwealth* has only just discovered the famous—or infamous—*Sight of Hell*, a Roman Catholic manual for the use of children and young persons. Anyway, its issue for February 25 contains a description of the pamphlet, with some expressions of opinion about it. It says that the book is "a vile production, and ought to be suppressed by law. It must poison the mind, vitiate the moral sense, distort the vision, pervert the judgment of any child or young person who has the misfortune to read it." We are not fond of suppressing publications by law, otherwise we quite agree with the *Commonwealth* writer's opinion of the pamphlet. It is a horrible publication; it must have a bad effect on all who are influenced by it—save in the direction of laughter. Only we would beg the *Commonwealth* to restrain its indignation for awhile, and remember that it is a Christian publication—written by Christians for Christians and proclaiming what is the best attested of all Christian doctrines.

Let us keep before our minds the fact that for hundreds of years the Christian Churches preached this doctrine without the slightest suspicion that it was either untrue or evil. Some of the greatest writers and preachers in the history of Christianity taught it, in much the same language of the *Sight of Hell*, down to our own day. There is nothing in it, for example, worse than Spurgeon taught. Let us grant that it poisons the mind, vitiates the moral sense, and perverts the judgment; grant all this, and you at once frame a splendid indictment against the whole of historic Christianity. No Freethinker could say more; it is, indeed, only repeating what Freethinkers have said and have been denounced for saying. Then let the *Christian Commonwealth* reflect on the probable consequence of this poisonous, demoralising doctrine, taught generation after generation as beyond question, and try to calculate how much Christianity is responsible for coarsening and brutalising human character. And when it realises this—and if it does not it should apologise to the author of the pamphlet in question—then let it apologise for all its nauseous, sentimental claptrap about the sweetening and purifying influence of the Christian creed.

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It is all right. Americans may take heart. Dr. R. F. Horton recently paid America a visit, and while there he found out what Americans were created for. The idea "stole" into his mind that the responsibility for saving the world "did not, after all, rest upon the effete nations of the Old World, but was being entrusted to the vital forces of the New." Then, he says, "a great sigh of relief seemed to go up from my heart." We are glad Dr. Horton gained this relief, but it seems rather rough on the "effete nations of the Old World." Hitherto, we have taken it for granted that this peculiar privilege of saving the world was reserved for the British Empire. That is why we have annexed so large a part of the earth's surface, solely to carry out our spiritual mission. Now it seems that we are to make way for America. It looks a bit rough on the Old World, but now we know, at least, *why* America exists.

Dr. Horton says they have one great advantage in America, which is religious equality. By this he means that they have no established Church. This is true, and so far there is equality between Christian sects. But it is not equality of religion that profits a nation, but equality of opinion. And America has not that yet. The legal dice are loaded in America against the Freethinker as they are elsewhere. But we daresay that Dr. Horton would take that as one of the proofs that God has designed America for a great spiritual work.

Rev. T. F. Bull, of Southsea, is a cleric of the good old sort. He writes that he is convinced "the growing laxity and demoralisation of civilised nations is due not to ignorance but to knowledge," and he warns reformers against thinking themselves wiser than God. We are not sure that there is a growing laxity and demoralisation. Manners change, and a change is often enough thought to be bad mainly because it is different from what we are accustomed to. All the same, Mr. Bull is a type of cleric that is becoming rare, and we salute him accordingly.

Mr. H. G. Wells has been giving his impressions of Russia. He says that in Russia he felt himself for the first time in a Christian country. The people—he is referring, of course, to what are called "the masses"—he says, are organically religious. We quite believe him. And those who know the state of Russia have not been slow to connect it with the hold religion has on the people. Were Russia a little less Christian it might easily be a little more civilised. The misgovernment of the people has been made possible by their eight centuries of religious dragooning, and the power of religion must be broken before liberty can be secured or progress made sure.

Referring to Mr. H. G. Wells' remark that were Nelson alive to-day he would not "be given the ghost of a chance of putting his gifts at his country's service" because of his relations with Lady Hamilton, the puritanical *Daily News* says that "there is no profession outside the Church in which conventional immorality is to-day the slightest bar to success." Our Nonconformist contemporary has soon forgotten Dilke and Parnell, who were both men of Nelsonian morals.

A correspondence has been going on in the *Times* on the subject of whether death is painful or not. The general opinion is that it is usually painless, which we can quite believe. Acute pain is generally a characteristic of acute vitality rather than the reverse. In normal cases death occurs when the body has been worn out by disease, and the capacity for feeling is therefore at its lowest point. The spasmodic actions that take place on the approach of death are more often than not in the nature of reflex action, and have very small psychological significance. It is a pity that so much religious legend should have gathered round the fact of death, and very often deliberately manufactured for religious gain.

The religious comments upon this painlessness of death are, as usual, amusing. The *Church Family Newspaper* has the usual fatuous remark about pain serving a useful purpose, and explains the painlessness of death by saying that "when death is inevitable pain ceases to have an educative value, and therefore death is unaccompanied by pain." Now, bearing in mind the fact that when death is painless it is probably because so much pain has already been experienced, the stupidity of the comment seems fairly complete. Let anyone consider in how many illnesses death is preceded by months of pain, and they will appreciate the value of the above quoted comment. Even if it were granted—what is not always true—that pain educates, what education is there in one suffering for months and then dying? Obviously the only possible education here would be if the patient recovers. But when the patient dies? Of course, there are the people who are left alive, and the believer in God *may* argue that the patient suffers to educate those who are well. It would be quite in line with the general run of Theistic arguments to put this plea forward. Where absurdities are so numerous, one more or less can make little difference.

Sir Thomas Dewar has been telling the public of his big-game exploits through the press under the title of "Lions I Have Met." Wouldn't the journalists like to meet the prophet Daniel and listen to his exploits?

"Always a Warm Welcome" reads an advertisement in the daily papers. It does not refer to hell, but to a new radiator.

"You pass into Euston Station as into a cathedral that is to convey you somehow directly to heaven," says a *Daily Chronicle* scribe. Isn't it smoky enough to suggest that the trains go to the other place?

Mr. A. C. Benson thinks that people are not so certain as to what is going to happen to them after death as they were in the past ages. Yet 50,000 professional, and as many amateur, preachers try to tell people the Bible "truths" every Sunday. Hell ought not to be "shut down" with so many "stokers."

For burning a maidservant's arm with a heated poker, a man was sent to prison for a month with hard labor by the Mansfield magistrates recently. Yet there are people who profess to believe that the majority of the human race will be subjected to eternal torment in the fires of hell.

Mr. H. G. Wells thinks that the extended use of the aeroplane will eventually lead to a floating population. It is, however, curious that the record for aviation belongs to a Jewish carpenter, who lived twenty centuries ago, and who "flew" without a machine.

A magistrate recently stated that it did not pay to joke with a police-constable. Especially when one is a Freethought speaker and the man in blue has no sense of humor.

A new Ingersoll story is going the rounds. Speaking of a person of enthusiastic character, but not conspicuous intellect, the Colonel said "he would go to the stake for a principle under a misapprehension as to the facts."

A CALIFORNIAN'S PRAYER FOR RAIN.

O Lord of Storms, be good anon,
And vindicate our trust;
Send down thy saving rains upon
The just and the unjust.
Alike they pray—upon their knees
Those, and upon their neighbors these.

Behold, thine earth is very dry
(And similar thy bard)—
We've naught to make it lighter lie,
Our very cider's hard.
Our fields so long have moisture lacked
They gape. Our preachers, too, are cracked.

They tell us that of righteous men
The prayers avail, but lo!
They take not their umbrellas when
To pray for rain they go.
But, Lord, in the resulting show'rs
Thy saints are sometimes seen with ours.

We've set apart with sweet accord
A day of gratitude.
(The Spaniard and the turkey, Lord,
Are dissident and rude)—
Our pious hearts are full, but pray
Take soundings in our wells to-day!

For next year's harvest fit our lands—
For grain and grape and peach;
This season's crops are off our hands—
Sold, and beyond thy reach.
Lord, from thy creatures turn this woe,
And let it fall on Mexico.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

March 22, Manchester.

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £63 2s. 9d. Received since:—Alfred Delve, £1 1s.; H. Kennedy, £2 2s.; G. Raggett, 10s.; H. W. B., 3s.; J. Pendlebury, £2; W. Bailey, £6; R. S. P., 10s.; V. M. Crosse, 2s.; F. M. A., 10s.

J. WOOD.—Ingersoll's writings and lectures contain hundreds, probably thousands, of such epigrams. We cannot undertake to give reference to all or any of them.

J. SNOOTER.—We are quite unable to supply readers with questions or answers for use in debating societies. We should have no time left for our proper work. Glad you find the *Freethinker* interesting and informing. You might try to read some of the books we advertise or refer to from time to time.

JAMES WILLIAMS.—Sorry we can't oblige. We have not issued a weekly contents-sheet for many years. So little display was given to it that the game was not worth the candle. We have a permanent bill, which your friend might like to display. Please apply, in that case, direct to our shop manager. Thanks for your efforts to promote our circulation.

J. W. O'LEARY.—All the Sandwich family ever did, that we know of, was to give a name to a well-known "snack." His present lordship's prophecy about religion and science is of no importance.

J. ALLEN.—You mean well, but what interest can you imagine the enclosure could have for us? We would send the pious thing back, but it isn't worth the trouble or postage.

W. P. BALL.—Your cuttings are always useful.

WALTER STEWART, compositor, aged 73, asks for the vote and interest of any Freethinker who can give the same to his candidature for election to the Printers' Pension Corporation. It is a deserving case, and this is his second application.

W. BAILEY.—We appreciate your generosity in relation to our Honorarium Fund.

R. S. P.—Better late than never, but better early than late—as you say. We wish all subscribers (who can) would remember it.

F. GATESHILL.—Lecture notices should be framed on the model of our printed list. We are glad to see the St. Helen's N. S. S. Branch holds its first meeting at 7.30 on March 7 in the Central Café, Bridge-street, the President giving an address.

C. T. SHAW.—Thanks but Tuesday is too late for this week's issue.

F. M. A.—Sub. acknowledged; letter next week.

E. B.—Thanks for cuttings.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

The wet weather at Glasgow on Sunday did not damp Mr. Foote's ardor nor the enthusiasm of the fine morning audience and the crowded evening audience that assembled to give him another welcome after a long absence. Many ladies were present, and "saints" came from Kilmarnock, Paisley, the Bridge of Allan, Dundee, Aberdeen, and other places. Mr. Turnbull presided at both meetings and warmly invited new members, in which we hope he was successful. Several questions were asked after the evening lecture and suitably answered. But when a familiar voice started asking "What about Capital?" everybody knew it was time to wind up and go home.

Mr. Foote left home at 10.30 on Saturday morning, and arrived in Glasgow at 10.30. p.m. It was a long while to be "upon the road." Sunday's lectures were, of course, very heavy work. On Monday there was the journey back from Glasgow, leaving at 10 in the morning and arriving home at 9 in the evening. Really a good half of a week gone; a big inroad on the time otherwise available for the *Freethinker*, which suffers to some extent in consequence. Mr. Foote will, however, make up for this as far as possible in the next number. Meanwhile we are glad to state that the Glasgow visit made him rather tired, but did not affect him in any other way. The lectures themselves, and meeting old friends again did him good.

Mr. Cohen lectures at the Manchester Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints, to-day (March 8). Both afternoon and evening subjects should attract large audiences.

The *Leamington Chronicle* fairly reports Mr. Cohen's lecture before the Literary and Philosophical Society. In the editorial notes, however, it rather suggests that the Committee was "had." It is even hinted that Mr. Cohen's visit was rather a slight upon Sir Oliver Lodge. Tut, tut! Sir Oliver Lodge is only Sir Oliver Lodge. He is not everybody. There were thinkers before he was born, there will be thinkers when he is dead, and there are thinkers while he is living. This may sound odd in the Midlands, but it is true. We have what we hope is a proper respect for the Principal of Birmingham University, but when we hear his name used to belittle other men's names, we are inclined to say with Hamlet, "Something too much of this."

Mr. Lloyd lectures for the West Ham Branch at the Workman's Hall, Stratford, this evening (March 8). The local "saints" should see the place well filled. They can do this by advertising Mr. Lloyd's visit amongst their friends and acquaintances.

The Annual Meeting of the Humanitarian League will be held at the Westminster Palace Hotel on Thursday, April 2, when the chair will be taken at 7 30 p.m. by Mr. Ernest Bell. An address will be given on some points connected with the League's work, and the Annual Report for the past year will be submitted for adoption. The business concluded, a conversazione, with a short musical program, will follow. Members are invited to attend and bring friends. Mr. Foote has often wished to attend the annual meeting, and he will make an effort to do so this time.

The National Committee for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws will hold a public meeting at Essex Hall on Friday evening, March 20.

The Secular Education League holds its annual Members' meeting on Tuesday evening, March 24, in Room I of the Caxton Hall. The chair will be taken at 7.30. This will be followed by a public meeting at 8.15. It is hoped that Mr. George Greenwood will be able to preside, and the list of speakers includes Mr. Halley Stewart, Sir Henry Cotton, Lady Byles, Mr. Arthur Henderson, M.P., Rev. Dr. Walter Walsh, and Mr. G. W. Foote.

The Rationalist Peace Society holds its Annual Members' Meeting at 167 St. Stephen's House, Westminster, on Thursday evening, March 5, at 8 o'clock. Report and Balance Sheet to be presented and Officers elected for the ensuing year. This is a very late announcement, but the fault is not ours.

We have only space and time for a few lines on the *English Review* for March. We shall give it greater attention next week. For the present we can only say that it is a full number and an excellent number, which we warmly commend to our readers' attention. We may mention the editor's capital article on "Crime and Punishment" now, as it deals with a passing topic—Mr. Frank Harris's imprisonment.

Mr. W. Heaford writes:—"In reference to my article of March 1 on M. Daanson's book, *Mythes et Legendes*, the author informs me that the price stated (10 francs) was the price for subscribers only before the work was issued. M. Daanson's publishers are, he states, Marcel Rivière et Cie, 31 rue Jacob, Paris, and the price of the book is now 15 francs (or 12s.), post free. It is but fair to our readers to put this matter of price right at once. I may add that M. Daanson has confirmed my impression that his present work is but the synthesis of a larger work. In elaborating his theory in definitive form, M. Daanson will devote some eight years to further research and classification, and at the end of that time he hopes to publish a work in two volumes, one on *The Origin and Evolution of Myths*, and the other on *The Origin and Evolution of the Jesus Legend*."

The Half-Yearly Meeting of the London members of the National Secular Society has been arranged for Tuesday, March 24, at Chandos Hall, Maiden-lane, Charing Cross. The production of a card of membership is sufficient to obtain admission. Members desiring to introduce any particular business should give previous notice to Miss Vance, the N. S. S. secretary. The chair will be taken, of course, by Mr. G. W. Foote.

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The Church and Literature.—III.

(Concluded from p. 140.)

JUST three centuries ago Pope Sixtus V. finally organised a special "Congregatio Indici," which is still in operation, and which, besides publishing a list of prohibited books the writing, printing, publishing, distribution, reading, lending, or having possession of any of which is visited with excommunication, publishes also an *Index Librorum Expurgandorum*—a list of books which may be read after being expurgated and freed from certain offensive passages. In the words of Milton, they "rake through the entrails of many an old good author, with a violation worse than any that could be offered to his tomb."

The latest edition of the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* on the reference shelves of the British Museum Library is dated Rome, 1877. A later one has been issued by the present Pope. It gives a list of over a thousand names of persons, from Abaelardus to Zwinglius, whose works must be avoided by the faithful. The work is a curiosity from many points of view. Thus it contains the name of Erasmus Darwin, but the works of his more famous grandson are apparently unknown. Many of the works of the heresiarchs are not enumerated, but have simply the words *opera omnia*, so that it is an offence to read even an ordinary letter by these authors. The list of works deemed objectionable by the Church contains some of the most eminent names in every department of literature. Our historians are represented by such men as Hume, Gibbon, Robertson, Hallam, and even Oliver Goldsmith. Among foreign historians Macchiavelli, Guicciardini, Raynal, Sismondi, Botta, Mosheim, and Ranke are interdicted. Philosophy is represented by the most illustrious names: Occam, Bruno, Bacon, Campanella, Pomponatius, Hobbes, Descartes, Bayle, Pascal, Leibnitz, Locke, Voltaire, Rousseau, Helvetius, Comte, Hegel, Kant, Fichte, V. Cousin, and Vera. J. S. Mill is catalogued as Stuart, not for his *Logic* or *Essays*, but for his *Political Economy*. Archbishop Whateley's *Elements of Logic* is forbidden. Hume is inserted both as Mr. Hume for his *Essays*, and as David Hume for his *History of England* and *opera omnia*. Addison is down for his *Tours in Italy*, Swift for his *Tale of a Tub*, Lord Chesterfield for his *Letters to his Son*. That exceedingly chaste novel, *Pamela*, is interdicted, although, apparently, the Congregation of the Index do not know the name of its author, Samuel Richardson. Among novelists are George Sand, Balzac, Soulié, Murger, and Flaubert. Poets are represented by Ariosto, Petrarch, Milton, La Fontaine, Lessing, Lamartine, Béranger, Carducci, and Heine. Shelley and Burns are apparently unknown to the Congregation. Dante has the honor of a place, not for his epic, but for his treatise, *De Monarchia*, in which he argues against the Pope's temporal power. Hugo is catalogued for his *Nôtre Dame*, not for his *Torquemada* or *Religions and Religion*. Among theologians one finds, of course, the names of Wiclif, Hus, Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, Servetus, Sherlock, Tillotson, and Michaelis. The critical works of such learned Catholics as Father Simon and Dupin are interdicted, as are also Fenelon's *Maxims of the Saints*, the complete works of Molinos, and the reconciliations of Bordas-Desmoulins.

Of the Freethinkers, of course, all works are excluded as far as known. In the case of Voltaire an attempt seems to have been made to enumerate his objectionable works, but it does not exhibit much bibliographical knowledge. The well-known works of Dupuis, Volney, and Pigault Le Brun are inserted, as well as the treatise on Religion by Benjamin Constant, and the modern works of Rénan, Strauss, Péyrat, Jules Soury, Baissac, Larroque, and Jacolliot. The numerous translations of Draper's *Conflict of Religion and Science*, and Büchner's *Force and Matter*, have got those works inserted in the Index; but there is no mention of important Freethought works best known in England, possibly because it is understood that all works coming from heretics are forbidden.

There are also upon the Index a number of works such as most fathers would keep from their children. Rabelais, Boccaccio, and others, of course, are there. Among the smuttiest collections are the works of Aretino, who was a Cardinal's favorite, and the *Facetiæ* of Poggio, who was apostolical secretary to three popes. These are inserted, although, in several editions, Poggio is carefully concealed under the name of "Florentinus"; but we miss the works of Abbé Brantôme and others only too well known in the Church.

In addition to the published list of prohibited literature, bishops and priests are supposed to exercise a censorship over the reading of those under their charge. Peignot, in his "Dictionary of the principal works which have been committed to the flames," gives a ridiculous instance of the way in which this has sometimes been carried out. He says:—

> "In Styria the censorship of books is carried on in singular style, and one which shows that the function in Austrian states is not confided to very enlightened men. In the year vi, [i.e, 1798] one of these censors condemned as heretical two books, of which one was entitled *Principles of Trigonometry*, and the other the *Destruction of Insects*. The censor thought Trigonometry was closely related to the Trinity, upon which it is forbidden to write; and took Insects for Jesuits."

Let not Protestants lay the flattering unction to their souls that it is the Catholic Church alone that has made war upon literature. Penal laws against the full expression of opinion are yet in force in every Protestant country. Many heretical works have been burnt by the common hangman and summarily suppressed both in England and Germany. In the reign of Elizabeth the Independents had to have a private travelling printing press to issue their Marprelate tracts. Among works publicly burnt were all the early Unitarian and Deistic pamphlets, John Milton's *Defence of the People of England*, and Defoe's *Shortest Way with the Dissenters*. The works of Servetus were seized by Bishop Gibson, and burnt in 1723; and the same dignitary suppressed the second volume of Tindal's *Christianity as Old as the Creation*. In my Historical Sketches of Freethought in England I have, I believe, adduced sufficient evidence that it is to the labors and sufferings of the Freethinkers that we are mainly indebted for a Free Press, the palladium of civilisation.

No doubt, in the palmy days of Christianity, the Church could claim that such literature as there was bore the impress of Christian teaching. The only opening for talent was by entering the service of the Church, and the blighting influence of its creeds is evident in all the writings of the Middle Ages, when it has been said there was no such thing as philosophy, but only scholastic logic and theology. The nature of the Trinity, of the soul; "whether angels in going from place to place move over the intermediate space"—such questions as these formed the intellectual exercises of the cultured, while the mental pabulum of the unlearned consisted mainly of lying legends of the saints. With the renaissance of Pagan learning came a change for the better; Erasmus, Rabelais, Montaigne, Shakespeare, Spinoza, Hobbes, Descartes, Bayle, and Voltaire found new directions for the human mind. Gradually the affairs of this world took pre-eminence over those of a speculative world to come. Historical criticism, directed at first to "profane" matters, gradually trenched upon the domain of Jewish records labelled "sacred." Science, ascertaining more and more of the workings of nature and of the immutability of law, has gradually displaced "Providence"; and literature, despite the copious publication of unheeded sermons, becomes ever more and more secular in its character. Theology, which a few centuries ago commanded the attention of the highest minds, is now left to rhetoricians like Farrar or charlatans like Cook.

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The world is beginning to give more heed to the opinions of the most insignificant journalist of the present than to the united pulpit speaking with the voice of a discredited Church of the past.

(The late) J. M. WHEELER.

Aphrodite and Adonis.

THE religious beliefs of all primitive peoples appear to have been greatly influenced by the constantly changing phenomena of the seasons. Ever at the mercy of the elements, early savage races were never without warning of their entire dependence on the ceaseless alterations which the rolling years disclosed. The wintry blast, the fallen snow, the bare and withered vegetation, the frozen rivulet and lake, the scarcity or disappearance of animal life with the departing summer, each and all conspired to impress upon prehistoric man his utter impotence while within winter's cold embrace.

There is much reason to believe that at an early stage of man's development the idea was almost universally entertained that the flight of summer might be stayed by the influences of magic art. There is positive evidence that among many races spells were recited and ceremonies conducted to cause the sun to shine, the rain to fall, the animals to abound, and the earth to give forth her fruits. This cultural stage was to some extent succeeded by another, in which a religious superstition born of wider knowledge and experience began to supersede the belief that the course of the seasons could be arrested by the potent spells of magic alone. A belief arose that higher and greater powers determined the coming of spring, the sweetness of summer, the tinted robes of autumn, and the darkness and cold of winter. The development and decay of plant life, the scarcity or abundance of animal organisms, now came to be more and more regarded as the rising and declining powers of divine creatures who passed from youth to old age, and who gave birth to offspring like common human mortals.

From direct magical exertion over the forces of Nature, men turned their attention towards the gods and goddesses they had themselves created, and strove to assist these divine creatures in their conflict with the dark and sinister powers of death and decay. It was therefore essential to do something to recruit the declining powers of the deities, and when at last they passed unto death to secure their resurrection from the grave. All the world over, magical ceremonies are based on the assumption that by simulating the end desired its accomplishment will be effected. There is in all probability no rural district in Western Europe—the most civilised area in the world—in which these superstitions are not commonly credited to this very hour. The extent to which these primitive beliefs prevail, even in England, is well illustrated in Hardy's *Return of the Native* and *Wessex Tales*.

So far as research has hitherto disclosed, the rites and ceremonies designed to assist the gods have been nowhere more elaborately observed than in the countries which environ the Eastern Mediterranean. In Egypt and Western Asia the birth, decay, and revival of animal and vegetable life were personified as divinities who died and rose from the grave. Adonis, Attis, Osiris, and Tammuz, not to mention a more modern divinity, were all gods of this kind. The details recorded concerning them vary, but in substance they are the same, and a study of the god Adonis will in reality embrace the others.

To the student of Greek literature the story of Adonis has long been familiar, and in Shakespeare's "Venus and Adonis" we possess a poem of deathless charm. But Adonis was not born on Greek soil. Under the name of Tammuz he was worshiped by the Semitic inhabitants of Syria and Babylonia centuries before his entrance into Greece.

> "The true name of the deity was Tammuz: the appellation of Adonis is merely the Semitic 'Adon,' *lord*, a title of honor by which his worshipers addressed him. In the Hebrew text of the Old Testament the same name Adonai, originally perhaps Adoni, 'my lord,' is often applied to Jehovah. But the Greeks, through a misunderstanding, converted the title of honor into a proper name.....We first meet with Tammuz in the religious literature of Babylon. He there appears as the youthful spouse or lover of Ishtar, the great mother goddess, the embodiment of the reproductive energies of nature. The references to their connection with each other in myth and ritual are both fragmentary and obscure, but we gather from them that every year Tammuz was believed to die, passing away from the cheerful earth to the gloomy subterranean world, and that every year his divine mistress journeyed in quest of him 'to the land from which there is no returning, to the house of darkness, where dust lies on door and bolt.' During her absence the passion of love ceased to operate; men and beasts alike forgot to reproduce their kinds: all life was threatened with extinction."*

So necessary was the goddess to the world of life that the great god Ea sent a messenger to restore Ishtar to the light of day. The difficulties of the lower regions overcome, Istar returns to earth, presumably with her loved Tammuz, and with their reappearance Nature resumes her garment of fertility. In some of the Babylonian hymns the death of Tammuz is deeply deplored, and he is compared with the plants that quickly die. His untimely death was commemorated with sad ceremonial every year, and the object of these observances was to awaken the god from the slumber of death. The legend of Adonis finds a fuller expression in Greek literature than in the Babylonian fragments that have so far been deciphered.

In the Greek myth the maiden Symrna had grown cold in her devotion towards the goddess Aphrodite, and was cursed by the angry divinity with an unnatural desire for her father. This part of the myth bears some resemblance to the story of Lot's chaste daughters, as Symrna was not above the practic of deceit in order to secure her desires. Assisted by a nurse, she succeeded in sharing her father's couch without being known to him. When he discovered his daughter's sin he determined to slay her; but she escaped, and when nearly captured she implored the gods to make her invisible. They were moved by her tears, and transformed her into a tree. At the end of nine months the tree opened, and Adonis was delivered. Aphrodite was so smitten by the loveliness of the child that she hid it in a chest, which she entrusted to Persephone's care. When, however, Persephone discovered the beauty of the treasure entrusted to her keeping she refused to part with it. After an angry dispute, the case was carried to the court of Zeus, and the great divinity decided the difficulty by declaring that for four months of each year Adonis should be free to himself, that for an equal period he should dwell with Persephone, and that during the remaining four months he should remain with Aphrodite. Adonis, however, elected to live with Aphrodite during his period of freedom, and thus was with her eight months of the year. Afterwards the beautiful youth met his death from the wound inflicted during the chase by the ferocious wild boar. When we remember that Aphrodite was the goddess of love, and Persephone the divinity of death, it becomes obvious that the contest between the two deities for the possession of Adonis personifies the struggle between summer and winter for supremacy.

The attributes and character of Aphrodite—the Greek equivalent of the Roman Venus—naturally excited the affections of Adonis. She was the divinity of love and beauty. Sprung from the foam, she was the personification of the procreative processes of Nature and the begetter of all living things. During the combat of Typhon with the gods, Aphrodite metamorphosed herself into a fish, and this denizen of the deep to the Greeks was the possessor of the greatest powers of fecundity. Zeus

* *Golden Bough*, Part IV., pp. 6, 7.

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asserted that she ought to occupy herself with marriage celebrations and wedding feasts. The beauty and gracefulness of Aphrodite were beyond compare, and Paris awarded her the prize for loveliness. The myrtle, rose, apple, and poppy were sacred to her. Winged creatures were her messengers and chariot-drawers—the swan, the swallow, the sparrow, and the dove. The ram and the tortoise were especially associated with her worship, and sacred to the goddess were the planet Venus and the month of April. The characteristics of Persephone, her great adversary, were, on the other hand, those of gloom and darkness. Syria and Cyprus were leading centres of the worship of Adonis, and both on the mainland and in the island the cult long flourished. In Syria a great sanctuary of Aphrodite or Astarte stood at a spot on Mount Lebanon, a day's journey from Byblus.

> "The spot was probably Aphaca, at the source of the river Adonis, half-way between Byblus and Baalbec; for at Aphaca there was a famous grove and sanctuary of Astarte which Constantine destroyed on account of the flagitious character of the worship. The site of the temple has been discovered by modern travellers near the miserable village which still bears the name of Afker, at the head of the wild, romantic, wooded gorge of the Adonis."

This is one of the loveliest landscapes in the world, and it was upon this sacred spot that, according to the tradition, Adonis encountered Aphrodite for the first and final time, and here his mangled corpse was consigned to mother earth. "A fairer scene could hardly be imagined for a story of tragic love and death." In ancient times this splendid valley was sacred to Adonis, and broken weather-worn monuments still remain to testify to the piety of his worshipers. One of these records is at Ghineh, where a huge rock is carved with the forms of Adonis and his mistress. Adonis is represented awaiting the onrush of a bear, while Aphrodite is reclining in an attitude of grief.

> "Every year, in the belief of his worshipers, Adonis was wounded to death on the mountains, and every year the face of nature itself was dyed with his sacred blood. So year by year the Syrian damsels lamented his untimely fate, while the red anemone, his flower, bloomed among the cedars of Lebanon and the river ran red to the sea, fringing the winding shores of the blue Mediterranean, whenever the wind set inshore, with a sinuous band of crimson."

A sanctuary of Aphrodite at Paphos, in Cyprus, is one of the most celebrated. Whether reared to the worship of that goddess or to older deities, it was of extreme antiquity. In this instance, as in so many others, the names of the gods were changed, but the ideas underlying their worship remained immutable. The image of the goddess was a simple white cone, and the phallic ceremonies which attended her worship distinguish her as the divinity of motherhood and fertility. The sacred image was anointed with oil on certain solemn occasions, and "To this day," as Dr. Frazer says,

> "the old custom appears to survive at Paphos, for 'in honor of the Maid of Bethlehem, the peasants of Kuklia anointed lately, and probably still anoint each year, the great corner stones of the ruined temple of the Paphian goddess. As Aphrodite was supplicated once with cryptic rites, so is Mary entreated still by Moslems as well as Christians, with incantations and passing through perforated stones, to remove the curse of barrenness from Cypriote women, or increase the manhood of Cypriote men.' Thus the ancient worship of the goddess of fertility is continued under a different name. Even the name of the old goddess is retained in some parts of the island; for in more than one chapel the Cypriote peasants adore the Mother of Christ under the title of Panaghia Aphroditessa."

The resemblances to the legend of the Nazarene contained in the story of Adonis are certainly suggestive. Whether Jesus is to be regarded as an historical character or not, there can be little doubt that the main outlines of his story have been built up out of similar materials to those that went to fashion the myths and legends of Adonis, Attis, Osiris, and various other Oriental divinities.

T. F. PALMER.

Human Filth.

A MISERABLY cold wind was blowing from the east, a penetrative damp wind, with an unjoyful trait of discovering and assailing all the most susceptible parts of your body. A fortnight's rain had turned the road and pathway into thick mire. Darkness of the quality that miraculously descended from the land of light that people name Paradise, upon Jerusalem on a famous occasion, engulfed us, making the travelling heavier and more wearisome.

We were trudging along bravely, keeping up our spirits with visions of a cheery fire and an appetising supper in a cosy room, within an hour's time, when, on turning a bend, something white seemed to gleam in the grass by the pathside. My companion stumbled against some obstruction, and nearly fell. She gave a startled exclamation of fear, and through me flashed the unpleasant sensation that tells of sudden fright. For a second there was the shock of suspended consciousness. For a second I was a savage in the blackness of a primeval forest. For a second I unconsciously awaited the unknown terror.

In the piercingly brilliant rays of the electric lamp we saw the most pitiable, perhaps the ugliest, sight we have ever seen. Lying outstretched in the wet grass was the body of a woman. From the waist downwards her only garments were a pair of torn, bedraggled skirts and a pair of equally ragged stockings. This paucity of garments, when the night was so bitterly cold, in itself, made us shiver, and feel as if tears would be a relief. Her limbs were splashed with mire, ugly blotches of mud on the white flesh, that burned into the brain, and made us sick. In one place there was a deep, red tinge that meant blood. A beautiful statue defiled would evoke resentment in the least artistic sense; but those unsightly, horrible splashes of mud on the white limbs brought nothing but an all-consuming despair, and a pity as sorrowful as the utter loneliness of her death. Pity and repulsion struggled hard for mastery, and repulsion won; for they were as ugly as death—as repulsive.

The upper portion of her body was wrapped in a wet shawl, half covering her head. Her hair was loose, and damp, and stringy. Round her neck was a circlet of red beads. When I removed the shawl from her head I noticed that the rats and weasels had already feasted on the flesh of her face.

Quickly I put the lamp in my pocket and let the shawl drop over the hideous spectacle; but it was too late; for my companion clutched me nervously by the arm, saying in a choking voice, "Come on! Come on! I feel sick."

Hastily I pulled the poor body into the hedge, arranged the skirts, and laid an overcoat on top for protection against hungry animals. Then we resumed our tramp in silence, each engrossed with our own thoughts, towards home, and all the invaluable comforts home entails.

There was no sleep that night. My mind returned, in time, to a sermon I heard in my boyhood days, a powerful sermon by a powerful preacher. "Mary Magdalene" it was entitled. I remember it well. I remember the solemn stillness that filled the church and acted upon us as the religionist imagines the Holy Spirit would influence us. I remember how the minister gripped his congregation; how he held them by the strength of his words. I remember the emotion lights and shadows that sped rapidly over the faces of my friends. I remember the glowing peroration about the cleansing, redeeming, revitalising blood of Jesus. And I remember my sarcastic comments when the sermon was afterwards applauded. And I am still unrepentant.

With the vision of the lonely woman, lying out there in the cold on the wet grass, before my eyes in the darkness of the room, I was sorry I had not been able to speak more strongly. With the knowledge of the tragedy of her death, the awfulness of her condition, and the hateful position she occupied in Humanity's life, I wished, with a savage longing, I

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had been born a Shakespeare, a Shelley, a Voltaire. Unbefriended, uncared-for, dying like a dog left broken-limbed in a ditch, human filth that she was in the estimation of society, yet she represented, for me, the dark side of the cloud of Christianity.

Never needs religion ask for more proof of its monstrous failure while she and such as she live and die. Contrast her existence with the social power of religion. Reckon its secular power by its churches, its priests, its communicants. Gauge the opportunity ever before religion by the wealth, the position, the strength of its friends. Add the centuries of its life. Multiply the total by the omnipotency that religion professes to have as its chief lever, as its principal justification. And the abjectness of its dominion is of such a miserable degree that you cannot even laugh.

What mattered all their sublimely beautiful words, all their glorious perorations, all their throbbing references to a sympathetic Jesus? What mattered their wonderful language, their divine example, their verbal obedience to the commands intrinsic in that example? What mattered their influence, their power, their opportunity? They, these apostles of Christ, even the best of them, spoke plenty.

The people came forth from the pews, and their sensitive hearts were touched with divine pity, and their eyes were moist with the God-given tears of welling sympathy for the woman of whom their Lord and Master was not ashamed. And out in the cold, in the darkness, on the wet grass, the modern Mary Magdalene was lying, her body exposed to the rain and wind, and providing a meal for rats and weasels.

Listen to the pastors' championship of the love of God, to their joy at finding Christ, to the power of Christianity, to its achievements, to the necessity of its existence for the safety of society, and all the rest of the priestly lies. The ocean of oratory around the barnacled rocks of its accomplishments.

The story of Christ Jesus and Mary Magdalene has brought tears to the eyes of thousands, perhaps millions; but Mary still dies, unknown, forsaken, worn out, by the pathside of life. The story has awakened emotions by the million; but never a reasonable endeavor to rid the world of its Magdalenes. Priests and pastors still pray and preach; the secular power of Christianity is still capable, if used, to move society, almost to unimaginable lengths; religion's opportunity still remains; the Christian God, we are informed, still lives; his Son and the Holy Ghost still influence, we are told, the minds and lives of men; and Mary Magdalene still dies in the wet, cold grass by the wayside, her only companions the hungry rats and weasels.

Robert Moreland.

The "Face" of God.

"When, by His Grace, I shall look on His face,
That will be Glory, be Glory for me."
But I think that the question is not out of place:
What sort of a face do you think you will see?

That is all right to sing, but a face is a thing,—
Whoever may own it, though he be by birth
A saint or a sinner, a clod or a king,—
That has special regard to the things of this earth.

Take a nose, for example, a feature that's built
To receive and expel the material air.
Be it straight or *retroussé*, whatever the tilt,
Without breathing or smelling it's no business there.

Now what use would a nose to a spirit be, pray,
Without air to breathe, or an odor to smell?
Yet a face, minus nose, would but scare one away,
And what if the face lacked a mouth, Sir, as well?

But a spirit, you'll say, needs a mouth when it sings.
Yet a mouth without teeth, Sir, would captivate few:
Steaks and chops and sea biscuits and similar things
Are for bodies. With spirits they've nothing to do.

It is open to question if eyes are of use
For the light that the substance called ether conveys;
But what will be said for the eyelids that serve
To protect mortal eyes from the sun's fiercer rays?

And what useless appendages ears would become
With no vibrating matter its sound-waves to send;
For the ear, as we know, from the lobe to the drum,
Has in this useful office its practical end.

Will the Lord be baldheaded and smooth at the chin,
Or will he rejoice in long hair and a beard?
If he favors a "Billygoat" many will grin,
And if "sideboards" are there the effect will be weird.

"Hold! 'tis blasphemy, thus to speak lightly of God."
But the crime is with you, Sir, who sing of his "face."
If the thing as a whole can be thought of at all,
To discuss its formation can be no disgrace.

The fact is, a spirit, whatever it be,
Can have nothing in common with you, Sir, or me;
And there's naught with a face in earth, heaven, or hell,
That doesn't possess, Sir, a belly as well.

H. W. Thurlow.

National Secular Society.

Report of Monthly Executive Meeting held on Feb. 26.

The President, Mr. G. W Foote, in the chair. There were also present:—Messrs. Baker, Barry, Bowman, Cohen, Cowell, Cunningham, Davey, Davidson, Heaford, Judge, Moss, Neate, Nichols, Quinton, Roger, Rosetti, Samuels, Schindle, Thurlow, Wood, Miss Kough and Miss Stanley.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The monthly cash statement was presented and adopted.

New members were admitted for the Edmonton Branch and the Parent Society.

An application for permission to form a new Branch at St. Helens was received; and the conditions having been complied with, permission was granted.

The Secretary reported as to arrangements for the Summer propaganda.

The usual circular concerning invitations for the Annual Conference was ordered to be sent out.

The Secretary reported the result of investigations in a case of religious persecution in the Midlands, and it was resolved that the Birmingham Branch be thanked for their assistance in the matter.

The Secretary was instructed to arrange for the Half-Yearly Meeting of London members, early in March.

A communication from the International Freethought Bureau was ordered to stand over till next meeting.

Notices of motion for future business were given.

The Secretary reported a highly successful Annual Dinner.

E. M. Vance, *Secretary*.

Correspondence.

THE LEAMINGTON MEETING.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—A crowded meeting at the Café Royal, Leamington, on Tuesday, February 24, listened to Mr. Cohen's lecture on "God and the Soul in the Light of Science." The lecture was in connection with the Leamington Literary and Philosophical Society, and had been brought about by Mr. F. W. Walsh, one of its members. Mr. Cohen was in very fine form, and he was followed by his audience with the closest attention. Several members of the Society spoke against Mr. Cohen's views, but their objections were effectively replied to by the lecturer. The best of spirit maintained throughout the evening, and, though this was the first lecture of its kind under the auspices of the Society, it should not be the last in Leamington. Mr. Walsh should be very pleased with his effort which brought it about. Among the audience were ladies and gentlemen from Birmingham and Coventry.

J. Partridge (for F. W. Walsh).

ATHEIST.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—In your issue of the 1st inst., you refer to an editorial footnote to an anonymous letter in the *Sentinel*, in which it was stated that "even so distinguished a Freethinker as the late Charles Bradlaugh never condescended to call himself an Atheist." This was literally wrong, of course, as I perceive upon refreshing my memory by reference to my copy of Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner's *Life*; but without entering into details, perhaps you will allow me to say that what was really in my mind was that there was a considerable distinction between the Atheism of Mr. Bradlaugh and that of the correspondent calling himself "Atheist," to whose letter the footnote was appended and that is still my view.

The Editor of the "Staffordshire Sentinel."

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Mr. Miller's, 8 Matthias-road, Stoke Newington): Monday, March 9, at 8.30, Business Meeting —To consider appeal re W. J. Ramsey and other important matters.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workman's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, J. T. Lloyd, "Various Delusions About Life."

OUTDOOR.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, J. Rowney, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (North Saloon, City Hall): Mrs. H. Bradlaugh Bonner, 12 noon, "Britain and Germany"; 6.30, "The Faith Men Live By."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): C. Cohen, 3, "Religion and the Breeding of a Better Race"; 6.30, "God and Morals."

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The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularisation of the State, etc., etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

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—VICTOR HUGO.

Mr. Trevelyan's Pamphlet.

WE left off our review of Mr. J. M. Trevelyan's pamphlet a fortnight ago, having reached a point where he was considering the general question of toleration and compromise in human life. We will now finish what we wished to say on this subject,—quoting largely, as before, from Mr. Trevelyan's published lecture, so that there may be no mistake as to *his* meaning.

With regard to toleration within families, who are so frequently divided on religious matters in these days, Mr. Trevelyan takes a reasonable position. Young people, by a social law, are bound to show a certain deference to their elders. This is a good reason for courtesy, but not for betrayal. Mr. Trevelyan speaks very plainly on this point:—

> "Concealment from old people must not involve telling lies; or concealment from equals in age and from the world of one's daily life; and, above all, it must not involve the concealer in putting fetters on his or her choice of companionship, reading, or intellectual and moral development."

Taking the family as a whole, or the portion of it dwelling under the same roof—for it is personal contiguity that creates the greatest part of the difficulty—Mr. Trevelyan writes:—

> "It is still sometimes supposed that religious unity can be preserved at least in the family. But members of the same family often differ in temperament, intellect, and emotional character. In other words, they are, by nature, of different religions. And if natural growth is denied, the individual, whether man or woman, is stunted in development. Happy is that family where all the members think alike—happy, but not always vigorous. Unhappy is the family whose members have given up thinking because they cannot think in unison."

There is still discord because of difference in many families. But there is a great improvement in this respect within our own memory. In the days of our boyhood a whole town would be agitated by the presence of one Atheist. He was pointed at by adults, and mobbed and hooted by children, when he walked in the streets. We recollect the only known Atheist in our native town. To add to the horror of his personality, he was a chimney-sweep, and he was a perfectly awful figure when dressed in the garb, and covered with the blackness, of his profession. To have such a man in the house was like having the Devil for a lodger. As a member of your family he would, in most cases, be simply intolerable. But there would be a certain amount of humor mixed in the situation now. Scepticism and discussion have gone so far that the majority of families have to practise more or less accommodation in religious matters, as they have in politics and social affairs.

Mr. Trevelyan was bound, of course, to deal with the question of woman. Fortunately it is something else than woman's right to fight the police, or burn down her neighbors' buildings, or dog-whip old gentlemen, or hunger-strike against the indignity of imprisonment for what, according to the law of the land, are criminal offences—that Mr. Trevelyan has to deal with. He has no need to penetrate into that region of violent deeds and more violent casuistry. He is able to leave political and social discussions altogether aside. It is woman simply as a human being, in those fundamental relations to the world which her sex involves, whom he is considering. Is it necessary, is it right, to withhold from her the freedom enjoyed by men in respect to religious inquiry and speculation? Mr. Trevelyan answers as follows:—

> "In close connection with the argument from the family is the argument about women. The man may often stay away from Church, even in the country, provided he pretends that it is because he is lazy; but it is too often regarded as 'bad form' for women to be absent. This insult to women is sometimes excused on the ground that 'women can't do without religion.' If this saying means that no woman can lead a good or happy life without the Christian religion, it is disproved by countless examples. But, perhaps, it means that they care more about religious questions and are more emotional than men. Now, if psychology has proved the existence of a more emotional temperament in women (a point on which I have heard different opinions stated) we could only deduce that indifferentism and hypocrisy come less naturally to women than to their brothers; and we should therefore see an even greater wrong in the purely conventional conformity expected of them by family and social custom. Further, their emotional and poetical temperaments (if such they have) would do much to save Free Thought from the hardness that often besets the virile reaction against sentimentality. Therefore, to shut up women in a charmed circle of Christian dogmatics, would be no less injurious to the progress of the world than to place similar restrictions upon men."

The characters of Freethought women are a sufficient answer to the old argument that the "tender sex" are injured in some mysterious way by acquiring knowledge and learning truth—even in matters of religion. "I cannot understand, I love," sounded very pretty from the affectionate, submissive wife in Tennyson's *In Memoriam*. It was so flattering to male vanity. But, after all, it was never meant; and, in reality, it is opportunity that actually creates, by vitalising through a regular supply, the passion in women, as well as in men, for intellectual culture and the higher life. It has been discovered—or rather rediscovered, for it was known long ago, as long as the days of ancient Paganism—that a good wife need not be a dunce nor a good mother a fool—nor a good sister a mixture of both.

The idea that one part of human life can be benefited by the suppression of another is one of the worst delusions. Landor was right in saying that the price of the higher pleasures is abstention from the lower. Abstention, yes; but restriction, no. This development must necessarily be self-development. You cannot beautify a human soul by mere ignorance, or elevate it by mere thoughtlessness—or what the old divines used to call inconsideration. Certainly there is no real opposition between mind and morals. It was one of the great utterances of Socrates that wisdom and virtue were ultimately identical. Mr. Trevelyan is sound and clear enough on this point:—

> "For, in fact, morality and intellect are the two deities that preside over the human soul; it is not

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necessary that they should in every case be of equal stature, but it is necessary that neither should be deliberately mutilated to give life to the other. If intellect is sacrificed on the shrine of morality, morality itself becomes a Moloch, and loses its own virtue."

This is followed by a fine passage on the life that is left to men when they can no longer rely on the supports of the Christian (or any other) superstition :—

"The vast, unexplored fields of thought and poetry are not all closed up to us if one noble legend is found to be a legend—no more, and no less. The 'splendors and terrors' never cease to rise from the unplumbed depths of our own minds, until we ourselves have yielded up the life of the spirit to the pressing cares and vulgarities and amusements of daily life; and no one is more liable to this fate than one wrapped up in comfortable and conventional orthodoxy. Has our life ceased to be worth living because we no longer say we know its origin and its end? Must love decay on earth because hell is quenched, or pity because suffering here is without personal compensation hereafter, or energy because mankind can only be saved by its own effort? Is the good worth fighting for only if we are certain beforehand of conquest? Dare we serve only under a banner predestined to victory, and under an omnipotent general? The imagination should be used to illumine and spiritualise what is, and to picture what is not, but never to preach that which is not as though it were."

It is evident that, in Mr. Trevelyan's opinion, Christianity will long, if not always, present a problem of toleration by existing in the same society with Freethought, or Agnosticism, or the Religion of Humanity—or by whatever other name *naturalism* is called in opposition to *super*naturalism. This is his view of the future :—

"I deprecate the plea, however forcibly argued, that civilisation is 'at the cross-roads,' that it must turn either wholly Christian or wholly non-Christian. It is not going to do either. Civilisation is no longer an indivisible unit that must go down one of two paths. It was on one path in the middle ages, but now it is found on many paths. Diversity of religious experience and belief is the law of the future, and those who cry out that there is danger of our becoming wholly Christian or wholly anti-Christian, are unnecessarily perturbed. Christians and non-Christians will grow together to many harvests to come. It is only a question of how to get along together."

A pleasant prospect, in theory; but we may doubt its practical realisation. Society is always tending to unity of belief in essential things. When a religion like Christianity once gets found out, people cannot go on living as if they believed it. It comes to be entertained, in time, only by the intellectual and moral refuse of the community. Even its professional representatives are drawn from lower and lower strata of character and ability. Christianity must eventually go altogether, unless it regains its old position, just as its component parts go altogether. Take the case of witchcraft. People used to believe in it universally. It was given up gradually, of course, with the growth of knowledge and the scientific spirit. It has now entirely disappeared. People do not settle down in society, some believing in witchcraft and others denying and despising it—cultivating, all the while, a mutual toleration and respect for each other. And in our opinion it will be the same with Christianity.

But we do not deny Mr. Trevelyan his own glowing picture, if he chooses to cherish it. Freethinkers, at any rate, will sympathise with the fine spirit it enshrines :—

"What, then, are we to aim at as our ideal? Shall we try to create a society composed one half of sincere Christians and the other half of make-believe Christians, relieved by a few enraged anti-clericals stung to fury by the insincerity around them? Should we not rather aim at a society of sincere Christians and sincere heretics, living in friendly social intercourse with each other, working together for the innumerable objects that good men have in common and sharing together not a few spiritual emotions? The question concerns Christians and non-Christians alike, for, whether we know it or not, we are one body, and we flourish not at each other's expense, but by a system of wholesome rivalry and mutual reaction that can be actively friendly in its workings. Christians and non-Christians are no more 'natural enemies' than English and French, or English and Germans. But each side must admit the other's right to a 'place in the sun.' It is to be hoped that the Twentieth Century may see the growth of Norman-Angellism in religion, and the disappearance of the last relics of our bad inheritance from the Middle Ages, the spirit that once took form in the statute of *De Haeretico Comburendo*."

There is a valuable corrective on another page to what is perhaps the weaker side of this ideal :—

"To prevent misunderstanding, I should like to add this to what I said in the lecture: I do not mean that a person is to be blamed *ipso facto* if he attends the service of a religion in which he does not believe. I attend Christian marriages and funerals, provided I do not have to do so as bridegroom or corpse, and have no quarrel with others who choose to go further in the direction of 'occasional conformity.' My objection is made against—

"(1) Those who conceal their heretical opinions from the society in which they ordinarily live; if church-going is a part of this deception I think it wrong;

"(2) Those who try to make their spiritual life centre round rituals expressive of doctrines they do not believe.

"Of course, I recognise a distinction between these two classes. No. (1) seems to me an obvious social crime. No. (2) is a personal matter and is much more difficult to define and to appreciate in all the subtleties of each individual case."

Here, indeed, we do come up against a real difficulty. Where is one to draw the line? The fact is that no line can be drawn. We never have the absolute choice of good and evil in this world. We have to choose between various mixtures of both, and as the choice is necessarily personal we should not judge each other hastily.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Limitations of Science.

IN the *Inquirer*, for February 7 and 14, there appear two articles reviewing Professor Bury's *History of Freedom of Thought*, published in the Home University Library. The articles are by Dr. S. H. Mellone, formerly examiner in Philosophy at St. Andrews, Edinburgh, and London, and author of several works on psychological subjects. With the general run of his review of Professor Bury's work I am not now concerned, although one may note that the great cause of complaint is that too much stress is laid upon the anti-theistic implications of modern science, and too little value placed on religious ideas. If this were true, it would be an excusable fault. With so much stress laid upon the religious side of the case, and so many studied endeavors to hide anything from the average reader that might suggest anti-religious conclusions, it would surely be permissible for a writer, with limited space at his disposal, to lay emphasis upon those aspects of thought usually overlooked. I do not say that this is the case with Professor Bury; I am only pointing out that under existing conditions it would be a forgivable offence in a writer wishing the general reader to know all the currents of modern thought.

My object in noticing Dr. Mellone's critique is to deal with what he has to say concerning the possibility of science regulating life. In this he follows a great many other writers, some of them entitled to rank as authorities on matters of scientific thought. And yet I am quite convinced that they are wrong, although it may sound rash for a layman to venture to correct the specialist. All I need plead in extenuation is that science is wholly democratic—the one real democracy in a world where many pseudo-democracies exist. Moreover, unfortunately perhaps, a man may attain great eminence as a scientific *worker* without being a great scientific thinker, with the result that when he comes to deal with subjects just a little off his regular path, he may be found stumbling through only partial appreciation of the scientific method. On the other hand,

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a man may be a genuine scientific thinker, and a fruitful one, without having at his disposal anything like the store of knowledge that many a scientific worker has. To take only two examples; neither George Henry Lewes nor Herbert Spencer were what one would call great scientific workers, but both were able to suggest to the ordinary man of science principles and conclusions that they would not have reached alone—at any rate, they did not.

There are many, says Professor Mellone, who claim that when the world has destroyed theology and metaphysics, it will find its salvation in an outlook on life based entirely on science. He adds:—

> "A strange illusion besets many men in this matter. They see that science has contributed to the destruction of a great deal of harmful superstition; they see that science puts into men's hands means of practical invention and achievement to which no limit can be set, and they run to the conclusion that because science has been or may be *used for* good, therefore science itself is good."

This illusion Dr. Mellone undertakes to dispel. He is convinced that "an obstinate attempt to think clearly dissolves the whole of it into smoke." This thinking clearly is crystallised into the following:—

> "Science is essentially limited, in the first place, to the endless ascertainment of facts and the physical conditions under which they occur, and in the second place to the criticism of error. This limitation is all-important. To understand it is to dispose once for all of the current cant about 'Science and Progress.' The facts and the laws of their causation exhaust the realm of science. Science belongs to the world of analysis. She can lay down no judgment of value or worth; all such judgments belong to a world beyond that of science—the "world of Appreciation." Her finding may, indeed, be turned to practical purposes, good and bad; but she knows nothing of goodness or badness. Her results may be employed equally to save life or destroy.....Science cannot demonstrate that.....one desire is any better or any worse than the other. Hence it is simple or rather complex nonsense to assume as 'scientific facts that the process of natural evolution leads to good, or that the increase of human life is good, or the stability of society good. If a man chooses to deny any of these statements, there is not a word, from the merely scientific point of view, to be said against him."

The statements made here are all more or less common. Similar statements have been made by Sir Oliver Lodge, they were made over and over again by Mr. Balfour in his recent Gifford lectures, as well as in his previous writings on religion. And they are all either false or misleading. That is, they either misstate the facts, or state facts in such a way that while they are accurate enough in *form* they give rise to quite misleading ideas.

First of all there is the attempt to impose limitations on science. The purpose here is obvious. By marking off a region beyond which science cannot travel, another region is secured in which all kinds of speculations, religious and other, may deposit themselves without there being any effective checks. There is a region in which science is supreme, and it is admitted that it leaves no room for religion here. But, they say, science has its limitations. There is another region in which scientific method and scientific tests do not apply. And here there is room for religion because there is no rule by which one can declare it to be wrong. It is the old game of the "Unknowable"—with a difference. Instead of there being a great "Unknowable," spelt with a capital letter and called "God," because, as F. Bradley said, we didn't know what the devil else it could be, we have a "knowable," but of a different kind to that with which science deals, and quite superior to scientific method.

Is it true, then, that science is essentially limited to physical facts? It is limited to facts, certainly; but why physical facts? And suppose one were to argue that there are no "physical" facts, and that in dividing the world into physical facts and psychical facts, we are only adopting a convenient method of classifying the sum of facts? In that case what becomes of Mellone, Lodge, and Balfour? Clearly, to use Dr. Mellone's expression, we have dissolved their arguments into smoke. Science, we can grant, is concerned with facts, with nothing but facts; but why with *physical* facts only? All facts are not physical. If I have a headache, that is a fact. If I feel hot or cold, angry or pleased, think one thing ugly and another beautiful, find one smell agreeable and another disagreeable, these are all as much facts as a chunk of granite or a bottle full of hydrogen. Nay, if I fancy and see a ghost, or a vision, these are also facts so far as my mental state is concerned. So also are my beliefs about all manner of things. There is nothing, in short, that does not come under the heading of "facts" so far as a sound science is concerned. The facts may be objective or subjective. They may exist in relation to all minds normally constituted, or they may exist only in relation to my own mind; or, yet again, they may exist only in certain states of mind, but they do not cease to be facts on that account.

Now the business of science is to collect facts—all facts—classify them, and frame certain generalisations that explain their groupings. It takes all the facts available, and divides them into two groups—one physical, the other biological, or inorganic and organic. It divides the former up into sub-groups, and it does exactly the same with the latter. It talks of the facts of the physical world, the facts of the biological world, and the facts of the psychological world. It finds this last group of facts made up of all sorts of feelings, beliefs, and experiences, some of which it calls true, some false—that is, they are true when they hold good of all men and women normally constituted; they are not true when they hold good of isolated individuals, and can be seen to be the product of misinterpreted experience or a temporary derangement of the nervous mechanism. But, true or false, they remain among the facts of the mental life. They have to be collected, grouped, and explained exactly as other facts are grouped, collected, and explained. They fall within the scope of science to be dealt with by the scientific method.

Now, on what ground can science be limited to the study of "physical" facts? Non-physical facts, it is said, cannot be tested and measured and weighed as physical facts may be. Suppose we grant this, it would only prove that the same tests cannot be applied to all classes of facts, and I am not aware that there is anything in the scientific canon why this should be so. The physical facts and the laws of their causation, says Dr. Mellone, "exhaust the realm of science." Emphatically, no. The causation of mental states, the relations between mental states and the effects of these relations between organisms possessing the same mental states, offer a quite legitimate field for scientific inquiry. What becomes of the whole science of psychology if science is chained to physical facts? It is true that our knowledge here is not so precise, and may never be so precise, as our knowledge of physical facts. But that is entirely due to the complexity of the facts themselves. It is true also that science is continually endeavoring to relate mental facts to physical facts. That is all part of the general scientific search for unity and continuity. But the identity of mental facts is not destroyed. As mental facts they remain, part of the material that it is the work of science to reduce to order. If mental facts cannot be weighed or measured, science must devise some other test; that is all. If we cannot weigh an emotion, we can test its intensity, note the condition under which it appears, and its influence so far as it affects the life of society.

There is, in short, no fact that lies outside the scope of science; and there is nothing that forms part of the world or of human life that does not rank as a "fact" of which science legitimately takes heed. Even Dr. Mellone's illusion about the scope of science is a fact. And that has to be explained in terms of a desire to find a region from which science is excluded, and so provide a safe refuge for religion.

C. COHEN.

(To be concluded.)

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What is Man?

IN the Articles of Religion the one living and true God is defined as a being "without body, parts, or passions." The Rev. Arthur Chambers, vicar of Brookenhurst, is an ordained minister of the Church whose creed is embodied in those Articles, and we naturally infer that he accepts and approves of that definition of the Divine Being. In our estimation it is the most absurd definition ever framed; but in the year 1562 the archbishops and bishops of both Provinces, and the whole clergy of the Anglican Church unanimously adopted it as the best that their united wisdom, guided by the Holy Ghost, could construct. And yet Mr. Chambers speaks with contempt of those "excellent Christians who only think of a spirit as a shapeless essence—a vague something without body or parts." The Bible tell us that God is a spirit, and Article One assures us that, being a spirit, he is "without body, parts, or passions." It inevitably follows, if Mr. Chambers is right, that the Almighty is "a shapeless essence—a vague something without body or parts." Of course, the reverend gentleman was not thinking of his Maker when he penned those words. He was absorbed in the advocacy of the peculiar theory that man, after death, exists in bodily form. In *Man and the Spiritual World*, he defends the strange notion "that it is possible there may exist bodies other than those compounded of material particles" (p. 57). What such bodies are like no one knows, not even Mr. Chambers. Is it not sheer nonsense to talk about bodily *forms* other than those compounded of material particles? Are not all *forms* of necessity physical?

Mr. Chambers contends that "man, while in the Earth-life, possesses certain faculties that point to an interior spiritual organisation." It never seems to strike the reverend gentleman that "organisation" cannot possibly be "spiritual." An organisation is a body composed of different organs or parts performing special functions that are dependent upon one another and essential to life. All known organs or parts are certainly physical in their nature, and perform physical functions. We are not surprised, therefore, to learn that the only faculties said to point to "an interior spiritual organisation" are the highly doubtful ones known as clairvoyance and clairaudience. This is how Mr. Chambers describes them in action:—

> "There are, at the present time, persons who can see and hear external spiritual realities that are *near* them, although those realities are imperceptible to the ordinary senses. There are others who can see and hear spiritual realities *distant* so far as to be absolutely beyond the range of material vision and hearing. And, further, there are many who can clairvoyantly see and clairaudiently hear external *physical* realities, under circumstances of time and distance precluding all possibility of ordinary eyes and ears being the media of the sight and hearing" (pp. 112-3).

"An interior spiritual organisation," "a spiritual body," and "spiritual realities," are purely imaginary objects, while clairvoyance and clairaudience are spurious faculties, in no sense super-physical. Mr. Chambers is evidently a spiritualist, who believes in mediums and their alleged trances; and it is from the phenomena of Spiritualism that he derives his proofs of the spirituality of man's nature. No other evidence whatsoever is adduced. Here is a fair specimen of the line of argument pursued in this remarkable book:—

> "Our existence, while on this earth, is a duplex one. We live in two worlds—the physical and the spiritual. By our material body, we are in conscious contact and adjustment with the physical world; while, by our spirit-body, we are consciously or unconsciously in relation to a spiritual universe that interpenetrates the physical and us. Further, while we are encased in flesh, the physical part of our nature predominates, in the sense that it is, more *completely* than is our spiritual part, in its own particular sphere. We can fully exercise our material faculties, but we cannot as yet fully exercise the faculties of our finer spirit-body. Nevertheless, the latter are within us, and they have been partially exercised by numbers of men and women while still in this world. The facts of clairvoyance and clairaudience bear witness to this" (pp. 94, 95).

The claim that we are threefold in our constitution falls to the ground through an utter lack of supporting evidence. Nothing is easier than to assume that "man, in his essence, in the basis of his being, is a spirit, even when passing the first phase of existence on the plane of matter," but nothing is more impossible than to produce a single fact in support of the assertion. "Spirit" and "spirit-body" are words that convey no intelligible meanings whatever.

What, then, is man? If he is not a spirit, encased in a spirit-body, how are we to define him? Let us examine a few undoubted facts concerning him. One is that when he begins life he is devoid of consciousness. He is much lower down in the scale than many of the higher animals. They possess in their maturity what he in his infancy is clearly without. In other words, he and they commence their careers at precisely the same point. An infant cannot feel "I am I," cannot distinguish itself from surrounding objects, and has no sense of right and wrong. Consciousness develops but slowly. The sense of personality is a product of evolution. Another fact is that consciousness can easily be destroyed. In sickness it is sometimes entirely lost for days and weeks together. Does not this prove that consciousness is not a spiritual entity resident in the material organism though perfectly distinct from it, but, rather, "a physiological function of the brain," which is common to all animals with a centralised nervous system and a brain? Now, if consciousness is a function of the brain, absent in infancy, lost in certain diseases, destroyed by any serious injury to the head, and utterly discontinued at death, on what ground can it be declared that man is more than a physical being? Mr. Chambers himself admits that, judging by appearances, we are bound to put him in the same category as the animals round about him:—

> "He seems no more than a higher class of physical being, who shares with other earthly creatures a common physical life. Those in whom the faculty that perceives the Spiritual is dormant, look at him and see no vital distinction between him and the brute, insect, and plant. The circumstance of death seems to make them alike. What befalls them also befalls him. Physically he and they appear to perish. To whatever ends, in the economy of Nature, the dead and the disintegrated particles of their material organisation may subsequently serve, it looks as if death obliterates their individuality. The man, the brute, the insect, and the plant, *as such*, seem to end their existence when death comes" (p. 54).

But the reverend gentleman declines to accept the verdict of appearances, preferring to believe, without a scrap of evidence, the testimony of the Bible. Without a moment's hesitation he pronounces the materialistic conception of man unworthy and disappointing, simply because it is contrary to the teaching of Holy Writ. He does not even understand what Materialism really is. He represents the Materialist as saying, "At death, our bodies are resolved into the physical elements of which they are composed, and *ourselves will cease to be*." No true Materialist would ever differentiate between our bodies and ourselves, because he believes that our bodies *are* ourselves.

Mr. Chambers builds his whole system upon unverifiable assumptions. He assumes the existence of a just and loving God while all the facts of life emphatically deny it. Man is by no means a being of whom such a Deity could feel proud. He assumes a human craving for a Hereafter which he calls "an implanted instinct." It is true that most religions teach a doctrine of immortality, and that the majority of mankind, being religious, have always believed in it; but there have been men and women in all ages and countries who rejected the belief in a future life, treating man merely as a child of the earth. The craving for a Hereafter is not an im-

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planted instinct, but a distinct acquirement. The child is trained to believe in immortality and then to cherish the hope of it. Left to itself no child would ever think of a Hereafter or desire to live beyond the tomb. Mr. Chambers is fundamentally mistaken when he affirms that "unpoisoned by negative thought, and not drugged by vice or worldliness, the thoughts of a man turn as naturally to a Hereafter existence as the desire of a bird turns to the air, or that of a wild animal to the woods." The truth is that, uninfluenced by religious instruction in early life, no man would ever dream of either a God or a Hereafter, or have any craving that could not be satisfied on earth.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Boy Who Said "Damn."

"We have a kindness for Mr. Leigh Hunt."—MACAULAY.

BY the death of Mrs. Jacintha Shelley Hunt Cheltnam, who died recently at Hammersmith at the age of eighty-six, a link with the literary giants of the nineteenth century has been severed. She was the last surviving child of Leigh Hunt, the friend of Shelley, Keats, Lamb, Byron, Dickens, Carlyle, and many another well-known writer; and Hunt's own literary work commands attention, for he was a poet as well as the friend of poets.

A man of letters, Leigh Hunt was almost a genius, and his excursions into literature included poetry, criticism, a novel, several dramas, and works dealing with religion. In conjunction with his brother he started the *Examiner*, and his robust Radicalism soon got him into trouble with the authorities. The two brothers were prosecuted and fined £500 each, with two years' imprisonment, for lampooning the Prince Regent, afterwards George IV. That Leigh Hunt called the Prince "a fat Adonis of fifty" may have been a pretty insult, but was certainly not his chief legal offence. He also called the Regent "a violator of his word, a libertine over head and ears in disgrace, a despiser of domestic ties, the companion of demireps, a man who had just closed half a century without one single claim on the gratitude of his country or the respect of posterity." It was largely true; but there was not a country in Europe where it would have been allowed to be said of the chief of the state, and similar things could not be said to-day without retaliation.

Leigh Hunt's imprisonment was not a holiday, nor was it a silent meditation among the tombs. He could not go beyond the prison walls, but he had rooms furnished by himself, and he enjoyed the society of his wife and family, and had frequent visitors. The learned Jeremy Bentham came and played battledore and shuttlecock with him. The imprisonment may have affected Hunt's health, but it was a comedy compared to the treatment of Holyoake and Foote, condemned to their cells and the prison yard. Besides, Hunt had facilities for writing, and composed "A Feast of the Poets," "The Story of Rimini," in addition to a vast amount of journalism.

Hunt's imprisonment brought him into unusual prominence. He had known Charles Lamb from boyhood, and Shelley some years. He now made the acquaintance of Keats, Hazlitt, and Byron. Indeed, he was always happy and fortunate in his friendships with men of genius. Later in life he added to his circle the names of Carlyle, Dickens, Macaulay, Lytton, and Lord Houghton.

For this reason Hunt's autobiography is excellent company, for he always writes naturally and unaffectedly, and his description of his famous friends is vastly entertaining. His account of his Italian travels, too, is an example of the best kind of such writing. His humor is never forced. A typical example is his youthful recollection of how he used, after a childish indulgence in bad language, to think with a shudder, when he received any mark of favor, "Ah! they little think I'm the boy who said damn."

An omnivorous reader, Hunt secured the rare commendation of Macaulay for his "catholic taste." Of all authors, indeed, and probably of all readers, Leigh Hunt had the keenest eye for merit and the warmest appreciation of it wherever found. An active politician, he was never blind to the genius of an opponent. Blameless himself in morals, he could admire the wit of Congreve, Vanbrugh, and Wycherley; and a Freethinker, he could see both wisdom and beauty in the old divines. It is to his credit that this universal knowledge, instead of puffing him up, only moved him to impart it. Next to the pleasure he took in books was that he derived from pointing out to others the pleasure in them. Witness his *Wit and Humor* and his *Imagination and Fancy*, two of the finest handbooks in English literature. Hunt was always genuine in his criticisms. It was nothing to him whether an author was new or old, an Englishman or a foreigner, for his sympathies crossed all frontiers. Nor did he shrink from any literary comparison between two writers when he thought it appropriate. Thackeray had this same outspoken honesty, and in speaking of Fenimore Cooper's hero in the "Leather-stocking" novels he says, "I think he is better than any of Scott's lot."

Few critics would deny Hunt's talent for poetry. There is no doubt that his verse had a very strong influence on his contemporaries, and that it inspired music much better than itself. After all, the poems, or some of them, form the only part of Leigh Hunt's voluminous literary work likely to survive. Perhaps his happiest lyric is the charming trifle:—

"Jenny kissed me when we met,
Jumping from the chair she sat in;
Time, you thief, who love to get
Sweets into your list, put that in!
Say I'm weary, say I'm sad,
Say that health and wealth have missed me,
Say I'm growing old—but add,
Jenny kissed me."

Some of his sonnets are excellent. Perhaps the best is the one on the Nile, which he wrote in rivalry with Shelley and Keats, commencing—

"It flows through old hushed Egypt and its sands,
Like some grave mighty thought threading a dream."

This includes the magnificent description of—

"The laughing queen that caught the world's great hands,"

which is not only a very fine line, but the discovery of a cadence which has been imitated ever since.

His sonnet on "A Lock of Milton's Hair" is a splendid example of his enthusiasm for the great writers:—

"It lies before me there, and my own breath
Stirs its thin threads, as though beside
The living head I stood in honored pride,
Talking of lovely things that conquer death.
Perhaps he pressed it once, or underneath
Ran his fine fingers, when he leant blank-eyed,
And saw in fancy Adam and his bride,
With their rich locks; or his own Delphic wreath."

In "Abou Ben Adhem," the poem that has found its way into every anthology and every heart, he shows an unexpected depth and tenderness. It is Ariel turned Prospero, and showing in the transformation how antic and irresponsible a spirit Ariel is. It is appropriate that on Hunt's tombstone at Kensal Green should appear two lines from that fine poem which alone would make his name immortal:—

"I pray thee then,
Write me as one that loves his fellow men."

MIMNERMUS.

FINITE AND INFINITE.

Imagine a man who, with balances a thousand cubits high, should wish to weigh the sand of the sea. When he had filled his two scales they would overflow, and his work would be no further advanced than at the beginning. All the philosophers are at that point. They may say if they please, "Still there is a weight, there is a certain figure which we should know, let us try," the scales are magnified, the rope breaks, and always, always so!—*Gustave Flaubert.*

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Literary Gossip.

Mr. Bertram Dobell, the well-known bookseller and book-writer, sends me a copy of his latest "catalogue of rare and choice books." I should like to order two or three hundred pounds' worth of them, but I haven't the money, and the prices are not for my purchase in any case. I note that George Meredith's earliest volume of poems, which is excessively rare, is priced at £30. It was published in 1851, with a dedication to Meredith's father-in-law, Thomas Love Peacock.

* * *

Mr. Dobell had a copy of that little volume of Poems in the middle 'seventies—nearly forty years ago. He lent it to James Thomson ("B.V."), the poet, who copied out the best of them, and returned the precious collection of Meredith's earliest poetry to Mr. Dobell. I copied Thomson's copy, and I still have the penny notebook in which I wrote. There were some very beautiful things in that little volume, including the original draft of "Love in the Valley."

* * *

The *Herald of the Star* is a monthly Theosophical magazine with the object of preparing for the Great One—the new spiritual Teacher—who is generally expected in the eastern part of the world. It is published at 19 Tavistock-square, London, W.C., and the price in this country is sixpence. It is beautifully printed, and some of the writers may be considered "beautiful" too—by their followers and supporters. Mrs. Besant is one of them. She is a sort of high priestess now, and she ventures to patronise persons who were at one time her superiors. Look at the following from her brief article on "Religion":—

> "It is, of course, possible that a man may remain in the sceptical stage, may not be strong enough to grow out of spiritual youth into spiritual manhood, and yet be too strong to fall back into the spiritual second childhood of dogma. Then, if he be of well-trained intellect and of clean life, if he feel that 'though there be neither heaven nor hell, nor any Gods to rule the world, virtue is none the less the binding law of life,' then such a man—like Charles Bradlaugh and William Kingdom Clifford—will learn, through the loss of the belief in man's immortality, the lesson of the purest altruism which man can acquire, and he will be the next best thing to the illuminated Mystic, the high-minded and tolerant Sceptic, equal to all that life and death can bring. He will be the gate-keeper of the Temple of the Religion of the future, and in another life shall cross its threshold and know the Hidden God."

Poor Bradlaugh! This is the most unkindest cut of all. To be patted on the back, intellectually, morally, and spiritually, in this condescending way, by the lady who, however unintentionally, was the cause of so much mental anxiety to him in the last few years of his life, is calculated to make him feel something worse than anxiety, if he were still within the reach of experience. So much I do not hesitate to say, knowing Bradlaugh as I did. I also knew Clifford, who had a clear keen mind and a sense of humor, with a particular contempt for all kinds of charlatanry. And I can guess what he would say about Mrs. Besant's pious charity. To *him*.

* * *

A further notice of the March *English Review* was promised last week in these columns. It opens with a powerful poem entitled "Tid 'apa" ("What *does* it Matter?") by Gilbert Frankau. I do not say a great poem, for the theme is not great enough, for one thing; and the psychology and style are not equal to the writer's story-telling faculty. But if this is the work of a young poet he should do very much better yet. He has force in him, and nothing is done without that. Frankly, I do not care for Mr. Wells' new serial, "The World Set Free," but one had better wait till the end for a safer judgment. Next comes a short bright article by Francis Grierson on "Offenbach and Hortense Schneider," reviving for a few minutes a peculiar society which existed in the 'sixties under the Third Empire (of Napoleon the Little), and never at any other time or place. The second instalment of "Prehistoric England" is devoted to "Housefinding," and is decidedly humorous. "Eve's Pigpen" is a translated profanity which I leave the reader to discover for himself. Mr. Norman Douglas, the sub-editor, who writes so well and could give points to some more popular writers, deals with the interesting and suggestive topic of "Dragons." Mr. Austin Harrison, the editor, follows with what I regard as a very able and sound article on "Crime and Punishment." Many years ago I said that *punishment* should be banished from the jurisprudence of civilisation. Mr. Harrison argues eloquently to the same conclusion—especially with reference to Mr. Frank Harris's imprisonment for contempt of court. I commend this article to the reader's best attention.

"Mimnermus's" pleasant article on Leigh Hunt in this week's *Freethinker* quotes that fine writer's delightful lines to "Jenny." They possess all the more interest to lovers of literature because "Jenny" was Mrs. Carlyle, who was very fond of Hunt, and overlooked the faults that Dickens and others drew into the daylight, in consideration of his good looks, his courtly manners, his pride of principle in public matters, and his nobly generous nature. Not only was Jane Carlyle "Jenny" but the incident was a real one. The kiss chased away the cloud of depression from the old man's brow, and its bestower was rewarded by what she valued more than money: an exquisite cameo of verse, expressing real gratitude, and conveying a superb compliment.

G. W. F.

Acid Drops.

Rev. J. A. Shaw, of Wolverhampton, has been preaching on the want of a new religion. What he or other people want in this line is no concern of ours. We are quite able to do without any religion at all, and we know a great many people who can do ditto. But when the reverend gentleman mentions "Atheists" we begin to take an interest in what he is saying. This is what he is reported to have said by the local *Express and Star*:—

> "There was, after all, only one Atheist—he was not the man who declined to believe the creeds and nostrums of the Churches, but rather he was the man who pretended to believe and by his life gave the lie to his profession. The good man, the affectionate father, the upright citizen, the honest trader, the sincere worker, the genuine patriot, and the lover of mankind could never be dubbed an Atheist, no matter what his attitude towards Church dogma might be"

No doubt this is well meant, but it is very stupid stuff. The right people (and there are plenty of them) to say who are Atheists are the Atheists themselves. And they very decidedly object to receiving a present of all the hypocrites in the Churches. Before Mr. Shaw prepares to make a gift he should be sure that it will be cheerfully received. In this case he is mistaken. Atheists don't want his refuse, and don't mean to have it. He must keep it himself, or offer it elsewhere.

The following appeared in the *Daily Chronicle* of March 2 as "special" from its Berlin correspondent under date of March 1:—

> "Some extraordinary figures relating to Church attendance in Berlin are published in the *Vossische Zeitung* to-day.
>
> "On February 22 the united committees of the movement away from the State Church took a census in the seventy-eight churches of Berlin and Charlottenburg. These churches have seating accommodation for 120,000 and serve a population of 2,060,000.
>
> "On the date mentioned there were only 35,000 at two services, or under 2 per cent. of the population. Of worshipers present on that day, the journal declared, more than three-quarters were women and children.
>
> "The movement away from the Church is stated in another quarter to be growing seriously. Last year, in Germany, 12,000 persons severed their connection with the State Church, in comparison with 6,000 in the previous year and 3,000 in 1910."

Only 2 per cent. of the population attending church, and more than three-quarters of these women and children! "Great Pan is Dead" was shouted nearly two thousand years ago by voices in the air, as Plutarch relates. The time has now come to shout "Great Christ is Dead."

The Church party in Grimsby and Cleethorpes have held a meeting in Freeman-street Market and marched to Grimsby parish church "for solemn prayer" against the Disestablishment of the Welsh Church. We can hardly suppose they are stupid enough to imagine that their prayers, solemn or otherwise, will affect the fate of that Establishment. We surmise that they know the great game must be kept up, and that a public advertisement is absolutely necessary now and then.

At a City inquest on a sandwichman who committed suicide in the Thames, it was stated that clergymen had been know to carry sandwich boards in the streets. We have often thought that parsons are not much use in the open market.

"Telephonic conversations with England will cost fifteen shillings for every conversation," said the German Postmaster-General in the Reichstag. Our spiritualist friends will enable anyone to have a conversation in hell for about the same fee.

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The King visited the Central Young Men's Christian Association in the Tottenham-court-road on March 4 to open the building, which has been in use for about two years. The "opening" was as belated as the superstition with which the Association is concerned.

According to a contemporary, Queen Alexandra has a fondness for patent medicines and quacks generally. This may account for her affection for the Salvation Army.

One of the witnesses to the will of Alfred Nobel has been protesting against the manner in which the Nobel trustees have awarded the annual prize—which, it will be remembered, takes the shape of a lump sum of money. The practice of the trustees is to award this to some world-wide celebrity, and this, says Mr. Leonard Hwass, is directly contrary to Nobel's intention. What the testator desired was an annual award to some struggling man, or woman, of genius, so that their life might be lightened of financial strain and encouragement given them in their work. We cannot, of course, say how far this really represents the wishes of Alfred Nobel; but it strikes us as infinitely preferable to throwing an award at a world-celebrity who has already achieved fame, and who is in no need of the money. A recognised genius can look after himself. It is the genius who is unrecognised, and whose work may be brought to an untimely end, who is most in need of encouragement. Of course, it is much easier to select a famous man than a comparatively unknown one, and this may be the reason why the award has taken its present form. But we hope that the protest referred to will receive proper attention, and the money available be spent in the direction indicated by Mr. Hwass.

The cavalier way in which Church dignitaries treat Freethought is worth notice. Writing in that intellectual periodical, *Lloyd's Weekly News*, Dean Inge, better known as the "gloomy dean," has been unburdening his mind on "Religious Doubts," and he says, "within the last few years three very able and capable gentlemen—an English Radical politician, an American professor of mathematics, and a German lecturer on philosophy—have tried their hands at critical investigations to prove that the historical Christ never existed"; and, he continues, the results are "simply comic." The gloomy Dean's own advice is to "wait till the clouds roll by," like the lady in the music hall song, which strikes us as being vastly more humorous.

The Church Army, a side-show of the Government religion, has had a "Self-Denial Week" on the same lines as the Salvation Army. Imitation is the sincerest flattery.

"A rancid and musty stench emanates from the stoats and polecats of the new literary insurrectionaries," says "Vanoc" of the *Referee*. If so, the odor from the Bible must be thick enough to be cut with a knife, for the filth in the Old Testament begins where the others leave off.

"Vanoc," of the *Referee*, has been wasting some metaphors. In a recent article he said "the cross-examination of the defenders of accepted beliefs" is one of the proofs that "the Hound of Heaven is on the trail of humanity." A wag might say that it was a proof that religion was going to the dogs.

Speaking at the Huntingdon County Hospital, Lord Sandwich referred to the power of faith healing, and added that "truth would always prevail." The very existence of hospitals is a proof of the limitations of faith healing; and, as for the power of truth, there is too much money on the side of error. The Christian superstition, for instance, has millions of money behind it.

People are very fond of talking about the man of genius forcing his way to the front, but so far as we can see the only ground for the belief that this will always occur is that *some* men of genius have done so. But there is no possibility of knowing how many other men of sterling ability are lost to the world for want of timely help, or because the fortunate accident does not occur. As a matter of fact, a fair proportion of works of ability are published by men who happen to be so placed that their livelihood is secured to them in some other direction. How much might be done, and by how many others, it is impossible to say; but it is easy to see that the loss to the world in sheer ability must be enormous. And it is worth noting that in his earlier years Herbert Spencer, more than once, was compelled to consider the probability of ceasing to issue his works, and was only saved by a fortunate legacy. Genius will tell, if it is given the chance of finding expression. But circumstances may be too strong even for genius. For the greatest genius needs bread-and-butter, and is never superior to all possible combinations of adverse circumstances.

Defenders of the Design Argument will be delighted to note the case of the "Siamese" twins, Suzanne and Madelaine, two baby girls in Paris, who were operated upon last week by M. Le Filiatre, the surgeon, and separated. The two babies were joined by the body, face to face, and cocaine was used during the operation, which, it is hoped, will prove successful. This is the ninth operation of its kind.

At the Chelsea Arts Club Ball many persons represented "gods" and "goddesses." Fortunately, none attempted to portray the Trinity.

"The Soul's Winning Fight with Science" is the heading of one of the pages in *Public Opinion*, summarising an article in the *American Magazine*. The writer of the article admits that the vast majority of leading scientific men do not accept the belief in immortality, but he points to a small group who believe as evidence of a movement in the contrary direction. These scientists, he says, admit all the materialistic facts, but correlate them with other facts and explain them in a new way. This *new* explanation is that the brain is "merely the instrument by which the soul—the feeling, thinking, remembering ego—secures expression." Really! We are under the impression that this explanation, instead of being a new, is a very old one. There has never been any other, so far as Animists are concerned, although it has found expression under various names. Nor do the small group of scientists who believe in immortality greatly impress us. The evidential value of those scientists who have reached disbelief in the face of all their early training and prejudice is far greater than that of those who continue to believe *in spite* of their scientific knowledge.

Rev. Dr. Orchard thinks that people are bothered too much about religion nowadays. He thinks that if they are let alone they will the more readily realise their need of religion. Well, if Dr. Orchard really believes this, he should prove it by giving up preaching and wait until people crowd to him to tell them all about it. It is all talk, however. The only time during which a people remain religious without being bothered about it is when the general environment enforces it. Savages do not need preachers to make them religious; they are made so by the general character of their environment. But under civilised conditions the environment saps religion instead of enforcing it. Religion becomes a thing of artificial culture, and the preacher is bound to bother people about it, or they would forget it altogether. A great many get rid of it as it is; leave a generation or so quite alone and religion would become a negligible quantity.

There is less crime now than twenty years ago. That is the consoling conclusion from a review of a Government Blue Book on crime. The spread of Freethought has none of the horrible consequences that the clergy predicted.

The subject of "Cinematographs" is to be considered at the forthcoming annual meeting of the Free Church Council. This looks as if picture shows were affecting the chapel collections.

"Funerals are becoming more cheerful," says Mr. C. C. Whitley, a director of the South Metropolitan Cemetery Company. This may be owing to the fact that people no longer believe the horrible Christian dogma of eternal torment after death.

Some of the comments on evangelistic work are really amusing. There has been a Chapman-Alexander mission in Edinburgh, and the reports run in the usual vein—thousands converted, etc., etc. Dr. Chapman's preaching has made a "wonderful impression," and, above all, "Edinburgh is waking up to the fact that Christ is a living reality." Wonderful! After all these centuries of Christian preaching, in Edinburgh of all places, the people are waking up to Christ as "a living reality"! Then these people deny that Christianity is a failure. All they ask for is a couple of thousand years to wake people up.

The Bishop of Oxford, Dr. Gore, has roused the ire of some people because he said, some weeks back, that the "critical school" think it legitimate for a clergyman to

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remain in office while repudiating in his published writings the miracles in which he must affirm his faith every time he says the Creed. Whether this is true of one particular school only, or of certain individuals—so far as the special subject of miracles is concerned—it is tolerably certain that it depicts the general attitude of a very large number of clergymen in relation to Christianity as a whole. Their faith is very often not that of the Church to which they belong, and which they are paid to preach. They may hold it in words, but they repudiate it in spirit. They give interpretations that are wholly at variance with what Christians have always held it to mean; and there is really no substantial difference between saying that a thing is false and saying it is true—only it means something entirely different to what people have been taught it meant. To say, for example, that Jesus was the Son of God, but only in the sense that we are all sons of God, is only another way of saying that the historic godhead of Jesus is false. That is the plain common sense of the situation; and it is one that people who have no interest in casuistry are quick to realise. The clergyman who does not believe in the plain interpretation of Christian doctrines has no moral justification for preaching them. This rule would be readily admitted in every other direction, and it should hold good here. But religion has a notorious knack of blunting one's sense of moral discrimination.

Cabourne is near Caistor, and Caistor is near Great Yarmouth, where our veteran friend J. W. de Caux, J.P., resides. It will interest him to learn that a parson at the first place (the Rev. Robert Thomas) has left £5,137 0s. 6d. But our old friend has heard that godliness is great gain, and he won't be very much surprised.

In two plays just on in London the principal attraction is an undressing scene, and there is commotion in clerical circles. The players, however, do not attempt to rival David's undress dance before the Ark, or the primitive costume of Eden.

Smoking is permitted in many American prisons. Pious people pretend to think that all persons will "smoke to the glory of God"—in the next world.

In an article in the *Star* on the Camp Hill Prison, Isle of Wight, it says that the prison library contains the works of Darwin and Montaigne, and similar literature, and that these volumes are "discouragingly clean and unthumbed," whilst popular illustrated magazines are well used. As the prison is one for habitual criminals, we are glad to note the preference.

An ex-Army man named William Jeffery, who was sentenced to fourteen days' hard labor at Eastbourne, said he had been in prison for about forty years, and had over 400 convictions against him. He calculated that it had taken 1,200 policemen to attend him. He did not say how many prison chaplains had been engaged in the same business.

The London Missionary Society's *Chronicle* for March boasts of the conversion of a press-man—a class of people whom General Booth once declared to be hopeless. "The ex-editor of the atheistic paper, the *Sun*," we read, "has become a staunch Christian and a powerful preacher." But this *Sun* turns out not to be Mr. Horatio Bottomley's old paper. It was published at Faraavohitra. We understand it is dead now. Perhaps, on inquiry, the converted editor would turn out to be dead too.—Here endeth the first lesson.

Rev. Dr. Jowett, formerly of Birmingham, and now of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York, has declined to accept a "call" to Union Chapel, Islington. He is very comfortable where he is. His salary is £3,600 a year. Christianity as a business proposition has mightily improved since its founder had to send a lieutenant fishing for half-a-crown, to pay the tax collector.

Here are a few more destitute Christites. Rev. Joseph Mould Adcock, of Willesborough, Kent, left £1,672. Rev. Owen Evan Anwyl, vicar of All Saints, Plymouth, left £5,122. Rev. Robert Thomas, vicar of Cabourne, left £5,174. Very Rev. Charles Saul Brice, dean of Cork, left £4,263. Rev. Paulet Nichols, rector of Little Cheverell, Devizes, left £20,128. Rev. Philip Carlyon, Falmouth, left £18,945. Not so bad for the "blessed be ye poor" tribe.

Mr. H. M. Hyndman and Mr. Keir Hardie have "made it up." We hope the former will not contract the latter's bigotries. Evil communications, as the proverb says, are very apt to corrupt good manners. Mr. Keir Hardie has brought in a Bill to stop Sunday shaving in Wales. The honorable gentleman doesn't shave at all himself. See?

In a recent divorce case of William Barker, a local preacher, at Bolton, his wife testified that when she caught him in the servant's room he said he was plotting to catch a burglar. Did he give the burglar notice? He also said he was "seeking a kindred spirit in his higher aspirations." Both plots together cost him a separation with £1 10s. a week for the wife who wasn't invited to share his diplomacy.

RESURRECTION AND IMMORTALITY.

The idea of Resurrection arose from, and is closely bound up with, the practice of burial, the second and simpler mode of disposing of the remains of the dead. The idea of immortality arose from, and is closely bound up with, the practice of burning, a later and better innovation, invented at the third stage of human culture. During the early historical period all the most advanced and cultivated nations burnt their dead, and, in consequence, accepted the more ideal and refined notion of Immortality. But modern European nations bury their dead, and, in consequence, accept, nominally, at least, the cruder and grosser notion of Resurrection. Nominally, I say, because, in spite of creeds and formularies, the influence of Plato and other ancient thinkers, as well as of surviving ancestral ideas, has made most educated Europeans really believe in Immortality, even when they imagine themselves to be believing in Resurrection. Nevertheless, the belief in Resurrection is the avowed and authoritative belief of the Christian world, which thus proclaims itself as on a lower level in this respect than the civilised peoples of antiquity.—*Grant Allen*, "*Evolution of the Idea of God*," p. 54.

A COLD COLLATION OF DIABOLISMS.

People who honor their fathers and their mothers have the comforting promise that their days shall be long in the land. They are not sufficiently numerous to make the life assurance companies think it worth while to offer them special rates.

I once knew a man who made me a map of the opposite hemisphere of the moon. He was crazy. I knew another who taught me what country lay upon the other side of the grave. He was a most acute thinker—as he had need to be.

Benevolence is as purely selfish as greed. No one would do a benevolent action if he knew it would entail remorse.

Most people have no more definite idea of liberty than it consists in being compelled by law to do as they like.

The Psalmist never saw the seed of the righteous begging bread. In our day they sometimes request pennies for keeping the street corners in order.

It is wicked to cheat on Sunday. The law recognises this truth, and shuts up the shops.

If a jackass were to describe the deity, he would represent him with long ears and a tail. Man's ideal is the higher and truer one; he pictures him as somewhat resembling a man.

Camels and Christians receive their burdens kneeling.
—*Ambrose Bierce* ("*Dod Grile*.")

POETRY AND RELIGION.

The future of poetry is immense, because in poetry, where it is worthy of its high destinies, our race, as time goes on, will find an ever surer and surer stay. There is not a creed which is not shaken, not an accredited dogma which is not shown to be questionable, not a received tradition which does not threaten to dissolve. Our religion has materialised itself in the fact, in the supposed fact; it has attached its emotion to the fact, and now the fact is failing it. But for poetry the idea is everything; the rest is a world of illusion, of divine illusion. Poetry attaches its emotion to the idea; the idea *is* the fact. The strongest part of our religion today is its unconscious poetry.....More and more mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us. Without poetry, our science will appear incomplete; and most of what now passes with us for religion and philosophy will be replaced by poetry.—*Matthew Arnold.*

"Mummie, do lions go to heaven?"
"No, Dickie."
"Do missionaries?"
"Yes, of course."
"Well, what happens when a lion eats a missionary?"

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

March 22, Manchester.

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £76 0s. 9d. Received since:—C. and H. Shepherd, 10s.; Postman, 2s. 6d.; Dr. Martin, £3 3s.; J. H. Gartrell, £1 1s.; Sydney A. Gimson, £2 2s.; W. W., 2s. 6d.; R. L. M., £2; J. Brodie, 3s.; W. Broadbent, 10.; Robert Lloyd, 2s.; Atheist (Edmonton), 2s. 6d.; J. Dunlop, £1; South Africa, 10s.; Edward Oliver, £3 3s.; Wm. Mitchell, £1 1s.; W. F., £5.

R. L. M.—That fund is closed, but we have passed your £1 over to the beneficiaire as the shortest and easiest way. As to the other matter—all right.

C. T. SHAW.—Glad to hear that the circulation of the *Freethinker* is improving at Wolverhampton, and that the local "saints" are arranging for Sunday evening meetings at the Magnet House, Worcester-street.

DONALD MCKENZIE.—Pleased you enjoyed our Glasgow lectures so much. Thanks for future good wishes.

POSTMAN.—As desired; thanks.

HARRY JACKSON.—Next week.

J. H. GARTRELL, subscribing to the President's Honorarium Fund, writes: "I believe I was the only one last year from this finest and last borough town (Penzance) in England to subscribe to it. I hope I shall not be the only one this year."

SYDNEY A. GIMSON.—Thanks for what we know to be your sincere good wishes for 1914. The "health" we value mainly for the "work." Dispirited is a feeling we never experienced. We are speaking of public matters, of course.

M. RAPHAEL.—We were writing for English readers, and were obliged to use their week and days. One cannot burden one's pages with frequent explanations for the sake of a quite unessential accuracy.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—Josiah Pendlebury, £1; Henry Foyster, 10s.—Miss Vance reminds members that parcels of cast-off clothing are always welcome for distribution.

W. BROADBENT.—Yearly subscription passed over to Miss Vance. Thanks for your very good wishes for the new year.

ANDREW MILLAR.—You say you heard us at Glasgow on March 1 "with wonder, reverence, and delight," and "with not a little sorrow" that you might see us "so seldom now." Perhaps not so seldom as you apprehend.

H. O.—We think the publisher is Duffy, Dublin; but you ought to get it at any Catholic bookshop.

NORMAN MURRAY (Montreal).—Thanks for cutting, which had already been noticed in our columns, the news having been telegraphed over to the English newspapers at the time.

J. F. A.—Yes, it brought the bird down.

J. W. WHITE.—Glad to hear from you again. It is a long way from West Stanley, Co. Durham, to Sydney, New South Wales. Thanks for your efforts to promote our circulation out there. We are sorry that there is no Freethought organisation at Sidney now.

J. BRODIE.—It is pleasant to hear from one who has read the *Freethinker* regularly ever since 1882 and with undiminished interest.

E. B.—Cuttings very welcome.

EDWARD OLIVER, sending cheque to the President's Honorarium Fund, hopes the full amount "may be reached earlier this year," and our mind "spared an anxiety" which will make us "freer for" our "great work."

WM. MITCHELL.—Sorry it was overlooked. Servetus was burnt alive at a slow fire on October 26, 1553.

W. P. BALL.—Thanks again for cuttings.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

There was a conflict of dates in last week's "Sugar Plums." Both the Secular Education League meeting and the London N. S. S. members' half-yearly meeting were announced for the same evening—Tuesday, March 24. The former remains the fixture it was; the latter has had to be shifted to Tuesday evening, March 31.

The Secular Education League's meeting—the seventh annual gathering of members and friends—takes place at Caxton Hall (Room I) on Tuesday evening, March 24. The annual *business* meeting starts at 7.45 prompt. It will be followed by the annual *public* meeting at 8.15; when friends of Secular Education are invited to attend, whether members of the League or not. In the enforced absence of the President (Mr. George Greenwood, M.P.) through illness, which his many friends profoundly regret, the chair will be taken by Sir Henry Cotton; and among the speakers will be Lady Byles, Mr. Arthur Henderson, M.P., Mr. Halley Stewart, J.P., Rev. Walter Walsh (the late Mr. Voysey's successor), and Mr. G. W. Foote. We hope there will be a crowded meeting. Admission is free, and no tickets are required.

The Essex Hall meeting under the auspices of the National Committee for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws, which takes place on Friday evening, March 20, will be addressed by several members of Parliament (the list is not to hand yet), and by Messrs. Herbert Burrows, Harry Snell, and G. W. Foote. There are strong reasons why the hall should be crowded. We beg the friends of free speech in London, who read these lines, to attend and give weight to the public protest against those odious old laws.

Mr. Asquith has consented to receive a deputation from the memorialists who approached him with a view to moving in some way for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws. The reception will take place probably on March 26.

A General Meeting of the Camberwell Branch N. S. S. will be held at the Committee Room, Lambeth Baths, Kennington-road, on Tuesday evening, March 17, at 8 p.m., for the purpose of arranging the summer propaganda, electing new officers, etc. The meeting will not be restricted to members. All local sympathisers are earnestly invited to attend. The chair will be taken by Miss E. M. Vance, the N. S. S. General Secretary.

Leicester "saints" will have an opportunity of hearing Miss Kough lecture at the Secular Hall, Humberstone-gate, this evening (March 15). We hope they will avail themselves of it, and bring some of their friends along to the hall with them. There is no charge for admission—though Miss Kough's eloquence may cost them something (in the collection) before they go out.

We beg to call attention to the very interesting first-hand account, in the letter we print from Mr. G. Peabody this week, of the state of Christianity, and some other things, at Jerusalem. The Holy City, as it is still facetiously called, is a standing proof of what Christianity has done for the world. Near it Christ was born, outside it he was crucified and buried, from thence (or somewhere else—it isn't certain which) he rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, and there the first Christian Church was formed, after the fall of the city to be scattered all over the Roman world. Jerusalem ought, therefore, to be a striking illustration of the uplifting power of Christianity. But look at it! Read our correspondent's letter. And all other travellers tell the same story.

A number of new things are now being got ready for publication by the Pioneer Press under Mr. Foote's editorship or supervision. The series of Pioneer Pamphlets will be continued. A booklet by Mr. J. T. Lloyd (issued for the Secular Society, Ltd.), similar to Mr. Cohen's on Determinism, will also appear shortly—on the subject of Immortality. A new volume of Mr. Cohen's may likewise be expected. Mr. Foote intends seeing several of his own works through the press; *Bible Romances* (now out of print again) and *Bible Heroes*, for a start. He is also contemplating a fresh collection, or more, of essays and articles in volume form. Altogether there will be movement at our publishing office during the next two or three months.

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Science and the Soul.—VII.

(*Continued from p. 150.*)

"No indwelling deity now regulates the life of the burning sun, no guardian angels drive the stars across the arching firmament, the divine Ganges is water flowing down into the sea to evaporate into cloud and descend again in rain. No deity simmers in the boiling pot, no presiding spirits dwell in the volcanoes, no howling demon shrieks from the mouth of the lunatic. There was a period of human thought when the whole universe seemed actuated by spiritual life. For our knowledge of our own history, it is deeply interesting that there should remain rude races yet living under the philosophy we have so far passed from, since physics, chemistry, biology, have seized whole provinces of the ancient Animism, setting force for life, and law for will."—E. B. TYLOR, *Primitive Culture*, vol. ii., p. 167.

"If there is any natural knowledge of human immortality, it must be acquired either by intuition or by experience, there is no other way. Now, whether other men from a simple contemplation of their own nature, quite apart from reasoning, know or believe themselves intuitively to be immortal, I cannot say; but I can say with some confidence that for myself I have no such intuition whatever of my own immortality, and that if I am left to the resources of my natural faculties alone, I can as little affirm the certain or probable existence of my personality after death as I can affirm the certain or probable existence of a personal God. And I am bold enough to suspect that if men could analyse their own ideas, they would generally find themselves to be in a similar predicament as to both these profound topics."—PROFESSOR J. G. FRAZER, *The Belief in Immortality and the Worship of the Dead*, p. 26.

IT was only after long ages that primitive man developed the capacity to cultivate the food necessary to his subsistence. Before then he was a hunter. Now the savage hunter does not know the meaning of abstinence; many of our best observers of savage life have compared the savage to a child. He lives for the present and leaves the future to take care of itself; the lives of hunting tribes, therefore, alternate between a feast and a fast; between the extremes of gluttony and starvation. "The very inferior savage," says Letourneau, "like our own infant children, does not know what to-morrow means."* Topinard says of some African and Melanesian tribes, "if, after long abstinence, they get a windfall, they eat and think of nothing else."†

Waitz, the great German anthropologist, whose researches place him upon an equality with our best authorities in these matters, observes:—

"Hunting tribes require a great space, and are frequently in want, as they do not economise their provisions. The hundredth part of the game killed by the Zulus, observes Delegogue, would have been more than sufficient for him and all his companions. There are people who suffer annually from famine, and nevertheless neglect to lay in provisions or to cultivate the soil for their support. A characteristic trait, proving utter carelessness for the future, is mentioned by Labat, namely, that the Caribs sell their hammocks cheaper in the morning than in the evening."‡

Upon returning from a successful chase, the wild hunter proceeds to gorge himself to the fullest possible extent. Of the Esquimaux, it is said that after eating his fill, his wife will sit by him and press tit-bits into his mouth. On the rock-bound and inhospitable shores of the northern latitudes, says Lubbock, the sight may be seen of naked savages crawling in and out of the body of a stinking whale which has been washed ashore, eating their fill. Now, as Spencer points out, "Hunger and repletion, both very common with the primitive man, excite dreams of great vividness."§

The effect of eating a heavy supper in producing bad dreams and nightmares is too familiar to need dwelling upon.

Sproat, in his *Scenes and Studies of Savage Life* (p. 172) says—

"Owing to the quantity of indigestible food eaten by the natives, they often dream that they are visited by ghosts. After a supper of blubber, followed by one of the long talks about departed friends, which take place round the fire, some nervous and timid person may fancy, in the night time, that he sees a ghost."

On the other hand, the effect of fasting is equally productive of dreams and visions; the Shamans, or witch-doctors, of some tribes undergo voluntary fasting on purpose to produce dreams and visions. The Roman Catholic Church has always recognised this method of obtaining intercourse with the spiritual world; hence their fasts. It does not require much study of the lives of the Catholic saints to understand the true character of the beatific visions recorded by them after their long fasts and vigils. And if these men believed in the supernatural origin of their dreams and visions, how much more difficult it would be for primitive man to understand them for what they are? "To suppose him," says Spencer, "saying to himself 'It was all a dream,' is to suppose him already in possession of that hypothesis which we see he cannot have."*

Dorman says, "The influence of dreams is so great upon the life of American Indians that every act and thought is predicated upon this superstition."†

"A young Macusi Indian declared to Im Thurn that he had been taken out in the night and made to drag the canoe up a series of difficult cataracts. Nothing would persuade him of the fact that this was but a dream."‡

Herbert Spencer gives many instances of uncivilised tribes holding this belief. Among American Indians,—

"Morgan states that the Iroquois think dreams real, and obey their injunctions—do what they are told by those they see in dreams; and of the Chippeways, Keating asserts that they fast for the purpose of 'producing dreams, which they value above all things.'..... In Africa it is the same. The Congo people hold that what they see and hear in 'dreams come to them from spirits'; and among East Africans, the Wanika believe that the spirits of the dead appear to the living in dreams."§

The same authority also states that, according to Crantz, the Greenlanders believe "that the soul can forsake the body during the interval of sleep." The theory in New Zealand is "that during sleep the mind left the body, and that dreams are the objects seen during its wanderings"; and in Fiji "it is believed that the spirit of a man who still lives will leave the body to trouble other people when asleep." Similarly in Borneo. It is the conviction of the Dyaks that the soul during sleep goes on expeditions of its own, and "sees, hears, and talks." Among the Hill tribes of India, such as the Karens, the same doctrine is held, their statement being that "in sleep it [the Lá, spirit or ghost] wanders away to the ends of the earth, and our dreams are what the Lá sees and experiences in his perambulations."‖

Professor Frazer, in his *Belief in Immortality and the Worship of the Dead*, cites the high authority of Dr. Landtman, who, in his *Wanderings of the Dead in the Folklore of the Kiwai-speaking Papuans*, declares:—

"Undoubtedly dreams collected by me have largely contributed in supplying the natives with ideas about Adiri (the land of the dead) and life after death. A great number of dreams among the Kiwai people tell of wanderings to Adiri or of meetings with spirits of dead men; and as dreams are believed to describe the real things which the soul sees while running about outside the body, we understand that they must greatly influence the imagination of the people."

Similarly, the uncivilised man does not recognise his shadow to be merely the absence of light. To him it is a real thing, a part of himself, and he naturally connects this mysterious dark shape following him about with the equally mysterious thing which leaves his body in his dreams. Says Tylor:—

"Thus the Tasmanian word for the shadow is also

* Letourneau, *Sociology*, p. 555.
† Topinard, *Anthropology*, pp. 152-3.
‡ Waitz, *Anthropology*, p. 295.
§ Spencer, *Principles of Sociology*, vol. i., p. 133.

* Spencer, *Principles of Sociology*, vol. i., p. 133.
† Dorman, *Origin of Primitive Superstitions*, p. 61.
‡ King, *The Supernatural*, vol. i., p. 69.
§ Spencer, *Principles of Sociology*, vol. i., p. 137.
‖ *Principles of Sociology*, vol. i., p. 135.

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that for the spirit; the Algonquin Indians describe a man's soul as *otahchuk*, 'his shadow'; the Quiché language uses *natub* for 'shadow soul'; the Arawac *uɔja* means 'shadow, soul, image'; the Abipones made the one word *lodkal* serve for 'shadow, soul, echo, image.' The Zulus not only use the word *tungi* for 'shadow, spirit, ghost,' but they consider that at death the shadow of a man will in some way depart from the corpse, to become an ancestral spirit. The Basutos not only call the spirit remaining after death the *seriti* or 'shadow,' but they think that if a man walks on the river bank, a crocodile may seize his shadow in the water and draw him in. While in Old Calabar there is found the same identification of the spirit with the *ukpon* or 'shadow,' for a man to lose which is fatal."*

As Herbert Spencer remarks: "The primitive man, left to himself, necessarily concludes a shadow to be an actual existence, which belongs to the persons casting it";† and points out that "The Benin negroes regard men's shadows as their souls; and the Wanika are afraid of their own shadows: possibly thinking, as some other negroes do, that their shadows watch all their actions, and bear witness against them" (p. 116). He also observes that the Abipones and the Indians of Cumana believed the Echo was the answer of the spirit of the dead to him that spoke or called.

This soul, or shadow, which is believed to survive the body, is not immortal, but is believed to die away with the body. Says Lord Avebury:—

> "To be eaten was the greatest misfortune that could happen to a New Zealander, since he believed that the soul was thus destroyed as well as the body. The chief who could kill and devour his enemy had nothing more to fear from him either in this world or the next; on the contrary, the strength, ability, and prestige against which he had to contend, were not only conquered, but, by this dreadful process, incorporated and added to his own."‡

The same writer also gives the testimony of the French traveller, M. du Chaillu, who says:—

> "Ask the negro where is the spirit of his great-grandfather? he says he does not know; it is done. Ask him about the spirit of his father or brother who died yesterday, then he is full of fear and terror; he believes it to be generally near the place where the body has been buried, and among many tribes the village is removed immediately after the death of one of the inhabitants" (p. 146).

Even the highly civilised Egyptians believed that the soul only maintained its existence so long as the body remained intact; that is why they embalmed the body with such care, and their kings built those stupendous Pyramids, to raise which, says the historian Buckle, "there must have been tyranny on the part of the rulers, and slavery on the part of the people."§ For, as he points out, "they were neither more nor less than tombs for the Egyptian kings!" whose embalmed bodies concealed in the heart of these immense masses of stone, were thought to be safe from destruction for all time.

(*To be continued.*) W. MANN.

* E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, vol. i., p. 430.
† Spencer, *Principles of Sociology*, vol. i., p. 115.
‡ Lord Avebury, *Marriage, Totemism, and Religion*, pp. 151-2.
§ Buckle, *History of Civilisation*, p. 52.

The Divinities of Fecundity.

ASSOCIATED with the worship of the gods of fertility, a system of sacred harlotry was anciently prevalent throughout Western Asia, and was in Syria and in Cyprus conspicuously connected with the adoration of Adonis.

As a result of a wide survey of the accumulated evidences of modern scholarship, Professor Frazer was driven to the conclusion that among agricultural peoples the Great Mother Goddess became the personification of the procreative processes of Nature, and that she was worshiped under different designations, but with practically identical rites and ceremonies, by many races in Western Asia. The goddess was accompanied by a lover, or procession of lovers, with whom she united every year, the divine marriage being looked upon as indispensable to the growth and fruition of living things. Moreover, there is much reason to believe that the "fabulous union of the divine pair was simulated and, as it were, multiplied on earth by the real, though temporary, union of the human sexes at the sanctuary of the goddess for the sake of thereby ensuring the fruitfulness of the ground and the increase of man and beast." And if, as appears probable, the conception of the Great Earth Goddess was in classical times already very ancient—dating, indeed, from the far distant period when marriage was either unknown or just tolerated as a risky innovation, or regarded as an immoral interference with the sacred communal rights—we can, as Professor Frazer says, understand why the goddess herself was almost invariably pictured as unmarried and unchaste, and why her worshipers were compelled to follow the example she had set them.

> "For had she been a divine wife united to a divine husband, the natural counterpart of their union would have been the lawful marriage of men and women, and there would have been no need to resort to a system of prostitution or promiscuity in order to effect those purposes which, on the principles of homœopathic magic, might in that case have been as well or better attained by the legitimate intercourse of the sexes in matrimony. Formerly, perhaps, every woman was obliged to submit at least once in her life to the exercise of those marital rights which at a still earlier period had theoretically belonged in permanence to all the males of the tribe."*

With the evolution of individual marriage, however, the earlier communism and promiscuity fell into disfavor, and the occasional observance of the ancient custom came to be regarded with growing repugnance by the people, and they began to evade in practice a custom which was indelibly associated with their religious beliefs. This compromise assumed various forms. Women were sometimes suffered to sacrifice their hair as a substitute for their chastity; and a phallic symbol did duty in other instances for the reproductive act. But while the great majority of women were thus released from the old obligation, it was not deemed prudent to abolish the custom absolutely. Certain of the sex were in consequence set apart to maintain the ancient religious ceremony.

> "These became prostitutes either for life or for a term of years at one of the temples: dedicated to the service of religion, they were invested with a sacred character, and their vocation, far from being deemed infamous, was probably long regarded by the laity as an exercise of more than common virtue, and rewarded with a tribute of mixed wonder, reverence, and pity, not unlike that which in some parts of the world is still paid to women who seek to honor their Creator in a different way by renouncing the natural functions of their sex and the tenderest relations of humanity. It is thus that the folly of mankind finds vent in opposite extremes alike harmful and deplorable."

There is no reason to doubt that the gods of fertility were honored by all the Semitic peoples, including the ancient Israelites. Holy men lived in the Temple of Jerusalem, and were attended by women, who appear to have ministered unto them. Despite all the glosses put upon the sacred text, there can be little doubt as to the functions of these priests, who were not expelled from the Temple until the reign of Josiah. "In Palestine," writes Professor Frazer, "as in other Semitic lands, the hire of sacred prostitutes was probably dedicated to the deity as one of his regular dues: he took tribute of men and women as of flocks and herds, of fields and vineyards and oliveyards."†

In contemporary Africa and India sacred harlotry still survives. Every Tamil temple of any note in Southern India contains its bevy of sacred women. Twice daily they dance before and minister to the requirements of the idol. These dancing women are trained from infancy for their holy profession, dancing and singing being a necessary part of their

* *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, pp. 35, 36.
† *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, p. 15.

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education. Among the weavers of a small Madras town the first girl born of every family is dedicated to the service of the god. These females are wedded either to the idol or to a sacred sword ere they commence their career in the temple, and they are commonly spoken of as the wives of the divinity.

In Travancore the dancing women of the temple are regarded as the servants of God. Their union with the deity is supposed to imply a complete surrender to his desires, with the full renunciation of all family duties. From the standpoint of the pious Hindoo, these sacred women may fairly be compared with "a lady nurse at a hospital or a sister at a convent." They assist the priest, dance and sing to the divinity, are pensioned off as they advance in years and infirmity, and when overtaken by death the temple funds bear part of the funeral expenses. Whatever the real functions of these women may now be, the sexual side of their profession was in any case originally associated with the idea of assisting the procreative agencies of life.

Examples of kindred customs drawn from savage races conduct us nearer to the primitive conceptions which underlie them. With the Ewe peoples of West Africa sacred harlots are considered the spouses of the gods. During their novitiate they are specially reserved to the priestly caste; but, curiously enough, when this period is past they sink to the level of common strumpets. These unfortunate women, however, excite neither pity nor contempt, as they continue to be regarded as the wives of the god, and their licentious acts are generally attributed to the indwelling agency of the divinity who possesses them, while their offspring are looked upon as the sons and daughters of their divine husbands.

A West African serpent-god is presented by his worshipers with human wives. This divinity—the python-god—is wedded to these women in secret in his temple; their children are accounted his; but, needless to say, the priests appear to be the real parents. The natives seem to connect the abundance of the harvest with the successful union of the women with the serpent. When the millet begins to grow, the old priestesses secure new brides for the god. In seasons of flood and drought the sacred python is invoked with compelling earnestness; he appears to preside over the growth of vegetable life and the increase of the cattle.

> "Once in a bad season the Dutch factor Bosman found the King of Whydah in a great rage. His Majesty explained the reason of his discomposure by saying 'that that year he had sent much larger offerings to the snake-house than usual, in order to obtain a good crop; and that one of his viceroys (whom he showed me) had desired him afresh in the name of the priests, who threatened a barren year, to send yet more. To which he answered that he did not intend to make any further offerings this year; and if the snake would not bestow a plentiful harvest on them, he might let it alone; for (said he) I cannot be more damaged thereby, the greatest part of my corn being already rotten in the field.'"

Among the Slave Coast negroes, men as well as women are consecrated to the deity. This sacerdotal caste enjoys numerous privileges, and is obeyed with fear and trembling by the common people. Having been fully ordained, the priest is honored as the special mouthpiece of the divinity, whose commands he communicates to the people while in a condition of nervous excitement, which is taken as a positive proof of divine possession. Nevertheless, a modicum of scepticism appears to have put in an appearance.

> "Any crime which a priest committed in a state of frenzy used to remain unpunished, no doubt because the act was thought to be the act of the god. But this benefit of clergy was so much abused that under King Gezo the law had to be altered; and although, while he is still possessed by the god, the inspired criminal is safe, he is now liable to punishment as soon as the divine spirit leaves him."

But the natives in general still regard these priests with considerable fear, and their power over the people remains very great.

Also among the savage races of the Gold Coast are to be found singing and capering men and women who are reverenced as the messengers of the gods. The priests are not celibate, but marry like the ordinary people; and although the priestesses are denied this right, they are free to grant their favors to all who happen to strike their fancy. The "celibate condition" of these sacred women is a consequence of their supposed espousal to the divinities.

Just as in Africa and India the temple harlots were looked upon as the partners of the gods, whose licentiousness was to be pardoned on account of their acting under the influences of religious inspiration, so the sacred harlots of antiquity, in much the same manner, were regarded as the brides of the deity. The reproductive rites of religion appear to have been strictly confined to the sacred edifice itself, and seem to have been originally designed to promote the activities of the deities of fecundity while these were engaged in carrying on the multiplication of man and beast, and the increase of vegetable life.

With the civilised communities of the ancient world this idea, however much it may have been obscured by time and the changes which time carries in its train, undeniably underlies many of the ceremonies sacred to the divinities of Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon. In the temple of Bel or Marduk a female regularly reposed on the god's couch, and the divinity was believed to visit her by night. In Egypt the spouse of the god was supposed to share her slumbers in the temple at Thebes, her consort being the great Ammon himself.

In all probability that form of religion known as phallic worship, in which adoration of the generative powers plays so conspicuous a part, is to be traced to kindred conceptions. Phallicism is very common among savage races, and in its ruder forms is openly orgiastic; but with the development of civilisation the realism of the earlier ceremonies and beliefs gradually gives place to a more poetical recognition of the majestic powers of natural reproduction. But even in civilised and cultured Rome the women carried the emblem of fecundity in procession from one temple to another. The phallic sign was worn as an amulet, and this custom long survived the triumph of the Christian faith. The practice was common throughout the Middle Ages, and attempts were made to prohibit it at the Church Council at Mans in 1247, and at Tours in 1396.

T. F. PALMER.

Correspondence.

CHRISTIANITY AT JERUSALEM.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I am in Jerusalem for my twelfth annual visit, having come here first in 1903, and every year since, the entire distance from my home in Boston, U.S.A., having been traversed each time. The brawls between the different sects and denominations here are well known, and I have witnessed many of them, even to the ghastly climax of seeing the dead in the street. This year, however, for the first time, I saw a party of courteous gentlemen violently and brutally expelled from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre; and, the incident being a typical one, and the circumstances being really instructive, it occurs to me that you may like to set it before your readers; in case you do, I here set forth the facts. I must first state that I can vouch for the precise truth of what I myself saw only; in this city of cruelty, misery, blindness, dirt, and Christianity, it is most difficult to obtain accurate information on any topic; least of all can one believe what is told him regarding religious brawls—all interests combining to hush them and have them forgotten; a hundred times, when inquiring about some detail, I have been abruptly asked, before my question was answered, "How did you find it out?" "Who told you?" Unless I am sure of my ground, I am always told that "no such thing occurred; it was a mistake." Now for the facts:—

Last Wednesday morning, at 8.30, I was passing across the courtyard in front of the church, not intending to enter,

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and not being within 100 feet of the entrance; a loud, angry, and continued shouting from the interior attracted my attention; a moment later, a party of about 20 to 25 gentlemen were ordered and pushed more or less violently out of the church. Baron Rothschild, perhaps the greatest living benefactor of this most wretched city, had arrived here the previous day.

On inquiring of six or eight of the generally best-informed merchants here, all of whom I know, I was told that these gentlemen were members of Baron Rothschild's party, some, or all, being Jews; they had gone to the church under the guidance and protection of one of the official dragomans; the general sentiment was that the Christians had acted with extreme, and most *unprecedented* (this I know to be true) kindness and gentleness, in not killing, or at least seriously injuring these Jews—it being so perfectly understood that Jews who attempt to enter the church, or even to walk across the courtyard, will absolutely be murdered by the infuriated lovers of the meek and lowly Jew of Palestine, that for a generation no Jewish resident here has even attempted it. That this treatment of Jews is based on cruelty, and not on principle, seems to be proven by the well-known fact that at least one well-known Jew is at times allowed, and requested to enter the church, because he is a skilled artisan, and the Christians need his services.

Doubtless the wealth and high standing of this party accounts for the small amount of violence used in this case. I am told that Turkey has long since advised all governments of its inability to protect Jews from Christian ferocity, and that an agreement exists to the effect that damages, in event of a Jew being murdered on account of his proximity to the church, will be fixed at thirty piastres—less than six shillings.

Now for the sequel. This morning, on inquiring of such friends as I chanced to meet if there were any further news of the event, one or two seemed to have wholly "forgotten" the incident and the conversation regarding it; at least two, who gave me the information I narrate herein, declared that the whole thing was a mistake, and had not occurred at all. On my reminding them that I had *seen* the affair, they said that the people were put out of the church because the monks were cleaning it. The fact is that no one is put out, or kept out; and that exit, or entrance, is not in the slightest degree affected in consequence of the cleaning of the church—with the exception of the *weekly* washing, which was not going on at the time, and which is done on Friday, not Wednesday. If the sweeping was going on, it would not account for the event; furthermore, it would not account for the shouting, screaming, and violent and blackguardly actions that were in evidence. When I spoke of all this, I was further told that "that is the way the Christians have of asking people to keep out during the cleaning."

The general poverty and misery are much the same as usual. The cruelty to animals—formerly absolutely indescribable, and said to be the very worst in the world (which I endorse, having crossed the Atlantic fifty-seven times, and travelled much in Asia and Africa)—is somewhat diminished; a very small group of English people—perhaps ten or less—having done devoted service. All are Christians, and one is secretary of the Y.M.C.A. here. I honor them all more than I can say.

Excepting these, no Christian, and few Moslems, take the slightest interest in the treatment of animals. When I say that a common method of "getting rid of" rats and mice, and a not at all uncommon method of similarly disposing of cats, and even dogs, is pouring oil on them, setting it on fire, and "seeing the fun"—without protest, unless one of the small group I mention make it, and his, or her, protest always being laughed at—I give a fair index of the general sentiment in this most religious city—a city, literally, of "religion run mad." The wife of a clergyman here tells me she was thus laughed at by one of the oldest employees in the office of Thos. Cook & Son for protesting against burning an animal in precisely this way.

PHILIP G. PEABODY.

Palestine, Syria, Turkey, Asia, February 10, 1914.

"GENTLE JESUS."

Oh! what have sickly children done to share
Thy cup of sorrows? Yet their dull, sad pain
Makes the earth awful. On the tomb's dark stair
Moan idiots, with no glimmer on the brain.
No shrill priest with his hangman's cord can beat
Thy mercy into these. Ah, nay! Ah, nay!
The angels Thou hast sent to haunt the street
Are hunger and distortion and decay.
Lord! That madest man and sendest him foes so fleet
Who shall judge Thee upon Thy judgment day?

—*Robert Buchanan.*

SKY PILOTS.

You have so debilitated the minds of men and women by your promises and your dreams that many a generation must come and go before Europe can throw off the yoke of your superstition. But we promise you that they shall be generations of strenuous battle. We give you all the advantages that you can get from the sincerity and pious worth of the good and simple among you. We give you all that the bad among you may get by resort to the poisoned weapons of your profession and your traditions—its bribes to mental indolence, its hypocritical affectations in the pulpit, its tyranny in the closet, its false speciousness in the world; its menace at the death-bed. With all these you may do your worst, and still humanity will escape you, still the conscience of the race will rise away from you; still the growth of brighter ideals and a nobler purpose will go on, leaving ever further and further behind them your dwarfed finality and leaden, moveless stereotype. We shall pass you by on your flank; your fiercest darts will only spend themselves on air. We will not attack you as Voltaire did; we will not exterminate you; we shall explain you. History will place your dogma in its class, above or below a hundred competing dogmas, exactly as the naturalist classifies his species. From being a conviction it will sink to a curiosity, from being the guide to millions of human lives it will dwindle down to a chapter in a book. As history explains your dogma, so science will dry it up; the conception of law will silently make the conception of the daily miracle of your altars seem impossible, the mental climate will gradually deprive your symbols of their nourishment, and men will turn their backs on your system, not because they confuted it, but because, like witchcraft or astrology, it has ceased to interest them. The great ship of your church, once so stout and fair, and well-laden with good destinies, is become a skeleton ship; it is a phantom hulk, with warped planks and sere canvas, and you who work it are no more than the ghosts of dead men, and at the hour when you seem to have reached the bay, down your ship will sink like lead or like stone, to the deepest bottom.—*John Morley, "Miscellanies."*

GOD.

I would not be an angel and with the angels stand,
To land a silly God, Sir, who fools with either hand;
I'd rather be a pumpkin, an oyster or a slug,
I'd rather be a tapeworm, a trichina or a bug;
I'd rather be the parasite of monkey, man or cod,
Than be a praying parasite of anything called "God."
That name denotes all folly, all vice and every crime,
That man has e'er exhibited in all the course of time!
Ay, choose from human language, from every babbling tongue,
From every speech e'er spoken, or clicked or growled or sung—
Select the word most pregnant with every evil sense,
Most full of downright wickedness, of folly and pretence—
You'll find, I'm very certain, when the round of tongues you've trod,
The word most direly hateful is the tiny nomen, *God!*

—*Joseph Symes.*

VOLTAIRE'S TASK.

Voltaire's task, however, was never directly political, but spiritual—to shake the foundations of that religious system which professed to be founded on the revelation of Christ. Was he not right? If we find ourselves walking amidst a generation of cruel and unjust and darkened spirits, we may be assured that it is their beliefs on what they deem highest that have made them so. There is no counting with certainty on the justice of men who are capable of fashioning and worshiping an unjust divinity, nor on their humanity so long as they incorporate inhuman motives in their most sacred dogmas, nor on their reasonableness while they rigorously decline to accept reason as a test of truth.—*John Morley.*

Obituary.

We regret to report the death, after a long and painful illness, of Mrs. R. Axelby, of 22 Wattisfield-road, Clapton, N.E., whose burial took place at Chingford Mount Cemetery on Saturday, March 7, when a Secular Service was conducted at the graveside. Mrs. Axelby was a devoted mother, a faithful wife, and an excellent neighbor. Though not an avowed Freethinker, she had much sympathy with the Freethought movement; but Mr. Axelby was a zealous worker for the cause in the Hall of Science days, and is loyal to its principles at the present time. We offer him and the family our sincere condolence.—J. T. L.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Lambeth Baths, Kennington-road): Tuesday, March 17, at 8, General Meeting. Local sympathisers cordially invited.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workman's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, W. Davidson, "The Theological Bog."

OUTDOOR.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, E. Burke, "Organised Insanity."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (North Saloon, City Hall): Joseph McCabe, 12 noon, "The Real Sources of Christ's Teaching"; 6.30, "The Virtues of Irreligion."

LEICESTER (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Miss K. B. Kough, "Immortality."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Fred Morgan, Miscellaneous Dramatic Recital.

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OF MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF THE LEAGUE

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CHAIR TO BE TAKEN BY

SIR HENRY COTTON.

SPEAKERS:

MR. G. W. FOOTE, MR. ARTHUR HENDERSON, M.P., MR. HALLEY STEWART, J.P., REV. W. WALSH, D.D.

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The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularisation of the State, etc., etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

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THE
Freethinker
Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXXIV.—NO. 12 SUNDAY, MARCH 22, 1914 PRICE TWOPENCE

People will not look forward to posterity who never looked backward to their ancestors.—EDMUND BURKE.

Christian Self-glorification.

THE annual meeting of the Free Church Council held at Norwich last week was notable for the extraordinarily high estimate of Christians generally, and of Christian ministers in particular, to which it gave so emphatic an expression. While self-esteem is doubtless to be encouraged, being the faculty that adds dignity and power to a man's character, it is certainly anything but a virtue to exalt ourselves at the expense of depreciating others. The doing of this is by no means a sign of real greatness. Boasting always indicates moral littleness. It is true that Christians sing their own praises presumably in order to glorify God, because the better they are supposed to be the greater is the credit due to him. Briefly stated, the following is their position: "Not unto us, but unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father—to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." Sheltered behind such a sentiment a man may and does indulge in self-glorification to his heart's content. But we must not forget that by God or Christ, in such a connection, is meant a glorified picture of the man himself. Analyse any conception of the Divine Being and you will find that it consists of an unnatural and ludicrous magnification of purely human attributes. It is this alone that accounts for the endless number of such conceptions, and the enormous differences and even contradictions which characterise them. The prophet Jeremiah informs us that the Gods of Israel were as numerous as his cities, which is equally true of the divinities worshiped in Christendom to-day. It follows from this that to glorify God is equivalent to glorifying self. Preachers talk very glibly about the Holy Ghost, the Great White Throne, and the words of the living God, as if they were objects of direct knowledge, when in reality their very existence is insusceptible of demonstration. The moment you examine the so-called words of the living God you learn that they are extremely human in their nature and origin.

Now, the retiring President of the Council, the Rev. Alexander Connell, preached a sermon from the text, "The word of God came unto John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness" (Luke iii. 2), in which he confidently asserted that the people who do not believe such a text are the biggest fools on earth. He said:—

> "The people most to be pitied in this generation, or in any generation, are the people who go about the world spiritually blind. They may be masters of many sciences, but the secret of all true knowledge eludes them. They may have much joy out of life, but life itself they never know. They may gather much wealth, but their eyes never rest on the pearl of great price. They may live their length of days, and see many a peaceful sunset; but they never see the world as God made it, or as God meant it to be. They may taste of human affection, and may value it above all else; but they miss the love that lies disclosed like a glory about the humblest inquirer who lights his way with the lamp of the Spirit and has his brow fanned by the faintest breath of the Holy Ghost."

What is it to be "spiritually blind"? Simply not to believe that John the Baptist was God's spokesman, not to regard the Bible either as being, or as continuing, a Divine revelation, or not to accept Jesus Christ as one's all-loving Savior. Well, we frankly admit that we are "spiritually blind," and we positively decline to accept any Christian's pity. We even glory in our blindness. Mr. Connell, himself a Christian minister, addressed a Christian assembly, saying, in effect, "We alone are truly good and wise; we alone know what life is, and how to live it; we alone can read history, and shall yet have to rewrite it from beginning to end; we alone are ever reshaping our ideals and recapturing our dreams, floating our barques on life's highest tides and having the light of the morning in our faces." No wonder that he was heard with gladness. It was eminently soothing flattery that flowed from his mouth, and like most flattery, it was wholly false. We boldly deny the intellectual and moral superiority of Christians. What knowledge does Mr. Connell possess of which an Atheistic scientist is destitute? What is that "secret of all true knowledge" which is said to elude an unbeliever? Does the reverend gentleman really think that Sir Ray Lankester, or Dr. Chalmers Mitchell, is ignorant of, while he knows, "life itself"? As a matter of fact, Christians are not *knowers*, but *believers*. The only genuine knower is the natural man whom Mr. Connell looks down upon. This despised species, we are told, may have much joy out of life, live on to a ripe old age, and witness many a lovely sunset, may gather much wealth, taste the sweetness of human affection, and value it as if it were the pearl of greatest price; but he can never see the world as God made it, or as God meant it to be, or experience "the love that lies disclosed like a glory about the humblest inquirer who lights his way with the lamp of the Spirit and has his brow fanned by the faintest breath of the Holy Ghost." That is perfectly true, as the natural man is proud to admit; but his contention is that what is true of him is, in reality, equally true of all others. Has Mr. Connell ever seen the world as God made it, or as God meant it to be, or does he know that the world was ever made at all, or is meant to serve any specific purpose? It is comparatively easy to write fine sentences about the lamp of the Spirit and the breath of the Holy Ghost, and thereby to stir the emotions of credulous people; but we cannot repeat too often that both the lamp of the Spirit and the breath of the Holy Ghost are but creatures of the fancy, absolutely unknown to unbelievers.

While Mr. Connell devoted his discourse to the glorification of Christians in general, and only incidentally to that of ministers, Principal Forsyth, a trainer of young preachers, confined his attention to the rights and privileges of the ministry. As reported in the *Christian World* for March 12, he said:—

> "The ministry had not to reform the world, but to create a Church for the world's reformation. The ministry was effective as it was creative. It was not there merely for the sake of decency and order in the Church. No wonder the ministry is lightly treated if it is viewed as a mere convenience, like a chairman, or the proposer of a motion. And in some quarters it is

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> so viewed. Some preaching is like proposing the health of the Gospel. Some prayer is like moving a vote of thanks to the Almighty. There are those who look upon the minister simply as one of the members of the Church—the talking or the presiding member. They think anything else spoils him as a brother. They believe a church could go on without a minister, only not so well, with less decency and order. That is all wrong. The minister is much more than a brother. He is neither the mouthpiece of the church, nor its chairman, nor its secretary. He is not the servant of the church. He is an apostle to it, the mouthpiece of Christ, the servant of the Word, and of the church only for that sake. The ministry is a sacramental office..... The ministry represents God. It carries the Word of his mercy to the world. Nay, more, it *conveys* God in his grace."

We are in full agreement with the erudite Principal. Preaching is essential to the existence of the Church, just as the Church is essential to that of Christianity; but preaching cannot be effective unless it is viewed as a Divine institution. A church's success is completely dependent upon the minister, and the minister's influence upon the belief that he is the mouthpiece of God. Indeed, the existence of God is conditioned on the belief in the minister as his vicegerent. As the Principal so aptly says, the minister *conveys* him. Now, such a belief in the minister is rapidly dying out, and in consequence churches and chapels are emptying. It is true that a few places of worship are still crowded, but in every instance that is due to the minister's superior gifts, by the prudent exercise of which he manages to keep the belief in himself as God's ambassador still alive. God has never filled a single church yet, nor has the Holy Ghost ever displayed his power in the conversion of sinners. All the work has always been done by the clergy and their supporters, and when their work fails the Church's life is endangered. It is all very well for Dr. Forsyth to say that "it is not an effective ministry when the crowds the minister drew melt whenever he goes, when they gather about a personality rather than about the Church"; but there is no doubt whatever but that the crowds do melt when the popular minister leaves, unless he is succeeded by an equally popular one.

Now our conclusion is that the self-glorification so ardently indulged in by Christians is sure to end in the disintegration of their creed and the entire loss of their hold upon the world. In any truly human sense they have never been better than other people, and assuredly they owe nothing to the so-called mercy and grace of God in Christ. It is to the advent and ministrations of Humanism that the world is indebted for whatever progress it has made during the last few centuries; and Humanism has come in and done its work almost in the exact proportion in which supernaturalism has been decaying.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Limitations of Science.—II.

(Concluded from p. 163.)

IT is nonsense, says Professor Mellone, to assume that natural evolution leads to good, or that the one desire is any better or worse than the other, because science cannot prove it. These things lie outside the scope of science. Therefore, it is vain to hope to build human life on "Rationalism" or on science:

> "An outlook on life based entirely on science means an outlook, which does indeed leave out every ground for accepting any religious belief as true, but it also leaves out every ground for distinguishing degrees of worth or goodness and badness in human purposes. The whole world of appreciation, that is, the distinctively human world, is dissolved into chaos. By implication, all the distinctive tendencies of human nature (as distinguished from animal nature) are disregarded, save the one ideal—the ascertainment of laws of cause and effect."

The cat is out of the bag here with a vengeance. So long as we base life entirely on science it leaves out all ground for accepting religious belief. Therefore, some other reason must be found for religion. Hence the desire to prove that science cannot cover the whole of life, but leaves untouched what is to human beings the most important part. The confession is interesting.

As I have already pointed out, it is not true that science is incompetent to deal with *any* part of life. Its method is equally applicable to every aspect. There is, however, a certain truth mixed up with Dr. Mellone's statements, and it is well worth while setting forth that truth as plainly as possible.

In what sense can we hold that some desires are better than others, that some things are good and some bad, or that the process of natural evolution is good? Eliminating ourselves and our standards of valuation, what right have we to call anything good or bad? The answer is, none at all. If Dr. Mellone had put the case in this way I should have agreed with him. As mere natural facts all desires are equal. As natural facts an earthquake is neither better nor worse than a gleam of sunshine. As natural facts a man is no better and no worse than a tapeworm. In truth, good and bad, better or worse, higher or lower, have no meaning once we put on one side the human standard of valuation. Things are. They are what they are because of all the circumstances that made them what they are. Good and bad are inapplicable to nature, because such terms are only valid in the region of intelligent purpose. This is the truth contained in Dr. Mellone's statement, although in setting it down he has quite lost sight of its real import, and has mixed it up with a lot of quite irrelevant matter.

This is the exact truth of the matter so long as we eliminate the human standard of value. But this standard exists, and as it exists, it becomes a fact of which a sane science duly takes note. In order to better group, and better understand existing facts, we agree to call certain things good or bad, higher or lower, perfect or imperfect. From our point of view we consider the preservation of the race, the health of the race, the happiness of the race, as good things. Consequently, anything that favors these ends we call good. As Dr. Mellone rightly says, "good" means good for *something*, that is, in relation to some ideal end or purpose. But so far as nature itself is concerned, there is no justification for assuming any end or purpose in particular. Given appropriate conditions, and the germs of tuberculosis develop as surely as the human embryo becomes a man or a woman. Nature shows just as much "care" in producing a poison as in furnishing an antidote. You simply cannot deduce any end or purpose from nature because it shows a constant war of antagonistic tendencies, a constant building up and pulling down, with just as much "foresight" or "care" or "wisdom" shown in the one direction as in the other.

Of course, it may be said that we have the growth of higher forms of life and their prevalence as so much evidence in favor of natural progress. But this phrase "higher forms of life" is a sheer begging of the question. Man is only perfect after his kind, as other animals are perfect after theirs. *We* say that the prevalence of the human, and of animals and plants that are useful or pleasing to man, is a sign of advance. But can anyone point out in what way, once we eliminate *our* standard of value, this is advancement? One may safely challenge all the logicians and scientists in existence to prove that the present earth is actually "higher" or "better" than it was in the Carboniferous epoch. They can show it is different; but difference in nature is only difference. It is we who make things better or worse, good or bad. We say that things are improving when they favor our ends and the realisation of our ideals, just as other forms of life might have argued that things were deteriorating when changing conditions threatened their destruction. Order, improvement, progress, are, in short, what logicians call methodological concepts. They are conceptions framed by us to express changes in the direction of

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realising our ideals. But they have no value apart from our ideals. And their inapplicability to nature at large is shown by the scientific certainty that just as death puts an end to the individual, so nature will write "finis" to all our "progress" by making the earth impossible for animal habitation.

Nevertheless, these ideals exist; they have their place and their value. No one denies either the one or the other; all that is needful is to understand their place and their character. Dr. Mellone's error lies in taking it for granted that because science declares our measures of "good" and "bad" to be purely ideal constructions, therefore they do not exist to science, and science can say nothing concerning them. This is absurdly inaccurate. Whatever the nature of these ideals, there is no questioning their existence, and they become part of the "facts" which influence human action, and with which science has, consequently, to deal. "Science," says Dr. Mellone, "cannot sit in judgment on human purposes and decide on their relative worth." As a matter of fact, that is exactly what science is always doing. Unless Dr. Mellone denies the possibility of a science of human conduct—and to do so would indeed mean that the "distinctively human world is dissolved into chaos"—he must admit that certain desires are preferable to others in order to achieve a given end—whatever that end may be. Most emphatically science can do more than ascertain "the natural conditions under which they occur"—although even this would go a long way towards destroying Dr. Mellone's case—she can indicate their consequences. That is, science can do here exactly what she does elsewhere. She can analyse and she can synthesise. She can show under what conditions desires occur, and indicate the consequences that will result from their operation. And that is only what is done when the question is concerned with purely physical facts and forces.

Now, common observation finds that people desire to live; also that they desire to live experiencing the minimum of pain and the maximum of happiness. And with these desires dominant, there goes the conclusion that any conduct that favors these ends is good, and a conduct that prevents their realisation is bad. Next, science, which is only common observation organised and elaborated, analyses the conditions of healthy and pleasurable life, and says, virtually, If you desire to live, and live happily, these are the things that must be done and these are the things that must be avoided. It goes further, and points out why there exists this desire to live, and why the desire for happiness. Without the first the race would long since have ceased to exist, and without the second there would be no guarantee that, having discovered what was beneficial, the race would have gone on practising it. The main functions of life are really carried on because people find an organic pleasure in their performance, and the reason for this is perfectly plain to those who care to go into the subject. Every reason that we have for calling one thing good and another thing bad remains, whether we base life on science or not. The real distinction lies in the fact that science enables us to say *why* things are called good, and the reason why we have come to regard them as such.

But, says Dr. Mellone, "If a man chooses to deny any of these statements, there is not a word, from the merely scientific point of view, to be said against him." It all depends upon how far his denials go. If he denies that certain things are considered good by most people, and that the movement of society is in the direction of what they consider good, then he is certainly in the wrong, and can be shown to be so. But if he denies that happiness is a good thing, if he asserts that the sooner life comes to an end the better, then one can only question the conclusion by challenging the grounds on which it is made. Really, no one does deny the distinction—between good and bad. The correctness of our classification may be questioned, but the possibility of a classification is admitted in the act of framing the indictment. Man is a bundle of antipathies and attractions, and these are inevitably expressed under the categories of good and bad.

But suppose some one does choose to deny that things usually accepted as good are good, and that from the "merely scientific" point of view, what then? It is only what may happen to Dr. Mellone's position. Dr. Mellone believes that good and bad exist in virtue of a belief in the decree of some "Supreme Reason." But suppose anyone chooses to deny this "Supreme Reason." What can Dr. Mellone do? He is obviously helpless. He can only say, "If you accept my premiss of a 'Supreme Reason,' then I can show that some things are good and others bad. If you do not accept the premiss, the conclusion cannot be accepted either." Well, that is really the position of the scientist. He says, "If you grant that my reading of life is correct, then there is an obvious standard by which you may determine what is right and wrong. If you deny my premises, I cannot expect you to accept the conclusions." So far the scientist and the religionist are on equal grounds. But now the scientist has a distinct advantage over the religionist. When all is said and done, belief in the "Supreme Reason" is an act of pure faith. The scientist asks for no such act of intellectual abnegation. He appeals to human nature as it is, as we know it in ourselves and in intercourse with others. He starts with facts, and his generalisations are in the nature of conclusions drawn therefrom. The religionist commences with a mystery and ends in a fog.

Finally, I do not think anyone can seriously read apologetics of the kind I have been considering without being struck by their unreality. The genuine ground of the criticism is not stated. This is not that science fails to supply grounds for ethical judgments, but that it offers no foothold for religion. It is seen, in spite of apologies offered to reconcile religion and science, that no genuine reconciliation is possible. If science does not pronounce against religion, it affords no reason for it. All that remains is to mark off a region and label it "Religion; No Admittance to Science." The subterfuge is patent, the policy futile. Science does not claim a part of life, but the whole. All knowledge, actual and possible, is its province; all facts, physical, biological, mental and moral, its material. Beyond these lies ignorance, deep, impenetrable, irremovable. Religion is welcome to that region; but it will have to release its hold on human nature, as it has already given up the physical universe.

C. COHEN.

Science and the Soul.—VIII.

(Continued from p. 171.)

"Of all our acquired tastes, the taste for living for ever is the one which will be found least deeply rooted amongst men, if for no other reason, because it has never been strengthened by indulgence. No mortal knows whether a resurrection to eternal life would answer his expectations or not."—EDITH SIMCOX, *Natural Law*, p. 359.

"Christians believe themselves to be the aristocracy of heaven upon earth; they are admitted to the spiritual court, while millions of men in foreign lands have never been presented. They bow their knees and say that they are miserable sinners, and their hearts rankle with abominable pride. Poor infatuated fools! Their servility is real, and their insolence is real, but their king is a phantom and there palace is a dream."

"What a state of society is this in which *free-thinker* is a term of abuse, and in which doubt is regarded as a sin. Men have a Bluebeard's chamber in their minds which they dare not open; they have a faith which they dare not examine lest they should be forced to cast it from them in contempt."—WINWOOD READE, *The Martyrdom of Man*, pp. 534-541.

"We may love the mystical and talk much of the shadows, but when it comes to going out among them and laying hold of them with the hand of faith, we are not of the excursion."—OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES, *Literary Friends and Acquaintance*; cited by Osler, *Science and Immortality*, p. 25.

WE have now seen how man came by his ideas of ghosts, spirits, souls, and a future existence after death. Primitive man arrived at them, quite logically, in the same way that he derived the

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idea that the earth was fixed and the sun moved, from the evidence of his senses, although we know that the evidence of his senses was false.

Science gives no countenance to the crude idea that certain cunning men invented tales of ghosts and bogies to frighten their fellows into doing what they required them to, and so rule them through their fears.

It is true that priests and kings have used these superstitions, added to them and intensified them, to further their own ends; but they did not invent them, and, until comparatively recent times, they themselves believed in them.

It is only in our own time that science has succeeded in freeing man from the gigantic web spun from the brain of primitive man in his first childish attempts to explain the things he felt and saw. And if, as some scientists think, our world, in the course of ages, is again reduced to the primitive nebula, and passes through all the phases of evolution resulting in man, then these illusions will produce similar superstitions, with all their resulting miseries. It was this idea of the "eternal recurrence" of the past which struck Nietzsche with such unutterable horror that it is said to have been the main cause of the breakdown of that fine brain, from which he never recovered.

It remains to consider the ruling beliefs now held concerning a future life. The Buddhists have no such belief. Confucius told his followers not to trouble about it. The Mohammedan believes in a heaven of ease and voluptuousness. The Christian, with Chinese superciliousness, looks upon all other beliefs as unworthy of a moment's consideration.

And what are the Christian beliefs upon the subject? The early Christians believed in a material hell of endless torment for the wicked—the great majority—and a material heaven—for a select few—provided with mansions, golden streets, pearly gates, etc., where they will spend eternity in singing endless praises to God. These conceptions lasted throughout the Middle Ages down to our own times. The present writer was brought up in that belief, nor ever doubted it until he left home to go out into the world. The Salvation Army still teach this view in all its nakedness. Probably the vast majority of the old members of the Nonconformist Churches also hold this belief; also the majority of the women folk of the working classes.

The working man has got rid of the *fear* of hell—this is the real reason of the total failure of the religious revival missions to touch the masses, and their desertion of the Churches. The working man thinks, with old Omar, that, if there is a future life, God is "a Good Fellow and 'twill all be well," and dismisses the subject from his mind. For what is there in the conception of the Christian heaven to appeal to any civilised and intelligent being? Golden crowns, and harps, and streets might appeal to a Johannesburg financier, but who would not prefer a beautiful English lawn to the flashiest of golden streets?

As Mr. George Bernard Shaw remarked, the Salvationist looks forward to spending eternity "in a sort of bliss which would bore any active person to a second death."*

Sir William Osler also refers to—

> "the absence of features in the presentation which prove attractive, and the presence of others most repulsive to the Western spirit. What is there in the description in the Apocalypse to appeal to the matter-of-fact Occidental mind? The infinite monotony of the Oriental presentation repels rather than attracts, and the sober aspirations of Socrates are more appreciated than the ecstasies of St. John. Commenting upon this, Jowett says: 'And yet to beings constituted as we are, the monotony of singing psalms would be as great an affliction as the pains of hell, and might be even pleasantly interrupted by them.' How little account is taken of our changed attitude of mind on these questions."†

But not more absurd than the idea of singing the praises of God for ever is the idea that an intelligent omnipotent power would require, or permit, such a degrading and stupid performance. What earthly civilised king would submit to having his praises sung to his face for an hour?

But we must remember that Christianity is an Eastern religion and thoroughly oriental in spirit. As Winwood Reade observes:—

> "Heaven was invented in the East; and in the East to be a courtier has always been regarded as the supreme felicity. The feelings of men towards their god, in the period to which we have now arrived, are precisely those of an Eastern subject towards his king. The oriental king is the Lord of all the land: his subjects are his children and his slaves. The man who is doomed to death kisses the fatal firman, and submits with reverence to his fate. The man who is robbed by the king of all that he has earned, will fold his hands and say, 'The king gave, and the king taketh away. Blessed be the name of the king!'"*

And, as he further remarks, "Men resort to churches to fall on their knees and to sing hymns, from the same servile propensity which makes the Oriental delight in prostrating himself before the throne."

And where is this heaven supposed to be? No one knows. During the Middle Ages, the ages of ignorance and darkness, they knew. It was just above the clouds, not very far away; and hell was underground, and could be entered through volcanoes, which were entrances to it. But science has searched the skies for millions of miles, and the most powerful telescopes have not revealed the towers and battlements of the New Jerusalem. Even the most sensitive photographic plate, which reveals stars too faint to be detected by the telescope, has no better success; and, as Buchner remarked, "There is no theological or ecclesiastical natural science; and there will be none, so long as the telescope does not reach the regions where the angels dwell."†

The old conception of heaven as a place of eternal psalm-singing has almost faded away. Among the educated who still cling to the idea of a future life probably there are scarcely two with exactly similar ideas upon the subject. Where there are no facts to work upon, everything is nebulous and hazy. Each one moulds it to the heart's desire.

The conception of heaven, among the working classes, especially among the women folk, is much more definite. It is a place where everybody will be good and happy. There will be no more scrubbing and mending; no more washing days, in spite of the fact that everyone will be clothed in white. Everyone will be provided with a crown and a harp. All their friends and relations will be there, as God would never be so unkind as to exclude any friend they may have known on earth. In fact, it will be a continuation of the old earthly life, with all the dirt and discomfort, all the pain and sorrow and want taken out of it—an eternal Bank Holiday. And those who have suffered most in this life will receive a greater recompense in the world to come. It is a dream born of the hard struggle for existence. For as Leslie Stephen remarked, "The argument that because good and evil are mixed wherever we can observe, therefore there is elsewhere unmixed good, does not obey any recognised canons of induction."‡

Not only is there no foundation in science for the popular idea of a future life, but it is in opposition to the teachings of the Church itself. For the Church teaches that the soul is *immaterial*, and how is an immaterial father going to recognise an immaterial son; or an immaterial husband going to recognise an immaterial wife? How is an immaterial body going to be clothed in garments of white and wear a crown or play a harp. How can its immaterial feet walk the golden streets?

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* *John Bull's Other Island*, p. 169.
† Professor Osler, *Science and Immortality*, pp. 30-31.

* Winwood Reade, *The Martyrdom of Man*, p. 178.
† Preface to the Fourth Edition of *Force and Matter*.
‡ *Free Thinking and Plain Speaking*, p. 356.

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The nearest we can get to the immaterial is a vacuum, and even our most exhausted vacuum is full of the inter-stellar ether; if a glass bell-jar was exhausted of air, and we could exclude the ether as well, we should attain to the immaterial. No sound could be heard inside of it, no light could penetrate the glass walls, for light could not travel without the ether. And when the priest talks about an immaterial existence, he palters with us in a double sense to "keep the word of promise to our ear, and break it to our hope."

What would be the use of an *immaterial* life? A life where we could not look into the eyes of our wife, hear her voice, and touch her hand, would be a ghastly mockery. As Ingersoll well says, "If, when the grave bursts, I am not to meet the faces that have been my sunshine in this life, let me sleep on."*

W. MANN.

(*To be concluded.*)

The Savior.

WE are the rockfolk, who live in the caves on the mountains near where the clouds come to sleep. Men, women, and children there are of us, many—how many we do not know; nor do we need to care; for we have no foes to trouble us, and there grows plenty food on the slopes, and plenty birds are there to feed the young amongst us. And standing at the edges of the rocks there are piles of stones, built there that we may be ready for the enemy that never comes. So we live together amid the rocks, in peace one with the other, and the days of our lives are many, and many are the children that make the mountains ring with their laughter and playing.

Many snowfalls ago our people left the valley, and came to the caves to dwell, and their coming is the only story we know of the days that are gone and of the people who never come back. We shall never forget the story, nor shall we ever let it grow dim in the lives of our children.

On the day of memory, the day when the snow goes from the peaks of the mountains, we gather, all of us, in the great cave that is open to the light of the sun, to hear the story told by him who is softest of tongue amongst us. And as we sit in the great circle in the sunlight he tells us of our father who was the savior of our people, Ironhand, who was eaten by the strange beasts that came from the darkness of the trees to feed upon us, Ironhand who now lives in the great cave in the heart of the mountain that is open to the sun.

The singer tells us how Ironhand, he who was strongest and bravest of the men of his time, and more beautiful than a woman, was teaching the young men to use the stone-headed stick; for farther than any two men could he fling the stick, and no beast ever twice crossed his path, nor was he ever known to be foolish. As he was teaching the young men there was a mighty crashing of trees, and a great strange beast came rushing from the forest towards them. The foam dropped from its gaping mouth, and the noise of its roaring was like the voice of the mountains when the sky is black, and the men who live there shoot arrows of fire that blacken and shrivel and kill, arrows that cannot be found when afterwards we look for them. The young men fled in fear from the terrible beast, but Ironhand stayed to fight that he would let them reach the huts in safety. Bravely did he attack the beast, but the blows of his stick were like pebbles falling on the rocks; for, afterwards, when the beasts were stoned from the rocks, the biggest stone was useless to hurt them. And Ironhand, the bravest and best of the men who came before us, was caught in the jaws of the ugly monster, and carried away into the darkness of the trees, before the men could know what had happened.

And the air was full of the wailing of the women for Ironhand, the well-beloved, and there was misery in the hearts of the men. The bravest of them went to the edge of the trees, but were afraid to follow the tracks of the beast that had carried him off from amongst them; for the young men told with trembling of the size, and the strength, and the anger of it, and there were fallen trees to prove that they spoke only the truth. In woe and fear they returned home to their dwellings to tell what they had seen; and no one could understand. But when the weeping of the women was most sorrowful and the anger of the men was most bitter, a sudden shout of joy went up from one of the young men who, being ashamed, had ventured some little way from the huts. And Ironhand was seen flying from the trees towards them. He called upon the people to rush to the mountains, for the great beasts were coming from the forest to devour them. And as he called the joy was turned to woe again, for it seemed as if the trees were being torn to pieces by a mighty storm of wind, and the air was full of angry roarings that silenced the shouts of Ironhand. But he waved his hands that they might know to flee to the rocks.

Soon the huts were all empty, and the people were quickly flying to the mountain; all but Ironhand. Once more did the well-beloved turn to face the hungry monster that came first. Once more did he stay to save his fellows; and their hurried shouts of grief affected him not, nor would he have any to assist him, but he waved them all away, and they went. And so it was that those who lived before us reached the rocks in safety, while the great beasts fought each other for the flesh of Ironhand, and tore him to pieces, and devoured him. But they could not climb the mountain.

For many snow times the beasts made the valley their home, and often caught and ate the foolish of our people who were tempted by the fruits that grow there. And one day, when the snow was deep in the valley, the beasts disappeared into the trees, and came no more; but our people remained here, on the mountain side, living in the caves amongst the rocks, knowing not cold nor heat, nor lack of food, nor lack of drink; and the women gave birth to children that loved the rocks even more than did our forefathers for whom the rocks were the sacrifice of Ironhand, the brave and beautiful. The people were happy and lived in peace.

So it is that we gather, all of us, on the day of memory, in the great cave that looks upwards to the sun; and the singer tells the story I have told you. When the sun looks down into the great cave, when its rays first fill the darkness with light, we gather together to weep for Ironhand, the savior of our people, and the giver to us of peace. And on that day it often happens that the last snow goes from the mountains and we know that the sun-time has come; and that day we have made the day of memory, when we gather together, all of us, men, women, and children, to rejoice over the death of Ironhand, who died so that we might live, who gave his strong life to the hungry beasts that he might save those whom he loved.

And we have set up the rock that glints like the rays of the yellow sun near nightfall, and on it we have carved the life-giving of Ironhand, that our children, in the days to come, will weep and rejoice as we weep and rejoice in the days that are; and that they will remember and worship in the days that are yet to be as we remember and worship in the days that are now. For the name of Ironhand is sacred to us; and the memory of him is like the sweet clear waters that spring from the rocks near where stands the yellow-starred stone around which we gather on the day of memory in the great cave that looks to the sun.

* * * * *

The pastor is really responsible for all this. I got sick of his seemingly interminable delights over his Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of Man; and I went a-dreaming.

ROBERT MORELAND.

* Colonel Ingersoll, *The Dying Creed*, p. 30.

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Realism.

WHEN Nietzsche aimed at the Superman idea, he had thrown overboard the trappings of Christianity, and had set out on the voyage of life determined to find or create something better than the discarded book of theology. If *Hyperion* had never been written, the trend of thought which ever outgrows the God-idea would still make itself articulate. Thus man, at a certain stage, appears to tower above what were once his gods. So long as the unsatisfying objects of worship do not appeal to the intellect, so long shall we have them discredited and despised. In the evolution of deities, the theory of natural selection is reversed. This may at first appear a paradox, but when we consider that artificial interests keep alive the crude objects of veneration, we must not be surprised. Sun-worship for England would be unprofitable; so would Buddhism. Both would be too cheap and easy of access for everybody, and the gigantic interests of parsonic middlemen would be cut away. Therefore, it is to the benefit of the middlemen of heaven to keep alive the tradition and God-idea of Christianity, and so reverse the theory of natural selection in the religious sphere.

If we may divide society in three sections, and label them respectively, Philistines, Idealists, and Realists, we shall find that Freethinkers fall in the third category. We, as Freethinkers and Realists, should not mind if we only had the forces of hell against us; the galling part is, that we have also the heaven idea thrust in our path, and, therefore, we are Realists with no illusions. The advanced Christians, much against their will, have destroyed hell; it is our task to force them to dispense with heaven. And none but Realists could venture on such a super-quixotic adventure. If we are bespattered with mud in the process, we must not complain; it is for future generations that we build, and the superman's conception of immortality extends no further than that attained through future generations. Meredith was fully aware of this when he wrote—

> "Life begets with fair increase
> Beyond the flesh if life be true!"

We shall break down the marble walls and golden pillars of heaven for the benefit of posterity, and, in doing so, prison gates shall open for us, slander assail us, and every vice invented shall figure to our names. With this sweet prospect in view, we cannot be accused of avoiding reality; we are Realists in the nethermost sense of the word.

This brings us to an interesting position. The Christian, through his hopes being centred in heaven, says, *in theory*, "Nay" to life. The Freethinker, having dispensed with such an illusion, says "Yea," and would probably say so again if the theory of eternal recurrence were true. He would come to the banquet of life and say, "Once again." The Realists are truly those who are not afraid to face life and everything the term connotes; to the Philistines we leave the prospects of heaven and any other delusion they may like to cherish.

In philosophy, in art, in science, it has always been the fate of those who had any length of vision to be execrated by the mob, that is, by the Philistines. Shelley pitched out of Oxford, Swinburne sneered at by the mid-Victorian school of milk-and-water poetry, Thomas Paine hounded from his country—these are but a few of the examples of the treatment received by pioneers or realists. And a list of such names could be carried on indefinitely. They are the men who light the torch, and it is our duty to keep it burning. They have made the path easier for us, and they have paid the price demanded by their respective generations of Philistines. The altar of Progress will always have its victims; where the high priests are Philistines this cannot be avoided.

Consciously or otherwise, Nietzsche trumpeted the Freethinker of to-day when he spoke of the Superman. Social reconstruction is nothing short of blasphemy if one truly believes in any of the hundred-and-one versions of the Christian God; to touch with desecrating finger the work of one who made "the world and the stars also" is an act too impious for words. For this reason alone we are of the opinion that a Christian, by his own creed, should not meddle with the betterment of society, but rather leave it to those who are quite willing to take their chance in the great hereafter. Nietzsche had nothing but scorn for those whose sympathies were for the weak and the botched, the inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. He knew that such conduct could not uplift a single human being, and therefore, in his vision of the superman, he places courage and hope as two chief virtues. And the first is as necessary as the second in the Freethinker's armory.

In the writings of Nietzsche Freethinkers will find much with which they can agree, and little that will meet with their disapproval. Freethought is eclectic; it is this very quality which makes it universal. And the realism of Nietzsche comes as no shock to us who have been face to face with realities ever since the Christian God was commercialised. Let him blow his mighty blasts through the pages of *The Antichrist*, or wither creeds in the aphorisms of *Thus Spake Zarathustra*—we are not amazed, for he is a man after our own heart, and the patriotism of Freethinkers knows no country. His reception in England is an index to his position; and we conclude by saying that there is work for many Biblical Samsons in this country before Nietzsche can claim a fair judgment.

WILLIAM REPTON.

CHILDREN OF FAITH.

Diana's children are of a distinctly religious turn of mind. I think most children are, and what a wonderful and curious thing their religion is.....

Hugh wants to know if God put in the quack before he made the duck? It is difficult, isn't it, to answer those sort of questions? On another occasion he asked Betty if God was alive? Betty, eager to instruct, said, "My dear Hugh, God is a spirit."

"Then we can boil our milk on him." That was a poser for Betty.

Diana was at a loss, too, when Hugh announced his intention of going to heaven. She asked him what he would do when he got there? "Oh!" said Hugh, "stroll round with Jesus, I suppose, and have a shot at the rabbits."....

It is the custom of Diana to read the Bible every morning with her children.....On this particular Sunday, Hugh marched through the hall with his Bible under his arm, followed by Betty, carrying a smaller Bible. He said to her, "I will teach you, darling."

Betty said, "Can you, Hugh?" and he said "Rather."..... "What's it going to be about?" she said.

"All sorts of things," said Hugh, grandly. "P'r'aps about Adam and Eve, and Jonah and the whale, and Samson and Elijah. Do you know the diff'rence between Enoch and Elijah, that's the first thing?"

"No, I don't," said Betty, reluctantly.

"Well, darling, you must remember the diff'rence is that Enoch only walked with God, but the carriage was sent for Elijah!"

"Was it a carriage and pair, Hugh?"

"More, I expect."

"What next, Hugh?"

"We'll just look until we find something," and Hugh opened the Bible.

"It's upside down," whispered Betty.

Hugh assumed the expression my spaniel puts on when he meets a dog bigger than himself.

....." Go on Hugh," said Betty, humbly.

"Now, Betty," he said, "you must listen properly, and not talk, because it's a proper lesson, just like mother gives us when visitors aren't here." A pause, then Hugh said in a very solemn voice, "You know, darlin', Jesus would have been born in the manger, but the dog in the manger wouldn't let him."

I stole out of the room.—*George Wemyss*, "*The Professional Aunt.*"

In calling a man a hog, it is the man who gets angry, but it is the hog who is insulted. Men are always taking up the quarrels of others.—*Ambrose Bierce* ("*Dod Grile*").

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Acid Drops.

Father Furniss's *Sight of Hell*—a little penny book "for children"—has been denounced in Freethought journals for the last fifty or sixty years. It is now discovered by the *Christian Commonwealth*—"rather late in the day" as *John Bull* says. Our pious contemporary says it ought to be suppressed by law. That's it. Resort to violence against anything you object to. This is the Christian all over. What he once burnt you alive for denying he is now ready to burn you alive for teaching. And how, we should like to ask, does he know that he is right in either case. Father Furniss gives the children good New Testament pictures of hell. The alteration is not in the substance but in the reasoning.

Mr. Bottomley denounces Father Furniss's truly "hellish" teaching. But hasn't he found the very same teaching in the New Testament? If he hasn't he must have read it most inattentively. For our part, we prefer dealing with principals to dealing with subordinates. Moreover, if the doctrine of hell is true, let it by all means be preached; and, if it be not true, let it by all means be repudiated. Never mind the preacher's name. Jesus Christ or Father Furniss, what does it matter? A "damnable lie" is a "damnable lie" and comes from a damnable liar.

At a speechless dinner in honor of Sir Edward Carson at the Ritz Hotel on March 13 a presentation was made to him of a sword and a book of signatures. The sword was sheathed in a very useful silver scabbard; in order, we suppose, that the right honorable gentleman may shine on the field of the battle of Belfast like King Henry the Fourth on the field of Ivry. "And be your oriflamme to-day the helmet of Navarre." The blade of this fine weapon bore the following inscription: "Presented to Edward Carson by friends of Ulster in sure confidence that God will defend the right." Has it come to that? No wonder the dinner was speechless.

Readers of this paper will be quite familiar with arguments such as these:—

> "It is easy to say 'in the beginning,' but what was God doing before the beginning? A beginning of beginnings is inconceivable, and if God himself never began, a million million years would bring him no nearer the act of creation than he was at first. It is plain that what we call a beginning is not a beginning, but somehow a part of an eternal process.....Again there is an insuperable difficulty involved in the very conception of a purposeful artificer away at the beginning of time fashioning a universe; his own presence needs accounting for. Where did he come from? It is no easier thinking of God as existing without a creator than to think of the world and man existing without a creator."

This is from a recent sermon by Mr. R. J. Campbell. It is interesting to observe the way in which very old Freethought arguments are served up as advanced Christian thinking.

Mr. Campbell also comments on the design argument as stated by Paley, and says that "this kind of reasoning is quite useless nowadays; no one pays heed to it." We fancy we could show that Mr. Campbell's arguments for Deity are not a bit better than Paley's; are, indeed, only the Paleyan argument in a new form. But Mr. Campbell is quite wrong in assuming that the weakness of Paley's argument is shown by discovery of imperfection in the world. Imperfections would not prove the absence of design, but only the absence of perfect design. The real weakness of every form of the design argument is just that the evidence selected is the wrong kind of evidence. If everything in nature were of the most perfect and most admirable character, it still could not prove design. All that is proved by a scrutiny of natural process is that the result expresses the conditions that produced it. And this is true in every case, and cannot be otherwise. Design really implies purpose, and purpose is shown by the end reached realising the intention existing in the mind of the designer. The Theist has to assume a God, he has to assume a knowledge of God's intentions, and then he has to show that the ends reached the purpose. But he only knows the ends. He does not and cannot know that there is a God, or what his intentions were, and so cannot say whether these intentions are realised or not. This is the real fallacy of the design argument, and it is surprising that so many able men have missed it.

Dr. Gibson, Bishop of Gloucester, reports a gift from a Christian lady for foreign missions. She had no money to part with, but she handed over a pearl necklace, which the good bishop sold for over £800. We should like to know what difference it made to the heathen inhabitants of heaven—or hell.

At a recent fire in a tin tabernacle at Southend-on-Sea a notice-board remained intact with its contents. It contained the title of the previous Sunday's sermon, "Prayer to God Answered."

The outrage at the National Gallery, where a Suffragette attempted to destroy a masterpiece by Velasquez, recalls the time when the Christians destroyed priceless works of art because they saw in them sinful idolatry or sinful luxury. It was the same holy feeling which caused Christians to destroy their enemies, and to-day the persecution of Freethinkers under the Blasphemy Laws is a proof that godly people who profess to love their enemies usually finish by hating their neighbors.

"A Star Fish" runs an advertisement in the daily papers. It does not refer to the "fishy" monster who swallowed the prophet Jonah. That story is too "fishy" even for the journalists.

A London lady has just left £10,000 for church building in the metropolis. Who will provide the congregation?

The Rev. J. H. Shakespeare, speaking at the Free Church Council meeting at Norwich, said there were 5 villages with 1,000 persons and 16 chapels, a group of villages with 1,500 people and 19 chapels, and a small town with 6 Free Churches, 2 Brotherhoods, and the Salvation Army, and a total attendance of 800 people. We shall soon be fighting bricks and mortar and parsons, for the congregations are near zero.

The one great thing the Churches need, says Rev. Rhondda Williams, is to sink all ideas about the rights of property, the privileges of classes, etc., and "enter upon a campaign of righteousness." This is the kind of windy blather that does duty in the modern Churches for thinking. You are not to bother about anything else, only to preach righteousness. Anyone with genuine intelligence would realise that it is just these other things that determine righteousness. Current conceptions as to the rights of property or the functions of property, the existence of class privileges, the relations of classes, of capital and labor, of government and its functions, of housing, wages, education, etc., are the things that make a people either usefully and intelligently righteous or a mere collection of moral humbugs. Religion has been prolific in producing the latter; it has very seldom made for the former.

It is not difficult to see the reason why Mr. Williams offers this advice. The moment any genuinely social issue is raised co-operation among the Churches becomes impossible and their generally retrogressive influence manifest. But to unite in a general shriek for a vague, unindicated righteousness is perfectly safe. No one knows exactly what is meant, everybody can join in, and nobody is injured or benefited. For ourselves, we say deliberately we have never known a mere preaching of righteousness do any genuine or lasting good, and do not expect to see it accomplished by this method. To be quite fair to the Churches, there has never been any lack of the preaching of righteousness, and its ineffectiveness is patent. It does encourage the worst of all moral evils—a feeling of self-righteousness; it dissipates moral energy, it makes hypocrites by the cartload, and leaves real evils quite untouched. The religious prig is bad enough; the moral prig is even more nauseating.

Nothing like adapting theory to circumstances. Two stained-glass windows have just been sent out to the Kikuyu Mission Church, one of which represents Christ blessing *negro* children. We have no doubt that, if necessary, he could be found recommending some particular brand of patent medicine.

Judge Cluer, at Whitechapel County Court, has been asking why litigants lie so in the witness-box. He answers that they do it in order to give magistrates a job. Which shows that Judge Cluer can be facetious; also that he can forget what he has read in the Bible. We must freshen his memory a bit over Acts v. 3:—"Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie?" The Devil has many names to himself in Holy Writ, and one is "the father of lies."

Providence has been playfully inflicting the bubonic plague on the natives of Havana. Maybe, the pastime was

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so amusing that the weather got out of hand in England, and the seasons a bit mixed.

The Rev. J. H. Shakespeare wants Free Church Bishops. We are not so keen as the prospective "fathers-in-god," who scent good emoluments.

The Westminster Coroner says the safest thing for taxi-cab drivers to do is to assume that all people are fools. The advice certainly has the merit of considerable success, for priests of all denominations have feathered their sacred nests on the assumption.

Sir George Alexander assisted a number of clergymen to unveil a monument to the Burbages and other "men of the theatre" at St. Leonard's Church, Shoreditch. How the clergy do like to drag in famous names to bolster up the Christian superstition. Not long since the name of Shakespeare was used to collect sixpences for St. Savior's Church, Southwark.

In godly Paisley we see that the local inspector of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children has during two months investigated 45 complaints of cruelty, affecting 168 children, and implicating 65 adults. Three hundred "supervision" visits have been made. This is not a bad record for a Christian country. In a non-Christian country such a state of affairs would be a consequence of the absence of Christianity. In pious Scotland we must, of course, conclude that things would be much worse if Christianity were non-existent.

In many persons, says Sir Edward Russell, editor of the *Liverpool Post*, "religion or no religion was actually the dividing line between dormancy and intellect, the utter inaction of the intellect and the active employment of the intellect." We agree; although we feel sure we should relate the two differently to Sir Edward. What he means is that dormancy of intellect means with many the absence of religion. Well, that is simply not true. It is not a question of whether non-religious people are right; it is simply a question of fact. Under existing conditions, dormancy of intellect means falling in with ruling conceptions, and these are in form religious. The vast majority of people receive some sort of religious instruction, and dormancy of intellect means that they cannot outgrow it. On the other hand, giving up religion means activity of intellect. It does not mean that one is thinking accurately, but it does mean that one is thinking. Finally, look at the vast majority of believers in religion, and then realise the absurdity of talking about religion being due to a more "active employment of the intellect" than is observable with the non-religious!

Electric light is to be installed and trams are to be run in Jerusalem before long, as a Paris banking house has obtained concessions for those purposes. When Jerusalem and Bethlehem are connected by trams, and resemble Houndsditch, some of the glamor will be removed from the "holy places."

The Rev. S. Baring-Gould has been poking fun at the Nonconformist doctrine of sudden conversion. He says: "A man who is a child of Satan at twenty minutes to six, by a sudden internal commotion of the ganglions becomes an elect saint at six o'clock." When sky-pilots begin to slang one another, they sometimes let the cat out of the bag.

A country rector has been writing to the *Times* and the *Daily Mail*, pleading for the inclusion of the words "by air" in the Litany. He adds in his latest letter that he has had only two responses; one from an Atheist and the other from a Christian who thought that aeronauts deserved broken necks. We don't know which to admire the more—the religious Atheist or the irreligious Christian.

The connection between the advance of Christianity and the consumption of intoxicating liquors is an old one, and there seems no immediate danger of the connection being severed. The *Transvaal Leader* of February 25 reports a case in point. Two native ministers invited people to attend a "Grand Tea Meeting." Those invited were, of course, natives. When the guests arrived, they found a large box standing in the room labelled "Glass." The description was not altogether inaccurate, as the box contained about two dozen bottles of "dop" brandy. The bottles were handed by one minister to the other, who served out the contents to the guests "in the name of Christ." A detective, however, arrived on the scene, the ministers were arrested, and their trial fixed for March 3. As our readers are probably aware, the supplying of alcoholic drinks is forbidden to natives. White Christians may get drunk with impunity.

Bishop Ryle thinks that religion ought to be advertised. We fancy clergymen are sufficiently alive to the value of advertisement, and hardly need admonitions on this head. As a matter of fact, the business of modern religion is very largely built up on advertising. Its value and its beauties are the themes of countless puffs, and, like many another well-advertised article, if the advertisements were to be dropped the demand would rapidly diminish. We wonder what would be the position of religion in this country if for a single generation people were left severely alone—left, that is, to discover the beauties of religion for themselves? The whole thing, we believe, would then be in a state of social bankruptcy. Intellectual bankruptcy has already been realised.

With reference to the proposed alteration in the Litany, so that "by air" may be added to the "travel" portion, Rev. O. C. Legge-Wilkinson writes from Maidstone saying that he intends to do so, and the "sad fact that three more deaths of Army airmen have just occurred" confirms him in his intention. We do not see that it matters much anyway. Mr. Legge-Wilkinson surely does not believe that these military aviators would not have been killed if the prayer for their protection had been offered. And he will hardly claim that it would have been better for them to have been killed *after* their safety had been prayed for. That would have been to emphasise the uselessness of prayer. Besides God—if there is a God—knows these aviators are flying round. He knows they don't want their necks broken, and it is anything but gracious for him to allow them to break their necks because he has not been specially asked to preserve them.

Since last December a deputation of American parsons has been touring in Great Britain in favor of bringing the different denominations into unison. These gentlemen have just handed in their report, and the committee which received it is issuing a proclamation calling for "a truce of God among the sects of Christendom." This is not so bad. Centuries of rule, and then the Christian ministers begin to inquire whether it is possible for them to leave off fighting among themselves long enough to hold a "World's Conference." What a religion of love! And what a loving religion! We would suggest to some of these gentlemen that, instead of taking on the whole of Great Britain and America—which is a large order—they should experiment on a small scale. Reconciling Protestant and Catholic in Ireland would do for a start.

The *Christian World* observes that the Free Church Council appears to be suffering from lack of leaders. This means, we suppose, lack of *men*. It is quite true, but not peculiar to the Free Churches. All the Churches are suffering in the same way. The best men, men with the stronger brains and the better characters, do not and will not enter the Churches as leaders or preachers. Many religious authorities have lamented this lack of first-class men in the Churches, and the reason is simple. First-class men shrink from a profession which involves beliefs that the best contemporary knowledge declares to be of either doubtful veracity or altogether false.

The village of Nebo, Denbighshire, is evidently a stronghold of liberty—of a kind. At one of the local tabernacles a local preacher delivered a sermon on the vice of swearing. On the following Sunday, when the preacher ascended the pulpit, he found the church empty. His congregation had gone on strike as a protest against clerical interference with freedom of speech. The way of a modern preacher is unquestionably hard.

Some members of the Omagh Y. M. C. A. have been victimised by a clever adventurer, who represented himself as a millionaire traveller, journeying round the world for a wager and a wife. He asked for a loan and subscriptions were collected. The man told stories of adventures with lions in Africa, and of his being many days in the Sahara without food or water. He knew *where* to tell his tales.

The Rev. A. J. Waldron considers that "man is essentially divine, and that it is our cursed civilisation that defames God's image." This Brixtonian imagery is somewhat mixed, but does it imply that the Deity is uncivilised?

A church choir at Wetherafield, Essex, has gone on strike in defence of the eastward position during the recitation of the creed. This looks like going on strike for a relic of sun-worship.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

Sunday, March 22, Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints, Manchester: at 3, "Shaw Among the Prophets"; at 6.30, "Mr. Balfour on God."

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £96 13s. 3d. Received since:—Percy Main, 5s.; George Taylor, £5; Julius Rasmussen, 8s. 2d.; Prof. Charles Cadmore (Brazil), £1 6s.; M. Brown, 5s.; G. Harker, £2 2s.

PERCY MAIN.—You forgot to add your own name. We note your hope that "the rank and file will hurry up and complete the Fund," which is so "small in comparison with the Archbishop of Canterbury's £15,000."

E. B.—Much obliged for enclosures.

A. L. COATES.—Order, etc., passed over to the publishing department. We cannot say whether we have any other readers in the place from which you date. Thanks for your good wishes.

HARRY POWELL.—We have a cheque of yours; it has got separated from your letter, which has either been lost or mislaid. Will you kindly send us fresh instructions?

MANCHESTER BUSINESS MAN.—We have not seen the paper you refer to, and we have no time to hunt it up at present. Besides, the argument it sets forth has been answered again and again.

ADELAIDE REED (Canada).—If we were to deal with all the questions referred to in your letter we should wear out ourselves and puzzle, instead of enlightening, our readers. Secularism says "one world at a time." Common sense says "one thing at a time." Making men think about religion makes them think better on all other subjects they attempt.

R. H. ROSETTI.—Obliged to make *one* exception.

THOMAS FAWCETT (Liverpool) asks whether it is true that Mr. John Morley, now Lord Morley, once said that "Mr. Foote was the best writer of English writing to-day." We do not know, but we should imagine not.

S. CHARLES CUDMORE.—Glad to have your appreciation; thanks also for your efforts to promote our circulation.

G. BARBER.—Thanks for papers. The one you say is being circulated in Manchester is being sent round other towns in a similar manner. We do not know the character of the man who produces it, but there is no doubting the mental character of those who provide the funds. It helps one to realise what a poor thing, after all, is our boasted civilisation.

J. F. AUST.—It is a long time since there was any organised Freethought work in the Potteries, but not quite so long as you say. If your newsagents "cannot" supply the *Freethinker* of the date you require, it must be because they *will not*. That is part of the boycott from which we suffer.

F. PEARSON.—If you cannot get a copy of *A Sight of Hell* from the publishers, and will apply to Miss Vance, she may be able to oblige you.

L. S. MANN.—We cannot say where you can get a copy of the sermon noticed by Mr. Mann in our issue of February 8. Perhaps Mr. Mann will be able to give you the information.

Some correspondence and other items are unavoidably held over till next week.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

South Lancashire friends will note that Mr. Foote visits Manchester again to-day (March 22). His subjects should be very attractive.

There is just time to call attention to the Blasphemy meeting at Essex Hall on Friday evening (March 20). The speakers include Mr. F. W. Jowett, M.P., Rev. Walter Walsh, Mr. G. W. Foote, Mr. Herbert Burrows, Mr. Harry Snell, and Mr. G. H. Radford, M.P. The hall should be quite full, and, if London Freethinkers take the matter seriously, will be crowded. The list of speakers is attractive, and the subject important—one of the most important at present before the country.

The Secular Education League's meeting—the seventh annual gathering of members and friends—takes place at Caxton Hall (Room 1) on Tuesday evening, March 24. The annual *business* meeting starts at 7.45 prompt. It will be followed by the annual *public* meeting at 8.15.; when friends of Secular Education are invited to attend, whether members of the League or not. In the enforced absence of the President (Mr. George Greenwood, M.P.) through illness, which his many friends profoundly regret, the chair will be taken by Sir Henry Cotton; and among the speakers will be Lady Byles, Mr. Arthur Henderson, M.P., Mr. Halley Stewart, J.P., Rev. Walter Walsh (the late Mr. Voysey's successor), and Mr. G. W. Foote. We hope there will be a crowded meeting. Admission is free, and no tickets are required.

The half-yearly meeting of London members of the N.S.S. will be held at Chandos Hall, Chandos-street, Charing Cross, on Tuesday evening, March 31. Members' cards should be presented for admission. Any difficulty in this respect should be brought to the attention of the General Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, who will be in attendance. Notice should be sent to her, also, of any matter intended to be brought before the meeting.

The West Ham Branch holds a "social" at the Workman's (Small) Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E., on Thursday evening, March 26—from 7.30 to 11 o'clock. Admission free; with collection in aid of expenses. Songs, dances, recitations, games, etc. We are asked to extend an open invitation to all Freethinkers and friends. We do so with pleasure—but with one exception. It is the N. S. S. Executive meeting night. We hope to see the members at the post of duty.

A debate on the subject of "Is Theism Rational?" is to take place at the Reformers' School-room, Crete-street, Liverpool, on Friday and Saturday, March 20 and 21. The affirmative is to be taken by Mr. H. D. Longbotttom, the negative by Mr. J. Hammond, President of the Liverpool Branch of the National Secular Society. Debates are rare nowadays, and this should make the discussion more than usually attractive. We do not know Mr. Longbottom, but Liverpool Freethinkers may leave their case in Mr. Hammond's hands with the utmost confidence. The chair is to be taken at 8 o'clock, and admission is free.

We have to thank Mr. Cohen for seeing the *Freethinker* pages through the press. The winds of March are very poetical in the writings of English songsters, especially in Shakespeare's magical passage on the daffodils. But a little of them goes a long way with our Editor. A catarrh has brought on a touch of asthma, which always lies in wait for him. He hopes, however, to shake it off in a few days. This is written on Tuesday.

The Bradlaugh Fellowship is holding a "Social Party" at the Shoreditch Radical Club, New North-road, on Wednesday, March 25. There is no charge for entrance to this function, which is timed to commence at 8.30. All Freethinkers will be welcome.

One of our readers in Newport (Mon.) made the offer of a free copy of the *Freethinker*, weekly, to the Free Library. This was declined on the ground that there was no public demand for the paper. This is an old excuse, and we agree with the gentleman who made the offer, it can easily be removed. The truth is that people do not usually ask for what they know is not there. Where the *Freethinker* is taken in the demand for it is large enough. That is why it is often kept out. We should advise that the offer be made again, backed up by a requisition from as many residents as it is possible to secure.

We are very much pleased to see a note from the pen of Mr. Franklin Steiner in the New York *Truthseeker* to the effect that Mr. Mangasarian still holds his large Sunday meeting at Chicago, and that it is usual for a number of people to be turned away. Mr. Clarence S. Darrow also lectures to good audiences in Joe Howard's theatre; and Mr. Percy Ward "has for three months been conducting a 'Mission' in Roseland, south of Chicago, with much success."

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New Lights on Materialism.

THE attitude of the anti-Materialist towards the most recent developments of physical science affords an instructive example of that trick of "shifting one's ground" which is too often practised in philosophical controversy. In times past Materialism was vilified and abused as the "philosophy of dirt," and the Materialist was asked how any sane person could believe that "dead, inert matter" possessed within itself the potentialities of life and mind? Now that this despised matter is being found to be not dead or inert, but instinct with mighty and eternal energies; now that this revolting "dirt" is discovered to be nothing less than the embodiment and manifestation of the primal existence, the anti-Materialist at once shifts his ground, and, assuming a sort of proprietary right over the new aspect of matter, calmly asks the Materialist what is to become now of his attempt to reduce all existence to "blind material forces"—to the fortuitous concourse of "mere dead atoms"? To this the Materialist, of course, makes reply that the epithets "dead," "inert," and the like have never been applied to matter by *him*. This false and ignorant conception is entirely due to those who have opposed Materialism, not to those who have defended it. The ascription of all the marvellous properties of life and mind to the functioning of matter has meant to the Materialist, not the lowering and degrading of life and mind, but the elevating and glorifying of matter and all its powers and functions. The following pronouncement by the great modern apostle of Materialism, Ludwig Buchner, should be decisive on this point:—

> "It is for every man to decide whether he will continue to regard 'matter' as the beggar in rags it has hitherto seemed to the uncultivated mind, or whether he will recognise its true proportions and the splendid vesture of properties with which modern science has endowed it. The scientific mind of these latter days inclines to the assumption of a unified conception of the world, instead of the old dualistic theories, a faith in the simple monistic basis of all things, which remains one and the same in itself throughout all the changes and diversity of its phenomena. When that faith shall have conquered, there will be an end of the old unscientific depreciation of matter, and the world of the long misunderstood and despised Materialist will be grander and nobler than any of the imaginative and artificial structures of the theologian or the philosopher."

The recent investigations in radio-activity and the conclusions now being formed as to the intra-atomic constitution of matter do not in the least discredit the materialistic position—on the contrary, as I hope to show, they tend to strengthen it. The materialistic conclusion is, after all, an extremely simple one. It is merely this, that as all the activities of nature are expressible in terms of what we call matter and energy, these two entities constitute a manifestation of that ultimate reality whose existence we are compelled to postulate. The ultimate existence is known to us through matter and energy, therefore it is a matter-energy existence. If, on the other hand, all the activities of nature were expressible in terms of spirit, soul, or God, we should be equally bound to regard the ultimate existence as spiritual or divine; but, unfortunately for the idealist and the theologian, the cosmos, so far as we know it, absolutely refuses to be expressed in these terms. The materialistic conclusion seems, therefore, to any unprejudiced mind, to be forced upon us by the facts of the case, and no discovery as to the nature of matter or of energy can shake it in the slightest degree. This conclusion can no more be affected by a deeper analysis resolving matter into energy or energy into matter than, say, the chemical fact that water is produced by a combination of oxygen and hydrogen can be affected by a deeper analysis proving that oxygen and hydrogen are different forms of the same thing. The fact that water is produced by a combination of those two forms of existence which we call oxygen and hydrogen would remain as true as ever.

The sweeping generalisation—so startling in its utter novelty and so revolutionary in its philosophical import—that matter is nothing else than a form of energy, has been definitely and boldly affirmed by Gustave le Bon, and it seems to be the goal towards which the researches of other physicists are irresistibly leading them. The conclusions formed by this eminent scientist as the result of his investigations have been given by him in his work, *The Evolution of Matter*, in the form of seven plainly enunciated propositions, and in order to give the reader a clear idea of his views, I cannot do better than quote these seven propositions in full. They are the following:—

> "1. Matter, hitherto deemed indestructible, vanishes slowly by the continuous dissociation of its component atoms.
> "2. The products of the dematerialisation of matter constitute substances placed by their properties between ponderable bodies and the imponderable ether—that is to say, between two worlds hitherto considered as widely separate.
> "3. Matter, formerly regarded as inert and only able to give back the energy originally supplied to it, is, on the other hand, a colossal reservoir of energy—intra-atomic energy—which it can expend without borrowing anything from without.
> "4. It is from the intra-atomic energy manifested during the dissociation of matter that most of the forces in the universe are derived, and notably electricity and solar heat.
> "5. Force and matter are two different forms of one and the same thing. Matter represents a stable form of intra-atomic energy; heat, light, electricity, etc., represent instable forms of it.
> "6. By the dissociation of atoms—that is to say, by the dematerialisation of matter, the stable form of energy termed matter is simply changed into those unstable forms known by the names of electricity, light, heat, etc.
> "7. The law of evolution applicable to living beings is also applicable to simple bodies; chemical species are no more invariable than are living species."

These conclusions, forming the greatest generalisation ever reached in the whole history of science, are rapidly receiving confirmation, and will, in all probability, soon be fully confirmed. They will receive the whole-hearted assent of all Materialists, since they possess a significance for our monistic conception of the universe far transcending that revealed by all the past generalisations of science put together. This has been admirably expressed by an appreciative critic, M. Sagaret, in the following passage quoted in *The Evolution of Matter* (p. 79), and which I make no apology for reproducing here:—

> "No scientific theory has responded, nor can better respond, to our yearning for unity than that of Dr. Gustave le Bon. It sets up a unity than which it would be impossible to imagine anything more complete, and it focusses our knowledge on the following principle: one substance alone exists which moves and produces all things by its movements. This is not a new conception, it is true, for the philosopher, but it has remained hitherto a purely metaphysical speculation. To-day, thanks to Dr. Gustave le Bon, it finds a starting point in experiment.
>
> "The scholar has till now stopped at the atom without perceiving any link between it and the ether. The duality of the ponderable and the imponderable seemed irreducible. Now the theory of the dematerialisation of matter comes to establish a link between them.
>
> "But it realises scientific unity in yet another way by making general the law of evolution. This law, hitherto confined to the organic world, now extends to the whole universe. The atom, like the living being, is born, develops, and dies, and Dr. Gustave le Bon shows us that the chemical species evolves like the organic species."

The unity is indeed complete. From the immaterial, through the proto-material, to the material; from the inorganic, through the proto-organic (the colloids), to the organic, the continuity of existence runs unbroken. Nor does it stop short of the sphere of consciousness. If matter be but a mode of energy,

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and if mind be also a mode of energy—which few will be found to deny—then matter and mind are in essence the same. Hence would disappear that "fundamental duality of mind and matter," that "impassable gap between Thoughts and Things" which has ever been the favorite dogma of the orthodox philosophy, and hence would be established that unity of mind and matter for which Materialistic Monism has all along contended. But this is too large a subject to be entered upon here. It has been merely mentioned to show that even in this aspect of the question the new view regarding matter supports the materialistic position.

The evidences of continuity in the material and proto-material worlds are twofold and mutually confirmatory, being yielded alike by the researches of the chemist and the observations of the stellar physicist. To the chemist the term "element" is becoming almost meaningless. The spectra of many metals vary according to the intensity of the dissociative action to which they are subjected, and the more intense the dissociation the simpler in character becomes the spectrum. These partially dematerialised elements are called proto-elements, and furnish a series of gradations between the material element and the primordial energy of which it is merely a stable form.

Stellar spectroscopy yields exactly similar results. The less hot stars give, in general, spectra of the metals. Hotter stars give spectra of the proto-metals. The stars of highest temperature give spectra of those gases of lowest atomic weight forming what chemists call the "helium group." These elements of the helium group possess the common characteristic of having no combining power or affinity for other elements or for each other. They form the "non-valent" or "zero" group of the chemist, and come before all others in this periodic table of the elements—that remarkable system of grouping and classification in the inorganic world the significance of which has hitherto been somewhat mystifying, but which the new chemistry will probably show to be a product of evolution just as are the classifications of the biologist. It is obvious that in an evolution from the immaterial to the material these simple, inert, non-valent elements would appear first. The semi-material, proto-elements would first differentiate into the valent and non-valent types, and as the final stages of the progressive materialisation were reached the non-valent forms, by reason of their greater stability and resistance to combination, would stand out as the earliest distinct and separate forms of matter; and this is exactly what the researches in stellar physics reveal. Lastly, the coolest stars contain the elements of higher valencies, notably carbon, which, as is well known, is one of the principal constituents of living matter.

The process of evolution from the immaterial up to the organic seems, therefore, to be gradually revealing itself, and the physicist may in time be able to draw up a genealogical tree to represent a system of inorganic classification, as the biologist has done for organic classification. Even now the vague outline of such a system seems to be foreshadowed. The roots of the tree would lie deep down in the region of immaterial substance whose energy is in a condition of absolute instability—where no equilibrium whatever has yet been initiated. The main trunk of the tree would represent the semi-material forms of existence intermediate between substance and true matter—forms of energy-equilibrium gradually growing more stable, but not yet in that completely stable form manifested in matter. The summit of the trunk would represent the attainment of complete materialisation, and thence evolution would proceed along two main branches—one towards the production of elements of higher and higher atomic weight, and the other evolving elements of higher and higher chemical valency and intra-atomic complexity. The first would terminate in the spontaneously radio-active elements, uranium, radium, etc. The second, passing through ever-increasing complexities of combination and re-combination, atomic and molecular, would evolve first the great world of ordinary inorganic compounds, then the colloidal substances, and finally protoplasm. Both branches would thus terminate in conditions of unstable equilibrium, resulting in a final return to the non-equilibrium of immaterial substance, whence the same cycle of evolution would recommence.

So much, then, for what may be called the external aspect of the new theory of matter as revealed by those new facts of physics and chemistry which the researches of scientists have brought to light. Let us now examine the question, as it were, from the inside, and scrutinise the theory itself. I think that we shall here find an equally strong justification for the materialistic position.

The theory tells us that the entire material world is nothing but a manifestation of energy. Matter is a stable form of energy. The products of atomic dissociation—the emanations, the positive ions, the electrons, and the X rays—are forms of energy of increasing instability, till finally is reached that primal energy, presumably in a state of complete instability, which constitutes the fountain of all being. What, then, is this all-embracing and all-potent energy which bids fair to become the sole content of modern science?

Physicists conceive of two forms of energy—kinetic or moving energy, and potential or static energy. But the latter can always be expressed as a condition of equilibrium between two or more opposing kinetic energies; that is to say, a state of potential energy is merely a condition of more or less temporary equilibrium obtaining in some system of kinetic energy. For instance, the potential energy of a loaded cartridge is a condition of equilibrium between the atomic energies of the elements forming gunpowder. If the bullet be fired vertically upwards, this potential energy of the cartridge is converted into the kinetic energy of the moving bullet, till, at the instant when the bullet reaches its highest point, all the kinetic energy is retransformed into potential energy. This second condition of potential energy is again a state of equilibrium; this time an equilibrium between its own kinetic energy and that kinetic energy of the ether which we call the force of gravitation. If, instead of being discharged in the neighborhood of a gravitating body like the earth, the cartridge had been discharged in a void of infinite extent, it would never lose its kinetic energy, but would travel through space for ever with its velocity of discharge unabated. In defining energy, therefore, we need concern ourselves with kinetic energy only, and kinetic energy may be defined as *the movement of substance.*

Energy is, therefore, a dual conception, involving *movement* and *something that moves.* And in this dual conception of energy the notion of substance holds an indefeasible priority, for though we can conceive of substance independently of movement, no effort of the mind avails to form a conception of movement independently of substance. It is this fundamental necessity of human thought that constitutes the eternal and impregnable rock on which the materialistic philosophy is based. The notion of substance is inevitably involved in the notion of energy.

What conception, finally, can we form of substance? The foregoing considerations seem to lead to the conception that this primal existence is not discrete, but continuous and infinitely diffused through space—infinitely unstable—infinitely mobile; and that it generates by its eternal movement progressive forms of energy-equilibrium, ranging from absolute instability, through many intermediate degrees of imperfect equilibrium, to that form of complete equilibrium which we call matter.

But what substance *is*, and what its nature, we of course know not, since of an ultimate existence no definition is possible. All we can say is that substance manifests itself as energy, and energy in equilibrium is matter; or, to borrow the language of mathematics, energy is the "primitive function"

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whose "derived function" is matter—a derivative of which we have no means of finding the integral. But this very fact that substance can only be expressed in material terms amply justifies us in calling ourselves Materialists.

Thus the new lights on Materialism seem to reveal no weak points in its armor. The new conception of matter, besides furnishing a unifying theory of existence which bears out to the full the claims of Monism, leaves in the last analysis the position of Materialism unshaken. Hence there seems to be no occasion just yet to apologise for calling our philosophic system a Materialistic Monism.

A. E. MADDOCK.

Animal Enemies of Plants.

WHEN surveying the fair face of Nature one is deeply moved by her manifold beauties. A lovely landscape; the valley carved out by the meandering course of the river; the sweet blendings of color presented by the blossoms of summer and spring; the stately magnificence of the lords of the forest; and the multitudinous variety of plant life revealed by brake and copse; the clustering grape, the waving corn; the autumnal glory of the many-tinted apple, pear, and plum; the choice brown hazel nut and the sombre-hued blackberry, all conspire to lend to Nature a never-dying charm. From the darling of the gods—the human species—there almost instinctively arises a prayer of thankfulness to Nature for her unstinted gifts to her proudest and most precious production.

Many a Theistic homily has been written and countless sermons have been preached on the clear evidences of divine handiwork displayed to all who pause to reflect on the marvels and beauties of God's creation. But if we meditate with reverence and gratitude upon the beauties and blessings which our Mother showers upon us in such prodigal abundance, we must not on that account forget that the glories of Nature are the outcome of a pitiless struggle for supremacy which has most constantly accompanied all forms of living matter from the dawn of life many millions of years ago right down to the present moment of our existence.

Parasitic life is legion, and is responsible for incalculable misery and death throughout the entire realm of organic nature, from unicellular creatures to the highest of the backboned family. The subject is a vast one, and we will for the moment confine our attention to a consideration of a few only of the insect enemies of vegetable growths of outstanding economic value to mankind. A most elaborate study of the animal pests which attach themselves, to the detriment and destruction of the plants upon which they prey, has been carried out on the North American continent by an army of scientific investigators. Experts have come to the conclusion that the annual losses to American agriculturalists which are directly due to insect attack is 10 per cent. for ordinary farm crops, while the vegetable growers' losses reach the high average of 20 per cent. An evil of this magnitude called for serious inquiry, and as an evidence of the time and attention devoted to the study of the question in the United States we may mention that so far back as January, 1905, the various bodies interested in this inquiry had published over 12,000 memoirs containing about 72,000 references to noxious insects, and since that date the number has been constantly increasing.

From the moment a seed is sown until the vegetable is ready to undergo the processes of the culinary art, the plant is ever open to the onslaught of its insect foes. When seeds are "bad," and fail to germinate after planting, this "badness" is almost invariably to be traced either to the agency of injurious insects while still in the granary or to the destructive activities of insects contained in the soil. Weevils, wire-worms, and root maggots are pests of this character.

Asparagus is rendered unmarketable when ready for gathering by the asparagus beetle. Tubers, tomatoes, cereals, and other plants are all liable to the attacks of malign insect organisms. In fact, there is no cultivated plant of any kind that is immune to the depredations of animal parasites. These, however, are preyed upon in their turn; the vegetable fattens its insect enemies that these should afterwards fatten insectivorous birds, and carnivorous insects such as the ladybirds and other useful creatures. Animals useful to the husbandman are variously classified, but are best arranged in four divisions. In Dr. Chittenden's classification the leading forms are grouped as follows:—

> "(1) Predaceous insects consisting of those which feed externally on their prey; (2) predatory animals other than insects, such as birds and mammals; (3) parasitic insects which live in the bodies of their hosts; (4) fungi and diseases of bacterial origin."

Climatic conditions are as essential to the control of insect depredation as to the yield of the harvest itself. Intense frost and extreme heat, heavy rainfall or prolonged drought, exercise as great an influence on insect life as on that of the vegetation. The enormous increase of snails, slugs, and other pernicious organisms in our English gardens is very largely attributable to the abnormally mild winters of recent years.

Among the insects most valuable to the farmer and gardener, the ladybird occupies a pre-eminent place, as this useful creature destroys immense numbers of plant lice, while other forms closely related to it limit the destructiveness of scale insects. Ladybirds also feed on the eggs and larvæ of other insect pests. Several species of ground-beetles, spiders, wasps, and syrphus and robber-flies, are likewise instrumental in lessening the activities of noxious insects. Among birds, the quail is eminently useful as a destroyer of plant pests. Skunks and toads are both beneficial to the cultivator of the soil. Fowls, ducks, and turkeys devour incredible quantities of grubs, injurious worms, and similar pests.

> "The parasitic enemies of noxious insects are legion, but their activity as useful allies of the farmer is to a large extent dependent on atmospheric conditions. As a general rule, also, they seldom appear in their greatest numbers until their injurious hosts have done more or less damage. Their principal usefulness, then, is in so decimating the numbers of noxious species in one season that few are left to prey upon crops the following year."

The chief members of this useful group are related to the wasps; the ichneumon flies, braconids, and chalcis flies are salient examples of these. In referring to the economic importance of parasitic organisms as insect destroyers, Dr. Chittenden, of the United States Department of Agriculture, writes:—

> "An excellent example of the value of parasites is afforded by the imported cabbage worm. One of its parasites, Pteromalus puparum, destroys in some seasons from 80 to 90 per cent. of these 'worms.' Another parasite, Apanteles glomeratus, was purposely introduced by the United States Government about 1883. During the autumn of 1904 this species held its host under complete control in the District of Columbia, killing every 'worm' which came under the writer's observation."*

When pestiferous insects are classified as regards the nature of their food plants, we discover that many of these are specially noxious, inasmuch as they restrict their predaceous activities to particular vegetable growths. When parasitic pests display a particular predilection for exceptionally valuable plants, they become a standing menace to the raiser of crops. Some of these malign creatures strictly limit their attention to the cotton plant; others infest the tomato, tobacco, and other members of the same botanical family. Many insect pests, however, are quite cosmopolitan in their tastes; and although they may show a preference for certain plants, the fact remains that, when they have out-

* *Insects Injurious to Vegetables*, p. 15.

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run their favorite means of subsistence, they calmly proceed to devour the next plant they meet with, and orchard, garden, field, and forest are all invaded in turn.

Fortunately for the farmer, this omnivorous group is less destructive than its more special-feeding colleagues. Its attack is spread over a far more extensive area; but the damage to crops for which caterpillars, leaf-beetles, green flies (aphides), and other general crop pests are responsible is still very serious. And it must not be forgotten that omnivorous vermin such as locusts and army-worms may swarm over an entire territory and completely ruin the harvest.

White grubs are deadly antagonists to agriculture. There are several hundred distinct forms of these grubs, and the majority are parasitic on cultivated plants. The wireworms, again, rival the white grubs as general farm pests.

> "Though not related to the white grubs, they have very similar habits, the injurious vegetable-feeding forms being strictly subterranean, and subsisting at the expense of various crops, especially corn, cereals, and grasses, but attacking, in the absence of these, various vegetables and other plants."

Important crops such as potatoes, onions, turnips, cabbage, beetroot, lettuce, carrots, and others, are ravaged by these miserable parasites. Plant lice are another scourge to the cultivator. There are numerous species, and all are injurious to plant life. Lucky is the gardener who is not troubled with their presence. In some seasons the hardiest products of the kitchen garden suffer severely from their baleful activities, while the ordinary vegetable growths—melons, cucumbers, peas, and young budding fruit trees—are among their favorite victims.

That choice garden growth, asparagus, is the host of various parasites. If America presented Europe with the potato and various other useful plants, the Old World gave asparagus to the New. This vegetable was carried across the Atlantic by the early European colonists, and appears to have remained immune to insect molestation for a couple of hundred years. Few edible plants have ever enjoyed such prolonged security; but now the plant is preyed upon by two leaf beetles which are both of European origin, and whose food is confined to this plant alone. The common asparagus-beetle appears in the list of English exports, and it is now firmly established in the States. This beetle is the chief enemy of the asparagus. It first attracted attention near New York in 1860, four years after its introduction into the country. Both in its larval and adult state this beetle damages and devours the tender shoots of the plants which are cultivated for the early season's markets. Later in the year it destroys the developing vegetable, and is seriously injurious to the seedlings. The larvæ, as well as the adult beetles, destroy the delicate parts of the plant, "but the latter gnaw with seemingly equal relish the epidermis or rind of the stems."

To the artistic naturalist unacquainted with its noxious character this beetle would appeal as a thing of wondrous beauty unalloyed. It is, indeed, a lovely object, "slender and graceful in form, blue-black in color, with red thorax, and lemon-yellow and dark blue elytra on wing-covers, with reddish border. Its length is a trifle less than one-fourth of an inch." From the site of its first settlement in Queen's County, New York, the beetle has spread very widely, and were it not for the immense numbers of adults which perish in severe wintry weather, and the very numerous predaceous animals which feed on its larvæ, it would be an even worse pest than it is. Among its inveterate enemies are the spotted lady-bird, sundry wasps, and small dragon-flies.

Another eyesore to the cultivator is the twelve-spotted asparagus-beetle, which has also spread widely over the United States, and, like the related form above described, is a beetle of great beauty. A third pest is the maggot of a small black fly which is only too well known as the asparagus-miner, a name derived from its habit of tunneling under the skin of the plant-stalk near, or just below, its base. An ingenious remedy for this untoward happening has been proposed by Dr. Chittenden, which is as follows:—

> "Permit a few volunteer asparagus plants to grow as traps to lure the female fly to deposit her eggs. Afterwards, in late June or early July, pull the trap plants and promptly burn them with their contained insects.
>
> "If this is carefully done over a considerable area, there will be little necessity for other methods, as few insects will be left for another season, unless, indeed, the insect has an alternative food plant. Co-operation and thoroughness are essential to success. This method will also operate against the rust which is often present in fields infested by the miner."

T. F. PALMER.

(To be concluded.)

PILLS TO PURGE ORTHODOXY.

It is to be feared that, to most men, the sky is but a concave mirror, showing nothing behind, and in looking into which they see only their own distorted images, like the reflection of a face in a spoon. Hence it needs not surprise that they are not very devout worshipers; it is a great wonder that they do not openly scoff.

Piety, like small-pox, comes by infection. Robinson Crusoe, however, caught it alone on his island. It is probable that he had it in his blood.

Everybody professes to know that it would be difficult to find a needle in a haystack, but very few reflect that this is because haystacks seldom contain needles.

It was never intended that men should be saints in heaven until they are dead and good for nothing else. On earth they are mostly fools.

The influence of climate upon civilisation has been more exhaustively treated than studied. Otherwise, we should know how it is that some countries that have so much climate have no civilisation.

The symbol of charity should be a circle. It usually ends exactly where it begins—at home.

A four-footed beast walks by lifting one foot at a time, but a four-horse team does not walk by lifting one horse at a time. And yet you cannot readily explain why this is so. —*Ambrose Bierce* ("*Dod Grile*").

FAREWELL TO THE CROSS.

Straightway he raised the Cross high in the air;
Its shadow darkened space: into the deep
He threw it: then his terrible despair
Fell from him, as a sleep.

Falls from a young man on a summer morn:
Wondering and glad a lowly way he took
By pastures, flowers and fruit, and golden corn,
And by a murmuring brook:

And while were heard descending from the skies,
Or out of future times and future lands,
A bruit low and whispers, shadowy cries
Of joy and clapping hands.

—*John Davidson.*

So, when dark faith in faith's dark ages heard
Falsehood, and drank the poison of the Word,
Two shades misshapen came to monstrous birth,
A father fiend in heaven, a thrall on earth:
Man, meanest born of beasts that press the sod,
And dis: the vilest of his creatures, God.
A judge unjust, a slave that praised his name,
Made life and death one fire of sin and shame.

—*Swinburne.*

Obituary.

I regret to hear of the death of Robert Owen Smith, which took place rather suddenly on Friday, March 13—the cause of death being certified as rheumatism and heart failure. The funeral took place on the following Wednesday. It took place without religious rites of any kind. Mr. Smith is well known to the survivors of the "Bradlaugh" days at the Hall of Science. I did not hear of his death till Monday evening, and though I would write more, in the circumstances I cannot.—G. W. F.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workman's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, R. Rosetti, esq., "Is Easter a Christian Festival?"

OUTDOOR.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): G. W. Foote, 3, "Shaw Among the Prophets"; 6.30, "Mr. Balfour on God."

ST. HELENS BRANCH N. S. S. (Central Café, Bridge-street): Saturday, March 21, at 7.30, F. Gateshill, "Christianity at the Bar of Reason."

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OF MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF THE LEAGUE

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CHAIR TO BE TAKEN BY

SIR HENRY COTTON.

SPEAKERS:

MR. G. W. FOOTE, MR. ARTHUR HENDERSON, M.P., MR. HALLEY STEWART, J.P., REV. W. WALSH, D.D.

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The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularisation of the State, etc., etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

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He who will not freely and sadly confess that he is MUCH *a fool is* ALL *a fool.*—FULLER.

Trust in God.

ONE of the speakers at the Norwich Free Church Congress complained that often in the Churches the man with the cheque-book was thought more of than the poor man. He thought this was one reason why the Churches lacked force, and had lost, or was losing, the confidence of the mass of the people. The complaint comes rather late in the day, because there never has been a time when the man with the cheque-book was not thought most of in the Churches—and one might add very generally outside the Churches. And, if he were sufficiently cynical to say so, the rich man might point out that in this the Churches were only doing their duty. They may preach *to* the poor, but they exist for the rich. How often are the wealthy classes told that they *ought* to go to church as an example to the poor? And what is the great work of the Churches but to maintain order, which is only another way of resisting change and of conserving established interests? A French writer said once that it was the duty of the poor to protect the property possessed by others. So one might also say that the stock teaching of Christianity to the poor has always been the duty of maintaining an order from which they benefit least of all.

The speaker referred to advised that we should trust less to the millionaire and more in God. But why? Why should we put more faith in God than we do in a millionaire? Millionaires may not be always admirable persons, although some of them do not seem to be at all bad fellows, but at least there is no doubt as to their existence. We do not have to read volumes or wade through miles of argument to find out whether they exist. And some of them do use their wealth in a way which they believe will benefit their fellows. But there is no such certainty in the case of God. We cannot be certain that he exists; we cannot be sure, even if he does exist, that what he does is for the best, or that we can rely upon his assistance. His existence is only a possibility, his benevolence a matter of mere inference. In the case of distress we might approach a wealthy man with a fair amount of certainty that he would render assistance. No one can approach God with the same degree of confidence. An American millionaire who some years ago met an appeal on behalf of the public with a "Damn the public," was generally condemned for his callousness. But, as a mere matter of fact, God doesn't say it, he does it. Thousands of people are tortured by disease or overwhelmed by disaster. And if we are to trust believers, it is God who is behind all. It is certain that if any wealthy man were to act with as little regard for human well-being as does God, he would stand before his fellows as a moral monster. This is not alone the opinion of an Atheist, a convinced Theist comes to the same conclusion. Mr. W. H. Mallock says that if Theists will look the facts of the universe steadily in the face,—

> "They will see that if there is anything at the back of this vast process, with a consciousness and a purpose in any way resembling our own—a Being who knows what he wants and is doing his best to get it—he is, instead of a holy, all-wise God, a scatter-brained, semi-powerful, semi-impotent monster. They will recognise as clearly as ever they did the old familiar facts which seemed to them evidences of God's wisdom, love, and goodness; but they will find that these facts when taken in connection with the others, only supply us with a standard in the nature of this Being by which most of his acts are exhibited to us as those of a criminal madman.....Habitually a bungler as he is, and callous when not actively cruel, we are forced to regard him, when he seems to exhibit benevolence, as not divinely benevolent, but merely weak and capricious, like a boy who fondles a kitten and the next moment sets a dog at it."

What encouragement have we that we should rely upon God? Of course, the clergy tell us we should; but that, as Heine said of another occasion, is their trade. Our trust in God is the only warranty for their existence. But what reason does experience furnish for this trust? If experience is to be trusted, God does nothing. Civilisation is not the gift of God, but the product of human labor and human wisdom. And civilisation, when one comes to look at it, largely consists in correcting God's handiwork, or directly reversing it. God furnishes poisons and diseases ready made, but *man* has to slowly discover the antidotes. God inflicts pain without the slightest regard for merit or demerit, and human society flourishes as it negatives this method. We do not willingly punish the innocent for the guilty, or the children for the parents' faults; but that is precisely God's method—that is, if we are to adopt the belief in a God who speaks through nature. If experience has taught us anything at all, it is that human development depends entirely upon our acquiring the qualities of self-dependence and co-operation, and treating God as a quite negligible factor in our lives.

Preachers often enough lament that people ignore God, without apparently realising the significance of the charge. That we do ignore God is true enough; but how comes it that we can do so? Facts are not things that can be ignored for long with impunity. Beliefs that are vital to human well-being cannot be lightly set on one side. A fact is the most stubborn of things. We may ignore its presence for a time; but it remains awaiting, and finally compelling, recognition. The Gradgrindian philosophy did not break down because it insisted on facts, but because it left out of account facts quite as important as those it recognised. It was the neglected facts that ultimately wrecked it, as they will sooner or later wreck all false conceptions of life. How comes it, then, that we can neglect God? And not only neglect God, but do so without anyone being able to show that we are the worse for our neglect? Does it not argue that in neglecting God we are losing sight of nothing of any genuine importance? For, after all, it is not the man who gets on *with* the belief in God by which its value is to be tested, but by the man who gets on without it. Health *with* whisky drinking cannot prove that it is necessary to prevent disease; health *without* it does prove that it is quite unnecessary. The testimony of a thousand believers is not nearly such good evidence as that of a single unbeliever.

Observe, too, that this neglect of God is not the case of a people who have not yet arrived at the stage of trusting God. It is the case of a people

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whose neglect is the expression of experience. Trust in God was once universal. People depended upon God as far as it was possible for them to do so. Historically and individually, trust in God represents a stage that has been outgrown in those who "neglect God." The believer too generally forgets when he lectures the unbeliever that we know all about it. We have been where he is. He has not been where we are. We know all his arguments, we have experienced all his feelings. We know what it is to trust in God, and we know what it is to go our way having put this belief behind. We really are in a position to lecture *him*. He is in no position to lecture us. He is in the position of a confirmed whisky-drinker lecturing a teetotaler on the necessity of whisky to perfect health.

Of course, the world generally ignores God. How could it be otherwise? Experience may not be always expressed in words or formulated in theory, but it is there in practice. We may express faith in the power of God to heal disease, but we do not refrain from calling in a physician or surgeon. We may profess to believe in the power of faith to move mountains, but we place infinitely greater reliance on engineers. We may pray for a safe voyage overseas, but we all know that a well-built vessel and a skilled navigator is more important. We pray in Parliament that God will direct the decisions of those present, but no single member believes that anything of the kind occurs. We say we believe that God is on the side of right in warfare, but we certainly place more reliance upon men and armaments. We go on trusting God in theory and ignoring him in practice, because nature does not mind what theories we hold so long as we do not practise them. It is practice that tells, and sooner or later experience compels us to adopt a practice that is consonant with our welfare, as it compels us to drop practices that make against it. Man does not trust God in practice, because experience has shown him what a broken reed this trust is. And mankind cannot go on fooling itself for ever.

In sober truth, while conscious Atheism may not be general, practical Atheism—that is, the setting on one side of God in the affairs of life—is fairly common amongst civilised people. And this is only what one might expect. Practice is before theory, nearly always. In the main, theory only expresses practice. It summarises life rather than directs it. Life precedes theory, and philosophy explains and systematises what is and what has been. And this divorce between theory and practice, this trusting God in theory and ignoring him in practice, only means, at bottom, that the forces of life are too insistent, too strong for religious doctrines. In practice, God is ignored because he has failed to justify confidence. All our beliefs, all our institutions are, like forms of life, ultimately amenable to the operation of the survival of the fittest. If they are inimical to welfare, they die out sooner or later. If they are useful, they flourish and increase. If they are merely harmless, they may persist for an indefinite time. But religious beliefs have not increased. On the contrary, there is no denying their general decline. It only remains for theory to summarise practice here as elsewhere. Life will then once more represent a consistent whole, while our perception of the nature of the forces involved in human development will make our progress at once more rapid and more secure.

C. COHEN.

Irrationalism Glorified.

THE term "Irrationalism" has two principal significations. It is employed to denote a philosophy which regards all the processes and conclusions of reason as practically valueless, and contends that the emotions alone furnish the tests of truth as well as the rules for individual and social conduct. It is also used to signify the denial or disbelief of the principles of Rationalism. In the present article we shall combine the two meanings of the word. Two outstanding metaphysicians of to-day, Bergson and Eucken, are uncompromising Irrationalists, though the latter is claimed as an advocate of rational spirituality. We maintain that the very notion of spirituality is entirely irrational, a contention in which Bergson is on our side. He argues that "the intellect is characterised by a natural inability to comprehend life." "Intelligence," he adds, "treats everything mechanically." Therefore "on intuition alone can we rely in dealing with life." To the famous French philosopher life is a spiritual entity or force bending matter, more or less, into conformity to its own will. This is a truth which the reason, according to him, cannot comprehend. We agree with him, but on wholly different grounds. We hold that our intelligence cannot deal with life as a spiritual reality simply because there is no evidence whatever that life is such a reality, and Professor Bergson makes no attempt to adduce any.

In a sermon which appeared in the *Christian World Pulpit* for March 18, the Rev. R. J. Campbell confesses that no theory of the Atonement of Christ that he has ever heard of seems to him to be completely exhaustive of the subject, in fact, that of all the innumerable theories not one has quite got at the heart of it. They all fall short, are all more or less inadequate to the greatness of the fact they try to explain. "There is a spiritual depth they never touch," he says, "but of which the soul can have direct experience all the same." Then comes the following remarkable passage:—

> "I believe I am right in saying that we all feel a power, a richness, an all-satisfying completeness in the Gospel of the atoning work of Christ, which are not fully accounted for in terms of the reason. You read what all the master theologians of the past and present have to say about it, and you rise from the exercise with the feeling that there is still something left unsaid, and that that something is the most important thing of all; in fact, I am not sure that the essence of the atonement ever could be expressed in terms of the human understanding. It eludes exact statement; it sublimates the moment you try to seize it with the forceps of the intellect. You can get hold of something, it is true, but that which you cannot get hold of is—or so one is almost forced to believe—just that which has most of all given the Gospel power over the hearts and lives of men."

Now, if all theories of the atonement have failed to get quite at the heart of it, how does Mr. Campbell know that it has a heart to get at? We have read what all the master theologians have to say on the subject, and we have risen from the memorable exercise feeling, not that there was still something left unsaid, but that it would been infinitely better if all they do say had been left unsaid. If "that something" has never been expressed by a single divine, living or dead, how on earth can Mr. Campbell so confidently assure us that it is "the most important thing of all"? But, the reply comes, it is a thing "of which the soul can have direct experience all the same." Fancy a sane person coolly asserting that he has a direct experience of "the most important thing of all," but that for the life of him he cannot tell us what it is! That is precisely what Mr. Campbell claims to be true of every genuine Christian. "It is a great mystery," he adds; "and it remains a mystery when the utmost has been said that can be said in answer to the questions of the mind concerning it." What a contemptible city of refuge to fly into!

Let us look for a moment into this curious subject of Christian experience to which Mr. Campbell continually alludes. After treating of the atonement as the infallible means of reconciliation between God and man, and of saving people from the penal consequences of sin, the reverend gentleman proceeds to quote from a letter sent him by an old friend of the City Temple, in which the writer describes the terrible experiences of "a very poor woman of about forty-two, worn and prematurely aged, rather deformed, partially deaf, with that look in her eyes

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which a dog has in his when suffering," who yet "looks after and attends to a father, who is suffering from softening of the brain and insomnia, and who is in consequence very irritable, a crippled brother and his son." This very poor woman toils and slaves day after day, month after month, her one desire being to sacrifice herself in the service of those she has in charge, and she never murmurs or complains, often going without food herself so that father, brother, and his boy may not go without. The writer of the letter concludes thus: "For patient endurance, for loving unselfishness, for bravery and heroism, for unrequited devotion and self-sacrifice, this poor, deformed, deaf, toiling woman seems to me to be a burning and a shining example." One naturally infers that the unfortunate woman makes no religious profession whatever, for the writer's purpose seems to be to use her case to put to shame the religion of the Churches. There is a great number of such women in London alone, who wear themselves prematurely out in loving devotion to those dependent upon them, and some of them, to our personal knowledge, are moved to such conduct by no religious motives or sentiments of any kind, but alone by wifely and motherly affection. And yet, wonder of wonders, this is Mr. Campbell's amazing comment on that letter:—

> "We have not far to look for evidence of the saving power of Christ. There it is, and in all such lives as this. The redeeming love of Christ finds opportunity through the self-sacrificing spirit thus expressed, and will in the end prevail over everything opposed to it, and lift mankind back to the heart of God."

Is not the reverend gentleman aware that the existence of the conditions which make it possible for good and loving women so to toil and slave and endure unspeakable privations in a Christian country is a conclusive proof of the utter failure of the Christian religion? Does he not know that in Great Britain to-day several millions of God's children, for whose salvation Christ is said to have died, are living in the miserable state of semi-starvation, and that every year scores actually die of hunger? This is what the atonement of Christ has done for our country, and it has done no more for any other.

But we are urgently pointed to the blissful experience of real Christians. The curious thing is that this "simply cannot be stated in terms of the intellect at all," which means that the highest Christian experience is unintelligible to rational people. Listen to this:—

> "One will have to use hyperbole in order to do it, for plain, matter of fact statement is inadequate. It is that which from the point of view of common sense is an impossibility, namely, making the guilty innocent. It is something that goes beyond even forgiveness as we ordinarily understand that word. It is putting the penitent sinner in the position of never having sinned."

Do you now see what hyperbole means? It is nothing but rhetoric, deliberate overstatement, intentional exaggeration, an affirmation that cannot be literally true. Here is a man who for fifty or sixty years has wallowed in the filthiest moral gutters, bringing irreparable ruin upon innocent young girls, swindling in business, defrauding those who trusted in him, and perpetrating many other dark deeds; but at the last hour he repents, gives his heart to the Savior, and, in consequence, is assured that he has received "something that goes beyond even forgiveness as we ordinarily understand that word," with the result that he jumps to his feet and excitedly exclaims: "Hallelujah! The man I was five minutes ago is dead and buried for ever; I am no longer that man in the sight of God; in relation to the eternal holiness I am as though I had never fallen; that load of transgression has nothing to do with me; I am as those who have never known it."

Such is Christian experience; and without the use of hyperbole we can honestly say that it is rooted in a lie, and can lead to nothing but the worst form of hypocrisy. According to Mr. Campbell's teaching in this sermon, Christians pretend to be what they are not, and so must be written down as play-actors. They are encouraged from the pulpit both to believe and act a lie. They are taught to persuade themselves that what took place at their conversion was, not merely a severance between them and their guilty past, but "the utter destruction of that past, so to speak." Such teaching is fundamentally immoral, and is bound to exert an injurious effect upon the character of those who accept it. It is Irrationalism glorified with a vengeance. We prefer Rationalism, apart from the Gospel of something "that goes beyond even forgiveness," completely divorced from Christian experience, which can engender nothing but the most intolerable and intolerant form of self-righteousness; and we prefer Rationalism because its supreme emphasis is on the great law of Nature that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

J. T. LLOYD.

Science and the Soul.—IX.

(*Concluded from p. 181.*)

> "Since the awakening of the scientific spirit in Europe, it has been recognised that the promise of a future life has no basis of fact to support it. The modern study of the functions of the mind has shown beyond all question that these are dependent on the functions of the body, in particular of those of the central nervous system."—PROFESSOR ELIE METCHNIKOFF, *The Nature of Man*, p. 159.
>
> "Each man born is but a living wave of matter curving over the ocean of being, to sink again into the unseen trough of the next, while the calm of obscurity settles over all in this Universe of Oblivion."
>
> "The soul which he inherits from the elements, whatever it may be, he also returns to them: his personal immortality consisting solely in great thoughts, words, and deeds, and the depth of their impression on the shifting sands of men's memories."—A. R. DAWAN, *From Matter to Man*, pp. 284-286.
>
> "Notably too I observed among serious people there (at Havana) what I have observed in other places, the visible relief with which they begin to look forward to extinction after death."—J. A. FROUDE, *The English in the West Indies*, p. 323.
>
> "I find that when a Christian loses a friend the tears spring from his eyes as quickly as from the eyes of others. Their tears are as bitter as ours. Why? The echo of the promises spoken eighteen hundred years ago is so low, and the sound of the clods upon the coffin so loud, the promises are so far away, and the dead are so near. That is the reason."—COLONEL INGERSOLL, *The Dying Creed*, p. 31.

IT is said that Frederick the Great, upon seeing one of his regiments hesitate to charge, at a critical moment, shouted, "Rascals; do you want to live for ever?" It is certain, as Miss Edith Simcox has remarked, that "the lust for living for ever is one which will be found least deeply rooted among men." Moreover, as the same writer points out, "No mortal knows whether a resurrection to eternal life would answer his expectations or not."*

Every believer is quite certain that he, personally, whatever may be the fate of others, is going to have a good time in the life to come. Like the old French nobleman who declared that God would never damn a person of his quality. But, as Leslie Stephen observed, "The argument that because evil and good are mixed wherever we can observe, therefore there is elsewhere unmixed good, does not obey any recognised canons of inductions."† And John Stuart Mill has remarked that, in a "happier condition of life, not annihilation, but immortality, may be the burdensome idea," and that we should "find comfort, and not sadness, in the thought that it is not chained through eternity to a conscious existence which it cannot be assured it will always wish to preserve."‡

It is religion—with its ghastly pictures of endless tortures—which has made the thought of death so distressing to men. It is as natural to die as to be born. And as men lose the groundless fears of religion, so they will lose the fear of death.

As the historian Froude remarked:—

> "Men used to pretend that the idea of annihilation was horrible to them; now they regard the probability

* *Natural Law*, p. 359.
† *Freethinking and Plain Speaking*, p. 356.
‡ J. S. Mill, *Essay on the Utility of Religion.*

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of it with calmness, if not with actual satisfaction. One very interesting Cuban gentleman said to me that life would be very tolerable if one was certain that death would be the end of it. The theological alternatives were equally unattractive; Tartarus was an eternity of misery, and the Elysian fields an eternity of ennui.' *

Some men have even looked forward to absolute annihilation with pleasure. Mainlaender did so. Metchnikoff says :—

"Mainlaender describes the state of mind of a man who develops the will to die, and commits suicide. 'At first he glances anxiously and from afar at death, and shrinks from it with horror. Later, he draws nearer and walks round it in wide circles. Day by day, however, these circles become smaller, until finally he embraces death with weary arms and looks it straight in the face. Then peace comes; gentle peace!'

"It is absurd to expect anything to follow death but absolute annihilation, and the ordinary man faces this prospect with terror. 'But it is essential,' says Mainlaender, 'that man should dominate the universe by knowledge, and wise men look forward to total annihilation with joy.' 'In relinquishing Schopenhauer's will to live,' concluded Mainlaender, 'I have finally arrived at the will to die. I have raised myself upon the shoulders of Schopenhauer, until I have attained a point of view such as others have never accomplished. At present I am alone, but behind me all humanity is pressing on to freedom; and before me is the clear translucent vista of the future."†

Mainlaender, true to his principles, committed suicide when barely thirty-five years of age. We do not advocate, or approve, of Mainlaender's principles. Man should not cower down with terror in the presence of death, neither should he rejoice at its approach; he should relinquish himself to the inevitable without fear, and without joy, after the manner of the Greeks and Romans before the advent of Christianity, with its debasing superstitions of heaven and hell.

Among the Churches to-day there is a tendency to believe that everything will be all right in the end. Even among the old believers, the doctrine of hell-fire is not held as it used to be. Instead of the old fierce joy aroused by the idea of seeing unbelievers suffering indescribable torments, there is a tendency to keep this side of the "glad tidings" out of sight, to be ashamed of it, to regard it as a regrettable necessity, but taught by the Bible.

The more advanced section of the Churches now tend to the belief that everyone will be saved. The text now is taken, not from the Bible, but from Tennyson :—

"Oh yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill."

In Miss Marie Corelli's *Sorrows of Satan* even the Devil sneaks into heaven at last. Poor Devil! what a fate!

This future existence is pictured, especially by those who have been beaten and broken in the battle of life, as a floating, dreamy existence, careless and painless, where, bursting all bonds of habit, we shall be at liberty :—

"There to wander far away,
On from island unto island at the gateways of the day.
Larger constellations burning, mellow moons and happy skies,
Breadths of tropics shade and palms in cluster, knots of Paradise.

. . . . . .

Droops the heavy-blossom'd bower, hangs the heavy-fruited tree—
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-purple spheres of sea."‡

They take all the best of life, eliminate all its badness and sadness, and then imagine it continuing for ever. For instance, a worker in a smoky town goes to the country or the seaside for a summer holiday. For a few days he leads a happy, careless existence, all smiles and sunshine. He forgets that he would soon tire of such an existence; those who dwell by the sea do not spend all their time in gazing upon it, and the agriculturalist would be more likely to agree with James Thomson ("B. V.") in his pessimistic mood, disgusted with—

"The same old solid hills and leas;
The same old stupid patient trees;
The same old ocean, blue and green;
The same sky, cloudy and serene;
The old two dozen hours to run
Between the settings of the sun,"

than with the raptures of a dweller from a London tenement. Even the existence described by Tennyson would soon begin to pall, and in the prospect of an eternity of it, we should, like the Wandering Jew, cry for an end to such a life. The Atheist, like others, regrets that he cannot recall past joys, but recognises the futility of attempting it, and resigns himself to the inevitable. Lafcadio Hearn, who abandoned Western for Japanese civilisation, and married a Japanese wife, was an Atheist and an unbeliever in a future life, but in a few pathetic lines he put more feeling than in all the millions of sermons that have been preached.

They were found in his desk after his death, and are entitled "Illusion." It is reminiscent of a beautiful Japanese scene, and of a child who is no more :—

"An old, old sea-wall, stretching between two boundless levels, green and blue. On the right only rice-fields, reaching to the sky-line; on the left only summer-silent sea, where fishing craft of curious shapes are riding. Everything is steeped in white sun; and I am standing on the wall. Along its broad and grass-grown top a boy is running towards me—running in sandals of wood—the sea breeze blowing aside the long sleeves of his robe as he runs, and bareing his slender legs to the knee. Very fast he runs, springing upon his sandals; and he has in his hands something to show me: a black dragon-fly, which he is holding by the wings lest it should hurt itself struggling.

"With what sudden, incommunicable pang do I watch the gracious little figure leaping in the light—between those summer silences of field and sea! And how softly vivid all things under this milky radiance—the smiling child-face with lips apart; the twinkle of the light, quick feet; the shadows of grasses and of little stones!

"But quickly as he runs, the child will come no nearer to me; the slim, brown hand will never cling to mine. For this light is the light of a Japanese sun that set long years ago.

"Never, dearest!—never shall we meet—not even when the stars are dead!

"And yet—can it be possible that I shall not remember?—that I shall not still see, in other million summers, the same sea-wall under the same white noon; the same shadows of grasses and of little stones; the running of the same little sandalled feet that will never, never reach my side?"

This, of course, is not a longing for a future life, but a desire for a repetition of the past, like the idea of the "eternal recurrence" which filled Nietzsche with such despair; but none knew better than Hearn the futility of such crying for the moon. Hearn could never resist the idea to put all his emotions into words; emotions everyone feels, but only men of genius can transcribe.

Lastly, we have to deal with the moral argument. We are told that if we do away with the rewards and punishments of a future life, everyone will give vent to their evil passions, and no man's life and property would be safe.

Well, the Buddhists, who are more numerous than the Christians, have no such beliefs to restrain them, yet they do not require an army of police to keep them from robbery and murder as the Christians do.

Leslie Ward says :—

"This is a question upon which men are very prone to err. Just as they imagine they would commit crime but for certain governmental restraints, so they think they would do wrong but for religious restraints, when in fact they would do just the same as now if neither existed. The moral sanction is in reality first, both in time and in authority, and it has therefore been lashed to religion as a means of carrying the latter through, and not the reverse. It is moral sanction which gives authority to religious dogma, and not religious sanction

* J. A. Froude, *The English in the West Indies*, p. 323.
† Metchnikoff, *The Nature of Man*, p. 190.
‡ Tennyson, *Locksley Hall*.

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which gives authority to moral principle. It is morality which has saved religion, and not religion which has saved morality. Here, as so often elsewhere pointed out, the apparent is the reverse of the real."*

Heine mocks the idea of virtue being rewarded after death, in his *Confessions*, where he says:—

"One beautiful starlight night, Hegel stood with me at an open window, I being a young man of twenty-two, and having just eaten well and drank coffee, naturally spoke with enthusiasm of the stars, and called them abodes of the blest. But the master muttered to himself, 'The stars! Hm! hm! the stars are only a brilliant eruption on the firmament.' 'What!' cried I; 'then there is no blissful spot above, where virtue is rewarded after death?' But he, glaring at me with his dim eyes, remarked, sneeringly, 'So you want a *pourboire* (a tip) because you have supported your sick mother and not poisoned your brother?' At these words he looked anxiously around, but was reassured when he saw it was only Henry Beer."†

The man who practices virtue, only in order to avoid punishment and gain a reward in some future life, is not a moral man at all; he is only a bad man in chains; and, at the best, is only acting from selfish motives.

We cannot better conclude than by giving a verse from Swinburne's magical *Hymn to Proserpine*:—

"From too much love of living,
From hope and fear set free,
We thank with brief thanksgiving
Whatever gods may be.
That no life lives for ever
That dead men rise up never;
That even the weariest river
Winds somewhere safe to sea."

W. MANN.

Wordsworth's Poetry of Life.

Wordsworth, A Lecture by George Bedborough. Price 3d. (Letchworth, Garden City Press.)

MR GEORGE BEDBOROUGH, in choosing Wordsworth for the subject of his lecture, was wisely inspired. There is far too much neglect of that great poet, a master of verse, to whom discriminating judges grant a very high place among English classics, and to whom Matthew Arnold and other poets gave the sincere flattery of imitation. Moreover, Mr. Bedborough, a most democratic critic, turned to Wordsworth as to a poet "whose message is for our day and our people." And with justice he defends the poet from the charge of disloyalty to liberty and ingratitude to his friends, besides removing other popular misconceptions.

The booklet is the more agreeable to read because its slender length gives its author small chance of analysing in detail the various phases of Wordsworth's genius. Mr. Bedborough was perforce content with a brief summary of the poet's career, and with a more lengthy appreciation, which contains some of the soundest criticism on the subject that we have had the pleasure of reading.

At times Mr. Bedborough puts his thoughts on literature in a dramatic form, and fits them with a proper background. How excellent is his method of explaining who were Wordsworth's contemporaries. "About the time that Wordsworth was born, a dozen children prattled and played unconscious of their destiny, bearing the names of Charles Lamb, Walter Scott, Landor, Coleridge, Campbell, Hazlitt, Moore, Southey, Hallam, and Ebenezer Elliott." The last name indicates Mr. Bedborough's democratic sympathies, for no ordinary critic would have recollected this singer of the people, or mentioned that "about the time that Wordsworth died, Walt Whitman was editing the *Daily Eagle*."

Mr. Bedborough has some excellent remarks on the theological opinions of Wordsworth, whose religious and moral orthodoxy has generally been taken for granted. Says Mr. Bedborough:—

"He [Wordsworth] had many relations in the orthodox Church. He never troubled directly to defy orthodoxy, and he frequently used orthodox phraseology. If his whole work does not undermine orthodox morality it is only because we are incapable of understanding the implications of philosophy.....Wordsworth's Christianity was neither his chief nor his second concern. He loved Nature more than he loved anything, and Nature included humanity."

"Wordsworth's message," he adds in another place, "is essentially joy for the life that now is, or, in the poet's own beautiful words:—

'Not in Utopia, subterranean fields,
Or some secreted island, Heaven knows where,
But in the very world, which is the world
Of all of us—the place where in the end
We find our happiness or not at all.'"

We thank Mr. Bedborough for a fine tribute to the abiding power of one of the greatest English poets. Not to care for Wordsworth is not to care for poetry. Byron has been described as the favorite poet of the unpoetical; Keats is by common consent the poets' poet; Wordsworth, like Shelley, cannot cease to be the fashion, because he never was the fashion. Wordsworth was never, for instance, a general favorite, like Tennyson, whose popularity was equally great with the half-educated many and with the educated few. He delighted lovers of poetry with "The Lotos Eaters" and "Rizpah," and he charmed ordinary people with his sugary tributes to Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort, and with versified novelettes.

Matthew Arnold rightly insisted that Wordsworth is one of the very chief glories of English poetry. The admirers of Wordsworth are the most cultured students of literature. Wordsworth owed his proud position to his truthful interpretation of nature, and it is this quality in his writings which gives them their imperishable strength. Wordsworth belonged to the philosophic school. He was, if anything, a Pantheist. In his inspired moments, he absolutely forgot the Christian tenets and communed with Nature, which existed before all creeds, and will outlast them all. Hearing oftentimes the "still sad music of humanity," his poetry is charged with the profoundest meaning. That is why he abides, for his poetry has the quality of inevitableness. It could not have been otherwise, and no one else could have written it.

The difference between Wordsworth uninspired and Wordsworth inspired is the transition from a drone to that of a silver trumpet. When the dross has been removed from Wordsworth's work, there remains a greater mass of the finest gold than can be put to the credit of any English poet save Shakespeare, the master of them all. At his finest moments, Wordsworth was Shakespearean in splendid simplicity, as when he said of the sonnet that—

"The thing became a trumpet."

He was the equal of Milton in eloquence, as when he spoke of the ruined tower wearing its crown of weeds through the centuries:—

"And yet cannot sustain
Some casual shout that breaks the silent air,
Or the unimaginable touch of time."

On occasion he was the peer of Keats, as when he wished to—

"Hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn."

His finest lines are "jewels that sparkle for ever on the stretched forefinger of time." But, better than all these tributes, he was Wordsworth, who, with eyes fixed on Nature's loveliness, saw all in "the light that never was on sea or land." His splendid genius is like a pure, white flame, which, seen amid the blackness of contemporary literature, is a beacon to those whose lives are "consecrate to truth and liberty."

MIMNERMUS.

* Leslie Ward, *Dynamic Sociology*, vol. ii., p. 283.
† Heine, *Prose Writings*, pp. 302-3.

AN EQUIVOCAL ANSWER.

During an "Instruction" class, an inquiring youngster asked the instructor if Jesus was ever married; to which the priest replied that he never was.

Then little Bertie further asked, "Whom then did Jesus live with?" To this the priest replied, "His mother."

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Acid Drops.

The *Manchester Evening Chronicle* recently published a laudatory notice of the work of Dr. Knox as Bishop of Manchester. The notice is primarily concerned with the building of new churches and mission halls during Dr. Knox's tenure of office. Thanks to a committee appointed by him, in nine years £65,000 had been raised directly, and another £185,000 indirectly. In nine years, therefore, says the *Chronicle*, "£185,000 has been expended in extending Church work in the bounds of the ancient parish of Manchester and adjoining parishes." Now this is a huge sum of money, and it must be observed it was merely to *extend* Church work. All the pre-existing agencies have to be added before we exhaust Church activities. But the figures do bring home to one the extent of Church work, and one ought to look for striking results. Given any organisation other than the Church with these huge sums of money at command over a given area, and one can safely say that area would be transformed —for either good or ill.

What, now, has been the consequence of the extension of Church work in Manchester? Curiously enough, the *Chronicle* supplies an answer in another part of the same issue. Preaching in the Cathedral, the Rev. W. E. Kemp drew up a sweeping indictment against the morals of Manchester. In the factories, he said, "there was no deep realisation of the dignity of manhood and womanhood." Certain districts "were given up to organised vice."

> "Our church workers can tell you of outrages on children of a shocking character. In the district where I work the more decent mothers dare not let their children out at night, and only within the last fortnight a girl of eight was taken from the steps of the church and violated disgracefully. There seems to be no moral sense in the community."

There was much more said to the same effect, but the above will do to go on with. Now if the Rev. Mr. Kemp is not telling the truth, it is plain that the Bishop would do well to spend some of the money raised in training clergymen of a more truthful character. If he is telling the truth, or anything near the truth, how much has Manchester benefited by this expenditure of an extra £185,000 in nine years on Church work? Give any other body of men seriously interested in making things better in Manchester £20,000 a year for nine years, and is it not highly probable that they would be able to show much more in the way of improvement than the Bishop is able to show? The Bishop can point to more churches and mission halls. But his own clergy confess that the moral rot continues.

The *Scotsman*, in a recent issue, had some comments on the position of the Churches that have a direct bearing on what has been said above. Dealing with the returns of the United Free Church Presbytery, it points out that "In the crowded and poverty-stricken areas of the city [Edinburgh] the Churches have but a slender proportion of the population with them.....In the last twenty years eleven churches of the United Free Church have been extinguished in populous districts. It gives figures in support of its statements, and these fully justify the scathing comment: "They say, 'Pay so much per sitting and we will declare the glad tidings.' And when the people cannot or will not pay, then Morningside is filled with churches and the Canongate is left with only one church for every 5,000 of the population." The Church of Scotland has, in fact, only a membership of 3·3 per cent. of the population. "In other days," says the *Scotsman*, "the Churches were after men, but now they are after money." It is only fair to point out that the *Scotsman* attributes the present condition of affairs to the "senseless rivalry" of the Churches. It would probably not do for a leading Scottish daily to go any deeper into the question. But as all the Churches, not only in Scotland but all over the civilised world, are losing their hold on the people, one wants a better explanation of the facts. Of course, a deal of energy is being wasted in competition; but the real significance is that the Churches are competing for customers in a market that is rapidly declining.

Christians are getting squeamish. In the view of the National Peace Council there are grave objections to the use of lead soldiers for children. Some day tender-hearted pietists will cease telling little children of the horrors of hell—a far more serious matter than that of boycotting toy soldiers.

Mr. G. K. Chesterton, who has republished his amusing volume, *The Defendant*, says that "the Christian martyrdoms were more than demonstrations: they were advertisements." It would be more correct to say that they have been used as advertisements. The martyrs died on the cross; the exploiters live on it.

When our missionaries go abroad they usually carry with them all the prestige of a conquering race. They have, moreover, the advantages that are derived from advanced scientific knowledge and a generally higher social development. They are not slow in placing all the advantages derived from these sources to the credit of the religion that they preach. Very often the plan works. All people are not like the Japanese, who said quite openly, "We are quite willing to take any scientific knowledge you may have, but your religion you may keep." In a great many cases it is concluded that the advantages paraded by the missionary, and particularly the knowledge and skill of the medical missionary, are first-class evidence of the value of Christianity. We at home, of course, know better. We know how little connection there is between our really helpful knowledge and current religious belief, with the result that—even though all the stories of missionary conquests were true—Christianity is a declining force. And when natives of India, China, or Japan visit this country they are not slow to note the fraudulent character of missionary claims, and report accordingly.

The truth of this was admitted in a speech before the Free Church Congress, by Mr. Malcolm Spencer, Social Service Secretary to the Christian Students' movement. He said:—

> "In British universities more than 2,000 Eastern students are being turned against Christianity by the shame of our slums, the cruelty and materialism of our commerce, our behavior to each other, and more especially our attitude to the foreigner. When an educated Hindoo arrives in this country, he is at once impressed by the poverty and wretchedness of multitudes in our cities, particularly since he notices also a display of wealth and luxury, making it quite evident that poverty is due not so much to any want of material resources as to sheer lack of desire to overcome the difficulties."

In other words, intelligent non-Christian observers find that at home Christians fail miserably in developing a better human life. In India, religion is at least a disciplinary force, whether it makes for good or evil. In this country they see that religion is mainly used for the purpose of keeping one class in a state of subjection, and giving greed, lust, and cruelty a veneer of morality.

Mr. Silvester Horne says the British Parliament is only realising now what Moses realised 4,000 years ago—that man needs one day's rest in seven. Rubbish! Moses—or whatever the name stands for—realised nothing of the kind. The Sabbath has no connection whatever with the principle of rest. It is not the principle of rest, but the principle of taboo that is involved here. People were forbidden to work on a certain day because all work on that day was unlucky and offensive to the gods. Students of comparative mythology know this well enough, although it has become entangled with the question of necessary rest and recreation. How little the Sabbath has ever had to do with the need for rest is seen by the way in which men, women, and children have been worked like galley-slaves six days in the week, even in very recent times.

The Hon. Henry Cope has written a little booklet on *Our Schools and the Bible*. He speaks in it of the "pernicious influence of the popular notion that God is a Person." The *Christian World* objects to this as showing prejudice. As the question is an open one perhaps it would be more correct to refer to God as a "suspected" person.

The Master of Manchester Grammar School, Mr. Lewis Paton, says that the decreasing number of children in Sunday-schools is due to our shrinking from imposing endurance upon them for the sake of endurance. Maybe; but this is certainly not the only reason. Children are not at Sunday-schools in such large numbers as they once were mainly because the parents do not believe as keenly as they once did. And the better type of parent in the semi-religious world naturally and properly shrinks from forcing upon children views concerning the veracity and utility of which he is himself doubtful. Mr. Paton adds, that in the old days children who were in church were not necessarily joining in the worship. We fancy this applies to a great many adults nowadays.

The *Westminster Gazette* recently portrayed Mr. Lloyd George as a porcupine, some of whose spines were sticking in the trousers of a boy, under the legend "Not St. Sebastian This Time." This reminds us of the American who saw a

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picture of the saint, covered with arrows, at the National Gallery. "See here," the visitor said, "I don't mind the Venuses, but I can't stand this infernal pincushion."

It is seldom that those "Fathers-in-God" the Bishops have been subjected to such a fusillade of criticism as has been levelled at their devoted heads by the Rev. S. Baring-Gould, the author of the well-known hymn, "Onward, Christian Soldiers," and a number of popular novels, who, in his new book, *The Church Revival*, applies the red-hot poker with all the zest of a pantomime harlequin. According to the writer, Bishop Sumner, of Winchester, was a "narrow-minded Evangelical"; Bishop Davys, of Peterboro, was "as out of place as a corporal elevated to be a general"; Gilbert, of Chichester, was "hard and unsympathetic"; Sumner, of Canterbury, he calls "a mere nose of wax"; and Thorold, of Winchester, was a man "of little mental capacity." The gem is the description of Archbishop Tate as "a schoolboy set to work on a problem beyond his capacity." We don't presume to improve on the last, for it seems true of the whole bunch.

"Vanoc," of the *Referee*, referring to Mr. Kipling's remarks on the smells of different countries, says that "Smell follows religion. Burning peat or charcoal suggests the ancient faith of Rome. The smell of roast mutton, beef, and apple tart hint at Protestant Sundays. The sickly-sweet, luscious perfume of the lotus—speak of the Buddhistic philosophy." He might have added that the smell of burning heretics characterised Christianity for centuries.

"The Poems of Job, Translated in the original metre." Dear, dear! We have been told so often that Jehovah wrote those verses.

There must be freedom of the will says Rev. R. F. Horton, and "the meaning of the will being free is simply this: that we are perpetually choosing, and the choice which is made has a determining influence." All we can say is, that if that is what the freedom of will means, there is nothing to quarrel about, and Dr. Horton is threshing the air. But that is *not* what is meant by freedom of the will. No one denies the fact of choice. It is as obvious as daylight, and has never been questioned by anyone. It is the question of the nature of choice that raises the issue. Not whether we choose, or are free to choose, but whether we have the power to determine what shall be the nature of our choice. Or to look at the matter from another angle, whether our choice is determined by a freely moving will or not. It is a pity that so many writers and speakers should so often fail to grasp the truth of this subject.

Words show the nature and current of a man's thinking, and when Dr. Horton asks whether it is possible to conceive a perfectly unthinking, unconscious, material universe, "setting about to produce the lower animals"? he shows us how hopeless his thinking is. "Setting about"! There is everything in that expression. It is a form of thought that belongs to Central Africa rather than to a scientific age. He can only think of things occurring because some person or persons decide that they shall occur. Educated people by this time ought to be aware that nature does not "set about" producing anything. Nature does not "set about" arranging things to produce a storm; the storm occurs because the conditions arise favorable to its being. Dr. Horton thinks it remotely possible that the world might have occurred without God up to the point of producing life; but after that, God was needed. God had to be called in, like a vaccination officer, to inoculate the earth in order that evolution might advance a stage.

"We are all of us," says the *Guardian*, "in a condition of antagonism to nature." Very largely this is true. We only need add that nature is as God intended it—if there is a God. The moral is not a difficult one to draw.

The Christian Evidence Society, through its organising secretary, has discovered a very deeply laid plot against Christianity. He writes to several religious papers asking people to let him have reports of any attacks on Christianity that appear in the "professedly neutral papers." These attacks, he says, "often emanate from the chief anti-theistic societies, which carefully organise the attack upon Christianity." So Christian readers are asked to co-operate in defeating these deadly designs. This gentleman has discovered a mare's nest. There is no organised attack upon Christianity by this means, and we fancy he knows it as well as we do. We suspect that the real thing animating this appeal is the hope that people will enclose subscriptions along with the press cuttings. Christians need not be alarmed. It is not the attack on, but the defence of, Christianity that is illustrated by the press of this country. Unless from a man whose communication editors dare not refuse, attacks on Christianity are rigorously boycotted by newspapers. A well-known Freethinker stands about as much chance of getting his communications in the press as he does of getting appointed to a bishopric.

Pity the poor clergy! Here is a list of recent wills of clerics that calls for much sympathy. Rev. O. E. Anwyl, Plymouth, £5,122. Rev. A. Barff, Prebendary of St. Paul's, £3,679. Rev. C. S. Bruce, Cork, £4,263. Rev. E. Hughes, Oakham, £2,237. Rev. H. Lewis, Bermondsey, £3,774. Rev. R. Mole, £8,849. Rev. L. H. O'Brien, Limerick, £6,804. Rev. J. Robertson, Ripon, £5,235. Rev. A. V. Thornton, Truro, £8,201. These are only some of the —from a monetary point of view—smaller fry. Here are a few others. Rev. F. E. Broome, Gloucester, £30,811. Rev. C. Aubrey, Darlington, £20,729. Rev. T. Carlyon, Falmouth, £18,945. Rev. A. T. Chapman, Cambridge, £12,195. Rev. C. Hipkins, Banford, Derbyshire, £10,598. Rev. A. Jessop, Scarning, Norfolk, £11 817. Rev. V. Le Bas, Preacher of the Charterhouse, £16,175. Rev. W. P. Nichols, Devizes, £20,128. Rev. J. Porter, Blackheath, £13,838. Rev. J. Richardson, Sandy, Bedfordshire, £13,237. Rev. St. Aubyn H. Molesworth, St. Aubyn, £35,351. Rev. W. C. Sayer-Milward, Wallingford, Bucks, £110,109. That's all—for the present.

Wallasey, in Cheshire, will witness the opening of a women's church, and, say the papers, "a special church may be built." To be an entirely feminine production this sacred building should be planned by a lady architect, built by lady bricklayers under the direction of a polite forelady. The east window should have the blazoned figure of St. Jael with the little hammer, the patron saint of very advanced ladies.

The *Daily Mirror* has published a futurist menu, which shows that the cookery of the future will include tomatoes with brandy, and herrings served with jam. If the Christian superstition be true, the menu for most of us in the next world will consist of "something with boiling oil in it."

The Christian ideal of a heavenly father does not often fit the facts of everyday occurrence. Over 1,000 persons have been drowned in South Russia by the high tides; at one town alone 200 workmen were washed away in their sleep.

Emotional preaching is good on occasion, but it has its pitfalls. Recently a preacher, gushing over the Garden of Eden, said that it was "the apple of Adam's eye"; and a brother in the Lord, ranting elsewhere, declared that a missionary "went out with nothing but a torch to shoot a lion." These things could not be said before less stupid audiences without provoking uproarious laughter.

The few missionaries at work in the McKenzie River district, North West Canada, would have delighted those two ardent medical students, Bob Sawyer and his friend. One of them performed an operation for the removal of a man's leg with a butcher's saw and knife, owing to the lack of proper instruments. Why did they not rely on prayer? These Christians are always Secularists in their actions.

Still another account of George Muller, of the Bristol Orphanages, has been published with the sub-title of "A Record of Faith Triumphant." Muller pretended that prayer and faith were sufficient to carry through all his projects, and the obsequious press made him the most paragraphed man in the world, and he held the world's record for free advertising. As a consequence, he received a vast amount of money, which, of course, he attributed to his "faith."

America, the land of tall buildings and tall statements, has produced a Woman's Bible. The notes begin by blaming Adam, and end by denouncing all who wear trousers. Paul, we presume, has some special paragraphs devoted to his remark that women should keep silence in the churches. But what have the dear ladies done with those naughty stories in the Old Testament?

The notorious Billy Sunday, the American evangelist, whose ruffianism on the platform delights some Yankee

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preachers and disgusts others, has been calculating the cost of his converts. Dividing the amount expended by the number saved, he calculates the cost per sinner is in Indianopolis £125, in New York £109, Boston £90, Chicago £79, New Orleans £18, and Atalanta £15. At this rate the conversion of America promises to be an expensive affair; and, after passing through this evangelist's hands, we should imagine that it would be just a matter of opinion whether the converts deserved a prison or an asylum.

"We've got to resort to tricks that the Devil would be ashamed of to get money to fight the Devil with." This piece of wisdom was uttered by the Rev. Billy Sunday. Was he thinking of "Sermons to Men only" or church bazaars, where inflated prices are charged for inferior goods?

A Welsh vicar, of Whitchurch, near Cardiff, died recently whilst preaching at a church. As the deceased minister was not a Freethinker, his death was not considered a judgment of the Almighty.

A movement is on foot to establish an American church in London at a cost of £250,000. If this materialises it will constitute a Yankee invasion, for two well-known Free Church pulpits are already occupied by parsons from "over the herring-pond."

There exists some religious trouble in connection with the lunatic asylums under the control of the West Riding County Council. The Lunacy Commissioners report that the "Arrangements for Divine Service are very inadequate," and "the attendance of the patients both of the Church of England and Roman Catholic services are much below the average in asylums generally." Presumably, the inmates who profess other religious opinions are well up to the average in point of attendance. This, however, is poor comfort to Churchmen and Roman Catholics, who are naturally indignant at the loss of so promising a congregation. The *Church Times* demands that a sum of £30,000 shall be spent. The Council replies that the spending of such a sum for such a purpose would be "absolute lunacy." But the Church party remains firm, and we cannot avoid sympathising just a little with their desire to make the most of their opportunity and with such promising material.

Nothing is more amusing than the curious manner in which the men of God treat what they call "modern thought." They always seem to take it for granted that Christianity and modern thought are two entirely different things, though there *need* be no conflict between them. That is to say, the divines will tolerate modern thinkers so long as the latter pay due respect to the former. Principal Garvie, in a paper read before the recent meeting of the Free Church Council, was kind enough to say that the Christian Church "must allow its view of the earthen vessel of the Holy Scriptures as human literature to be modified even as regards the literary character or historical value of many of the writings, if the evidence carefully tested demands such a change." Nothing could be more delightful than this attitude of compulsory toleration towards modern criticism. It is as though the men of God said to the critics: "We do not like you; we have no confidence in you; but so long as you behave yourselves with reverent modesty we reluctantly give you permission to carry on your work."

How condescendingly considerate! But Principal Garvie sounds a solemn note of warning by telling us that the Church, being tolerant towards reverent critics, like Canon Cheyne or the late Canon Driver, "can the more confidently challenge the competence of criticism" when it is the hands of those who deny or depreciate "the heavenly treasure of the Divine revelation" alleged to be contained in "the earthen vessel" called the Bible. Does the Principal imagine that intelligent "young persons, maidens as well as lads," will not perceive that such an argument is rooted in conscious or unconscious hypocrisy?

There is a sharp conflict among Birmingham Jews over the question of the separation of the sexes in the synagogue. This reminds us of Ingersoll's jest that it took the Christian Church many centuries to understand that a man might worship God standing by the side of his own wife rather than by being next to a gentleman he had never been introduced to.

"Adam" and "Eve" are to be seen upon the London stage in an adaptation of Milton's *Paradise Lost*. The censor insists "that the costume of Adam and Eve before the Fall will be of such a character that no possible objection will be taken by anyone." Maybe they will come on backwards.

Canon W. L. Grane has published a book on *The Passing of War*. It would be more to the purpose if he could persuade his ecclesiastical superiors to discontinue blessing battleships and the flags of regiments in the name of the "Prince of Peace."

A New York commission, proudly calling itself a World Conference on Faith and Order, has asked the various Christian Churches to join in "a truce of God." This is a practical admission that they have been at war for twenty centuries. Unfortunately, leopards do not readily change their spots.

At the recent meeting of the Free Church Council a paper was read on "The Church as a Redemptive Fellowship," the underlying idea of which was that the Church is a society composed of superior people whose mission it is "not merely to improve the world, but to save it." A more ridiculous or egotistical idea never entered the human brain. In point of fact, the Church stands quite as greatly in need of improvement or salvation as the world outside. Envy, malice, jealousy, strife, competition, self-interest, sweating, and impurity are fully as rife within the courts of Zion as in the camps of the Philistines; and surely people who live in glass houses should never indulge in stone-throwing. When the maladies of the world are so minutely diagnosed by the Church the world can reasonably retort, "Physician, heal thyself, and leave me alone."

That unscrupulous maligner of dead Freethinkers, and peripatetic revivalist, Dr. Torrey, distinguished himself lately by claiming the Patron Saint of Ireland as a Protestant. This silly claim is as groundless as were his bitter and brutal attacks upon Paine and Ingersoll. Indeed, very little is known of St. Patrick but the fact that he was a devout and zealous Catholic. When we bear in mind that he flourished in the fifth century we can realise what a blessing it is that Dr. Torrey has not added an Ecclesiastical History to his long list of foolish blunders.

The parents were discussing the production of *Paradise Lost* at tea-time, and mamma said, "Of course Adam and Eve are going to wear clothes." The little girl expressed her opinion, "Then it won't be Paradise really, will it?"

"Nonsense is faith," says Mr. G. K. Chesterton. Maybe he was thinking of that arithmetical puzzle, the Trinity-in-Unity, or of the feeding of the five thousand—where the fragments left over exceeded the original menu.

A writer in the *Daily Mirror* advocates the founding of a Moral Inquiry Bureau. It would have to be on a comprehensive scale, for the clergy's shortcomings would occupy a lot of time.

A book has been published, entitled *Lectures on the Icosahedron, Solution of Equations of the Fifth Degree*, by Dr. Klein, Professor of Mathematics at Gottingen. It should be useful to Christian ministers, who are unable to understand that three and one are not identical.

"The Call of the Lord" was the title of a placard placed outside a suburban tin-tabernacle. Judging by the handful of people who attended, the Lord was a little husky.

Tramps sometimes carry mascots, such as cats, and leisured society people have a weakness in the same direction. Superstition is a hardy plant, which takes very little cultivation.

Mr. A. C. Benson, son of a former Archbishop of Canterbury, has confessed that he has always been hampered by fear. A recollection of his excursions into theology supports this view.

The Bishop of Manchester says that when he was eighteen years of age he had difficulty with a class of girls. The clergy of all ages, from eighteen to eighty, seem to find flappers a stumbling-block.

There are men in Wales, says the Bishop of St. Asaph, capable of saying, "Your dead shall not rest under the shadow of the cross they have worshiped all their lives." Bishops appear to think as profoundly at sixty years of age as schoolboys of sixteen.

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To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £105 19s. 5d. Received since:—Five Liverpool Freethinkers, 10s.; Dr. and Mrs. S. Laing, £2 2s.; G. F. H. McCluskey, £2 2s.; Henry Tucker, £1 1s.; M. Corbin, 10s. 6d.; Mr. G. L. Alward (per Miss Vance), £1 1s.; Mrs. Alward (per Miss Vance), £1 1s.; M. Deas (South Africa), £1.

G. F. H. MCCLUSKEY.—Glad to hear that you and old friend Tucker are pleased to express once more your "unabated confidence in the President."

DR. AND MRS. LAING.—Your subscription and your good words are both very welcome.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks again for cuttings.

E. RAGGETT.—We cannot say what is the present exact position of Rev. Frank Ballard in the Methodist body. We have no doubt that the *Methodist Times* would inform you whether he is now on regular circuit work or not.

H. PAIGE.—The opposition of Christians to works of art was shown by the "Iconoclasts" of the early Christian centuries, whose special aversion was to images, etc., in the churches. Hence their name—the Image Breakers. We do not think the paragraph in question makes this applicable to *all* bodies of Christians. At a later date the Church used art as it used other agencies on which to float its supernaturalism.

Mr. W. MANN writes, in reply to a request from Mr. L. S. Mann for the whereabouts of a sermon referred to him in a recent article, that the quotation was from a sermon which he heard the Rev. F. Ballard deliver. So far as Mr. Mann is aware, the sermon has not been published.

E. B.—We note your correction that *The Professional Aunt*, from which we gave quotations in our last issue, is by Mrs. George Wemyss. Our reference made it appear as though the work was by a man. We cannot say whether the error was due to carelessness in transcribing or to the compositor. Anyway, we thank you for the correction.

C. ATTWOOD.—We cannot say where you could now procure a copy of *Facts Worth Knowing*. A very large special edition was distributed gratis by the National Secular Society, but the supply is now exhausted.

F. J. RILEY.—Letter to hand, but no cuttings. They have been omitted. Your news, all the same, is interesting.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Special.

I HAVE handed this week's *Freethinker* over entirely to Mr. Cohen's control. He has done this work well (and cheerfully) before, and he is prepared to do it again.

I contracted a cold, and it turned out to be something more serious. Not quite so bad an illness, apparently, as I suffered from last March, but then, as Shaw says, "You never can tell." I hope to pull through fairly early, if the weather will only be a little kind. At present I am in a very weak condition.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

South Lancashire friends had doubtless been looking forward to Mr. Foote's visit on Sunday last. His sudden illness made travelling—to say nothing of lecturing—an impossibility, and at short notice his place was taken by Mr. Lloyd. We have no doubt that everything at Manchester went off in a perfectly satisfactory manner, but up to the time of going to press no report has reached the office.

We print in another column a brief report of the Essex Hall meeting in favor of the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws. The meeting was a good one in point of numbers, and the letters read showed a very widespread opinion, among people of differing religious views, that the time had arrived when these survivals of mediævalism should be abolished. The resolution was moved by Professor Gilbert Murray in a speech of marked distinction, although one felt that he was inclined to take the antics of the Christian Evidence Society too seriously. Some emissaries of this body had been distributing a leaflet against the object of the meeting, and Professor Murray seemed to take them as enemies to be fought. They are not. They are merely people to be ignored.

There was an attempt made by a member of the Christian Evidence Society to move an amendment to the resolution proposed by Professor Murray. The Chairman ruled that there was no time for this, which ruling we are rather inclined to regret. It might have been better to have allowed that gentleman to put the amendment, as he and two or three friends came for that special purpose, and so have demonstrated that these specially imported ones were the only persons who supported it.

Some little disturbance was created during the evening by two or three ladies bent on interrupting the Chairman, Mr. G. H. Radford, and Mr. Arthur Lynch, both members of Parliament, and the interrupters had to be ejected. The interruptions were quite unjustifiable, but a little tact, and above all, strength, on the part of Chairman and speaker, might have obviated the necessity for ejection. Unfortunately, ejection from public meetings is in the air, and for this the Suffragettes have only themselves to thank. We do not get anything in this world without paying a price, but it is possible to pay too highly for what we get; and it is time Suffragettes took into consideration the question of whether even "Votes for Women" might not be too dearly purchased if the cost involves the right and freedom of public discussion. This is the most fundamental of all social rights, and without which even "Votes for Women" would never have emerged.

By the time this paper is in the hands of its readers, Mr. Asquith will have received a deputation on the subject of the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws. We are not very sanguine as to what will result from this, but it will at least serve the purpose of advertising the injustice of these Acts remaining on the Statute Book. In this matter publicity and the education of the public intelligence are our great, if not our only, aids. Mr. Burrows said in the course of his speech that he was getting tired of meetings for this purpose. Well, so should we be if we saw any other way of achieving the abolition of these laws. But we do not see any other way. Parliament, it is true, must finally rule these laws out; but Parliament will do here exactly what outside opinion forces it to do. Freedom and justice rest ultimately upon education and enlightenment.

We again remind London readers of the half-yearly meeting to be held on Tuesday next at Chandos Hall, Chandos-street, Charing Cross. The gathering is confined to members of the N. S. S., who will please bring their cards of membership with them. Those not so provided may obtain admission by sending in their names to Miss Vance. We hope there will be a good rally of London Freethinkers on this occasion. The object of the meeting is to consider ways and means by which the propaganda of Freethought in the metropolis may be furthered. Some important resolutions may be forthcoming, and the meeting therefore should be as representative as possible. The chair will be taken at 8 o'clock.

A correspondent, writing from Sydney, informs us that a very resolute attempt is being made by the authorities to prevent free speech on advanced subjects. There is a Theatre and Halls Act which prohibits all except religious bodies from holding meetings on Sundays. That shuts out all who do not run a hall of their own. In the streets and open spaces the same one-sided legislation operates. Socialists and Freethinkers are being imprisoned for speaking at street corners on Sundays, although this privilege is freely granted to religious preachers. Attempts are also being made in Melbourne in the same direction. Christians in Australia have the same conception of liberty as they have elsewhere.

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Life and Love.

Helen, the doctor's daughter, was the spring of the romanticism of the village, but she was more; for she was the women's nurse. Around her personality had gathered two completely different circles of ideas in the minds of the villagers. The first was colored with the yellow lights of suspicion. One had to be careful what was said in her hearing, especially if it related in any way to religion and the Church. Helen had a sharp and witty tongue; and very often even Solemn John, the registrar, had to pull himself up quickly, when it struck him he was laughing at religion and the sacred things of life and death and the paradise to come. Not that Helen could be accused of irreligiousness, nor of base levity, nor even of sarcasm. One never felt very sure of her; that was all. And then, she was quite frequently at church, where she always appeared decorous and serious and attentive. Still, the villagers could not manage to forget the funny things Helen had said about the very subject upon which the minister preached; and the sight of her pretty face bent upon her prayer-book *did* give one occasion to wonder a bit what kind of a girl Helen was.

Then would crop up the old romance, the minister affair, about which everyone knew so much and so little. She was practically engaged to the young man who came from London at the time when Mr. Wise was very ill. He was a very clever young fellow. His sermons were invigorating and delightful. He filled the church, too, in the forenoons; for people came from far and near to hear him.

Yes; they would have made a fine match; but after a bit, near the end of his stay, there must have been a difference. It was noticed that he didn't go so often to the doctor's house. And then, there was the awful sermon, the last one, about some people being like serpents and cunningly poisoning the simple love of God and God's Book; how they would laugh and joke at the beliefs of others, and in so quiet and friendly a manner that they could crawl silently right into the holy of holies of God's love, and drop their poison there. And hadn't the young minister gazed at Helen all the time? And weren't her eyes always looking down into her lap, as if she knew he intended it all for her? but her face was so serene and bonnie that day that no one could rightly understand what the minister meant.

The villagers liked to recollect all the incidents of the romance as they called it. It was part of the Helen they knew, and as incomprehensible.

For all this suspicion, Helen was the trusty friend of the women in their times of need; and the first question of the sufferers was always, "Is Miss Helen coming?" although they knew she was sure to come. Many a man had Helen to thank for the existence of his wife; and many a woman had Helen to bless for the safety of her sons and daughters. At these periods the suspicion died, to be remembered immediately the danger was passed and Helen's tongue resumed its quiet, funny work of making the Scriptures ridiculous.

The minister affair had happened some time before I came to the village; but I had never discovered the real thread of the story.

One evening, while reading aloud to Helen likely paragraphs of interest from the newspaper, I chanced across one that contained the name of our village. It referred to the wedding of a clergyman who had, as the news item said, spent a very successful year of his ministry in this part of the country.

"Imphm; that's very interesting; but you didn't read that because you had a dim idea in your head that I was personally interested?" she said quietly, when I finished.

"Good Lord! No," I replied. My embarrassment must have been so obvious and painful that she laughed.

Well, I'll tell you the story, Bob, if you'll light your pipe, and don't interrupt. Besides, it's getting too dark for reading, and the gloaming is *the* time for reminiscences, isn't it? And the news of his marriage has set the old memories moving in my mind. You mustn't think I'm worried, or sad, or feel any of the heart-stirring emotions we read of in the ordinary novel, you know. In fact, I'm amused. I would like to laugh. I always feel like this when I compare our nice, very cultured habit of overlooking the real facts of our existence with people's ideas of things; and Mr. Pastor's future experiences appeal to me rather comically. You know what I mean, Bob, I've spoken about it before to you, when we've been criticising books.

The novelist imagines a man and a woman cast adrift in a small boat. He speaks of the hardships and all that; but he always forgets the man and the woman are human, and have bodies, and that the natural forces of these bodies must be obeyed regardless of environment. The mental delicacy of the novel-reading public is awful. Of course, that's an extreme case; but it shows what I mean. We have made too many things sacred. And a woman's body is so sacred that we are told a man must not look upon it lest it be defiled. Out of this has arisen all that despicable hypocrisy and cant and humbug about things that are as natural as sunshine. I hate it.

Amongst a certain class of people, the protectors of our morals—and all pastors are members thereof—this "gingerly" attitude towards the so-called crudities on the one hand and the so-called sacred things on the other, is most appalling. My poor pet pastor was a good example.

Do you know that he once cut up rough because he happened to see me dressed in a short underskirt and long stockings, and I hadn't very much covering for my neck and bosom? He was so exquisitely refined that my appearance shocked him. He thought it was indecent. You see, every woman was a potential mother, and maternity being, oh, very, very sacred, it followed, I suppose, that woman was sacred too. Consequently, she should be hidden like all other sacred things.

Funnily enough, he could read the most detestably obscene passages in the Bible without a blush or a stammer. That brought on the trouble, for I chaffed him unmercifully on the subject. In fact, what I said shocked him more than my unladylike appearance. And we moved slowly into the waters of intellectual discord.

Up to then I suppose I loved him; and if a dog-like attendance is any guarantee of a man's fondness, I guess he returned the compliment. But a battle between brains is a good love-test, whatever type of love it may be. Mental warfare tests the steel of affection better than anything else, I think. All the flaws become apparent; all the weaknesses are made evident; and instead of ideals you get facts. A man reveals himself more at these times than any other. He cannot hide his real character. That's why I love the men who have championed intellectual freedom. You get to know them so well that they become friends.

Well, I discovered that the man I had nearly idolised was rather mean-minded. He never ignored an opportunity for subterfuge. He even told downright lies, perhaps because he didn't like to be cornered by a weak woman.

Things went from bad to worse, till, one evening, they came to a boiling point. His sermon the preceding day had been all of God's wonderful handiwork. I was feeling bad, because father had told me that Mrs. Higgins would die, and that her baby would be a monstrosity, and very probably would live. The pastor was irritable that night, and I was simply spoiling for a tussle; and when we set to I made mincemeat of his wonderful-loving-kindness idea. He got personal a bit; but father came in just in the nick of time, and told me to get my coat on and come immediately.

I contrived that the pastor should accompany us, and father, who had a quiet way of being cynical with all ministers, saw I meant something. The

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upshot of the matter was that Mrs. Higgins died, and her baby lived, and I asked my friend if he would kindly come into the bedroom for a minute. I wanted him to see an example of God's loving-kindness.

Father held the baby boy up so that the minister could get a good look at him. He was a hunchback. His head and his sex organ were abnormally developed. His wee arms and legs were crooked. Across one eye was a browny mole. He whimpered and squirmed in father's hands like a little animal. He was the most repulsive, ape-like child I've ever seen.

"Mr. Fernside," said father, softly, in the tone he uses when he's angry, "this boy is full of vitality. He will grow to be a strong man. Society will probably call him a born criminal. He is an ataviet. As a minister you are privileged to be here at this moment; but you will, I hope, keep what you have seen and heard entirely to yourself."

Mr. Fernside bowed, and went into the kitchen, where we heard him praying for God's solace towards the father and the motherless children.

He never spoke to me again; and that, Bob, is the romance of the doctor's daughter. Here comes father, and we'll have supper.

ROBERT MORELAND.

Animal Enemies of Plants.—II.

(*Concluded from p. 189.*)

CULINARY plants are preyed upon by weevils, which place their eggs on or within the pods of the growing vegetable, and these germinate within the seed. The leading parasite of the pea is the pea-weevil, that of the bean the common bean-weevil; and both these pests are widely and abundantly distributed, and are therefore to be regarded as particularly noxious insects. Immense injury is caused by the mischievous doings of these parasitic organisms. Until quite recently it was commonly supposed that the well-being of the plants was in no way threatened by the presence of the larval beetle in the interior of the seed, but this belief has been proved erroneous by careful scientific inquiry. The growing pods are also injured by the bollworm and pea-moth, and the foliage is destroyed by blister-beetles, leaf-beetles, caterpillars, and cutworms, while plant-bugs, aphides, and other vermin weaken the plants by sucking their juices. The seed pea suffers seriously from the depredations of the pea-weevil. In the eighteenth century the injuries inflicted by this pest were so great that pea culture was for a time abandoned in several American States.

This particular parasite appears to have come originally from the Orient, but it now accompanies the pea plant wherever cultivated, and no known area of pea production is now immune to its ravages. A cold climate, however, seems to check its activities. In the more rigorous atmosphere of Canada it is comparatively harmless, and in consequence much of the seed sown in the United States is purchased from the Northern territory.

To the bean grower the common bean-weevil is a formidable foe. Its place of origin remains a matter of dispute, but it has spread in every direction, and, like the cowpea-weevil and four-spotted bean-weevil, it is feared and execrated by every cultivator of leguminous crops.

The seed-corn maggot is a further stumbling-block to the doctrine of Design. After the seeds of peas, beans, cereal and other plants have been sown in suitable soil they sometimes fail to develop, and this failure has been traced to the mischievous propensities of the seed-corn maggot, which damages the delicate sprouts and stems of the germinating seeds. What the wireworms, white grubs, and other insects fail to accomplish, this pest frequently succeeds in doing. Where the corn-maggot operates, the seed decays and the plants perish. Entire plantations are sometimes ruined; but, fortunately, the evil is usually restricted to a relatively small number of plants. The early growths are the chief sufferers, but if these can be carried through the first stages of development they become more hardy, and are then enabled to withstand considerable attack without serious injury.

The bean-ladybird is another pest, but luckily its food-plants are few in number and its distribution is limited in range. This insect is one of the three ladybirds that are detrimental to the American agriculturalist; the remaining species are his friends, as they actively devour soft-bodied insect larvæ and wage relentless war on the detested plant lice. But the bean-ladybird is a deadly enemy of the bean crop, and its powers of destructiveness have not inaptly been compared with that of the damnable Colorado potato-beetle. It ravages the leaves, green pods, and blossoms of the bean with insatiable relish.

In the pea-growing districts of Canada a seed-destroying parasite called the pea-moth is very abundant, whose larvæ develop in the maturing peas within the pods. "This is a comparatively new importation from the Old World, and it is as yet unknown in the United States, but it will probably in time invade the Northern States."

Until the year 1899 the American pea crop suffered little serious injury save that inflicted by the pea-weevil. At this time, however, the pea cultivator was driven to desperation by a visitation of the pea-aphis, which destroyed the crops in every direction. In 1899 and the following year the pea-aphis—despite the energetic attempts that were made to overcome the pest—swept down upon and ravaged some 50 per cent. of the crop from Nova Scotia to Virginia and Maryland. The estimated loss to the American farmer in the Coast States for one year only reached the high figure of three million dollars. In the succeeding year of 1900

> "the loss over the same area was placed as early as June 15th at 4,000,000 dollars. Several cases of severe damage were reported, in which 80 or more per cent. of the peas on farms of 500 or 600 acres were completely destroyed. In short, pea-growers as far westward as Wisconsin sustained such severe losses as to give rise to the expression that the country had been visited by a veritable scourge."

These abominable plant "lice" begin their attack on the young plants; they mass themselves about the terminals, and as soon as the leaves are smothered they proceed to swarm along the stems. Scarcely a plant escapes, and in a few weeks the once promising crop is destroyed. The vermin hibernate in clover and vetches, and they fly from their sleeping quarters in April or May to commence their pestiferous work among the pea fields. As might have been predicted, the reproductive powers of plant lice are prodigious. The female insect at certain seasons produces living young. These attain maturity in from ten to fifteen days, or even sooner in favorable weather. Several generations arise each season, and Professor W. G. Johnson has estimated that the female pea-aphis gives birth to 110 or 120 young. "Calculating from the average number of insects produced each day (six), one individual would in one year become the progenitor of 482,912 'lice.'"

Other insects inimical to peas and beans abound in rich variety, but we will glance at the parasites which infest spinach and beetroot. The former plant is sadly harassed by the all too close attentions of the spinach leaf-miner, spinach flea-beetle, and other pests; but as this excellent vegetable is less cultivated than the beet, fewer of its enemies are yet known to science. In the case of the beet, however, some 200 species of parasites are its ascertained enemies.

Beetles and caterpillars of several species damage this valuable vegetable to a very serious extent. Of flea-beetles that attack the sugar-beet there are twenty forms. Some of these are widely distributed; others are local. The larger beet-leaf beetle preys upon its host both as larva and adult; hun-

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dreds may be counted on a single plant, with the result that it is either utterly devoured or so seriously injured that it shrivels and dies. The Western beet-beetle is responsible for much monetary loss to the farmers of the Pacific Coast. This parasite pierces the plant's leaves so that only a network remains of the naturally rich leaf, and this checks growth to so great a degree that the young roots wither away. Another terror is the blister-beetle, and at least eleven species of this pest are known to inflict disastrous injury upon the sugar-beet alone. These creatures also attack potatoes, beans, tomatoes, and other important crops, as well as destroying several flowering plants. Very troublesome pests are the army and webworms; plant-bugs, leaf-hoppers, and aphides, if at all numerous, are all a source of loss to the beet-grower.

The sugar-beet leaf-hopper first attracted notice as a beet pest in Utah and other States in 1905, and was in that year responsible for damage to the extent of half a million dollars. Strangely enough, this species (Eutettix tenella) was quite unknown to entomologists until 1900. The beet-aphis is another scourge to the cultivator; in the State of Oregon it destroyed upwards of 1,000 tons of beet in one valley in a single season.

As anyone who has striven to cultivate cabbages and other cruciferous crops in urban or suburban gardens is only too well aware, the insect pests that prey upon these vegetable growths are innumerable. No single moment in the life of a cabbage-plant is immune to insect attack. The cabbage-maggot destroys the roots; it devours the tender rootlets, and frequently penetrates the lower sections of the stalk. The American grower regards this destructive parasite with well-merited aversion. It is an imported pest, and has already wrought sad havoc among cruciferous plants, all of which it impartially attacks. Its destructiveness assumed serious proportions in 1902, and for some years afterwards its depredations steadily increased, and large field crops have not infrequently been ruined.

But the "Imported Cabbage Worm" is the worst pest of all. As Dr. Chittenden puts it:—

> "It is altogether too well known throughout North America and Europe, and the white butterfly is quite generally recognised as its parent. The caterpillar is velvety green, and measures, when full grown, about an inch and a quarter.....This species was first observed in the United States in 1865, and in about a score of years it had invaded nearly every state and territory in our domains."

Prior to the appearance of the cabbage butterfly, the Southern cabbage butterfly inflicted considerable injury; but for some reason or other this particular pest is now less plentiful than in previous years. The potherb butterfly, the cross-striped worm, the common cabbage-looper—these last the larvæ of moths—all wage unpitying war on the unfortunate cabbage. But this by no means crowns the iniquity; the already much-exasperated cabbage-grower has now to encounter a new enemy to his crops. This pest made its appearance in the Southern States a few years since, and there is every prospect of its spreading in every direction.

The turnip is the unwilling entertainer of the destructive flea-beetle; watercress is preyed upon by leaf-beetles and sowbugs; while the leaves of the radish, cabbage, and other cruciferous plants usually have to endure the presence of foliage-miners and other malignant pests.

Next to the universally persecuted cabbage, the worst-suffering garden crops are the cucumbers, melons, and related plants. From the moment they are planted until the fruit is ripe, nearly a score of species of parasites infest these growths. "It is no uncommon sight to see four or five distinct species on the same plant, and several others in the same field." A maggot assails the newly sown seeds, and prevents their germination. Where the seeds do succeed in sprouting, the young plants are harassed by the striped cucumber-beetle. Those plants that manage to escape the presence of this and other pests are liable to the attacks of the squash-bug, to be succeeded by that of the squash-vine borer. This baleful parasite frequently kills the plant outright. When the vegetable has run the gauntlet of this formidable array of parasitic enemies, the pickle-worm and the melon-caterpillar commence their operations against the persecuted plants. The parasitic organisms which damage and destroy sweet corn, potatoes and other tubers, the lettuce, onions and other bulbs, the tomato, celery, carrots, parsnips, and kindred vegetables, are all too numerous to mention.

Sufficient has been said, however, to show that the struggle for existence is bitter in the extreme, even in circumstances most favorable to the healthy development of plant life. On evolutionary principles, the presence of countless parasites on highly developed plant forms is open to a rational interpretation; but in terms of the doctrine of Providential Design their destructive and almost morbid activities point rather to a diabolical than to a beneficent biological scheme of things.

T. F. PALMER.

"Twopenny Torquemadas."

NOTABLE PROTEST AGAINST THE BLASPHEMY LAWS.

MR. G. H. RADFORD, M.P., presided at a crowded meeting held at the Essex Hall, Strand, London, on Friday (March 20), in favor of the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws. The platform, which was an influential one, included two members of Parliament, Mr. G. H. Radford, M.P. (who was in the chair) and Mr. Arthur Lynch, M.P.; Professor Gilbert Murray, the Rev. Walter Walsh, D.D., and Messrs. Herbert Burrows, Harry Snell, S. H. Swinny, Mrs. Bonner, and others.

Mr. G. W. Foote, President of the National Secular Society, who was unable to be present, sent the following letter to the Chairman, which was read to the meeting:—

> "DEAR SIR,—I am on the list of speakers at this meeting, but I am sorry to say that I shall not be able to attend. My doctor forbids me to leave the house at present, and travelling and addressing audiences are quite out of the question. Happily you have a good list of speakers without me, and it affords me the highest gratification to know that the meeting must, from that point of view, be a thorough success.
>
> "I and my friends have done all we could to make it a success from the point of view of numbers. If the press treats you with common justice—which, however, I hardly dare hope—I shall see a report in Saturday's newspapers of what I have no doubt will be a magnificent protest against the most bigoted, odious, and indefensible laws that disgrace this boasted land of liberty.—Yours sincerely, G. W. FOOTE."

Letters of apology were also read from Sir W. Byles, Sir A. Quiller Couch, Mr. F. W. Jowett, M.P., Mr. Chancellor, M.P., Canon Scott Holland, Dr. Clifford, Rev. T. Rhondda Williams, and Mr. Israel Zangwill.

Owing to the presence of the members of Parliament, Suffragettes attended the meeting and created considerable disorder during the earlier part of the proceedings, cries being continually raised on behalf of "Votes for Women."

The Chairman, in his opening remarks, characterised the Blasphemy Laws as "fossils," which belonged to past ages.

Professor Gilbert Murray, who had a fine reception, in proposing a strongly worded resolution calling upon the Government to introduce a Bill for the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws, said that there had been a great modification of the law of blasphemy, and Judge Coleridge's ruling that religion might be attacked if the decencies of controversy were observed had been maintained. Although this was a humane and sensible ruling, it was a compromise. The Blasphemy Laws would never have lasted if they had not been explained in this manner. But if one party was condemned for the use of offensive language, so should all others. He objected to these laws because they made good manners the test, and good manners were not the test of crime; they punish one side only; and they create prejudice. It was difficult to carry on religious controversy without ridicule. The present interpretation of the Blasphemy Laws heavily weighted the scales of justice against uneducated men. Who is to be the judge as to language being offensive? The jury usually consisted of persons of all kinds of views, and in the main orthodox, and with a dislike of audacity of mind. The law exposed Christianity to ridicule. The main fight of Freethinkers must be against social sanction, widespread sentiment, ingrained feelings. At present the law steps in against the cause of enlightenment.

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The resolution was seconded by Mr. Arthur Lynch, M.P., in a speech full of good phrases, and who reminded the audience that Torquemada had burnt 10,000 heretics, and inflicted less drastic punishment on 100,000 others. The indignant comment made by Shelley remained true after a hundred years of enlightenment. He (the speaker) had drawn from Mr. McKenna the admission that it was not blasphemy to speak in offensive terms of Judaism or Islamism. Christianity was the only religion in the British Empire needing protection. The Christian religion was like an invalid, and has to be spoon-fed and nursed. Christians ought to invite criticism. If their religion was true, the touch of Thor's hammer or Ithuriel's spear would only make it rise greater from the test. We have outlived the era of imbecile inquisitions and twopenny Torquemadas.

He was followed by the Rev. Dr. Walsh, who spoke forcefully and well. No one, he said, knew what was meant by religion as defined by the Blasphemy Laws. It would need another bench of bishops to settle what was religion. The Blasphemy Laws were irreligious, and an infringement against the Golden Rule, which was found in all systems of religion.

A practical and business-like note was introduced by the veteran Mr. Herbert Burrows, who pointed out that the one constitutional way of abolishing the Blasphemy Laws was through Parliament. Freethinkers should be out to get votes. Society had no right to suppress free speech. The common law was quite capable of dealing with cases of indecency. You cannot punish a man for hurting another man's feelings, or we should all be in prison. The Blasphemy Laws are simply a relic of persecuting days. We have got rid of physical cooking, but still have mental cooking in its place. The Blasphemy Laws are a cancer in the social state, and the case of the repealers was good for civic justice and freedom.

Mr. Harry Snell roused the meeting with a capital speech. What a man believes, he said, he has a right to express. If a man is guilty of obscenity, let him be prosecuted for obscenity. Christians should be with us on this question. Hideous Blasphemy Laws put a premium on liars. The State's duty towards religion should be to let it alone. Orthodox believers do not love heresy the less because it is in a clean cup. Once Christians fought far higher men than they fight now. Formerly they attacked such giants as Carlyle, Holyoake, and Foote, and now it attacks only the outposts and the stragglers. The Blasphemy Laws should be abolished in the cause of our common humanity.

At this point the veteran, Mr. A. B. Moss, rose and asked the Chairman if, in the regrettable absence of Mr. Foote, he would permit another representative of the N.S.S. to address the meeting. There were loud calls for Mr. Cohen, who was present, and, in response to the wishes of the audience, he mounted the platform amid loud and continuous applause. His was a fighting speech, and brought the meeting to a triumphant conclusion. Although called upon at a moment's notice, Mr. Cohen was admirable in every way, and he roused the audience to a white heat of enthusiasm. He said he stood there as a blasphemer of twenty-five years' standing, and his view was that the Blasphemy Laws merely represented the orthodox hatred of Freethought opinions. The plea of obscenity was a cowardly evasion of the truth. When Mr. McKenna—that apology for a man—said that a blasphemer was locked up for his obscenity, it was a lie. The man was imprisoned because he attacked religion. We have no objection to people being locked up for indecent speech, but it must be fair-play all round. We could only admit one test as to the decencies of controversy. Language that was permissible elsewhere must be permitted here. We could not tolerate one rule of speech for politics and another for religion. At present a policeman decides what is blasphemy. His modest ears decide what deserves a five-shilling fine for mere profanity, and what language constitutes blasphemy and deserves four months' imprisonment. Once Christians burnt their opponents; but now their conduct was only cowardly and contemptible. A judge may be a Jew, and Lord Chief Justice Isaacs might have to decide if the Christian religion had been attacked with becoming taste. The Blasphemy Laws manufactures hypocrites by the thousand. The repeal of these odious laws rests with the people and not with the Government. They should be swept away as a remnant of barbarism.

The resolution was put to the meeting and carried with only seven dissentients.

C. E. S.

In synagogue and cloister, mosque and school,
Hell's terrors and heaven's lures men's bosoms rule;
But they who pierce the secrets of "The Truth"
Sow not such empty chaff their hearts to fool.

—*Omar Khayyam; E. H. Whinfield, Trans.*

THE SOUL'S SPRING CLEANING.

Yes, clean yer house, an' clean yer shed,
An' clean yer barn in ev'ry part;
But brush the cobwebs from yer head,
An' sweep the snowbank from yer heart.
Yes, w'en spring cleanin' comes aroun',
Bring forth the duster an' the broom,
But rake yer foggy notions down,
An' sweep yer dusty soul of gloom.

Sweep ol' ideas out with the dust,
An' dress yer soul in newer style;
Scrape from yer min' its worn-out crust,
An' dump it in the rubbish pile.
Sweep out the hates that burn an' smart,
Bring in new loves serene and pure;
Aroun' the hearthstone of the heart
Place modern styles of furniture.

Clear out yer morril cubby-holes,
Sweep out the dirt, scrape off the scum;
'Tis cleanin' time for healthy souls—
Git up an' dust! The spring hez come!
Clean out the corners of the brain,
Bear down with scrubbin'-brush an' soap,
An' dump ol' Fear into the rain,
An' dust a cosy chair for Hope.

Clean out the brain's deep rubbish hole,
Soak ev'ry cranny, great and small,
An' in the front room of the soul
Hang pootier pictures on the wall;
Scrub up the winders of the mind,
Clean up, an' let the spring begin;
Swing open wide the dusty blind,
An' let the April sunshine in.

Plant flowers in the soul's front yard,
Set out new shade an' blossom trees,
An' let the soul, once froze an' hard,
Sprout crocusses of new ideas.
Yes, clean yer house, an' clean yer shed,
An' clean yer barn in ev'ry part;
But brush the cobwebs from yer head,
An' sweep the snowbanks from yer heart.

—*Sam Walter Foss.*

CHILDREN OF FAITH.

One memorable Sunday, Betty did go to church as a great treat, and when the hymn, "Peace, Perfect Peace," was given out, a beatific smile illumined her face, and with her hymn-book upside down she was prepared to sing when Diana said, whispered rather, "You don't know this, darling." "Yes, I do, mummy, peace in the valley of Bong."……

Betty walked to church with me. "Aunt Woggles," she said, "you know the gentleman in the Bible who lived inside the whale?"

"Yes, darling," I said, "I do remember." My heart sank at the difficulties presented by Jonah as a gentleman.

"Well," she said, "what d'you suppose he did without candles in the dark passages of the whale?"……

At luncheon Diana cautioned Betty against swallowing a fish bone. "You might die, darling, if you did."

"Then I shall swallow every single bone I can," announced Betty.

"But, darling," said Diana, "why do you say that; you don't want to die? You are quite happy, aren't you?"

"Yes, I'm very happy, but I want to die all the same."

"Oh, darling, don't say that," said Diana; "there is a great deal for you to do in this world before you die."

"Yes; but you see, darling," said Betty, "if I don't die soon, I shall be too old to sit on Jesus's knee."—*Mrs. G. Wemyss, "The Professional Aunt."*

A CHILD'S LAUGH.

Strike with hand of fire, O weird musician, thy harp strung with Apollo's golden hair; fill the vast cathedral aisles with symphonies sweet and dim, deft touches of the organ-keys; blow, bugler, blow, until thy silver notes do touch and kiss the moonlit waves, and charm the lovers wandering amid the vineclad hills. But know, your sweetest strains are discords all, compared with childhood's happy laugh—the laugh that fills the eyes with light, and every heart with joy. O rippling river of laughter, thou art the blessed boundary-line between the beasts and men; and every wayward wave of thine doth drown some fretful fiend of care. O Laughter! rose-lipped daughter of joy, there are dimples enough in thy cheeks to catch and hold and glorify all the tears of grief.—*Ingersoll.*

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OUTDOOR.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, Mr. Marshall, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

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Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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Man's chief wisdom consists in being sensible of his follies.—ROCHEFOUCAULD.

The Virgin Birth.

BISHOP GORE has just published a Tract in which the Virgin Birth is depicted at once as a veritable fact of history and an essential dogma of the Christian Church. Without such a stupendous miracle the Divine Incarnation could never have taken place, and without the Incarnation there would have been no Christianity and no Church. It is true that many present-day divines either openly reject or ignore the supernatural birth of Jesus; but we are of opinion that Dr. Gore is fully justified in maintaining that no Christian teacher has a right to do either. Like the Resurrection, the Virgin Birth is a fundamental doctrine and cannot be laid aside without undermining the whole creed. "Conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary," this is the phrase used by the Church in all ages as a fit expression of its belief. The now-famous Bishop of Zanzibar, Dr. Weston, preached an able and earnest sermon on the subject in Westminster Abbey, which appeared in the *Church Times* for March 20. To the Church, Dr. Weston observes, "the Lord Jesus Christ is God-in-manhood." The following is the gist of this remarkable discourse:—

> "From the first moment of his Incarnation until his ascension to his Father's throne, and from the day of his ascension down the ages, and through the ages to all eternity, he is God-in-manhood; God true and perfect, yet living under conditions truly and perfectly human, with all the human instruments of self-expression that we call soul and body; and Man, true and perfect, yet in no sense at all a man. In order to become a God-in-manhood the Eternal Word took flesh and received his soul in Mary's womb; and from her he came forth to be the new Head of the human race. Virgin he found her; he left her virgin; and she, the Virgin-mother, is henceforth Mother of our Lord and God."

Such is the doctrine of the Virgin Birth as taught by the Orthodox Church. Dr. Weston frankly admits that it would be "folly to pretend that the modern Christian easily accepts" it. Failing to see the spiritual meaning and value of the alleged fact, the modern Christian cannot give due weight to the evidence for it. "The Church suggests that we accept her creed on her authority"; and, unfortunately for her, the modern Christian is strongly tempted to rely on the authority of his own judgment. What we suffer from to-day is "private judgment run wild." The Church is wonderfully patient, long-suffering, and sympathetic, "but not for one moment will she approve of any the least claim to be to ourselves the ultimate measure of truth." We are not at all surprised at this statement when we compare it with another more extravagant still; namely, that the discernment of spiritual values is the work of faith, not of reason." And what, pray, is faith? Nothing in the world but the power to accept as final the judgments of the Church, "the primary power of self-suppression, of humblemindedness, without which no heavenly society can embrace sinful men of disordered minds." The duty of the individual, therefore, is "to cast himself upon the society, upon the family of the Lord God, who cannot deceive or be deceived."

According to Dr. Weston, Christianity is a religion founded upon facts, not upon ideas. The Virgin Birth is a fact, "the only mode of entrance into the world that is fit for, and proper to, him who is Eternal God." Of course, the conception was miraculous, but the Bishop assures us that the miracle was exceedingly simple:—

> "We are asked to believe that Almighty God, through the Holy Spirit, dispensed with human co-operation in setting in motion natural forces; that once set in motion by immediate Divine intervention, those forces moved according to their own original, God-given laws, and the Christ was conceived by Mary his mother. In this miracle there is nothing contrary to Nature, no hindrance of natural results due to certain causes, no element of destruction and negation. All bears witness to a mighty act of the Divine Life-giver, in the supreme movement of the Divine Love."

The curious thing is that Dr. Weston completely ignores the question of evidence. Not a single shred of proof does he adduce. He tells us that natural forces were set in motion within Mary "by immediate Divine intervention"; but how does he know that? The nativity narratives are peculiar to the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, and New Testament scholars are convinced that they were inserted in these at a later date, say, at the close of the first century, or early in the second. That the birth-stories did not originally belong to these two Gospels is clear from the fact that the rest of the New Testament does not contain the slightest hint that the birth of Jesus was in any respect different from that of anybody else. Yet the Bishop of Zanzibar exclaims: "What I know is this, that Christ came down from heaven to a sinless mother, because before he came down he gave her the grace to be sinless." We challenge him to inform us when, whence, and how he acquired this amazing knowledge. If he tells us that he obtained it by faith, we beg to remind him that faith and knowledge are two totally different things. Of course, a man who believes that when a duly ordained priest sprinkles a baby's face with water, an act of supernatural regeneration is accomplished, can believe anything. A baptised child shows no signs whatever of having been twice born, being, on that account, neither better nor worse than other children. Even in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, Jesus never shows the least consciousness of having been supernaturally born. In all his intercourse with his disciples and others he did not once convey the impression that he even suspected that there was anything extraordinary about his advent into the world.

Dr. Weston's facts are all fables. He believes in the sinlessness of Jesus, and accounts for it in the following strange fashion:—

> "The body and soul of Christ never had a moment's existence except in the person of the eternal God, the eternal Word of God. Therefore we claim perfection. And the Virgin Birth is necessary to this argument just for this reason, that had the body, had the soul of Jesus for a single moment existed in a human person, the whole process of the Incarnation would have failed, and our redemption would never have taken place. It is on this kind of lines that we defend the doctrine of the Virgin Birth."

The so-called fact of the absolute perfection of Jesus

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is an unverified and unverifiable assumption. His character even as portrayed in the Gospels is not without fault; but even if it were, the Gospels tell us so little about him that we cannot legitimately come to the conclusion that he never did any wrong. But Dr. Weston *assumes* his sinlessness, and then *assumes* the Virgin Birth to account for it. Here is another fact which, on being examined, turns out to be a fable:—

> "The Incarnation reveals the supernatural order in which we have become new creatures; in its power we find our foothold upon the supernatural plane along which we are to move upward and Godward throughout all ages; and in the Incarnate Person we find our own personal union with the Divine Being."

The supernatural order is a pure fiction. It exists only in the imagination of fanatics. We know only of one order, the order of Nature; and no one has ever shown us any other. Christians call themselves new creatures, but nobody else does; nor do they ever say or do anything to justify their so calling themselves. The supernatural plane is a sheer illusion, and we judge of it by those who claim to find their foothold upon it, for, surely, they are not superior people. Have they not their little quarrels, bickerings, and wranglings just like others? Is not Bishop Weston in this country now because of a bitter controversy which has agitated the Episcopal Church for months and threatened to disrupt her? Is such a state of things worthy of people who proudly aver that they have a foothold upon a supernatural plane? Dr. Weston says that Christians "date everything from the great miracle of the Virgin Birth"; but to what end and with what results? Read history, consult the conditions that prevail in society at this moment, and you have the answer. Like all his brethren, the Bishop indulges in Christian boasting, and hears not the mocking laughter of the facts.

The Virgin Birth is a decaying superstition. Even to the modern Christian it is scarcely believable. When he finds any record of it outside the Bible he does not hesitate to say openly that he rejects it. The time is coming when the Biblical record will be treated in precisely the same way.

J. T. Lloyd.

The Cant of Brotherhood.

If we attend to theory only, there is nothing with which the Christian is so much concerned as universal love and brotherhood. If we check theory by practice, there are no other qualities that he so completely ignores. Theoretically every Christian is ready to spend himself in the service of at least every other Christian, if not of every human being. In practice they show themselves certainly not better than non-Christians, and do not betray an overwhelming confidence in even their fellow-believers. They watch each other most carefully in all business transactions; they "wink the other eye" if they are asked to trust another merely on the ground of a community of religious belief. Clergymen of all denominations accuse each other of being animated by petty jealousies, greed, hatred, and of stooping to slander and misrepresentation to further their ends. In a corporate capacity Christian nations act towards each other in exactly the same way. Each one laughs at the notion of trusting to the other's sense of honesty, justice, or generosity. They say frankly that self-interest is the only motive by which they will be ruled, a display of brute force the only argument to which they may be expected to yield. And still the cant of love and brotherhood goes on.

Now I am not arguing that the conception of human love and brotherhood are bad things. No one does so argue. Quite the contrary; they are fundamental to human welfare, and their practical realisation is the true measure of social development. I am merely taking these qualities in connection with religious beliefs—particularly Christian beliefs—and trying to estimate their value. For Christians write and talk of human love and human brotherhood as though these were in some peculiar sense Christian products, and formed the very essence of the Christian faith. They have done this until the very words themselves have acquired a cant significance. They have gained the aroma of the pulpit, and evil associations have not yet lost their time-honored power to corrupt things otherwise good. Of course, they have no real connection with religion, although the forces of modern life have forced genuine religious beliefs into the background, and brought a number of accidental and extraneous qualities to the fore. And the fact remains that of all the failures that may justly be placed to the credit of religion, none is more marked than the utter inability of religion to induce a feeling of genuine brotherhood and good-fellowship. There is no question of opinion here; it is simply a statement of demonstrable fact.

Look at the case of Ireland. Whatever other factors may be at work here, this much is certain. The rallying cries of the two great parties in Ireland centre round a difference of religious belief. Remove that difference, and so far as one can see there would be no insuperable obstacle to the speedy solution of the Irish difficulty. Protestants declare that they can never trust to the sense of justice or brotherhood of Roman Catholics in a position of authority. Catholics declare that they have suffered, and suffer still, from the religious bigotry of Protestantism in power. Whichever one is right, or if both are right, the same fact emerges—the distortion of a sense of justice and fairplay by religious belief. Catholics cannot trust Protestants; Protestants cannot trust Catholics. They do not mean that they cannot trust each other in business—they do, as a matter of fact. They do not mean that, religion apart, the Roman Catholic Irishman and the Protestant Irishman are not as good as each other. What they each point out is that the religious convictions of the other narrows his outlook, stunts his sympathies, blinds him to a sense of national duty, and makes him a worse citizen than he would be otherwise. A Freethinker need not argue which one is correct; it is enough to point to the facts, and the facts are a decisive disproof of Christian claims.

Look at home, amongst ourselves. What is the most divisive, the greatest separative force that one can introduce into association of human beings? Clearly religion. Up and down the country are thousands of associations of various kinds. The almost universal rule among them is that discussion of religious opinions must be tabooed. It is not that the individual members do not believe in religion; quite the contrary. The more firmly they believe, the more they perceive the necessity of the rule. They believe in religion individually; individually they would assert that it was of all beliefs the most important; but they dare not discuss their differences of opinion on religion as they discuss differences in literature, or art, or science, or sociology. Do that, they say—permit the introduction of religion—and our association will break into fragments. They also will repeat the cant phrases about brotherhood as an essential part of religion, and the value of their assertions are shown by the fact that one thing they dare not introduce if they wish to continue in friendly and brotherly intercourse is religion. Still they believe that Christianity promotes brotherhood. Nothing seems able to shake that superstition.

It is useless arguing that men take their religious beliefs as the most serious they possess. That may be admitted without weakening the force of the indictment. The charge is not that religious beliefs are not taken seriously, but that they serve as a cause of division rather than as a bond of union. And side by side with this you have the complementary facts that there are other aspects of life that really do unite people, and other beliefs about which people differ and yet dwell harmoniously together. You can see members of various religious sects uniting for various social and ethical ends;

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they will be friendly together on points of difference about things that are unconnected with religion. It is only when religion is on the carpet that union becomes impossible. Why, it is even paraded as a great triumph of the spirit of religious brotherhood that representatives of various Christian sects can stand upon the same platform in amicable mood. But, even then, it must be observed that what brings them together is not their religious opinion. When Anglican, Catholic, Protestant, and Jew stand upon the same platform the appeal is to a common sense of justice, a common humanity, a common appeal to moral feelings. Never is the appeal to religion.

There is, indeed, one case in which the religious appeal becomes a bond of union—of a sort. This is in connection with Sabbatarianism. Here it has been found possible to bring the Christian sects together on the basis of an appeal to their religious feelings. And the reason for this is as plain as it is discreditable. They are all faced by a common danger, and there is a chance of exercising the old spirit of religious tyranny. The "desecration of the Sabbath" affects them all alike. It means a direct loss to the Churches. It means the encouragement of the spirit of Rationalism and Secularism. It involves the secularisation of life, and in sheer self-defence religion forgets for a time its divisions, and closes its ranks to the attack of an enemy that threatens all alike. Then they all believe that they are their brother's keeper. And they interpret "keeper" to mean gaoler.

This, indeed, is the only way in which religion, and particularly Christianity, ever develops a sense of solidarity. Faced by an enemy that threatens all alike, the natural tendency is for the threatened individuals to draw together for mutual protection. In the earliest centuries Christians only held together in the face of persecution. So soon as the persecution was relaxed, the divisive consequences of religious belief began to show themselves. And for centuries nothing but the most intolerable tyranny of one of the most powerful and one of the most brutal Churches that the world has ever known was able to preserve unity amongst Christians. When social progress broke the power of the Church, the evil power of religious belief began to show itself. Existing causes of hatred were intensified. New sectarian reasons for ill-will developed. Men hated each other for political reasons, class reasons, or national reasons. But these were comparatively mild expressions of malevolence. On account of religion their malevolence knew no bounds, and the limit to their antagonisms was marked only by death—and not always then. One might almost lay it down as a law of social progress that the stronger religious beliefs are the greater the divisions that arise. An attempted union of religious believers only becomes possible when social culture has relegated fundamental religious beliefs to a position of subordinate importance.

In strict truth, the brotherhood of man has never been a part of the Christian religions, any more than it has been a part of other religions. What has been aimed at has been a brotherhood of believers. A human being became a brother when he believed, he remained an enemy as long as he disbelieved. Even the propaganda of Christianity was not due to any feeling of brotherhood. It sprang rather from the lust of conquest, and from the intolerance of the fanatic who felt that the existence of a new religion antagonistic to his own amounted to a slight upon the majesty of his own Deity. The long-continued denial by Christians of justice and consideration to those outside their creed proves the truth of this. During more recent times, the operation of a number of causes, chief amongst which was the growth of communication between classes and peoples, have weakened the petty divisions of sect and nation, and so have given emphasis to the more permanent qualities of human association. Powerful as it has been, and still is, Christianity could not withstand the influence of these developments, with the result that Christian teachers have been driven to a presentation of the doctrine of brotherhood less in accord with Christian practice, and more in harmony with the sense of the modern civilised State.

Religion can form no basis for genuine brotherhood, for the reason that there is nothing in it fundamental and inescapable. All men have not religious beliefs, and among those that have them there is endless diversity and contradiction. Let the religious appeal be as wide as possible, it still remains, and must remain, a sectarian one. And sectarian union depends as much for its strength upon hatred of outsiders as upon love between its members. On the other hand, the non-religious appeal to brotherhood does touch on elements or qualities that are common to all men, and which are, indeed, fundamental to the associated State. There is no man without some sense of justice, however rudimentary. There is no man without feeling for his fellows, however imperfect may be its expression. Beneath all differences of sect, class, nation, or color, there are qualities—mental and moral—that all men have in common. A rational, a far-seeing doctrine of brotherhood seizes upon these as the elements upon which it is to be based if it is to be at all successful. And, as a mere matter of fact, it is in proportion as these non-religious qualities have been developed that the doctrine of brotherhood has become realisable in practice. It may be true that these qualities are not irreconcilable with religion; but it is certain that they are independent of it. And it is also certain that their association with religion has served only to hinder their fruition.

C. COHEN.

The "Shadow Show."

THE *Shadow Show*, by J. H. Curle, is one of the most remarkable books of travel it has been my good fortune to come across for some time. It differs from most books of the kind, however, in that the author seems to have been everywhere and seen everything, except perhaps the hidden bowels of the earth and the North Pole. During his professional career he inspected no less than five hundred mines, in every part of the globe. "To-day, at forty," he says, "I have seen the world from end to end. A favored one, I have stood in the wings all my life, and have seen the mounting of a thousand tableaux." And as the reader travels with him, viewing the varied and picturesque scenery of every land—a dawn on the Karroo, the higher Alps outlined by moonlight, a spring morning in Kashmir—he feels indeed that that "the stage setting of the Shadow Show is extraordinarily beautiful." "To some of us who have failed to find God among the theologians, Nature alone is left," says Mr. Curle; and surely no goddess ever found a more fervent adorer.

The curious reader may ask, Why the *Shadow Show* as the title of such a book? It represents the author's philosophic view of world phenomena. He looks back on all the wonderful sights he has seen as a great and splendid phantasmagoria:—

> "This world of ours is the Shadow Show. We men and women are the silhouettes on the curtain.....The stage is fantastic, and the players; the only real thing is that mechanism of wires which science calls the 'reign of law.'.....We are puppets. We are the sum of all dead men, the sport of all past happenings. We are present links in the endless chain of cause and effect, and as our structure is, so does our life inexorably unfold.
>
> "'For man is man, and master of his fate,' sings the the poet, and Smiles, Lubbock, and other genial and wealthy persons chortle in the same strain. But Old Omar knew better, and men of the calibre of Æschylus and Shakespeare and Ibsen have always known; free-will is very nearly an illusion."

If our author's philosophy, as stated in the Preface, should disturb the ideas of some of his general readers, it is likely that the first incident he relates will alienate the puritanical sympathies of many others. As he begins to write, it is the little inci-

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dents, he says, that crowd upon him. And he takes them as they come:—

> "On a Christmas afternoon, in the country behind Manilla, I watched cock-fighting. In a great bamboo structure some two thousand Filipinos and myself sat, lost to the world. There were a hundred cocks, the din was hideous, and the betting high. *I have spent many a worse Christmas.*"

One of the charms of *Shadow Show* is the author's comprehensive grasp of the problems that confront present-day civilisation. He sees the minor races of the earth as the ordinary traveller sees them in their geographical setting and native environment. But he brings to the consideration of their well-being and future position a sympathetic knowledge of their racial characteristics and relation to the progressive forces among the stronger races. He appreciates, too, at their full value, the virtues and qualities of the so-called inferior nations, without a single trace of that insular prejudice which characterises the writings of so many of our travellers:—

> "As I sought out the world's beauties, so I have searched for the best peoples. The nations, first and last, have passed before me—good, bad, indifferent—to be judged, too, like men, with tolerance, for environment is the controlling factor."

Among the world's "best peoples," those to whom he finds himself closest—his "affinities"—he places the Chinese and the Zulus. This should give the supporters of missionary enterprise some food for reflection. For the writer is not only a broad-minded and cultured traveller, but he speaks from an intimate knowledge of both peoples. His memories of South Africa, he tells us, are full of the natives. "All the races interest me, but the Zulus I love. They are a race of gentlemen; they are, physically, the aristocrats of humanity." He speaks of them as a race who are as cheerful, kindly, and right-living a people as one may hope to see. "For many of the Zulus—laborers on farms, wagon-drivers, house servants, or quiet dwellers in their own kraals—I have the sincerest liking and respect. To the memory of N'Konjane ('the Swallow') and to Shingaan a 'kehele'—or head of a family—who came every year from the thorn country to the farm, and who, after many years of faithful work, at last came not, I raise my hat." Would that every traveller were as sympathetically appreciative of the virtues of these colored races.

Of the Chinese, he writes:—

> "The Chinaman was civilised while we dwelt in forests. He had evolved religion, philosophy, and the highest conceptions of art and beauty while we yet stained ourselves with woad and pursued our quarry with a meat axe. To-day, with all our blissful ignorance of China, we call the people heathen, and send a swarm of missionaries to preach doctrines that our ablest men have already discarded. These men preach twenty different creeds, they advocate love, peace, long-suffering; but let so much as one missionary be killed or injured, and the clamor for compensation and revenge, backed always by threats of armed retaliation, resounds through the land. The Chinaman, highly intelligent, sees the irony of it all. Our various creeds, jealous, narrow, preaching salvation through twenty channels, bewilder him. *He wants none of our religion; he has told us so a hundred times.*"

Our author has an eye for the beautiful everywhere; and his comparative faculty, which often displays a touch of humor, sees the utility of many foreign customs and practices, as compared to the conventional methods of Europe. Speaking of the Hindu custom of burning dead bodies, he says: "There is no slow festering of the dead in the ground, no choosing of leaden coffins by old ladies, to whom the resurrection looms more physical than mystic. The burial rites of the Hindu must, indeed, become our own":—

> "And to Hinduism we owe a great architecture. Each cycle furnished its masterpieces—the rock caves, with their rich and original figuring, the temples of Mysore, Gwalior, fortress of the Mahrattas, Amber, and the palaces of Rajputana, and golden-templed Amritsar, of the Sikhs. Lastly, note the small sect of Jains, building at Chitoor that tower aforesaid, and at Abu, in the hills, a temple of white marble, whose glory will never die. I thought to write down the Jains as the Wesleyans of Hinduism; for in each is seen a revolt against sacerdotalism, a return to simple forms. But when I saw Chitoor and Abu, comparison was dead. To liken these princes of architecture to the men who can design Methodist chapels must be for ever impossible."

"Wanderings in South America" is not the least interesting of the chapters in the book. Our author depicts the effect of Catholicism upon the poor Indian races in language that does not spare their historical oppressors. The Indians of the Bolivian Andes, the degenerate descendants of the Incas, he describes as a people filthy in their habits, much given to strong drink, and of a deeply religious strain. On a Good Friday, he writes, I stood in the *plaza* of Oruro and saw the Holy Image carried in priestly procession. Thousands of Indians followed, reverent in mien: an Indian band played holy music, and the Host was raised; all hats were doffed; many fell on their knees muttering hoarse cries:—

> "Such is religion in the Andes—a religion of the senses, not of the brain. Next day, feast-day and holiday, these people, men and women, lay in the very ecstasy of drink. For days they wallowed in it; then got up and went about their business, good-natured, ignorant, superstitious, filthy—a little higher than the beasts of the field."

In the summer months, after the melting of the snow, one can cross the Andes, he says, from Argentina into Chili. The summit of the pass is at 12,000 feet, and on the boundary line, erected by Chili, stands a colossal figure of Christ. Some years ago, when the figure was unveiled, the ceremony was made the occasion for a demonstration, and many political and religious personages from Santiago attended. Afterwards, champagne was served, and, having drunk heartily, the company proceeded to break the empty bottles against the statue for luck:—

> "There are quite a number of statues of Christ in Chili. Their erection has been coincident with a marked deterioration in the national character."

In Lima, capital of Peru, the city he founded, Pizarro's corpse lies in the cathedral in a glass coffin:—

> "Standing by this, my thoughts went back to Atahualpa, last of the Incas, made captive by Pizarro, ransomed with the treasure of Cuzco, then brutally murdered. By this act of treachery Spain set her foot on the neck of South America, while Holy Mother Church, herself torturer of men's bodies, looked on and palliated.
>
> "'You brute, Pizarro,' I remember saying. 'I could kick your coffin to pieces!' The mummy's face grinned placidly."

In a chapter entitled "Women," our author presents us with perhaps the sanest estimate of the fair sex, and of the trend and meaning of the modern feminist movement, that has yet been written. His remarks on Spiritualism and Christian Science, under this heading, are an admirable summing-up of both these delusions:—

> "Spiritualism, a result of too general education on the half-baked, hysterical of both sexes, is becoming rampant, but it is mostly women who are drawn into the vortex. One is often told by this or that woman that she communes with the dead, or lives in the occult world, or is in time with the Infinite. As the female is not open to reasoning, one can only leave these women to their obsessions. The 'in-time-with-the-Infinite' feeling is no doubt due to indigestion; but just how much of the rest is due to hysteria, or how much to lack of mental clarity and the consequent attributing of abstract processes of thought to supernatural origin, would be hard to determine. The reality or otherwise of spirits we need not discuss; but that so many of the less intellectual sex should be really media, or occult, when the greatest brains among men fail to detect any such phenomena, is to me unthinkable."

The most interesting phase in this whole trend, he says, is the spread of Christian Science—by a woman. Mrs. Eddy, a woman of little education, of

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neurotic and hysteric tendency, swinging for hours together in a hammock, in earlier life divorced, he regards as altogether a poor type. But she is already in process of deification. In the "Mother's Room" of the Temple at Boston, candles are always burning above her picture, and it is no rare thing to see worshipers on their knees before it. Tens of thousands of the ignorant and hysterical already attribute to her supernatural qualities, while many look for her second coming.

> "If the Eddy tradition gathers much more momentum, it is bound to crystallise. After that, for a large section of mankind, it is *fact*, and she is a *goddess*. Let us picture a baptism in Boston, a century hence. The pastor, sprinkling the babe, will say, 'In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and of Mrs. Mary Baker G. Eddy, I christen thee—Will Power,' and the guests will sit down to beans and bacon, or whatever viands are eaten in those days, unconscious of irony. The greatest traditions of theology sprang up in this way."

Of the future of religion, he writes:—

> "All religions die in time. Their early virile conceptions become lost in a maze of mysticism, ritual, and dogma. Our religion is dying this way. She is but a shell now; and vestments and wafers and oriental genuflections and intonings and Athanasian creeds and burning candles are what she offers as the Waters of Life."
>
> "The Church has lost its hold. By refusing to come in line with modern thought, it alienates those who think. What signifies an audience of old women or flighty girls, when the brainy men of the community are in their libraries or out on the links?
>
> "Religion, as we have evolved it, is become a flabby thing. It is a creed for the well-to-do, a creed of the tall hat, whose votaries dare not peer below the surface of things. We are concerned with the supernatural, with miracles, with three Gods who are one God; scornful of science, we treat sin and misery as casual factors, removable by prayer, and ignore the reign of law through which we move from birth to death. Meanwhile, in our rich, Christian England, one-third of the people live on the border line of poverty, or below it, drinking raw spirit to deaden their thought."

Our author offers some very friendly advice to the Bishops in their blindness:—

> "One hundred and seventy-one bishops of the Anglican Church assemble at Lambeth, and they make decision, by 87 votes to 84, to deny the blessing of the Church to the *innocent* party in a divorce who may marry again. *Pshaw!* You old men are no doubt well-meaning, but *you don't know*. You must adapt yourselves to modern intellect, or it will presently pass over you like a steam-roller. Moreover, such a union is legal to the State, and yours is a State Church. Go carefully, if you would escape disestablishment! There are social dignities and fat endowments some of you would ill surrender."

These extracts will give the reader but a poor idea of the subject-matter of the book, which is a racy record of a life's experiences more wonderful than any fiction. They are merely the running comments of the genial author upon subjects or events as they arise in the course of the narrative. But they serve to show, I think, that he is a writer worthy of every Freethinker's appreciation and esteem.

JOSEPH BRYCE.

Old Noah.

WE are not so "touchy" these days. It is quite consonant with respectability to pass a joke about the Lord, to speak lightly of angels, and to display even a nodding acquaintance with the Devil. The stage property of Christianity has become worse for wear, and, despite the work of revivalists and other industrious people to spring-clean it, we find that sacred objects are receiving less veneration than usual. If a person hits his thumb whilst carelessly using a hammer, there are ten chances to one that his exclamation is of a Biblical nature. If anyone suddenly assumes a sitting posture as he walks down the street, he does not say, "Alas Æsculapius!" His household gods are invariably invoked in a crisis of this description, and common use becomes a custom. I would not be prepared to say that all believers bandy words about in this manner, but many do who would safely be included in that elastic term "Church of England." In most of our present weekly papers this easy treatment of characters from the Bible is very evident, and we can safely say that there has been a landslide from the stern, uncompromising attitude of Christianity adopted twenty years ago. Without laboring the point, the mild curate's "damn" has become something stronger with the layman.

I was extremely shocked (I think that is the correct expression) when I found on the cover of the *New Witness* some rather disrespectful things said about Noah. In conjunction with an advertisement, there are verses from that lovable lump of humanity, G. K. Chesterton. Putting aside the question of taste in this matter, I found that the old patriarch was cheerfully digged in the ribs, and not by any means treated with the respect due to one who, in an amateurish sort of way, saved the world from utter destruction. It is not my duty to defend Noah, but I feel that a protest is necessary, and also that the moral needs to be pointed out when one more or less identified with the secret of England's greatness should so far forget himself, and do with impunity what would have probably meant, a few centuries ago, either having the tongue torn out or burning at the stake.

My readers must bear with me: I devoutly believe that I have a stern purpose in this article; but, as I write, within a few feet of my chair is a Noah's Ark. Scattered around this gaudily painted box are various pieces of wood representing cows, horses, sheep, and the *familiar* animals of *England*, and I laugh. I really think that the man who made them, the shopkeeper who sold them, and those who bought them are all accessories to a flagrant act of blasphemy. Poor Noah! What a fall! Thy brave efforts to save the world parodied at prices from a shilling upwards!

But to my purpose. The odious verses in question are entitled "Old Noah." He may have been an old man, but this habit of speaking of him is certainly not reverential, and would not be tolerated from the young in Sunday-schools. But of that no matter; there are worse things to come:—

> "And Noah would often say to his wife, as he sat down to dine,
> I don't care where the water goes, if it doesn't get into the wine."

Are you listening my readers? This is not by any common person who calls himself a Freethinker. It is not by Shelley. It is not by Omar Khayyám. It is not by John Davidson. It is by one whom, as far as I know, has never belonged to the movement for the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws. We must smile and enjoy the humor of the situation. The Freethinker must console himself that he goes to gaol for the benefit of the Christian.

I cannot but think that Noah was a selfish old man, if we are to believe the new version. The Ark to him was the Christian's idea of heaven. What did it matter to him so long as he did not die a damp death!—

> "And Noah cocked his eye and said, 'It looks like rain, I think.'"

This is truly shocking. Surely Mr. G. K. Chesterton has read Genesis vi. 17! Again, he would not have us believe that Noah had forgotten the Lord's terrible threat, and his method of carrying it out. I refuse to believe that the old salt (this disrespect is infectious) could overlook such a matter of importance. I refuse to agree that it is logical, as a Christian, to make fun of Biblical characters, and in all seriousness I warn the writer that it is but a short step from irreverence for Noah and his type to open blasphemy as interpreted by present-day "law and profits."

To Freethinkers there is a moral to this modern treatment of a famous boating excursion; but, unlike

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most morals, it is a pleasant one. It is a proof of the advance of Freethought, whilst at the same time it is not a proof of religious sincerity. Mr. G. K. Chesterton can poke fun at every character from Genesis to Revelations, but he shall not do so without being reminded that Giordano Bruno was burned by order of Catholics. For buffoonery? Good God, no! For accepting the theory that the earth revolves round the sun. At Toulouse (1619) Lucilio Vanini, a learned Italian, had his tongue cut out and was burned. For saying that Noah was not a nice person in the matter of clothes? Merciful heavens, no! For a little difference with the priests of his time, and his belief in natural philosophy. These are but two instances of intolerance by Catholics, but they will serve to point out the fact that in the present day Christians can be skittish or cynical in their treatment of Noah, without whom it would have been impossible to build up the elaborate forms and ritual of the Church of Rome. For, if Noah had disregarded his divine message, Catholics would be without their patron saint. Therefore, I plead for the reinstatement of Noah as a person not to be trifled with, but as a man who was the keystone of Christianity. I also draw attention to the fact that the Blasphemy Laws should be enforced impartially. If this could be achieved, Freethinkers would have no cause for fear. As James Thomson has pointed out, you cannot accuse an unbeliever of blasphemy no more than you can charge an unmarried man with infidelity.

William Repton.

A Sunday-School Story.

Over on Capitol Hill there's a Sunday-school where a young man is superintendent. He is an earnest, conscientious young fellow, and, disagreeable as it may sound to say it, he means well. Sunday before last he rose to give a little talk.

"Dear children," said he, "I am very glad to be with you this morning, and when I look into your happy faces I am sure that all of you rejoice with me in the privilege of gathering together this morning to sing our songs of praise, and to listen to the lessons your dear teacher"—but then you know what he said; you know what they always say. This particular superintendent said that this beautiful Sabbath was "only a promise of the blissful hereafter, of the happy land to which we all want to go."

"And what is that happy land?" he asked.

The small boys on the front seat kicked each other surreptitiously and viciously, but nobody spoke till little Georgie said, with a tone midway between a sniff and a gurgle: "Heaven."

"Ah, that's it! that's it!" said the superintendent. "Little Georgie knew it. It is heaven. And we all want to go there. And now, children, can you tell me what kind of little boys go there?"

George was emboldened by praise. His head was dizzy with success. He rose in his place.

"Dead ones," he bawled.

Scepticism and Progress.

Every advance in science, every improvement in the command of the mechanical forces of nature, every step in political or social freedom, has risen in the first instance from an act of scepticism, from an uncertainty whether the formulas, or the opinions, or the government, or the received practical theories were absolutely perfect; or whether beyond the circle of received truths there might not lie something broader, deeper, truer, and thus better deserving the acceptance of mankind.—*J. A. Froude.*

An Impulse.

Free as the wind that stirs the crested larch;
Mad as a hatter, or a hare in March;
Nor prude, nor pietist;
Nor yet a moralist;
A simple humanist
Am I.
I've bid to all life's artificial starch
Good-bye! —*Avon Dale.*

Acid Drops.

Here is a gem of a letter from a Christian judge which we think it best to print without mutilation. It was received by the secretary of the American Secular Federation in reply to a protest against the Bible being read in the State schools:—

"Probate Court, Franklin County.
"Samuel L. Black, Judge, Columbus, Ohio, Jan. 13, 1914.
"Mr. E. C. Reichwald, Corresponding Secretary,
"70 W. So. Water-street, Chicago, Illinois.

"Dear Sir,—I am in receipt of your letter of the 12th and in reply beg leave to say that it is only necessary to glance at your letter and circular to learn that you are a lot of damn fools.

"Personally I have no objection to reading the Bible in public schools or in any other place, if anybody wants to read the Bible. I have no choice or any power to prevent it or otherwise. The only excuse I have for answering such rot as you and your co-adjutors are circulating is the last paragraphs of your circular letter. Did it not contain that paragraph, I should have consigned it to the waste-basket without further consideration, but I am writing you and your co-adjutors to begin your propaganda as threatened and then go plum to Hell and take your propaganda with you.

"(Signed) Samuel L. Black."

We do not know whether Judge Black desires publicity, but he deserves it.

Mr. Arnold Bennett says his experience has caused him to lose all faith in the legend of literary talent going a-begging because of the indifference of publishers. Publishers are, in fact, looking for ability, and only too eager to utilise it. We have no doubt that this is, within limits, true. Publishers are quite glad to get a work of ability—provided it is not likely to seriously offend public prejudice. But let a man produce a work of unquestionable ability on, say, Atheism; let him state his case fairly, uncompromisingly, telling the truth so that any man of average education will be able to understand it; and then see what chance there is of any of the well-known publishers issuing it. We are not going upon mere surmise when we say that such a work would stand little or no chance of seeing daylight. We *know* it would not. The same influence that causes newspaper proprietors and editors to exclude Freethought news from the columns of their papers causes publishers to decline such works. They may admit the ability displayed, but they *dare not publish*. Sometimes they are honest enough to say so.

It is reported that six native mission teachers have been killed and eaten by the natives of Malekula Island, New Hebrides. One thing is fairly certain their place will *not* be taken by the white missionaries from home. It may, however, serve as a useful call for more subscriptions.

About three hundred English bluejackets were recently received in audience by the Pope, who expressed his pleasure at seeing the English seamen, who, he said, spread civilisation all over the world. That settles it. Hot-headed priests will note that the Head of the Church did not ascribe civilisation to the circulation of the Bible.

Nothing seems too silly for a newspaper correspondence. The *Times* has for some days been inserting letters on the subject of an additional human sense. Certain men are afraid of spiders, and some correspondents have been advocating the existence of a "spider sense." Others dislike cats, and another correspondent puts in a claim for a "cat sense." We do not see why there should be any limit to the number of senses we possess on these lines. Why not a whisky sense, a cold bath sense, a debt-paying sense, and so on? These things help one to realise how little genuine education exists among the "educated classes."

Rev. E. Griffith Jones complained at the recent Free Church Congress of the scarcity of children in the churches. He said "the truth was that children were not now being born"—quite a startling piece of news in its way. We have heard of a declining birth-rate, but that all births had ceased is indeed news. Still, we suppose the Churches must account for their losses somehow. "The serious point," says Mr. Jones, "is that it is affecting the Protestant Churches equally with non-churchgoing portions of the community." That is the parson all over. It is all a question of trade interest. He wants a large birth-rate so that there may be a chance of good pickings for the Churches. For ourselves, we are far more concerned with quality than quantity. We agree with Ruskin, it is not of

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vital concern whether a man has two children or four, but it is of very vital concern whether the children he does have deserve hanging or not.

Principal Garvie complains that the Churches are over much concerned about "the lapsed masses." He says they are too little concerned "about the lapsed class of the cultured, who, in large and growing numbers, are becoming more indifferent, and sometimes even hostile or contemptuous, to the Christian faith. The dominating tendencies of the age are science, philosophy, and criticism, and each of these might make Christian faith more difficult." A shrewd man is Principal Garvie.

According to that intellectual periodical, *T. P.'s Weekly*, the Moravians despatch wives to their missionaries where such articles are required, but not "on approval," for they must be kept, however unsuitable. One missionary had lost two wives in his malarial district, and he sent home an order for the third. On his first glimpse of his latest he gasped, "Oh Lord! Carrots again."

At this season of the year the proprietors of the picture theatres are hard driven to cater for religious folk. Accordingly they have been presenting films of *The Messiah* and *Daniel*. We fancy that the Annunciation would be more troublesome to screen than even Daniel in the lion's den.

Newly-minted coins and a copy of the *Daily Mail* in a sealed jar were placed under the foundation-stone of part of a new church at Spondon, Derbyshire. The churchwardens might have used a copy of *Truth*.

Rev. A. J. Waldron has written what he calls a "Morality Play" for a Brixton music-hall. He says it is "a contribution to present-day social reform," and calls it *The Carpenter*. Its central feature is the old and stupid notion of a man who works a beneficial influence on his fellows by the exertion of some supernatural influence. Any fool can write a play, or anything else, on these lines. Nothing is impossible to the supernatural, and so anything may be accomplished. And, unfortunately, there is enough latent superstition and general silliness abroad to make the running for this kind of thing easy. But it is the supernatural influence for good *off* the stage that most people would like to see. Producing it before the footlights is quite easy.

Providence still continues its unwelcome attentions. In Russia, as the consequence of a terrible storm off the Sea of Azoff, a township of 1,000 persons was overwhelmed. It is believed that only eight of that number were saved.

In the *African Times and Orient Review*, for March 23, Mr. F. Hugh O'Donnell points out that the motive underlying the Protestant side of the Kikuyu controversy is not the desire for unity or a feeling of brotherhood, but a simple device to hide Christian divisions from their Mohammedan competitors. He says:—

> "In order to hide this disgraceful state of misbelief, a large number of English missionaries, including some Anglican bishops, met at Kikuyu, in East Africa, some weeks ago. They said to one another: 'We cannot make any conversions, we cannot oppose the success of Islam, unless we agree to hide the points of belief on which we differ, unless we only mention those beliefs on which we appear to agree, and unless we lend to one another our different congregations so as to pretend to the Moslems that we have One Faith, like Islam, and that we have many converts who believe it.'
>
> "*And all these contradictory and English Protestant sects agreed to pretend to have only one religion and to lend their different congregations and followers to one another.* There were Anglicans, and Presbyterians, and Independents, and Baptists, and Anti-Baptists, and Congregationalists, and Quakers, and a lot of separate and contradictory sects, who all agreed to pretend to believe in one another's strange religions in order to deceive the Mohammedans! *It was Sectarian lying made a religious virtue!* Lying and deceit. Nothing more."

Mr. O'Donnell, it should be pointed out, is neither a Mohammedan nor a Freethinker.

A *Christian World* writer says that the many attempts to establish religion by State action are not encouraging, and asks "Where is there a case when such attempts have succeeded?" We agree with the first statement—for different reasons than the writer would advance, and in reply to the concluding question, would point out that the voluntary establishment of religion has met with even greater failure. True, the State establishment of religion has broken down sooner or later, but this was not really because of the action of the State in patronising religion, but because no State has ever been able to secure uniformity of belief. And this is equally true of religious establishments apart from the State. The same process of disintegration affects both equally. None of the sects that have been outside the State establishment show themselves better able to hold their own against the forces that make for the destruction of religion than does the Established Church. The State Church does exactly what all the other Churches do, it holds all it can and finds the number it can hold steadily diminishing. From a religious point of view it is as effective as any other Church. From the view point of human evolution they are all fighting an equally hopeless battle.

But it must not be forgotten that the Nonconformist Churches do actually benefit from the State patronage of religion. To begin with, the State patronage of religion kept religion alive as nothing else could have done. It saturated our public institutions with religion, and so encouraged the conviction that in some way or other religious belief was essential to the well-being of the State. Just imagine what a different state of affairs would exist to-day if religion had been kept as a purely voluntary affair. It would not be in schools, or in the courts, or in Parliament, or in any public function or ceremony. Religion would have been a purely personal, voluntary affair, and there would have been none of the social taboos against the non-religious man that at present exist. It is the State patronage of religion that establishes the social power of religion, and it is on that that all religions live nowadays in civilised countries. The sectarian outcry against the evils of the State patronage of religion is as shallow as are most other sectarian cries.

A sum of £2,046,126 was raised in the United Kingdom last year for Foreign Missions. This year it is proposed to expend an additional £50,000. With a tenth of this sum to be spent on a counter propaganda, we would undertake to diminish the contributions to the Foreign Missions Funds by one-half.

"The musical composer must be attended to," says Mr. Hubert Bath, musical director to the London County Council. We should like ourselves to attend to the genius who composed "Tell Mother I'll be There."

A simple life exhibition at the Royal Horticultural Hall, Westminster, has some novel exponents on view, including a married couple who have lived in a cart for years, and a man who carries a tent on his person. What a pity the Biblical king who ate grass is not alive.

"Empire Theatre: *The Messiah*" runs a startling announcement on the street hoardings in a well-known town. We are glad to hear it. Better late than never.

"Happily the God whom women worship is as unlike man as possible," writes a lady contributor in the *Referee*. Presumably a magnified and non-natural replica of Mrs. Pankhurst would be preferable.

Dr. J. S. Haldane has just published a book, entitled *Mechanism, Life, and Personality*, in which he dogmatically asserts that "we have parted company, once and for all, with the mechanistic philosophy—the notion of a real and self-existent material universe," but it is a notorious fact that at the Dundee meeting of the British Association, held a year and a half ago, this gentleman's "we" represented a miserable minority. At that time an overwhelming majority emphatically preferred the mechanistic philosophy, and certainly no radical change of opinion has taken place during the interval. Like Sir Oliver Lodge, Dr. Haldane woefully misrepresents the attitude of present-day biologists. Professor Loeb, a much more competent judge than either, agrees with Sir Ray Lankester in his oft-repeated declaration that the science of biology was never more materialistic than it is just now.

Calvary Reformed Church, Philadelphia, has just started a choir of boy whistlers to lead the singing, and Lincoln Baptist Chapel, Cincinatti, has a choir of canaries, who chirp to the accompaniment of the organ. Truly, a farcical ending to a tragic superstition.

"The whole world is going to Hell so fast that it is breaking all speed limits," says the Rev. Billy Sunday, one of America's flannel-mouthed preachers. Yet some of

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Sunday's colleagues tell us there is no such station in the Church's time-table.

Thirsting After God is the title of a new book by Dan Crawford, the missionary. Most people prefer something more spirituous.

Mons. Scriabine considers there is a connection between color and speech. This may account for the fact that when Christian ministers discuss Freethought they always "see red."

The Land of Open Doors is a title which occurs in the booksellers' latest catalogues. It does not refer to Christian England, where there are so many thieves.

"Are Modern Preachers Inaudible?" is a subject discussed in a religious contemporary. We only wish it were true.

The Punjab Government has demanded a sum of money, equal to £133, from a Christian newspaper, the *Ludhiana Missionary*, as security for its future good behavior. The offence committed was the publication of an article which was considered likely to bring the Mohammedan religion into contempt. A case of Christians being hoist with their own petard.

How easy it is for a superstition to get established, and how difficult to overthrow it, once it is established! Mr. T. A. Glover, reviewing, in the *Daily News*, a recently issued life of Calvin, says:—

> "It is curious that a generation which is terrorised in its thinking by semi-scientists, speaking in a vague and large way about Heredity and Environment, till we have almost lost the sense of individual responsibility and thrown over everything for an indefinite Social Righteousness, should have forgotten that the first European city in which Social Righteousness became a deliberate civic aim was Geneva, and that Geneva was inspired and nerved to carry this aim into actuality by the rejected Calvin himself."

It is easy for the ordinary newspaper man to write columns in this strain. He is fairly safe. The bulk of his readers are already believers in the story he is repeating. But it is almost pure superstition.

In the first place, the evil state of Geneva before Calvin has naturally been exaggerated by his biographers, as well as the purity that followed his government. Many of their "sins" consisted in dancing, and women were punished for this serious offence. In the next place, the opposition to his rule came from the better classes, including his fellow ministers, and not from the lower orders. Finally, the very records of the city during Calvin's rule decisively dispose of the notion of Geneva as a City of Righteousness under Calvinism. A Genoese authority sums up his examination of Genevan records of Calvin's time as follows:—

> "To those who imagine that Calvin did nothing but good, I could produce our registers, covered with records of illegitimate children, which were exposed in all parts of the town and country; hideous trials for obscenity; wills in which fathers and mothers accused their children not only of errors but of crimes.....I could instance multitudes of forced marriages, in which the delinquents were conducted from the prison to the church; mothers who abandoned their children to the hospital, whilst they themselves lived in abundance with a second husband; bundles of law suits between brothers; heaps of secret negotiations; men and women burnt for witchcraft; sentences of death in frightful numbers; and all these things among the generations nourished by the mystic name of Calvin."

Still, we suppose these traditions of the immense good worked by Christian agencies are too valuable as assets to be given up on the testimony of mere official records.

There are numerous suggestions as to the best way of dealing with the Irish question, and of course the religious crank was bound to appear with his suggestion. In a letter to the *Times*, Mr. J. Currie Macbeth asks "Why have none of our great church dignitaries called for a day of national humiliation and prayer?" Perhaps the reason is that there is a limit to even the foolishness of "church dignitaries." As a matter of fact both sides have prayed, and how on earth can God Almighty answer so as to satisfy both? Very wisely, he does nothing. Mr. Macbeth concludes his letter by repeating the legend that when the *Titanic* was sinking the band played "Nearer, my God to thee." Nothing of the kind happened; but this story appears to have established itself in religious circles, and one can hardly expect that the fact of its not being true will be considered sufficient reason for not repeating it.

The absolute "bunkum" of these large revival meetings that one reads about was unconsciously illustrated by Gipsy Smith in the course of a *Methodist Times* interview. He confessed that all but few of the people at the large gatherings addressed by himself and the President of the Conference were already members of the Methodist Church. In an audience of 1,500, not more than fifty were non-Methodists. That being the case, one would like to discover the value of the meetings. True, they please the attendants. They are able to once more "give themselves to Christ," as they have been continually doing, and are ready to do again when a new revivalist comes along. But meanwhile the Methodist Church is losing ground. Gipsy Smith says he is not "looking forward to any big increase of membership." That, too, after addressing over 150,000 people!

Professor David Smith tells an inquirer who complains that whenever he is ill he gets no help whatever from religion, that Jesus had a similar experience on the cross when he cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" If God deserted his only begotten Son, in his most trying hour, is it any wonder that he abandons an ordinary person when in trouble? Think of that, says Dr. Smith, and be comforted. Surely this is to trifle wickedly with a real problem. The inquirer's difficulty is not dealt with at all. There are multitudes of religious people to whom the belief in Christ and his salvation never ministers the slightest comfort or joy. If Christ exists, why is this?

Now that Christians are compelled to admit George Meredith's Freethought they give some very grotesque explanations. The *Daily Chronicle* recently stated that Meredith had Secularist friends and he was curiously chary of offending their peculiar sensibilities." We hope this sentence was paid for at the usual rate.

Archdeacon Sinclair has been complaining in the *Daily Mirror* of the "disproportionate rating of the incomes of the clergy." The founder of the Christian superstition had no income to speak of, and was sold up for thirty shillings.

Still further proofs of the benefits of Christianity as a civilising force. The Archdeacon of Richmond said the other day that he had been told by one who had lived in San Francisco, Sydney, and Leeds, that the latter place was the most impudently vicious in the world. A Leeds clergyman added that the comment was fully justified. As a redeeming feature we have no doubt that Leeds contributes its share towards the two millions sterling raised for foreign missionary work.

Nothing is real, say the Christian Scientists, but mind. There is a division of mind generally into mortal mind and spiritual mind. The late Mrs. Baker Eddy, foundress and head of the sect, left a fortune of £518,126. This, we presume, goes to the "mortal mind" portion of the concern.

Russia, which already possesses a number of semi-erotic religious sects, has just added another one to their number. A woman, with her son and another man, have just been charged with blasphemy and swindling. The woman's offence consists in representing herself as the Mother of God, who had descended from heaven for the special purpose of revealing new truth to the people. Part of this new truth consists in the inculcation of very common everyday morality, along with the practice of certain rites that are reminiscent of some of the erotic sects of antiquity and of the primitive Christian ages. She is also accused of extracting money from her dupes, but in these cases that is almost always a feature. Her male companion was said to be an incarnation of St. Peter, and her son an incarnation of King Solomon.

The new Woman's Church at Wallasey Cheshire, arranges that at the afternoon service only women are to be admitted. In the evening men and women may attend. This is rather a queer way of exhibiting the equality of the sexes. It looks more like a reversal of the practice in the early Church that prohibited women approaching the altar under certain conditions. Sermons to women only seem almost as objectionable as sermons to men only.

After our last week's batch of clerical wills, it seems hardly worth while to notice that of the Rev. William Pope with £7,287, Rev. G. Stanley with £7,108, and Rev. H. Shepherd with £76,638. Still, they may as well go with the rest, and may the Lord have mercy on their souls.

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To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £119 6s. 11d. Received since :—A. E. Maddock, £5.

E. B.—Thanks for cuttings, which we have found useful. We appreciate your point concerning the leopard changing its "spots." Many of us would like to possess the same facility for changing our "spot" for others more desirable.

C. HYLTON, of 32 Lancefield-street, Queen's Park, W., requests us to say that if C. Attwood will write him, he will gladly supply him with a few copies of *Facts Worth Knowing*. From another correspondent we learn that application to America has elicited the information that this pamphlet is quite out of print.

SECULARIST (Halifax).—There is no Branch of the N. S. S. in Halifax at present, but there is no good reason why there should not be one. Seven members are required before permission may be given to open a new Branch. The nearest one to you at present is Huddersfield.

A. J. MARRIOT.—We believe the usual effect of Christian settlement among a black people is that of "lightening" the population.

A. E. MADDOCK.—Thanks for cheque, which has been apportioned as you desire. Your MSS. came quite safely to hand, and is at present in type. We hope to publish in the course of a week or so.

D. MAPP.—Very pleased to hear that Mr. Lloyd's recent lectures at Manchester gave the audiences so much pleasure and satisfaction. We should have been glad to have recorded the success of the meetings earlier, but yours is the first letter that has reached us on the subject. Obviously, no one could have regretted his inability to lecture at Manchester on March 22 more than Mr. Foote himself.

CORRESPONDENTS will greatly oblige, and will also facilitate the dispatch of business, if they will mark all letters "Private" that are intended for Mr. Foote and are of a personal nature. Those containing editorial matter may be addressed in the usual manner.

J. N. LEARY.—Thanks for pamphlet. Several correspondents have written offering copies. Will they please take this as a general acknowledgment of their kindness.

T. L. BARRETT.—It is quite safe to assume that if Colonel Ingersoll declined to reply to Father Lambert his reasons were of a perfectly satisfactory nature. A man in Colonel Ingersoll's position could hardly be expected to publicly discuss with anyone who felt disposed to throw out a challenge. As a matter of fact Colonel Ingersoll did reply to Father Lambert, among others, but refused to be drawn into a lengthened discussion.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid :—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Special.

I AM happy to say—and a good many "saints" will be happy to learn—that the worst of my recent illness is over. Shorter and sharper was the motto on this occasion. I am now clothed and in my right mind, as the prophet says; and am even eating ordinary food with reasonable appetite. The question for me now is the weather. If I can get out of doors freely I think I shall soon be myself again. Sunshine and balmier air are what I want now. I shall be lucky, of course, if I get them. For the only certain thing about the weather in England, and at this time of the year, is that you have got to have it, anyhow.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

Under the present conditions of parliamentary business the Prime Minister's reception of the deputation on behalf of the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws was all that could reasonably be expected. The case against these laws was put forward by Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner and Professor L. Dickinson, who were accompanied by Sir W. Byles, M.P., Mr. H. G. Chancellor, M.P., Mr. R. D. Holt, M.P. (who has charge of the Bill for repeal), Mr. Silas K. Hocking, and others. With Mr. Asquith were the Home Secretary and the Attorney-General. Replying to the deputation, Mr. Asquith said—we quote from the *Daily Chronicle* of March 27—

> "he was glad they realised that prosecutions in recent years were due not to any act of the Executive Government, but to the zeal of local authorities (the Boulter case excepted). A good deal of what had been urged was absolutely common ground among them. No one could defend the existing state of the law.
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> Our statutes were absolutely obsolete, and he did not believe any recent prosecution ever took place under them. He agreed in thinking that the statutes might also be swept out of the book with very great advantage. The interpretation of the judges had varied from time to time, and of late years a more restricted view had been taken by them.
>
> 'I understand your desire to be that we should go a step further, so that even this attenuated fragment or relic of the old blasphemy laws should altogether disappear. I confess, speaking only for myself, that I am in sympathy with you. I see no good object, certainly no object which is bound up in any way with the cause of religion, which the maintenance and the enforcement of these laws provokes.
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> 'They are partial. They are uncertain. They have been differently interpreted from generation to generation; and I am afraid that there is a certain amount of truth in what has been said to-day, that they are rarely enforced, except against ill-educated and humble persons. That adds a sense of special injustice to a grievance which is already a considerable one. I do not know of any object which they serve.
>
> 'I think that if the law is adequately defined and maintained against the use of any form of language which would be reasonably capable of creating a breach of the peace, the context or the purpose for which it is used is wholly irrelevant. I think this rather outworn and obsolete chapter in our law might very well disappear, not only from the statute, but from the common law. I see no reason to repent of the vote I gave in favor of Mr. Bradlaugh's Bill, and if the opportunity offered I should give a similar vote again. I do not know what more you want.' (Laughter.)
>
> A Voice : 'Government assistance.'
>
> Mr. Asquith said that was a very different thing. 'We have a pretty heavy cargo to carry at present.'
>
> Sir William Byles : 'This is a very little thing.'
>
> Mr. Asquith : 'But every little counts, and I am not sure there is any room in the hold of our ship for an additional legislative parcel, however small. I cannot honestly promise you anything in the nature of Government time. Sympathy and good will I do promise you in full measure, so far as I am personally concerned. You have many opportunities open to private Members to prosecute legislation which is beneficent in itself, and generally desired. If you can manage to find a nook or cranny for this little Bill of yours, we shall be very happy to support you to the utmost of our power.'"

Mr. Asquith deserves the highest praise for his uncompromising condemnation of these iniquitous laws, and for the straightforward declaration that he would repeat the vote he once before gave for their abolition should the occasion for so doing present itself. It now rests with those members of the House who are in favor of their abolition to see that the opportunity comes as speedily as possible. Unfortunately, there is small chance, in the present state of Parliamentary business, for any measure that is not a Government measure. The time of private members in the House is at best a precarious quantity, and at present is more than usually doubtful. Still, the Prime Minister's promise of "sympathy and goodwill," "in full measure," should inspire members to press the matter forward. We should imagine that there would be a clear majority in the Cabinet in its favor. For the rest, the description of the Blasphemy Laws as "absolutely obsolete," as "partial" and "uncertain," and adding "a special injustice" to an already considerable grievance, ought to give pause to possible opposition to the abolition of these laws.

Mr. Asquith stated that blasphemy prosecutions in recent years were not due to any act of the Executive Government—"the Boulter case excepted." The exception is of some little importance. It will be remembered that this case was taken up by the National Secular Society, and a considerable sum of money expended in its defence. And this was done on the broad principle that, whatever the kind

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of language used by the defendants in these cases, the real object in invoking the Blasphemy Laws was to suppress an objectionable opinion. The Executive of the N. S. S. declined to consider whether the language used was coarse or refined, so long as the attack was made in the shape of an indictment for blasphemy. In doing this the N. S. S. stood practically alone, and it is pleasing to record that its straightforward attitude commanded greater respect and support than one might have, at first, thought probable. The Boulter case has, therefore, some little historic value. It obviously taught the Government that even uneducated men could not be attacked with impunity under cover of the Blasphemy Laws. It drew from a judge of eminence the first ruling in confirmation of Lord Coleridge's interpretation of the law on the occasion of Mr. Foote's trial. Finally, it brought the whole Freethought world into line in protesting against prosecutions under the Blasphemy Laws whatever the character of the speaker or speeches.

The friends of Miss Vance—and that means almost everyone in the Freethought party—will be glad to learn that she has decided to undergo a course of treatment for rheumatism in one of the London hospitals, and we hope that systematic care will have a beneficial effect. Her complaint has been more than usually troublesome of late. During her enforced absence from the office, her correspondence, and all matters connected with the Society's business, will be dealt with by Miss Kough, who is perfectly familiar with the routine work, as she has been assisting the General Secretary for some time.

Owing to the date (March 24) on which the annual meeting of the Secular Education League was held being that on which our last week's issue went to press, we have had no opportunity of referring to it before now. The necessity for doing so now chiefly arises from the careful manner in which the London papers avoid reporting anything that might offend the more bigoted of their readers. Fortunately, this boycott did not prevent the Caxton Hall meeting being one of the best hitherto held. The hall was full and the speakers all in excellent form. In the absence of the League's President, Mr. G. Greenwood, M.P., the chair was taken by Sir Henry Cotton. Sympathetic reference to both the absence of the President of the League —due to disablement from a broken knee-cap—and of Mr. Foote from illness, was made by the Chairman and Mr. Halley Stewart, both of whom paid high tribute to the work of Mr. Greenwood and Mr. Foote on the Executive Committee. The leaders of the League were all in fighting form, and the annual report and balance-sheet were both satisfactory documents.

The principal resolution of the evening was moved by Mr. Halley Stewart, and seconded by Lady Byles in a speech that bristled with epigrammatic utterances. This is the first time that Lady Byles has spoken at these meetings, but we hope it will not be the last. Not the least interesting part of her speech was the reading of a hitherto unpublished letter from Thomas Carlyle. A second resolution was moved by the Rev. Dr. Walsh, who, in the course of some forceful remarks, bore testimony to the influence of the League in most out-of-the-way districts. Mr. Swinny seconded the resolution, and Mr. Cohen brought the speaking to a close with a brief speech that was highly appreciated by the audience. There is plenty of work ahead of the League, and the results of its past work will be best shown whenever the promised Education Bill brings the question once more prominently before the public. As it is, the League has succeeded in bringing together people of all classes and parties who are agreed upon the importance of confining education in State schools to secular subjects, and in providing literature that will serve as ammunition in the coming fight. We cordially commend the League to those of our readers who are not yet members. The secretary is Mr. H. Snell, 19 Buckingham-street, Strand.

Whether we consider cases where individuals have had to suffer out of all proportion to their deserts and without ostensible, declared, or conceivable reason; or whether we consider the terrible natural calamities which befall great numbers of men and deal suffering and destruction to both good and bad together; in all cases we find that that view of life which would maintain that we, either as individuals or as a race, are under the protection of some external Providence will not fit the facts of our experience.—*Sir F. Younghusband, "Within. Thoughts during Convalescence."*

Death is the most important transaction of the religious life.—*Anatole France, "The Garden of Epicurus."*

A Three-Cornered Contest.

OFTEN when I have been arguing with Christians on some doubtful points concerning their faith, I have been in a minority of one, but I have never felt the least doubt that I should be able to hold my own against any number of them, if they only allowed me fair play. They have bombarded me with questions, and insisted upon me answering them to their satisfaction; but when I have returned the compliment, and told them that their replies were really no answer to my questions, they have generally lost their temper and become distinctly uncomplimentary, not to say offensive, in their remarks.

In the Council Chamber of Camberwell I have assailed the Christian belief in the efficacy of prayer under absolutely fair conditions, with a Mayor to keep order and insist upon my right to a fair hearing. I have also defended the *Freethinker* against the malicious and unfair charges of Christians, and been listened to calmly, though outvoted by an organised majority. Sometimes I have had the good fortune to have a friendly discussion with some Christians of various sects, a sort of round-table contest, in a room in which there was an audience of about twenty persons, mostly nominal Christians, or persons who might be more correctly described as "nothingarians." Of course, the great difficulty in such a discussion is to get the disputants to keep to the point, as most of them have a disposition to dodge about from one subject to another. There is also the further difficulty of keeping the spectators out of the discussion—especially when there is no chairman and no general rules of discussion are observed. In this little discussion I recently had, my opponents were a Roman Catholic and an active member of the Church of England. We discussed various questions relating to the Christian belief, but the main theme was "The Myths and Miracles of the Bible."

In this discussion I took the initiative, and opened the debate. The following dialogue will give the reader some slight idea of the matter and method of discussion:—

Freethinker: In my opinion the Bible, as a book, is full of myth and miracle; in fact, the whole story of Creation is one vast miracle.

Roman Catholic: But you do not deny that an Almighty God could create the universe in the manner described if he so desired?

Freethinker: No. I merely say that the story is so improbable and so contradictory that I cannot believe it.

Roman Catholic: Do you say that because you cannot believe it that therefore it is not true?

Freethinker: No, I do not take that ground. I take the ground that the story of Creation as given in the Bible is more likely to have been written by men who knew little or nothing of physical science than that it is an inspired production containing the utterances of the Jewish God—who, in my opinion, is a perfectly mythical personage.

English Churchman: But we are taught to believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, and for my part I see no reason to doubt it.

Freethinker: Which version of the Bible do you think inspired—the Septuagint, the Douay, or the Authorised English version?

English Churchman: Oh, the Authorised English version, of course.

Freethinker: But why of course, when there are other versions? Your Roman Catholic friend probably thinks the Douay version inspired?

Roman Catholic: Certainly as much as any other. But as Roman Catholics we do not accept the literal interpretation of everything we find in the Bible. We have an Infallible Authority at the head of our Holy Church in the person of his Holiness the Pope, and in all matters of theology we accept his authority.

English Churchman: As Protestants we have no such authority. We believe in the Bible generally,

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but we are allowed to exercise our reason in the interpretation of it.

Freethinker: You are a Freethinker, then, in a sense. You are allowed to pick and choose what you shall believe, but you must not call in question the fundamental doctrines of your faith.

English Churchman: What fundamental doctrines?

Freethinker: The doctrine of man's fall in the Garden of Eden, the miraculous birth of Jesus, his atonement for the sins of mankind by his death on the cross——

English Churchman: Of course not. We could not call in question these dogmas of the Church without giving up our belief in Christianity altogether.

Roman Catholic: We accept these teachings without question. Whatever our priests tell us on the question we accept, for we recognise the danger of allowing the ordinary lay mind to put his own interpretation upon them.

Freethinker: Exactly; the Roman Catholic is logical. He allows the priest to think for him; but the Protestant claims to exercise the right of private judgment. When, however, he comes up against his fundamental teachings, he gives up his reason and exclaims "I believe."

English Churchman: But there are a good many things in the Bible that I am not called upon to believe. I need not believe, for instance, in all the myths and miracles of the Old Testament.

Freethinker: Not now. But Christians had to believe a few years ago. Biblical criticism has knocked the bottom out of the incredible stories of the Old Testament; but I suppose you still believe the myths and miracles of the New Testament?

English Churchman: What myths and miracles do you refer to?

Freethinker: In my judgment the whole story of the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus is founded upon myth and miracle.

Roman Catholic: Not so. Jesus Christ was undoubtedly a historical personage. Does not Josephus say so?

Freethinker: The passage in Josephus is an admitted forgery.

English Churchman: Who says so?

Freethinker: I can quote you plenty of Christian writers on that point. But what I say distinctly is this: There never was such a person as the Jesus of the Gospels. There never was a child who was born of a virgin; there never was a man who walked upon the sea, opened the eyes of the blind, fed thousands of people on five loaves and two small fishes, raised the dead to life, and finally, after being crucified, resurrected himself from the dead, and after showing himself to a few friends, ascended bodily into the heavens, and disappeared from the gaze of mankind for ever.

English Churchman: Oh! it's all very well for you to say there never was such a being as Jesus Christ, but greater men than you, even Freethinkers, say there was such a person. For instance, Renan, John Stuart Mill, and others.

Freethinker: Renan and John Stuart Mill, it is true, both believed that there was such a man as Jesus, but they did not believe that he was miraculously conceived and born of a virgin, and they did not believe in any of the miracles attributed to him.

Roman Catholic: All the great teachers of our Holy Catholic Church implicitly believed in the historical character of Christ. Why should we commence to dispute it to-day?

Freethinker: Because we have more information on the subject, and science and modern thought have changed the whole aspect of the question.

English Churchman: In what way?

Freethinker: Because we now know by a study of other religions that many of the great religious teachers of other countries are said to have been born of a virgin, delivered Sermons on the Mount, and were crucified and rose again from the dead—such, for instance, as Buddha, Christna, Indra, Vishnu.

English Churchman: Well, but what are these myths and miracles that you refer to in the New Testament other than those you have mentioned?

Freethinker: Have patience, kind friends. You must remember that the sacred books of Buddhists and Brahmins have their marvellous tales of the dead brought back to life, of incarnations and virgin mothers, of angelic appearances, visions, and voices, magical fish with money in their mouths, talking serpents, and other such extraordinary occurrences as those recorded in the Gospels.* People with no knowledge of science were always on the look-out for the marvellous. As Shakespeare says:—

> "No natural exhalation in the sky,
> No scope of nature, no distempered day,
> No common wind, no customed event,
> But they will pluck away his natural cause,
> And call them meteors, prodigies, and signs,
> Abortions, presages, and tongues of heaven."

English Churchman: Well, we are not bound, at this time of day, to believe in all these things. The English Church is very liberal in these matters; we are only bound to believe in the fundamentals.

Roman Catholic: And Catholics do not concern themselves about such mere details. We have our Articles of Faith and our Catechism.

Freethinker: Minor details, you call them. You might say they are minor details when speaking to me, but you would not tell your local priest or your more pious co-religionists so. It is wonderful how liberal-minded religionists of all denominations can be when they are speaking individually, and not as representatives of an organisation.

English Churchman: The clergy of the Church of England, especially the most distinguished scholars among them, are gradually giving up belief in the miracles of the Old Testament, and many of them have given up some of the miracles in the New, while few of them believe in a personal Devil or the old-fashioned idea of eternal torment in hell for the wicked.

Freethinker: Well, but what has caused this change to come over them? In my judgment it is the growth of scientific knowledge among the educated classes, and more important still, the growth of common sense among the masses.

English Churchman: To a certain extent, I agree; but surely you will admit that religious folk are not without intelligence, also.

Roman Catholic: There is plenty of intelligence among Catholics.

Freethinker: Yes, but they are not allowed to exercise it on theology or religion.

English Churchman: As far as I can see, you throw over everything that cannot be proved—cannot be settled at the bar of reason.

Roman Catholic: Reason is but a poor guide.

Freethinker: It is the best we have got.

English Churchman: And so you make yourself an outcast from your fellows upon the mere vanity of your superior reason.

Freethinker: I am bound to be true to myself. I cannot be a hypocrite. And if I must lose the society of some of my friends by being true to my convictions, I am willing to go out into a larger world in which I can breathe the pure air and exercise intellectual liberty in the pursuit of truth. Gentlemen, I thank you for your courtesy, and wish you a very good evening.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

Organisms Antagonistic to Health.

THE wonders of life become the more wonderful the more closely they are studied. All diseases concerning whose genesis and development adequate knowledge is possessed are due to living germs, and doubtless all other ailments will be sooner or later traced to the malign influences of organic matter. As is generally known, the clearest water, which contains, or has contained, plant or animal organisms,

* *The Bible: What It Is and Is Not*, Joseph Wood.

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soon becomes turbid and coated on the surface with a film. When the surface scum is scrutinised under a microscope, a multitudinous medley of lowly life leaps into view. Simple-celled animals, such as infusoria, will in all likelihood be seen, as well as unicellular plants. These organisms are minute enough, but they appear as giants in comparison with the dense masses of dwarf bacterial life by which they are surrounded. These bacterial creatures usually assume the appearance of minute spheres, threads, or rods which move amid their liquid home with the aid of delicate lashes, or they may lie in a condition of comparative repose in a jelly-like mass. The bacteria multiply with astonishing rapidity by cross division; one soon gives rise to a thousand, and the microscopic specks which first appear will, in suitable conditions of nutrition quickly form a mass which fills the containing vessel. Wherever organic matter is undergoing decomposition in infusions such as that instanced, in cases of disease or death, or within the body of the living organism itself, there these bacteria are gathered together.

Throughout its historic period, and doubtless through many of the prehistoric periods which preceded it, the human family was familiar with the poisonous and death-dealing nature of many of the larger plants. But it was reserved for nineteenth-century science to discover that various simple plants, which lie far beyond the range of unaided vision, are the generators of the most terrible scourges which afflict mental and bodily health. These minute plants belong to the lowly group of bacteria, and that department of organised knowledge which concerns itself with them is termed bacteriology.

Strictly speaking, every bacterium is a one-celled plant. But bacteria, germs, micro-organisms, and microbes are all popularly regarded as various varieties of one fundamental living form. As a matter-of-fact, however, germs, micro-organisms, and microbes are not necessarily bacteria, which are plants, whereas the others may be, and frequently are, animals. All these forms are micro-organisms, but the bacteria are a special kind of such organisms. It is, of course, very convenient to employ the more general terms, as the following instance shows. The germ of typhoid fever is a plant (bacterium) while the germ of malaria is an animal, although both of them are micro-organisms.

The average rod-shaped bacterium is about 1-10,000th of an inch in length and about 1-50,000th in diameter; others are much smaller and are only rendered visible by the highest powers of the microscope, while many are probably too minute to be seen even with the aid of the most powerful instruments so far invented. The germs which cause foot-and-mouth disease are so minute "that they will pass through the pores of the earthenware tubes in a Pasteur-Berkefeld filter, which removes bacteria large enough to be seen with a microscope."

As already intimated, in conditions favorable to growth, a bacterium soon attains its maximum size, and then splits into equal halves. Each of these feeds, develops, and soon divides again. Some bacteria divide every twenty minutes, and it has been computed that if the descendants of a single bacterium were to divide once an hour only for two days, there would result a population of these plant organisms of more than 280 millions. If this rate of multiplication were doubled, and the descendants of the one original bacterium divided every half hour, in 72 hours there would be 4,772 billions, and their total weight would probably exceed 7,000 tons.

Fortunately for higher animal life, such a reproductive rate is seldom or never possible for any length of time. Nevertheless, the figures just given help to convey some idea of the danger from baleful bacteria to the human or other body that harbors them.

In normal cases the food supply of disease germs is soon exhausted, and their own waste products help to set up poisonous conditons, which inhibit any constant rapid rate of reproduction.

Spore formation is a distinguishing feature of some bacteria. Through providential care, perhaps, few spore-producing bacteria are responsible for human diseases. This is a gratifying circumstance, as spores are extremely difficult to kill; they are much more tenacious of life than the more mobile bacteria. Their death-resisting powers are well illustrated by the fact that spores from the bodies of cattle that have succumbed to the dread anthrax disease have been known to germinate several years after the dead cattle were buried.

The wide range of temperature through which bacteria live and reproduce their kind is very remarkable. Some are capable of multiplying at freezing-point; others abound in hot springs so near to boiling-point that they obviously flourish in conditions that are absolutely fatal to all high forms of life. Nor is this all. Intense cold is by no means fatal to some bacteria.

Several species of these, notably those of typhoid and diphtheria, have successfully resisted the temperature of liquid air (about —190° C.) for several days. When thawed out these germs have displayed every evidence of their power to multiply quite normally. The majority of bacterial forms, however, perish when congealed, and very few, indeed, can be restored to activity after water has remained in a frozen state for six months. Still, serious danger may lurk in ice procured from impure sources. At least one epidemic of typhoid fever has been definitely traced to ice kept in stock for fully seven months. As Dr. Bigelow, who records this case, very truly says, "All ice from waters contaminated with sewage should be regarded with suspicion. While most of the bacteria will probably die, the few which remain may multiply rapidly when taken into the human body."

The boiling-point of water is fatal to nearly all bacteria. One minute's exposure to ebullition suffices to kill the bacterial germs of both typhoid and tuberculosis. The hardier spore-forms of bacterial organisms are able to survive several hours' constant boiling, but when the method of discontinuous sterilisation is adopted, in other words, if the bacterial spores are boiled for a short time, and then allowed to cool, the spores germinate and are then easily sterilised by a little extra heating. It is a reassuring circumstance that contaminated water or milk very seldom harbors spore-producing disease germs, and a single boiling is thus usually sufficient to bring their inglorious career to a speedy termination.

It is also important to know that the *direct* rays of the sun are fatal to all bacteria. Some species succumb to a few minutes' direct exposure, and scarcely any can withstand an exposure of a few hours' duration. The services rendered by the sun in our streets and houses and other structures where disease-generating bacteria freely abound pass the limits of all ordinary calculation. The solar orb is, indeed, the supreme lord of light and life.

In all surface soils bacteria are abundant; no river, pond, lake, or sea is without its bacterial population; bacteria dwell in the bodies of plants and animals; the air is everywhere peopled with them except in the moteless atmosphere of high mountains, at the Poles at certain seasons, and possibly in some of the greater deserts.

Although it appears as if science long since rendered us familiar with the germ-theory of disease, this view of the origin of bodily ailments is of quite recent growth. Although much was suspected, little or nothing was definitely established until, in 1876, that great pioneer, Dr. Robert Koch, of Berlin, procured pure cultures of rod-shaped bacteria from the blood of sheep and oxen affected with anthrax, or splenic fever, and thus furnished the first proof that bacteria are responsible for disease.

Six years later, the same bacteriologist demonstrated the connection between human tuberculosis

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and a bacterium which he christened "Bacillus tuberculosis." In the following year he announced the further discovery that the fearsome disease of Asiatic cholera owed its existence to a specific bacterium. Many of the more progressive medical experts were quickly impressed by the remarkable results that Koch's inquiries had opened up, and in the comparatively short space of thirty years the important science of bacteriology has been evolved. And, if we base our expectations on the already vast achievements of this new science, we are not only entitled to the anticipation of the near approach of the period when all portions of the earth's surface will be rendered habitable, but we may also look forward with the utmost confidence to the coming day when all the more malignant diseases will be banished from the haunts of men.

The list of diseases demonstrably due to bacterial agency is now a formidable one, which steadily increases every year. The many forms of tuberculous disease, cholera, pneumonia, tetanus, meningitis, blood poisoning, leprosy, and a large number of other scourges are all contagious or infectious bacterial diseases.

Various diseases are now known to be due to the sinister influences of animal micro-organisms which are embraced in the unicellular group known as protozoa. Sleeping-sickness, dysentery, and malaria are to be numbered among the ascertained products of these animal organisms. Other diseases which are more than suspected of organic genesis, but whose specific causes as yet remain undetected, are small-pox, yellow fever, and similar complaints.

The most successful treatment of these diseases so far discovered has been based on the assumption of their microbic origin. It is now demonstrable that yellow fever has been transmitted by the bites of mosquitoes which have previously feasted on the blood of a victim to yellow fever, and this has led physicians into the belief that, by adopting the plan so fruitfully followed in cases where disease is most certainly due to organic infection, they will be enabled to secure the best results in cases where the organism responsible for the disease has so far eluded observation. The method in question is either to destroy the mosquitoes or to prevent their biting healthy subjects or patients afflicted with malaria or yellow fever. Similarly, in battling with scarlet fever, small-pox, measles, etc., experience has completely justified the assumption of their respective micro-organisms as the real generators of the various diseases. Those that are smitten with these disagreeable ailments are therefore isolated as far as possible, and the rooms they have occupied, and the utensils they have employed are thoroughly disinfected.

Diphtheria furnishes an excellent illustration of the manner in which bacteria generate disease, as the following instance advanced by Dr. Bigelow shows:—

> "A child is 'exposed' to diphtheria, perhaps in school where other pupils have shown signs of the disease, and after a number of days the symptoms of the disease may appear. Examination of the throat discloses certain peculiar spots, and microscopic examination of material from the surface of these spots shows thousands of bacteria of the diphtheritic species. The reason why the disease did not appear immediately after exposure is that it required time for the one or few bacteria which first lodged in the throat to multiply and form a colony."

The symptoms of this disease are not merely those of sore throat; many organs are affected. The explanation is that, although the bacteria are more or less confined to a given area of the body, they excrete toxins which enter into the blood circulation, and poison the system of the patient as a whole. When the sufferer has a sound constitution, the diphtheria toxin shows a lessening hold on the body in the course of a few days; the critical period is now past, and the patient begins to mend. Where the disease is overcome, this is due to the fact that the victim's body cells have slowly secreted a substance which fights the toxin; this substance is an anti-toxin. But in all cases in which the body fails to secrete sufficient anti-toxin, the patient dies.

Science, however, can cope with this difficulty. Diphtheria toxins are known to cause the tissues of the horse to form anti-toxin, which is contained in the animal's blood. Hence, the doctor injects into the human sufferer's blood a certain amount of this anti-toxin, and this prevents serious illness, and has proved a highly successful method in saving life.

(*To be concluded.*) T. F. PALMER.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON MARCH 26.

Members present:—Messrs. Baker, Barry, Bowman, Cohen, Cowell, Cunningham, Davey, Davidson, Heaford, Judge, Neate, Nichols, Quinton, Samuels, Silverstein, Wood, Miss Kough and Miss Stanley.

A letter was read from the President, Mr. G. W. Foote, explaining his inability to attend in consequence of very serious illness, and making suggestions concerning the business to be transacted.

Mr. Cohen was elected to the chair.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

The monthly cash statement was presented and adopted.

New members were admitted for the St. Helens and West Ham Branches and the Parent Society.

The General Secretary reported as to the recent meeting of the Camberwell Branch.

The forthcoming Conference was discussed, and the final arrangements adjourned until the next meeting.

On the motion of Mr. Cunningham, certain business remitted by the Conference to the Executive was dealt with, and, in regard to the resolution:—

> "That one Sunday in the year be called the Charles Bradlaugh Sunday, and that all Branches be requested to arrange for lectures or readings to be given on this day, bearing on the life and teachings of Charles Bradlaugh, our late great leader."

—it was resolved to recommend that the day be the nearest Sunday to September 26, the anniversary of Charles Bradlaugh's birth, and that this year it be Sunday, Sept. 27.

In regard to a contemplated testimonial to Mr. W. J. Ramsey, after a statement by Mr. Davey, delegate from the Kingsland Branch, it was unanimously resolved that Miss Vance, the General Secretary, and Mr. Davey should, on behalf of the Executive, confer with the representatives of kindred and political societies, who intended to co-operate, and to report at an early date.

A vote of sympathy with the President concluded the meeting.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary.*

THE SWORD OF BALAAM.

A Scotsman on a recent visit to Dublin went to see a private museum, which was advertised to contain the oldest and queerest antiquities in the world.

The Irish showman brought out a large sword and said: "This is the sword that Balaam slew his ass with."

The Scotsman, being well up in Bible history, here interrupted and said: "Balaam did not slay his ass; he only wished for a sword to slay it."

"Oh!" returned Pat, "then this is the very sword he wished for."

His evening prayer was notorious, and the reverend vicar of Postbridge had not seldom exhorted him to abandon such a narrow-minded petition. But Dennis would retort that he had but little time for devotion, and was not minded to spread his prayers thin.

"God Lord, bless me and my wife, and father and gran'-father and my girls—us six an' no more! Amen."

"That's all I've got to say, and 'tis enough," declared Dennis, "and as for t'other people in Postbridge, they've all got tongues in their heads, except old Drake Dicker, and they can pray for themselves."—*Eden Phillpotts, "The Master of Merripit."*

A mother noticing that her young son had omitted from his prayers a special favor she had impressed upon him to submit to divine sanction, said to him, "Archie, why did you not pray for what I told you?"

The little fellow then eagerly explained, "Because it's a secret; if I had asked God about it, he would be sure to tell Mrs. God, and then it would be all over heaven in no time."

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Mr. Schindle's, 91 Church-road, Stoke Newington): 7.30, Business Meeting and Social—Conference Resolutions, etc.

OUTDOOR.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, Mr. Marshall, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7.30, W. Davidson, a Lecture.

PROPAGANDIST LEAFLETS. New Issue. 1. *Christianity a Stupendous Failure*, J. T. Lloyd; 2. *Bible and Teetotalism*, J. M. Wheeler; 3. *Principles of Secularism*, C. Watts; 4. *Where Are Your Hospitals?* R. Ingersoll. 5. *Because the Bible Tells Me So*, W. P. Ball; 6. *Why Be Good?* by G. W. Foote. *The Parson's Creed*. Often the means of arresting attention and making new members. Price 6d. per hundred, post free 7d. Special rates for larger quantities. Samples on receipt of stamped addressed envelope.—MISS E. M. VANCE, N. S. S. Secretary, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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Determinism or Free Will?

By C. COHEN.

Issued by the Secular Society, Ltd.

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Secretary—MISS E. M. VANCE.

THIS Society was ormed in 1898 to afford legal security to the acquisition and application of funds for Secular purposes.

The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularisation of the State, etc., etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

The liability of members is limited to £1, in case the Society should ever be wound up and the assets were insufficient to cover liabilities—a most unlikely contingency.

Members pay an entrance fee of ten shillings, and a subsequent yearly subscription of five shillings.

The Society has a considerable number of members, but a much larger number is desirable, and it is hoped that some will be gained amongst those who read this announcement. All who join it participate in the control of its business and the trusteeship of its resources. It is expressly provided in the Articles of Association that no member, as such, shall derive any sort of profit from the Society, either by way of dividend, bonus, or interest, or in any way whatever.

The Society's affairs are managed by an elected Board of Directors, consisting of not less than five and not more than twelve members, one-third of whom retire by ballot) each year, but are capable of re-election. An Annual General Meeting of members must be held in London, to receive the Report, elect new Directors, and transact any other business that may arise.

Being a duly registered body, the Secular Society, Limited, can receive donations and bequests with absolute security. Those who are in a position to do so are invited to make donations, or to insert a bequest in the Society's favor in their wills. On this point there need not be the slightest apprehension. It is quite impossible to set aside such bequests. The executors have no option but to pay them over in the ordinary course of administration. No objection of any kind has been raised in connection with any of the wills by which the Society has already been benefited.

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Friends of the Society who have remembered it in their wills, or who intend to do so, should formally notify the Secretary of the fact, or send a private intimation to the Chairman, who will (if desired) treat it as strictly confidential. This is not necessary, but it is advisable, as wills sometimes get lost or mislaid, and their contents have to be established by competent testimony.

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NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

President: G. W. FOOTE.

Secretary: Miss E M. Vance, 2 Newcastle-st. London, E.C.

Principles and Objects.

Secularism teaches that conduct should be based on reason and knowledge. It knows nothing of divine guidance or interference; it excludes supernatural hopes and fears; it regards happiness as man's proper aim, and utility as his moral guide.

Secularism affirms that Progress is only possible through Liberty, which is at once a right and a duty; and therefore seeks to remove every barrier to the fullest equal freedom of thought, action, and speech.

Secularism declares that theology is condemned by reason as superstitious, and by experience as mischievous, and assails it as the historic enemy of Progress.

Secularism accordingly seeks to dispel superstition; to spread education; to disestablish religion; to rationalise morality; to promote peace; to dignify labor; to extend material well-being; and to realise the self-government of the people.

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Some people's minds are like a place of public meeting —all kinds of opinions appear there in turn, and leave it just as they found it, empty and open to every comer.
—ARNOLD TOYNBEE.

There are Others.

IT seems one of the most difficult things in the world to get Christians to recognise the existence of others. At first glance this seems an extravagant statement, since one would imagine that the existence of non-Christians was too obvious to be ignored. In a sense, this is so. Christians will admit the fact even while they deplore it. But the great bulk of believers, having made the admission, appear to consider that their duty in this respect has been fully discharged. When they come to consider the value of proposed measures before Parliament, or discuss any subject of social consequence, the argument is conducted, very largely, as though Christians were the only people that needed consideration, and the bearing of legislation on the Christian religion the really important point at issue. Under pressure, it is admitted there are others; but straightway their existence is ignored.

Take, as an illustration, the education question. This is constantly discussed among Christians as though the whole of the problem was how to secure a working agreement between the sects. I admit this *is* a problem, and if it could be secured there would be little chance of any other claims receiving consideration. Fortunately, the conflicting claims of the sects cannot be adjusted for any length of time, and so others are secured against a larger measure of injustice than would otherwise be the case. But how often does it dawn upon these people that there are others besides Christians to be considered? The modern civilised State is not a Christian State in any genuine sense. It is made up of all sorts of religious believers, with all sorts of creeds, and a large and growing number of unbelievers. And you cannot possibly satisfy sectarian demands for privileged treatment without inflicting an injustice upon those who are outside the sects. For, in the modern State, even the Christian believers, as a whole, represent nothing but a sect. A large one, maybe, but still a sect. This is a consideration that few Christians bear steadily in mind.

It is the same with the Sunday question. Christians demand, and feel morally injured if the demand is not granted, that nothing shall be done on that day that "outrages" the feelings of believers. They do not say nowadays that you must go to church, but they do say that you must do nothing on that day that hurts their feelings. It is exactly the same with Sunday concerts, Sunday excursions, and Sunday picture shows. No one should be allowed to say or do anything that displeases the Christian. He lives under the stupid delusion that the modern State is a Christian society that must be controlled in strict accordance with what he calls Christian principles. He does not always say this in so many words, but the idea is there all the same. He does not realise that the only rational basis for the modern State is to ignore these sectarian differences and deal with people on the basis of a common social life. He forgets, in short, that there are others.

In this matter, the Christian suffers from a very bad heredity. He has had it all his own way for so long, that he naturally finds it difficult to realise any radical change in the situation. He is in the position of a spoilt child who has never known what it is to have a wish refused, and who has seen the whole household arranged to suit his whims. The average Christian is not living in the modern State at all. Mentally, he is still living in the Middle Ages, when society was deliberately organised, so far as was possible, with reference to the maintenance of Christian doctrine, however much the doctrines might change from time to time. He simply cannot understand that society is, with increasing rapidity, freeing itself from the controlling influence of religious ideas. He not only continues to discuss social movements from the point of view of whether they hinder or promote the dissemination of religious beliefs, but he expects others generally to take up the same attitude. The discovery by an infant of its own toes, in all probability, initiates a very profound psychological revolution. But it is a trifling affair compared with the one that will be worked when Christians genuinely appreciate the existence in the State of others besides themselves.

The need for this revolution is shown very curiously, but very plainly, in the course of a recent article in the *Inquirer* on the Blasphemy Laws. The *Inquirer* has on several occasions spoken in favor of the repeal of these laws, but nearly always as though the decisive consideration was a religious one. In the present article, after expressing its dislike of the Blasphemy Laws, it points to the "injury which they do to the cause of religion," regrets that the agitation should be left largely in the hands of free-lances and Freethinkers," and asserts, "There is nothing in the least hostile to Christianity in the movement for the repeal, and it will be unfortunate if the impression is created in the public mind that what is demanded is greater liberty to attack the faith of other people in blunt and disagreeable language."

These strike one as rather poor reasons for supporting an excellent cause, and though doubtless they will appeal with some force to religious people, the strength of their appeal is derived from the inability of Christians to recognise the legitimate claims of non-Christians. Is it really a vital question whether the operation of the Blasphemy Laws injure religion or not? Would the *Inquirer* support prosecutions for blasphemy if they helped religion? Once upon a time, they unquestionably did this. In a society where religious belief is general and uniform, it can hardly be doubted that the suppression of anti-religious opinion helps to preserve and perpetuate religion. Persecution can accomplish its end if it can be made effective enough. It may work greater evil in other directions, but it can do, and has done, time after time, all that it aimed at doing. Assuming, then, that all attacks on Christian belief could be crushed out by persecution, would the *Inquirer* support it? If it would not, does it matter whether these laws injure religion or not? It is quite sufficient that they are unjust, that even though they benefit religion they strike at the higher interests of the whole of society. And their

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removal is demanded on the ground that in the modern State they are inevitably unjust and fundamentally vicious.

Why should it be unfortunate if the public—the Christian public, of course—get the impression that the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws will mean greater liberty in attacking religion, even in "blunt and disagreeable language"? It is quite a matter of taste whether language *is* disagreeable; and *blunt* speech is anything but a vice. Why should the faith of the Christian not be as open to attack as one's opinion concerning vaccination or the land laws? If the Christian will only awaken to the fact of others being in the world, he will realise that these others have the same right to attack him that he has to attack them. The demand of any believer that laws such as the Blasphemy Laws shall be maintained because their removal would make attacks on religion easier is a piece of sheer impertinence. If religion is attacked, it must depend for defence upon the weapons that every threatened opinion has to depend upon. But non-Christians do not now exist in virtue of the gracious kindness of Christians, and they decline to be muzzled in order to gratify the egotism and cowardice of believers.

To be quite frank, Freethinkers do want greater liberty to attack religious opinion—not merely legal liberty, but social liberty. What is the use of liberty if it does not include the right to attack—within limits recognised by all and *imposed upon all*—anything that we consider untrue or dangerous? Truth is always attacking. Justice is always attacking. There is no good done in the world without attack. And we object to special limitations being imposed upon Freethinkers when they choose to attack religion. We object to the policeman being turned into a theological expert, or a judge in first instance, as to what constitutes profane or blasphemous language. When the Catholic Church punished people for blasphemy, it had at least the dignity and sense to bring the offender before a court of ecclesiastics who might be considered experts on the subject. If the charge was damnable, the procedure was dignified. But it never condescended to the ridiculous measure of calling in the watchman or the man-at-arms to inquire whether his chaste ears had been affronted by the language used. Why, if Christians were only moderately endowed with a sense of humor, the Blasphemy Laws would not need repealing—they would be laughed out of existence.

What the Christian must be brought to realise is that we are not living in the thirteenth, or even in the seventeenth, century. We are in the twentieth century, and the conscious basis of the State is no longer what it was in the Middle Ages. Society is no longer made up of believers, and no one expects that it ever will be made up of believers. The existence of all sorts of opinion is not merely regarded as inevitable; it is accepted as something that is beneficial to the State. Uniformity of religious belief is as impossible in modern society as it is undesirable; and by mere social growth the position of religion has changed from one of paramount importance to a matter of purely private opinion. As an opinion, it can lay no greater claim to special treatment than opinion in general. If attacked, it must defend itself as it best can; but it is justified neither in resenting attack nor in calling in the aid of the policeman to repel it.

There are others. That is the immediate lesson for the Christian to learn. The modern State is not Christian. It is not based upon Christianity; it does not aim at the realisation of Christian ideals. The Christian is a member of the State. So is the Jew, so is the Mohammedan, so is the Atheist, so are scores of others. The Christian is no longer cock of the roost. He is but one of many. It may be disturbing to his egotism to face the fact; but face it he must, sooner or later. And when he does face it, if he does not become a better Christian in consequence, he will at least be a better man and a more profitable citizen.

C. COHEN.

Good Friday.

BOTH historically and mythologically Friday is an eminently interesting day. The Scandinavians regarded it as the luckiest day of the week. Such it turned out to be on six of the greatest occasions in the life of the illustrious discoverer, Columbus, the most wonderful of which was the discovery of the American continent on Friday, June 18, 1494. It was on a Friday that the famous battle of Bunker's Hill was fought; and it was on a Friday that John Adams made the motion that the United States were and ought to be independent. It was on a Friday that the *Great Eastern* sailed from Valencia, and it was on a Friday that she landed in safety with the cable at Heart's Content, Newfoundland.

It was on a Friday, mythology tells us, that Adam was created; on a Friday that, alas, he partook of the forbidden fruit, thereby bringing "death into the world, and all our woe, with loss of Eden"; and it was on a Friday that he died. Friday is a mythological term, signifying the day consecrated to the goddess Freya, or Frigga, a Scandinavian divinity of the character of the Roman Venus. Frigga was the wife of Odin, and the mother of Balder and other gods. She was worshiped as the goddess of fruitfulness and sexual love. Consequently her day was looked upon as a lucky one. But the moment we come to Christian mythology Friday becomes an unlucky day. In the Catholic Church, the Greek Church, and the Anglican Church it is a day of abstinence and mourning, in memory of the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth. It used to be the day commonly selected for the execution of criminals, and was in consequence often called "the hangman's day."

> "But once on a Friday ('tis ever they say)
> A day when misfortune is aptest to fall."

A man is styled "Friday-faced" because he is dejected and melancholy. Because Jesus is believed to have suffered a violent death on a Friday, every Friday is to be devoted more or less to fasting and lugubrious meditation.

It naturally follows, therefore, that Good Friday is pre-eminently a day of profound and universal grief. The Anglo-Saxons and Danes called it Long or Great Friday, and we read that "housel [eucharist] ought not to be hallowed on Long Friday, because Christ suffered for us on that day." From the fourth century the prohibition of communion became common. For a time it was customary in Spain to close the churches altogether as a sign of mourning; but in the seventh century the prohibition was condemned by the Council of Toledo. The Catholic Church has always insisted upon a specially rigorous fast on Good Friday. During the celebrations everything is draped in black, the officiating clergy not excepted. Even in Lutheran churches black is the universal color. The Church of England has a three hours' continuous service, during which the so-called "last seven words" are read and commented upon; and a tolerant, compassionate spirit seems to prevail. In one of the Collects this remarkable petition occurs:—

> "Have mercy upon all Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Heretics, and take from them all ignorance, hardness of heart, and contempt of thy Word; and so fetch them home, blessed Lord, to thy flock, that they may be saved among the remnant of the true Israelites, and be made one fold under one shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end."

O the cruel irony and mockery of it all! In one form or another that petition has been going up to a deaf and silent heaven for many long centuries, and yet Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Heretics are as far from conversion to-day as ever, if not much farther.

This is the day of the suffering Savior of the world. All the week he has been slowly and wearily treading the Sorrowful Way, and to-day it has landed him upon the cross of shame, and his suffering is so extreme that it drives him to the heartbreaking con-

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clusion that his Father in heaven has utterly forsaken him. Why was all this cruel suffering inflicted upon him who never did any wrong? Why did the Father desert the Son with whom he was declared to be always well pleased? It all happened to him, we are confidently assured by both Bible and Church, because he represented us; because, though he knew no sin, he was yet made to be sin for us; in other words, because he was earning, through obedience and suffering that cost him his life, the right and the power to be the Redeemer of a lost and ruined world. Well, what proof is there that the colossal sum-total of tragic suffering was accepted by Heaven as an adequate propitiation for the sins of the whole world, or as the supreme pledge of the redemption of humanity? The certain fact of his resurrection some thirty-five hours later, answers Paul. He was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. i. 4).

Now, the doctrine of the Cross is fully before us. Let us look at it from several points of view. In the first place, although the story of crucifixion is very dramatically told, the Gospels cannot be pronounced to be perfect works of art. They represent Jesus as solemnly foretelling, in clearest language, and repeatedly for many months, the exact nature of the approaching end, which was not going to be an end, but only a new beginning, merely the gate into a larger and infinitely more efficacious and glorious ministry. And yet when the end did come the disciples are described as being in a state of the utmost despair, as if they had never heard their Master's confident prediction of his speedy resurrection. This is one evidence that the Gospels are not historical documents. According to one account they all forsook him and fled in his hour of direst need, following the example of his Father. In the second place, if the Church verily believes her own doctrine of the Cross, what canting hypocrisy it is, on her part, to mourn on Good Friday. If it became God the Father, "for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings," why should the sons who are being brought unto glory hang down their heads and weep on this the greatest and grandest day in all history? Is it not an unmistakable sign that the Church does not truly believe her own doctrine? Thirdly, if the doctrine of the Cross is true, how can you account for the incontestable fact that the alleged Spirit of the Cross has completely failed to win a dominant position in the so-called Christian world? Europe is governed to-day, not by the spirit of love, but by stern physical force. We sometimes hear London boasted of as the most thoroughly Christian city in the world, but London is kept in order from day to day, not by the love of God, "for whom are all things, and by whom are all things," but by the police, who never leave our streets, night or day, and who never venture out on duty without weapons of defence and attack. The same thing is true of Edinburgh, which is frequently spoken of as the city of churches. This is the rule throughout Christian England, to which there is not even one exception. What brazen mockery it must be, then, to claim Jesus Christ as "our Lord, who ever liveth and reigneth" with the Father and the Holy Spirit, "one God, world without end."

Is it not a reasonable, necessary, even inevitable, inference from the existing conditions of life in Christendom that Good Friday and Easter Sunday are of a purely mythological character, and that Christianity, resting upon the Incarnation, the Cross, and the Resurrection, is as mythological as any Pagan cult it ever succeeded in forcibly crushing out of existence? Every return of the sun, every fresh advent of Spring, is a beautiful and inspiriting spectacle, and as we witness it year after year we do well to feel joyous and jubilant; but the idea that individual and social salvation can come by mystic union with a dying and resurrected Savior-God is so visionary, so chimerical, and so fantastic that one cannot but be amazed at its survival in its Christian form. It is highly amusing to read present-day discourses upon "The Triumphs of the Cross" when the only things visible to the eye of reason are "The Glaring Failures of the Cross." It is perfectly true that Christianity did succeed in establishing itself in Europe; but its success, its so-called triumph, was due to the fact that the secular power was on its side and gave it the free use of its sword. The triumphs of the Cross have always been the triumphs of physical force. It has never reconstructed social life. It has ever winked at, sometimes even formally encouraged, injustice, the inequality of the sexes, the sovereignty of wealth at the expense of the poor, and class divisions and antagonisms. The truth of that statement is abundantly proved by the very fact that such social wrongs exist at this moment. It is well known that Charlemagne was a great Christian Emperor who flourished some four centuries after Christianity had become the State religion; but the administration of justice in his reign was a horrible travesty of justice. The plaintiff and defendant, in each case, were requested to cross their arms upon their breasts, and the verdict went to him who could hold out the longest. Charlemagne was a great conqueror, who gave the conquered the altogether delightful choice of either becoming Christians or being put to death. To those who read history dispassionately and impartially the establishment of the "Holy Roman Empire" under this monarch was one of the darkest deeds ever perpetrated, for it enabled Church and State to play into each other's hand in the most wicked manner imaginable.

Good Friday thus stands condemned as the date on which there came into being, according to the theologians, a new religion in which was revealed the infinite love of a heavenly Father, but which in in its influence upon the world engendered suspicion, jealousy, and hatred, and has caused more bitter strifes and brutal wars than all other agencies put together, but which at last, we rejoice to know, is gradually taking its departure.

J. T. LLOYD.

Organisms Antagonistic to Health.—II.

(*Concluded from p. 221.*)

THE general conditions that govern the relationship of bacteria to diphtheria are substantially those that apply to all other diseases of bacterial origin. The disease germs invade the body, reproduce themselves, and evolve toxins. Anti-toxins and other opposing substances battle with the toxins, and the patient is restored to health. So far, however, in very few instances have disease-controlling substances of outside origin been discovered which may be injected into the tissues for the prevention or cure of human ailments.

All known anti-bacterial products are specific. That is to say, the anti-toxin of diphtheria, for example, has no preventive or remedial effect on any other disease. Animals into whose bodies the poisons of tetanus, or, as it is commonly termed, lockjaw, have been injected, manufacture the anti-toxin of tetanus and no other.

The problem of immunity to disease is a very instructive one. Some subjects never contract certain diseases however frequently they may be exposed to infection; and it is only in rare instances that we meet with patients suffering a second time from the same disease. Again, grown people seldom contract those complaints that commonly affect children. This absence of susceptibility to disease is what is meant by immunity. And this phenomenon may be usefully considered under two heads—that which is natural and that which is acquired.

Micro-organisms of one kind or another appear to be present in every human or other animal body. Natural immunity to disease, however, is much more

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general than susceptibility. The reason is not far to seek. Unless the invading germs discover a favorable environment, they fail to develop their malign powers. There is abundant evidence for the view that bacteria generate disease in a small percentage only of the individuals they attack. Proof positive exists that the germs of pneumonia and other maladies are to be found in the bodies of those who betray no signs of disease. Several ascertained causes account for this. Pathogenic germs are being constantly devoured by the white cells of the lymph and blood; soluble substances present in the blood oppose themselves to bacterial injury; antiseptic body conditions check baterial growth; the poisonous products of bacteria are rendered impotent for ill by the anti-toxins which the cells of the healthy animal body secrete. The part performed by these four valuable physiological processes varies widely with different individuals. Broadly considered, they all reach their highest state of efficiency when our minds and bodies are in a thoroughly healthy state. Conversely, they are least efficient when the mental and physical powers are depressed. Physicians testify to this in the case of many maladies. In dealing with the baneful tubercular diseases, it is regarded as of the utmost importance to aim at the restoration of the general well-being of the body if tuberculosis is to be cured or prevented.

But where ideal physiological conditions are lacking, a state of affairs which commonly exists, protective inoculation has proved extremely serviceable. The great Pasteur discovered that the toxins of cattle anthrax and chicken cholera, when they are developed in pure cultures in test tubes, tend to become weaker as the cultures grow older. Other means have since been devised by science through which it is possible to lessen the virulence of bacterial toxins. Prolonged investigations have proved that if weak toxins are first injected into the system, there is merely a mild attack of the malady. Then if toxins of steadily increasing strength are successively introduced into the animal body, the organism becomes more and more immune to the disease, until it is ultimately invulnerable to all further attack.

There is every prospect of the thoroughly successful application of the above principle to typhoid in the near future. The cholera so fatal to swine and the distemper so mortal to dogs, are diseases which are being treated by the same process, and let us hope that in the end much valuable food will be saved, and thousands of our faithful and intelligent canine companions will be spared a premature death.

It is of some interest to know that a few simple precautions may avert the unspeakable woes to which disease germs so frequently give rise. In the greater number of instances the bacteria enter the alimentary canal with food and water, they find their way into the breathing organs, are introduced into the blood through insect punctures, or secure an opening into wounds.

Asiatic cholera and typhoid fever are intestinal disorders generated by germs which are spread by excrement. Insect activity, aided by ill-regulated drainage, cause the contamination of nutritious matters, such as milk, fruits and vegetables, and oysters. Moreover, that indispensable necessity to health and cleanliness—drinking-water—is liable in such circumstances to constant contamination. Where these diseases prevail, every drop of water should be boiled, and all foods, including fruits and salads, should be cooked. The menacing powers of the dingy milk vessels are by no means inconsiderable.

Turning to the risk of infection through the organs of respiration, we find that tubercular affections are salient examples of these. Tubercle bacilli enter the lungs in many ways, and anything that encourages the dirty habit of indiscriminate spitting, slobbering, the fly pest, impure air, doubtful milk, and even the insane passion for draughty apartments is highly favorable to the dissemination of this infernal disease—a disease which has affected and proved fatal to some of the brightest intellects of the human race.

The natural healthy healing of wounds is absolutely dependent upon the absence of bacteria or the presence of some powerful anti-toxin. Any serious cut demands medical attention, and this, above all, in the case of those whose general health is in any way undermined. The use of surgically clean bandages and instruments is an all-essential condition if the very serious danger of lockjaw or septicæmia (blood-poisoning) is to be avoided. The inflammation of any wound, great or small, is a certain sign of bacterial activity.

Malaria is a disease of animal origin, which, in its worst forms, has long been one of the greatest scourges to mankind. Many valuable territories of wide extent have remained outside the pale of civilisation owing to its death-dealing powers. Malaria remained a practical mystery until the early 'eighties, when a protozoan parasite was detected in red blood corpuscles. From the earliest times malaria had been universally attributed to the poisonous vapors or miasma which haunted swamps and marshes. The word "malaria" itself means "bad air." In 1897, however, a British army officer, the now world-famous Sir Ronald Ross—an excellent Freethinker, by the way—demonstrated that the germs of malaria develop in the stomachs of mosquitoes which have absorbed the blood of malarial fever patients. In the following year, other scientists proved that mosquitoes, which suck the blood of diseased subjects, transmit the malarial parasites in drawing the blood of persons free from the malady. It has since been positively proved that the anopheles mosquito is the carrier of malaria, and this has led to a crusade of extermination against these offending insects.

Another protozoan disease is that horrible African disorder, the well-known sleeping-sickness, which has proved fatal to more than half-a-million natives of the Congo during the past dozen years. Sleeping sickness is caused by—

> "a parasitic protozoan which is injected into the human blood-plasma by the bite of a peculiar African fly. The parasite swims freely in in blood-plasma. Many experts on parasitic diseases are now engaged in studying the sleeping-sickness; but so far no satisfactory remedy has been discovered. It is spreading rapidly, and has become one of the greatest problems in Africa."

Other derangements, the protozoan genesis of which, although practically certain, so far lack conclusive proof, are yellow fever, scarlet fever, hydrophobia, and smallpox. In the case of yellow fever, however, it has been demonstrated that one of the various mosquitoes is concerned with the transmission of the undiscovered disease germ. The mosquito has, in consequence, been condemned, and the war of extermination waged against it has very materially minimised the death-rate from yellow fever both in Cuba and Panama.

The ubiquitous "harmless" house fly is a notorious disseminator of disease. It enters into every nook and cranny, and nothing is sacred to it. The insect is as partial to the refuse-heap as to the sugar-box, and wherever it wanders it carries the seeds of disease and death. Bacteriological science has shown the imperative need of a war to the point of extinction against the noxious creature. Experiment proves that if a fly is made to move across a sterile gelatin plate, it leaves along its line of march innumerable bacteria which it has gathered during its previous visit to the dunghill or other putrefying mass:—

> "Now, if a fly walks on sewage containing germs of typhoid or of other intestinal diseases, or on sputum from a tuberculous patient, and later on walks on food or on dishes ready to be used for food or drinking-water, it may leave in its tracks dangerous bacteria, which may be taken into the body with the food or water, and then cause disease. It is obvious that in this way a single house fly may be a very dangerous animal."*

* Bigelow, *Introduction to Biology*, p. 285.

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The importance of sanitary dustbins, good drainage, and the absence of decomposing substances of all kinds in the vicinity of human habitations cannot be too urgently insisted on. The removal of the favorite breeding-place of flies is of as much consequence to us, as the destruction of mosquito-breeding spots has been to areas formerly decimated by tropical diseases.

And before leaving this filth-distributing and disease-creating insect, it will be well to remark that it is now definitely known that the biting stable fly is guilty of transmitting the germs of infantile paralysis.

Possibly the most disgusting of all known parasites is the tapeworm. All these loathsome creatures, and very many species are known to science, take up their abode in the alimentary canal of man and other animals. Destitute of mouth or digestive organs, they absorb through their integument the digested food of the organism on which they prey. The tapeworm's body is ribbon-like in form, is divided into segments, and narrows towards the head, which is rounded and provided with hooks and suckers. These last appendages enable the parasite to cling securely to the lining of the intestine.

Each of the larger posterior segments—those nearer the rectum of the animal host—has a complete bi-sexual reproductive system. After each of these reproductive segments has undergone the process of self-fertilisation, the segments which lie nearest the orifice of the animal they inhabit become swollen with ripe eggs. The mature segments now separate from the parent body, and are discharged with the excrement of their host. As the old segments drop off and are carried away, new ones are being formed. In the case of the human tapeworm, should the ripe segment happen to alight on herbage cropped by cattle, or infest the food of pigs, it secures an easy entrance into their stomachs, the digestive juices of which dissolve its outer covering and liberate the embryo tapeworm. Being now at liberty, it bores its way into the flesh of these animals and becomes encysted.

If underdone pork or half-raw beef be eaten by man, there is thus a risk of the encysted bladderworm attaching itself to the intestine, and there developing into an adult tapeworm. The most terrible of the roundworms is the trichina, and if pork infested with this parasite is used as food, the dangers are very serious indeed. In a single German city in 1884, the flesh of one pig infected 364 people, of whom 57 died within a month.

The foregoing description of the life-cycle of tapeworms affecting man is equally true of tapeworms in general. Two hosts are necessary, one for the adult tapeworm and one for the succeeding bladderworm stage. The early, or bladderworm, period of the tapeworm of gulls is passed in earthworms; that of cats in rats and mice. There is a large human tapeworm in Asia which goes through its first stage in the bodies of certain fishes.

The dog is a great sufferer from tapeworms, and one of the commonest of these pests (Tænia cœnurus) infests the intestines of the animal in its mature stage. The embryonic form of this parasite has been found in the brain of the sheep, occasionally in that of cattle, and more rarely in that of the horse. Another parasite passes its cystic stage in the bodies of hares and rabbits, which naturally form part of the food of the dog, and this tapeworm reaches maturity in that animal's intestines. As in the cases instanced above, the segments of the worm are expelled with the fæces, and the eggs they contain fall on the herbage, which is eaten by the rabbits and hares. But probably the most remarkable parasitic biography is that of a small, but long cucumber-shaped, tapeworm, the segments of which, when ripe, escape from the dog's intestines and scatter their ova upon the animal's skin. The eggs are there eaten by the dog louse or the dog flea, in whose bodies the ova are hatched and develop into cysts. The fleas and lice irritate the dog, who, in hunting for them with tongue and teeth, is apt to swallow some of them. The eggs in their bodies are then hatched in the dog's interior, and soon reach the mature form. So that we see that the wants of the tapeworms are better provided for than the fall of the sparrows.

T. F. PALMER.

Omar Khayyam.

"Golden Eastern lay
Than which I know no version done
In English more divinely well,
A planet equal to the sun
Which cast it, that large infidel,
Your Omar." —TENNYSON.

THAT large Infidel!

An advertisement of the Young People's League connected with St. James's Congregational Church, Newcastle, announcing "An Evening with Omar Khayyam," with the additional attraction of a song cycle, "In a Persian Garden"—a selection of the quatrains to be rendered by a quartette—was sufficiently alluring to tempt me into the religious atmosphere of a church meeting. I was curious also to see how the philosophy of old Omar would be received in such a quarter, and how it would be treated by a Christian speaker. The reflections of the Persian poet on life and destiny, so utterly at variance with Christian thought and tradition, if presented in all their naked significance, would surely shock the religious susceptibilities of even a Congregational audience. Or so I thought. But one never knows. The old Presbyterian church of my childhood was recently the scene of an amateur theatrical performance—notwithstanding that the Westminster Confession forbids stage-plays as a breach of the seventh commandment, a sin in the same category as adultery. Could it be that these Congregationalists, also forsaking their one-time belief in heaven, were going to give god-speed to the Caravan starting for the Dawn of Nothing?

The evening's program was arranged by a Mr. Arthur Lambert, well known in local musical circles, and a member of the said church. In his introductory lecture, before the appearance of the quartette, Mr. Lambert said it would be his purpose, the better to enable them to appreciate the music that was to follow, to try and create something of an Oriental atmosphere. To that end he had been drinking black coffee and smoking Turkish cigarettes all the day. And everything seemed favorable to the lecturer's object: the fine commanding presence of the speaker, a good audience, a splendid lecture-hall, a desirable platform arrangement, and a subject worthy of the occasion. But somehow the Oriental atmosphere was not forthcoming. The few bald facts connected with the poet's life and Fitzgerald's popular translation of the Rubaiyat which he presented, failed to conjure up the faintest trace of an Eastern environment. Indeed, it was not long before one realised that the philosophy of Omar Khayyam was beyond the speaker's mental grasp. Omar's verses, he said, had a peculiar fascination for him; but it was apparent that it was not the sentiments or ideas of the poem that charmed him; it seemed rather that fatal kind of fascination produced on the mind by the repetition of phrases like "Punch, brothers, Punch." And when the speaker rather pityingly apologised for the heresies of Omar, by declaring that if the Persian's search for God was unavailing, the search itself was to his credit, inasmuch that many people at the present day never even troubled to seek for him, it was evident that his point of view was a serious hindrance to his understanding of the old Pagan. The Christian apologist is always assuming that every philosopher in the world is in search of the little tribal Deity of the Jews, whom he has been graciously pleased to adopt as his own pet idol. He is unable to realise that a thinking person may meditate on the deeper things of life without reference to his theistic beliefs; and it is this limitation which prevents him from comprehending a wider outlook than his own.

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Perhaps the most objectionable feature of the address was the statement that it was permissible for each individual to read into the text his own particular views, no matter how much at variance, apparently, they might be with its obvious meaning. This ingenious method of interpretation might, indeed, cause some surprise, if we did not know that it is the usual Christian method of explaining away views and opinions with which they disagree. A French translator of the Rubaiyat, Mons. Nicholas, in order to hide the pronounced irreligious opinions of Omar, substituted for the words "wine" and "winebearer," the terms "Dieu" and "La Divinity"; although he exposed his own verbal jugglery by stating, in his notes, that whatever be the nature of the wine that Hafis drank and sang of, it was the veritable juice of the grape that Omar used. It was a strange method of exegesis that could extract a divine meaning from the following:—

> "Ah! take heed to stay me with the wine cup, and make this amber face like a ruby. Wash me when I die with wine, and out of the wood of the vine make the planks of my coffin."

As a friend of mine very neatly puts it, in his booklet, *Omar, the Tentmaker*: "It was a prodigious stretch of the imagination that drew a theological inference from *that* quatrain."

A Mrs. Cadell, too, an Englishwoman, attempted to revise the Rubaiyat on the plea that it was "too unbelieving." In the preface to her booklet she says: "Omar was a person of varying moods, strong feelings, and remarkable boldness; but he had some sort of belief at bottom"—meaning that he had some sort of belief in a Deity or the supernatural. In one quatrain she makes Omar say:—

> "Oh! Khayyam, this thy body is a tent.
> Death, the tent pitcher, strikes this tent of thine
> For life's next stage, whence thy soul hence must roam."

And thus the words of this "large infidel," by Mrs. Cadell and other Christian pietists, are twisted and distorted, interpreted, translated, and explained, to mean anything or everything but what the text plainly indicates. Showing that whatever virtues the Christian religion may have emphasised, intellectual honesty is not one of them. One has only to put some of Omar's verses side by side with Christian teaching to see how utterly irreconcilable the two are. Take, for instance, the believing suppliant looking up into the heavens and crying,

> "Our Father who art in Heaven.....
> Give ——,"

and then listen to old Omar's reply to all such futile prayer:—

> "that inverted Bowl we call the sky,
> Whereunder crawling coop't we live and die,
> Lift not thy hands to *It* for help—for It
> Rolls impotently on as Thou or I."

Again, Christian saints and sages have invented for us pictures of the felicities of heaven and of the tortures of the damned in hell; they have taught us how to make the best of both worlds; they have essayed to unravel the knots of human death and fate, and professed to possess the key to futurity and be able to pierce the Veil of the Hereafter. Omar summarily dismisses all such pretensions:—

> "Why, all the Saints and Sages who discuss'd
> Of the Two worlds so learnedly, are thrust
> Like foolish prophets forth; their words to scorn
> Are scattered, and their mouths are stopt with dust."

Omar's oft-repeated praise of the Wine-cup stamps him as an unbeliever in religion. Not that the Christian has any quarrel with him on that score—or did not have, until the rise of the modern temperance movement. But the Koran strictly forbids alcoholic intemperance, and this prohibition he satirises as follows:—

> "I drink wine and mine enemies from left to right say, 'Do not drink wine, for wine is the foe of religion.' When I heard that wine was the foe of religion, I said, 'By Allah! let me drink the foe's blood, for that is lawful.'"

When we remember that in chapter two of the Koran it is written that all foes to Islam may be slain with impunity, the quality of the sarcasm is seen to be simply superlative. Von Hammer was justified in calling Omar "A Freethinker." But it is more than probable that his lavish praise of wine is purely iconoclastic.

Mr. Lambert, in the early part of his address, illustrated the general ignorance of the Persian poet by the following story. A commercial traveller of literary bent had recently taken two grocers in the neighborhood, who were brothers, out to dinner. In the course of the meal he asked how they liked Omar Khayyam? Said the younger of the two: "I think I like Chianti better." On the way home, the elder took his younger brother severely to task for his display of ignorance. "Whenever you are in any doubt about a subject like that," he said, "you should be careful not to say anything definite so as to give yourself away. Omar Khayyam is not a wine—it's a cheese!"

Which reminds me that the gentleman who seconded the vote of thanks at the end of the meeting must also have been a grocer, as his knowledge of Omar Khayyam was as newly acquired as the pitman's of the Crucifixion. This collier, on the way home from work, met a peddling Jew, whom he very soundly thrashed. "What you do that for?" said the astonished Hebrew. "Well, wasn't it you Jews that killed Jesus Christ?" "My dear fellow, that was two thousand years ago." "Never mind," said the pitman, unabashed, "A'w only heard aboot it yisterday." And so the seconder of the vote of thanks, who professed his ignorance of what the lecturer had called one of the world's poetic gems, only appeared to have heard of old Omar that night for the first time.

Whether this gentleman in particular, or the audience in general, were much the wiser as the result of the meeting respecting the profound philosophy of Omar, may reasonably be doubted. A Christian apologist makes but a poor expositor of the Rubaiyat. As we left the meeting, the lady who accompanied me said she thought an evening with Omar Khayyam was much better spent "beneath the Bough" or at the fireside. And I thought so too.

JOSEPH BRYCE.

Acid Drops.

According to the orthodox creed, Easter is the anniversary of a judicial murder. Judging by all the circumstances surrounding it, it might be the anniversary of a wedding. Excursions by road, river, and rail are advertised wholesale. The common salutation of friends is, "Going away for Easter?" Given fine weather, the beauty spots around London will be crowded with thousands of holiday-makers solely bent on enjoying themselves. Hardly one in the whole lot will think of the holiday as in any way connected with the death of the Son of God for the sake of their sins. Sympathetic souls, if they happen to hear anyone piling on the agony about the agony and death of "our Lord," may, like the old lady in the story, reflect that it happened a long while ago, and hope that it is not true. But the vast majority won't care a brass button whether it is true or not. Easter is a holiday for them, and nothing else matters.

Easter is not the anniversary of an historic event in the way that June 18 is the anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo. It is a piece of very ancient world-wide mythology and was in existence before Jesus was ever heard of. Its date is avowedly fixed by the spring equinox, and this was a period of rejoicing among all the nations of the ancient world. Attis, Adonis, Osiris, Dionysus, all had, like Jesus, their death and resurrection symbolised at the spring festival. Easter has nothing whatever to do with the resurrection of a man, but it has a deal to do with the nature festival celebrating the resurrection of nature after the apparent death of winter. All that the Christian Church did here was to take the old myth and attach it to a supposed historical personage. Take Easter for what the Churches say it is, and an educated man is either disgusted or amused. Take it for what we know it to be, and we can appreciate its significance to primitive peoples, and still utilise it as a piece of poetic imagery now that its mythological significance has passed away.

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The Christian Endeavor Union of Washington, U.S.A., has founded a society for the prevention of Easter desecration. It is objected that Americans utilise the "sacred season" as an occasion for displaying fashionable dress. The members of the new society pledge themselves not to wear any new clothes from Palm Sunday until after Easter. This is self-sacrifice beyond question. But why not revive the good old religious practice of doing without clothes altogether; or, at least, going without a wash?

The Bishop of London's Bill, introduced in the House of Lords last week, is pure Sabbatarianism, with the usual addition of personal tyranny that accompanies such measures. It proposes not only to still further limit the hours during which publichouses are to be opened on Sunday, but provides that the licensing justices may attach any conditions they see fit to the renewal of a licence. It also gives these same justices the power to issue a "general order" closing all the publichouses in a district during the whole of Sunday. No one but a religious "reformer" or a fool would dream of favoring proposals of this kind. His idea of reform is invariably that of forcing other people to act so as to please *him*. So far as we are concerned, the publichouses might be closed altogether without causing us any personal discomfort; but at present selling drink is a legitimate business, and there is no justification for placing them at the mercy of religious bigotry. If our legislators were stupid enough to make this Bill law, it would mean another sacrifice of personal liberty to the tyrannical spirit of Sabbatarianism.

The combined stupidity and injustice of the Blasphemy Laws could not be better exhibited than is done, quite unconsciously, in a leaflet that has been written and is being circulated in favor of their retention. We are told that the law only interferes in a case of blasphemy "in order to prevent a disturbance of the peace," because "blasphemous preaching and writing has led, and may lead, to dangerous outbreaks of fanaticism." So the real trouble is, evidently, not the "blasphemer," but fanatical people who are neither level-headed enough nor civilised enough to hear their opinions assailed. One would think that the real cure for this state of things would be to take hold of these ignorant and fanatical people and teach them better manners. The writer of the leaflet evidently thinks they deserve special protection, if not patronage. His defence of the laws is really an attack on religious believers. The sum of his argument is this: If religious people were all cool and level-headed there would be no need for Blasphemy Laws. But, he says, we are not that. We are hot-headed, we easily become brutal, we lose our tempers, we easily become fanatical, and unless the State stops people "blaspheming" we are bound to misbehave ourselves. Usually we aim at suppressing the lower in the interests of the higher. Here the only argument found in favor of the Blasphemy Laws involves the suppression of the higher in the interest of the lower. The "blasphemer" must be suppressed in order that the ignorant fanatic may flourish. It is not we who say this. It is the Christians themselves who say so.

The cocksureness of the religious mind is becoming modified. The *Guardian* says, "We greatly doubt whether the collective mind of our race would desire for itself a perpetuity of life on this planet, except under conditions widely different from any that are likely to obtain." What of the credo, "I believe in the resurrection of the body"?

We are pleased to find the *Baptist Times* approving the advice of an American writer who warns us that there has been too much dwelling of late on vice, and that no nation is ever made better or healthier by such means. This is exactly what we have pointed out when dealing with writers like Mr. Harold Begbie, preachers like Rev. F. B. Meyer, and organisations like the Salvation Army. These people and parties have of late gone in for a perfect carnival of exaggeration and deliberate lying concerning the amount of vice in our midst. They have set thousands of amateurs prowling round in search of vice of one sort or another, who have developed in turn a Munchausen-like aptitude for narrative, and a credulity that would have made Tertullian green with envy. "Educationally," says the *Baptist Times*, "it is a mistake to be always looking at the dark side of life." Of course it is. Life is not *all* dark side, and a healthy vision sees life whole. But it is worth noting that those who have served most powerfully to demoralise the public mind of late have been Christian preachers and writers.

From the New York *Truthseeker* we see that Police-Lieut. Becker, who was recently convicted and sentenced to death for murder and "graft," has spent the time pending his appeal in religious meditation. Becker is a staunch Roman Catholic, and the only event in his life he expresses remorse for is that of remarrying after being divorced. The agent of Becker during his official career, Jack Rose, turned State evidence, and was the principal cause of securing a conviction. Rose is also a very pious person. He has become a preacher, and spends his time on evangelical tours. Now, if only Becker is released eventually, and if he and Rose could join forces and go round the world conducting revival meetings, we feel sure that they would make more—far more—in this way than they ever made out of bribery and assassination. Both have had the finest conceivable preparation for a successful evangelical combination.

"From America, the Chapman-Alexander Mission has descended on Scotland to give the populace religion, and judging by a meeting in Edinburgh they are getting it hot and strong. We knew Mr. Alexander as a singing evangelist some years ago in partnership with Dr. Torrey; Dr. Chapman is newer—and different. 'So help me God,' he exclaimed in one part of his sermon, 'if you, you the keeper of a publichouse—you who are helping to ruin young Scotland worse than the plague of tuberculosis, worse than cancer, are in this audience, so help me God I would fight you to the last drop of blood left in my body. If you continue in it you are worse than a murderer, a murderer, a murderer! You get it, don't you? You are worse than a murderer.' This may demonstrate that Dr. Chapman is teetotal, but it is not convincing evidence that he is sober. Mr. Alexander should prevail upon his brother to cool his throbbing brain under the pump."—*John Bull.*

The minister of the Upminster Congregational Church understands the way to untie the purse-strings of the average Christian. In the *Monthly Calendar* for April he writes that "the more we give to Foreign Missions the more prosperous shall we become at home in every way." That is the right note to strike. Spiritual advancement abroad with material progress at home. The spread of the Gospel with a solid cash dividend. That is what the ordinary Christian likes, and he is never happy till he gets it.

"How was it," asks Rev. R. J. Campbell, "that Christ was able to sweep that whole [Pagan] Pantheon out of existence?" Well, he didn't. That is the plain and complete answer to the query. "Christ" was, indeed, part of the Pantheon. The heaven-born, crucified savior was one of the world's religious figures long before the Christian Church was heard of. Mr. Campbell himself says:—

> "The practice of the Roman Catholic Church to-day..... is exactly that of the pagan world out of which it arose, and has doubtless been copied from it. People went to certain shrines to be healed, and hung up their crutches and other relics of their infirmity as a thanksgiving for recovery. The little niches in the walls and inside the dwelling-houses which used to be occupied by little statues of gods are now replaced by those of saints. The old processions, feast days and fast days, the candles and the incense, even the altar vestments of the priests, have been adopted into the Church. It is not too much to say that the worship of the Madonna in the countries of Southern Europe is a survival of the worship of Isis; as some authorities declare, the Madonna is but Isis renamed."

If this is so, where is the sense of asking how Christ cleared out the Pagan Pantheon? The Christians simply adopted an old business as a going concern, and effected various modifications in view of a larger turnover.

What nonsense some of our religious philosophers do talk! There is no law of progress, declares Dean Inge, because only a proportion of the race really makes progress, and because degeneration is as common in nature as ascent. We do not think anybody ever questioned these rather commonplace observations. All they prove is that there is no *certainty* of progress. That is admitted; but the "law of progress" only means a statement of the conditions under which progress is achieved. And, obviously, these conditions admit of a summarised statement whether progress be an isolated or a universal phenomena, or whether it is permanently cumulative or merely sporadic.

"The quarrel between theology and physical science," says Canon Carnegie, "is almost a thing of the past." We should say *quite* a thing of the past. It takes at least two to make a quarrel, and theology has been so hopelessly beaten here that it no longer pretends to put up a fight. Canon Carnegie goes on to say that "the best theologians and the best scientists have practically agreed to delimit their territories and to exchange their former attitude of

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hostility for one of friendliness, and often of cordial co-operation." We were not aware of the fact. There is only one limit to the region over which science rules or claims the possibility of ruling, and that is the limit fixed by all knowledge, actual and possible. Everything that is known or may be known forms a portion of the scientific domain. What lies beyond this is blank, irretrievable ignorance. Religion is quite welcome to reign over that territory, and science has never questioned its jurisdiction. One only wonders how there can be any co-operation between the two. The fact is that it is too dangerous nowadays for religion to lay claim to special knowledge concerning anything that is made the subject of verification. It tried that game for centuries, and has evidently learned a little wisdom from its decisive defeat.

Canon Carnegie says, "We are inclined nowadays to regard the Cardinals who tried Galileo, and forced him to recant his statement that the sun goes round the earth, as a very arrogant and foolish set of old gentlemen." Personally, we are *not* inclined to regard them as foolish, although they may have been arrogant. They were even wiser in their generation than Canon Carnegie is in his. They were Christians, their business was to uphold Christianity, and they saw, with absolute accuracy of vision, that to admit the teaching of the new astronomy was to take the first step towards the disintegration of Christian doctrines. Subsequent events fully justified their judgment in this direction. True, they were mistaken in thinking they could altogether crush the new knowledge. But they did their best. They were Christian soldiers fighting a forlorn hope, and one really feels a more sincere admiration for these men who fought to the last, and who would admit of no compromise, than for those who, on the approach of the enemy, show an overpowering anxiety to come to terms.

Suppose the Church could have crushed out the new astronomy, as it had crushed out the science of antiquity? Suppose it could have crushed out the teachings of Copernicus, of Galileo, of Newton, of Buffon, of Laplace, of Lyell, of Darwin, would not Christian belief have been sounder and stronger, and unbelief more of a rarity, than is the case to-day? We should still have had the earth as the centre of the systems, we should still have believed in witches, in demoniacal possession, in miracles, in direct answers to prayer. We should be living in a quite Christian world, and our knowledge of nature would have offered no serious obstacle to the reception of Christian doctrines. We should have been very much more ignorant, much more brutal, but we should have been much more Christian. These Cardinals and their kind did their best in a desperate situation. And it ill becomes a Christian preacher, whose chief anxiety is to run with the hare and keep in with the hounds, to call them "a very arrogant and foolish set of old gentlemen." Their real fault was that they were Christians who believed in their creed and in their Church.

Few Christians need to pray to be given a good conceit of themselves. It appears to be part of their nature. Here is the Dean of Durham, Dr. Hensley Henson, calmly remarking that the Christian seems "marked out at this crisis for the rescue of the country," which is rather cool considering the large share Christians have had of getting it into difficulties. Dr. Henson offers two reasons for his belief. One is that the Christian is pledged to self-sacrifice, and is not daunted by the sacrifice of self-interests; the other, that "his religion is a genuine enfranchisement, making him what a Secularist can never be, independent of his circumstances." We do not care what the Christian is pledged to, we only know that there is to be found in any church or chapel in the country as fine a collection of greeds and self-seekings as can be found anywhere. The average Christian talks about sacrifice, and imposes it upon other people. As to the Christian being independent of circumstances, that is just sheer nonsense—the kind of nonsense that constitutes nine-tenths of pulpit talk nowadays. If the country's only hope lies with Christians, the outlook is a poor one indeed. But this assumption that Christians are the only ones that really count is merely a part of Christian egotism and impertinence.

Every Englishman, said Heine, will say something stupid if you talk to him about religion. Heine intended this, not for those whom nature has liberally endowed with folly at their birth, but for those who, in other directions, were blessed with a fair share of common sense. The strange thing is that so many of these act as though their chief object in life was to demonstrate the truth of Heine's observation. Judge Parry, for instance, contributes articles to the *Sunday Chronicle* that are usually marked by good feeling and good sense. But, in the issue for April 5, he brings in Christianity, and straightway what he says reminds one of Heine. Judge Parry is an Englishman; he touches on religion; he says something silly. Heine would have said it could not be otherwise. And we agree with Heine.

Nineteen hundred years ago, says Judge Parry, "a new principle was introduced into the world. It was the principle of unselfishness." Really! One wonders whether Judge Parry seriously believes that unselfishness began two thousand years ago. If he does, and he will turn into one of the excellent libraries that Manchester possesses, and spend an hour or two with any one of the Roman writers—Seneca, or Epictetus, or Aurelius, for instance—he will find how woefully he is mistaken, and how unwise it is to import into a newspaper article the irresponsible chatter of the pulpit. Two thousand years ago, we are told, doing good to others, promoting good-will instead of strife and ill-will, these ideas "as business propositions" were as unknown as railways, telegraphs, or aeroplanes. Well, this is simply not true. They were taught then as they are taught now, and we seriously invite Judge Parry to open his eyes and reflect on the huge war taxes that the whole of *Christian* Europe is groaning under, and also to reflect on the further fact that Old Rome could maintain its rule with an army of 400,000 men, where Christian Europe needs 4,000,000, and is clamoring for more. A vision of to-day, says Judge Parry, would seem to Marcus Aurelius like a "wild fairy tale." Hardly that; more probably a nightmare. And one can imagine the grand old Roman philosopher wondering what all our talk of progress is about if the Europe of to-day is all we have to show for what has been done since the sceptre of Roman rule was broken.

Pious invective is often found in the sporting pages of the lively *Referee*, but "Vanoc" recently made a slip in his theological terminology by saying "If the Cabinet does not destroy the Empire, the All-compassionate Allah will have intervened." "Jehovah" is first favorite in England, and "Allah" a rank outsider.

The Oxford manner has been described as like that of Almighty God addressing a bug, but sometimes under the haughty culture there is something of note. Dr. T. B. Strong, Dean of Christ Church, Oxford, preaching at Southend-on-Sea recently, said:—

> "There was one view of the Bible and one way of teaching it that had become impossible. They could not go to it any longer for information upon the subject of natural science. When they read its history—say the history of the Kings of Israel—they must bring to it the same tests as history of other sorts; and therefore the notion that they could teach people religion by making them read the Bible without note or comment had, in his opinion, disappeared for good. It never was true, and it only seemed to be true because they had never realised the context in which the books of the Bible were written and should be read."

If this sort of thing goes on, Mr. Foote's *Bible Heroes* and *Bible Romances* will be used as Sunday-school prizes.

"Abolish religion and we go back to the stone age," says Mr. Winston Churchill, the American novelist. In spite of Winnie's tears, we are going back.

"It is safe to disregard what is known as the spirit of the age," says Canon Green. Some greener Christians prefer the spirit of the Stone Age.

There is just as much religion in making a good pie as there is in making a prayer, says the Rev. R. L. Jones. Very likely; but there is a deal of difference from the point of view of nourishment.

The *Times* Literary Supplement published a two-column appreciation of the great Italian poet, Giosue Carducci, and referred to him as "the greatest poet alive at the beginning of the twentieth century." Of course, no mention was made of his Freethought opinions. On this subject the *Times* is always "out of joint."

The Southend-on-Sea Town Council have transferred the care of the Borough Cemetery from the Entertainments Committee to that of the Health Committee. An appropriate text for the cemetery gates would be the quotation from the Prayer Book, "There is no health in us."

Religious periodicals still persist in their statement that "popular Freethought is dead." The editors are now trying to ignore a very lively corpse.

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To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £124 6s. 11d. Received since:—"Manchester" (per J. T. Lloyd), 5s.; T. A. Matthews, £1; Juliet and Julian, 7s. 6d.; Josh Roeckel, £1 1s.; Wm. Stevens, £1 1s.; Mancunian, 2s.

ANTI-CANT.—Some good *might* be done by Secularists joining these "brotherhoods," and then insisting on expressing their opinions about religion, but we are not very hopeful of what can be accomplished in that direction. As you say, it would test the genuineness of the talk about "brotherhood." The probability is that they would be made to feel so uncomfortable that they would soon leave again. They would not be directly excluded, they would be quietly squeezed out. We do think, however, that in most organisations Freethinkers too easily permit Christians to air their religious opinions whenever and wherever they please, while maintaining silence about their own convictions. If they would insist on the same right for themselves, they would soon find themselves in a position of advantage and respect.

H. PAIGE.—We noted that one of the jurors in the Starchfield case affirmed, and that his affirmation was taken without trouble. This is usually the case in the higher courts and before responsible judges. It is usually the fussy, irresponsible J.P. or Coroner who makes a bother about permitting a Freethinker to exercise his legal rights. We, personally, agree with you on your comments concerning the futility of capital punishment, and also as to what you say on the question of punishment in general. But our criminal code is a semi-barbaric survival, and reforming ideas progress almost as slowly in legal matters as in the Church.

A. J. MARRIOTT.—Received, but we are arranging for a reply from another quarter, and there is no need for duplication.

H. D. MARSH.—We do not see that it is any special concern of yours where the discussion on which Mr. Moss based his article, *A Three-Cornered Contest*, took place, and we decline to bother him about the matter. The only legitimate concern of readers is whether anything is said that misrepresents the speakers in the discussion. For our own part, we do not care whether the discussion ever took place in fact or not. Imaginary conversations constitute a perfectly legitimate vehicle for the expression of opinions. We were under the impression that everybody was quite aware of this, but your letter shows that we were mistaken.

MANCUNIAN.—Acknowledged as desired. Your communication will appear next week. Mr. Foote, as you will see, is improving in health, but is not yet able to resume work.

CORRESPONDENTS will greatly oblige, and will also facilitate the dispatch of business, if they will mark all letters "Private" that are intended for Mr. Foote and are of a personal nature. Those containing editorial matter may be addressed in the usual manner.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Personal.

I HAVE little to say to my friends amongst my readers except that I am gradually getting my strength back, and that this is one of the most melancholy businesses I know. But I have no doubt I shall get to the end of it before very long, and my pen will (so to speak) long for fresh activity when the hour strikes. Meanwhile I have two duties to perform; one is to keep as quiet as I can,—the other is to thank Mr. Cohen for doing the editorial work of the *Freethinker* in my absence. He is not merely doing a good turn for a friend; he is serving what George Meredith called "the best of causes." For there is only one *Freethinker* in the world. And we have all of us made it what it is.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

Whit-Sunday is now only six weeks ahead, which is the date of the Annual Conference of the National Secular Society. The place of meeting is not yet fixed, but Branches should be preparing, so as to send in good time any resolutions they may have for the Agenda. The Executive of the N. S. S. is keenly alive to the need for a more effective organisation of propaganda throughout the country, but much of what it is able to do in this direction will depend upon the amount of local interest exhibited.

Branches are reminded that all Notices of Motion for the Agenda should reach the Secretary by May 2, so that they may appear in the *Freethinker* a fortnight prior to the meeting. The annual collections, one on behalf of the Benevolent Fund and one on behalf of the General Fund, are also due on the same date.

The April number of the *English Review* opens, as usual, with specimens of poetry. Sometimes they are striking and meritorious, but they cannot always be so, for good poetry is seldom written. This month's batch of verses can hardly be regarded as successful, though there is a touch of originality—or should we not rather say frankness?—in "Lips of My Love" by Katherine Prichard. Mr. Henry Newbolt's prose article on "The Poets and their Friends" is interesting in its way, but not of any special value. We confess to being bored by every fresh instalment of Mr. H. G. Wells's "The World Set Free." "An Ordinary Corpse" by Grant Watson is a gruesome story. When you have finished reading it your consolation is that it can't be true. James Stephens' curiously named "Essay in Cubes" is an extraordinary mixture of sense and nonsense. There are some excellent things in "Some Maxims and Reflections" by the late Professor Churton Collins. Here is a good sample:—

> "'I will give you,' said a certain tutor of my time at Oxford, 'all Theodicy in a nutshell. There is a pond and a duck. The Ancients said the pond was made for the duck; the Moderns say the duck was made for the pond; but the really wise man says there is the pond, and there is the duck.'"

Mr. Harrison's editorial contributions are always good reading. This month's is no exception to the rule.

From the last issue to hand of the Christchurch (N. Z.) *Examiner*, we regret to see that Mr. Collins' health has "completely broken down." We do not know the exact nature of the trouble, but we have a suspicion that the cares attendant to running a Freethought journal—never an easy task—are not unconnected with it. We hope that Mr. Collins will abide by the decision of his medical adviser and give himself the complete rest ordered. It may be the quickest and most profitable way in the end. His many friends in this country will hear of his illness with regret and join with us in wishes for his speedy recovery.

There is hardly any talk more mischievous than that which proceeds by way of asserting the "God-given" supremacy of this nation or that race. It is a gospel of international or inter-racial hatred and tyranny that brings its own nemesis sooner or later. Here, for example, is Major S. L. Murray preaching, in the *Nineteenth Century*, the "God-given" supremacy of the white man over all others, and calling upon the European peoples to combine in order to dominate all others. Above all, the white man is implored to organise so as to keep the yellow man out of Australia. These short-sighted preachers of racial animosity do not realise that their own preaching is a very active force in bringing about international trouble. It is teaching the millions of Japanese and Chinese that the only way to make the white man act fairly to them is by their being strong enough to compel him to act justly. The notion that the population of Australia can for ever bar out the Japanese and the Chinese is a dream of white egotism and greed. The yellow races will only submit to exclusion so long as they cannot prevent it, and they will meanwhile, under the constant irritation of exclusion, serve as a real danger elsewhere. The real "yellow peril" is created by the white man's treatment of people as civilised as himself, but whom he persists in treating as his natural inferiors.

When religious differences come to be and are regarded as mere differences of opinion, it is because the controversy is really decided in the sceptical sense, though people may not like to acknowledge it formally.—"*Liberty, Equality, Fraternity*," *Sir J. Fitzjames Stephen.*

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Louise de la Ramee.

Ouida: A Memoir. By Elizabeth Lee. (T. Fisher Unwin.) 1914.

To those who are passing into middle life the name of Louise de la Ramee, better known as Ouida, will recall a novelist who earned the title of the queen of the circulating libraries. A younger generation may have favorites of its own, but the great mass of English readers grew up under the influence of Ouida's genius, and delighted in each manifestation of her brilliant intellect. Her novels charmed their earlier years, and the freshness of her powers seemed only to furnish them with fresh gratitude every time they were exercised. They may have got to know the tricks of her style and the turn of her mind; but such knowledge served only to heighten the pleasure in a delightful personality that could not be disguised, however it was clothed.

It required extraordinary talent for a young and unknown woman to make a name in the literary arena as a novelist in 1868. At that date many really great writers held the field against all comers. Dickens and Thackeray were at the zenith of their extraordinary reputations. George Eliot, Mrs. Gaskell, Lytton, Lever, Charles Reade, Wilkie Collins, and Charles Kingsley were popular and deserved favorites. Obviously a new and untried writer had to contend against the giants. That Ouida did this successfully shows the fascination of her work.

It was in this year that Ouida captured her public with *Held in Bondage*, and she held her own successfully until the end. A very late work, *The Massarenes*, an able study of a plutocrat, showed all of the old magic. *Under Two Flags*, issued in 1867, is probably her best story, excellent in plot and movement, and containing a charming story of a vivandiere.

Ouida had power, imagination, and more knowledge than many of her rivals, having a keen interest in intellectual and social matters. She had an abiding sympathy with suffering, and was a humanitarian before that pursuit became fashionable. Her gift for epigram was not confined to novels; and, unlike Mr. Chesterton, she always mixed her epigrams with common sense.

A striking personality, she had her little vanities. "You must make much of me, for now George Eliot is gone there is no one else who can write English," she writes. With scornful accent she tells Mrs. Shirley Brooks that she "ought to be listened to even if singing is going on." So proud was she that she tore up cheques sent to her when she was in poverty, and on the edge of want she would entertain with oriental hospitality. She was a friend of Lady Orford, who powdered her hair with flour, and used the kitchen dredger in the process; and Ouida's own unconventionality was worthy of the model.

The most marked trait in Ouida's character was her love of animals. She was an early champion of those dumb slaves for whom Mr. Henry Salt and the Humanitarian League have since done so much. She was attracted to Matthew Arnold by his love of dogs, and her elegiac lines upon him recall his own lines upon "Geist's Grave":—

"Stern law of every mortal lot!
Which man, proud man, finds hard to bear
And builds himself I know not what
Of second life I know not where.
But thou, when struck thine hour to go,
On us, who stood despondent by,
A meek last glance of love did'st throw,
And humbly lay thee down to die.

Thy memory lasts both here and there,
And those shalt live as long as we,
And after that—thou dost not care!
In us was all the world to thee."

Thackeray was fond of dilating upon the power that novelists enjoy of conferring pleasure. He tells how he read Scott, Fenimore Cooper, and Dumas as a boy, and he boasted that the tastes of his youth had not deserted him in manhood. How many hours of pleasure has not Ouida given to her readers? For over forty years she delighted the reading public. All Englishmen knew her books, and their popularity in the Colonies was enormous. In America rival publishers competed which should be first to print them for Transatlantic readers.

Yet it would be a mistake to dwell merely on the amusement that her books provided, or to think of Louise de la Ramee as an idle writer of an empty day. The appeal of her novels may have been melodramatic; but their most censorious critic could not deny that their author had brains. From story-telling Ouida turned easily to intellectual matters. She put forward arresting opinions on Italian politics, on the development of woman, on Socialism, on the defects of society, and on the rights of downtrodden races. On all the movements of her time she formed clear and strong opinions. She denounced militarism with all the wealth of her poetic and voluminous vocabulary. In religious matters Ouida was an outspoken Freethinker, and her picturesque denunciation of the Christian superstition had something of the eloquence of Ingersoll.

Ouida was more than a mere writer, for she fought in the Army of Human Liberation. On the battle-grounds of Freedom the soldiers get many wounds. If Ouida's works exhibit this warfare and this tumult on too many eloquent pages, we judge with the wisdom which tempers justice with sympathy. Her first claim is genius; but we recognise in Louise de la Ramee a woman born of that heroic temperament to which, after life-long recognition of the vanity of vanities, Liberty never grew old, nor Love failed of his loveliness.

MIMNERMUS.

Christian Apologetics.

I.—THE APOSTLE BARNABAS.

SOON after the publication of the first primitive Gospel, and many years before the appearance of the four evangels which are called "canonical," we find a considerable number of Christian writings of an apologetic nature in circulation among the primitive Christians. Some of these were of such an outrageous character that in later times, when many educated Pagans had entered the Christian fold, they were rejected as fabrications, their authorship was ascribed to heretics, and they were called spurious or apocryphal.

Apart from these, however, there were several writings that were received by all Christians as genuine documents, written by men who were said to have been companions of apostles, or to have been taught by apostles. Among the latter are the compositions of five writers who are called "Apostolic Fathers." These are: Barnabas, Hermas, Clement of Rome, Ignatius, and Polycarp. The first, Barnabas, is said to have been Paul's colleague on his first apostolic journey (Acts xiii. 2—xv. 39); the second, Hermas, is said to have been the person named in Rom. xvi. 14; the third, Clement, to have been a companion and fellow-laborer of Paul mentioned in Phil. iv. 8; the fourth, Ignatius, is said to have been appointed bishop of Antioch less than forty years after the crucifixion of Jesus, and to have known and conversed with many of the apostles; the fifth, Polycarp, is said to have been a disciple of the apostle John, and to have been made bishop of Smyrna by apostles. Each of these "apostolic" fathers left writings behind him connected with the Christian religion, most of them containing quotations from the primitive Gospel. These quotations have been carefully examined by our modern Christian apologists, and those that are found to be in almost verbal agreement with similar statements in the canonical Gospels are declared to have been taken from the latter.

I will now briefly notice the so-called "apostolic" writings, with the view, chiefly, of fixing the date and illustrating the character of each. They are adduced by Christian apologists in proof of the apostolic authorship of the canonical Gospels.

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The "Epistle of Barnabas" is found, with the "Shepherd" of Hermas, in the oldest MS. extant—the Sinaitic Codex—the two being placed after the other New Testament books. The Epistle is not addressed to any church, nor to any individual: it bears neither date nor author's name. It is therefore impossible to say with certainty when or by whom it was written. Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 198) is the first who mentions it, and he quotes it as "scripture." Though Clement calls the writer "the apostle Barnabas," the writer himself as good as says he was *not* an apostle. He states, for instance:—

> "I, then, not as your teacher, but *as one of yourselves*, will set forth a few things by which.....ye may be rendered more joyful" (par. 1)—"And this also I further beg of you, as *being one of you*, and loving you individually and collectively" (par. iv.)

The writer of the Epistle was not the Barnabas who is said to have been the Hebrew companion of Paul, nor was he even a Jew. This will be seen from the following extract:—

> "Moreover, I will also tell you concerning the temple, how *the wretched Jews*, wandering in error, trusted not in God himself, but in the temple, as being the house of God.....for through their going to war, it was destroyed, by their enemies; and now they, as the servants of their enemies, shall rebuild it," etc. (par. xvi.).

The allusion here to the Jews having to rebuild their city and temple as servants of the Romans is a clear reference to the building operations under Hadrian. About A.D. 120 that emperor commenced to rebuild Jerusalem, which he named Ælia, and he also caused a temple dedicated to Jupiter Capitolinus to be erected on the site of the old Jewish temple. After the capture of Jerusalem by the Romans (A.D. 70) over 100,000 Jewish prisoners were sold into slavery, and an edict was issued forbidding all Jews to enter the holy city. Hence, when Hadrian commenced rebuilding, it is more than probable that all Jews found in or near Jerusalem were pressed into the service and made to assist as laborers. At any rate, it cannot be shown that the Epistle of Barnabas was written *before* A.D. 120, or even so early. The fact that Barnabas refers to a rebuilding as about to take place shows that if the building of the city had not already commenced, materials for the work—and probably the men also—had arrived there.

Again, no Jew, however much a Christian, would speak of his countrymen as "the *wretched* Jews," nor would glory in the destruction of their city and temple. Moreover, Paul's companion, Barnabas, was a Jew first, before being a Christian (see Gal. ii. 13). Furthermore, Barnabas says (par. xv.): "For which cause *we observe the eighth day* with gladness, in which Jesus rose from the dead." The regular observance of this day by the Church as a sabbath is another mark of the late date of the Epistle: no such observance can be traced to the first century.

With regard to the character of the so-called Epistle of Barnabas, this will best be perceived by giving three or four samples of the writer's teaching; for notwithstanding his disclaimer, it is clearly evident that the composer *was* a primitive Christian teacher.

> (1) "Blessed be our Lord, who has placed in us wisdom and understanding of secret things. For the Scripture says concerning us, while He speaks to the Son, '*Let us make man after our image and after our likeness.*'.....And the Lord said, on beholding the fair creature man, '*Increase and multiply and replenish the earth.*'.....Again, I will show thee how, in respect to us, He has accomplished a second fashioning in these days. The Lord said, '*Behold, I make the last like the first.*' In reference to this, then, the prophet proclaimed, '*Enter ye into the land flowing with milk and honey, and have dominion over it.*' Ye see, therefore, that we have been refashioned; as again He says in another prophet, '*Behold,*' saith the Lord, '*I will take away from them their hearts of stone, and I will put into them hearts of flesh*'" (par. vi.).

I have not omitted a syllable that would add to the lucidity of the foregoing teaching: I have placed the writer's quotations from the Old Testament in italics, in order to make the reasoning—I mean "teaching"—somewhat closer; though I cannot say that I thoroughly understand what he is elucidating. the only point that appears certain is that Barney claims to have been inspired by "the Lord" to correctly interpret the Jewish scriptures.

> (2) "Moreover, when fixed to the cross the Lord had given him to drink vinegar and gall. Hearken how the priests of the people gave previous indication of this. His commandment having been written, the Lord enjoined that whosoever did not keep the fast should be put to death, because He also Himself was to offer in sacrifice for our sins the vessel of the Spirit..... What says he in the Prophets? '*And let them eat of the goat which is offered with fasting for all their sins. And let the priests alone eat the inwards unwashed with vinegar.*' Why so? Because to Me, who am to offer my flesh for the sins of my new people, ye are to give gall with vinegar to drink" (par. vii).

The foregoing exposition is a tissue of falsehoods and a conglomeration of nonsense. No such passages are found in the Old Testament, and no such commands were given to the Jews. The "inwards" were always washed, when not burnt (Lev. i. 9, etc.); the priests only ate choice portions (Lev. viii. 31—34; x. 12—15), and never with vinegar: it is not easy to see how or where the gall comes in. It should also be noted that the writer confounds "the Lord" of the Old Testament with Jesus Christ, both being called "the Lord" by the primitive Christians (including Barnabas), and both applying, without the smallest hesitation, anything stated of the god Yahweh to "the Lord Jesus." The foregoing extract furnishes further evidence that the writer was not a Jew.

(3) In the following paragraph Barnabas ascribes to Abraham a knowledge of the Greek language and numerals, though that patriarch, assuming him to be historical, lived more than a thousand years before a Greek kingdom or language came into existence. Barney assumes that Abraham knew that IH were the first two letters of the name Jesus, when written in Greek capitals—IHSOUS—and that I stood for 10, H for 8, and T for 300, as numerals. He says (par. x.):—

> "Learn then, my children, concerning all things richly, that Abraham, the first who enjoined circumcision, looking forward in spirit to Jesus, practised that rite, having received the mystery of the three letters. For the Scripture saith, '*And Abraham circumcised ten and eight and three hundred men of his household.*' What, then, was the knowledge given to him in this? Learn the eighteen first, and then the three hundred. The 'ten' and 'eight' are thus denoted: 'ten' by I, and 'eight' by H; you have thus the initials of 'Jesus.' And because the cross was to express the grace of his redemption by the letter T, He says also 'three hundred.' He signifies therefore 'Jesus' by two letters, and the cross by one. He knows this who has put within us the engrafted gift of his doctrine. No one has been admitted by me to a more excellent piece of knowledge than this: but I know that ye are worthy."

The foregoing is most certainly an "excellent piece of knowledge," and for an ingenious and unscrupulous distortion of a simple passage in Genesis, Barney beats all our modern commentators hollow. I have space for but one more "excellent piece of knowledge" from the pen of this gifted writer.

(4) In the following extract Barnabas explains a portion of Lev. xi., in which the Jews are forbidden to eat the flesh of certain animals:—

> "'*And thou shalt not eat*, he says, *the lamprey, or the polypus, or the cuttle-fish.*' He means: Thou shalt not join thyself to be like to such men as are ungodly to the end, and are condemned to death. In like manner as those fishes, above accursed, float in the deep, not swimming like the rest, but make their abode in the mud at the bottom. Moreover, He says, '*Thou shalt not eat the hare.*' Why so? Thou shalt not be a corrupter of boys, nor like unto such. Because the hare multiplies year by year the places of its conception..... Moreover, '*Thou shalt not eat the hyena.*' He means, Thou shalt not be an adulterer, nor corrupter, nor like them that are such. Why so? Because that animal annually changes its sex, and is at one time male, and at another female.....Behold how well Moses legislated? But how was it possible for them to understand

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> or comprehend these things? We, then, understanding His commandments rightly, explained them as the Lord intended. For this purpose he has circumcised our ears and our hearts, that we might understand these things" (par. xi.).

The suggestions in the foregoing paragraph prove the writer to have been a man of very impure mind, with a coarse and positively filthy imagination. Setting aside his crass ignorance of Natural history, and his impudence and presumption in offering his own crude ideas as an interpretation of a passage which required none, only one of the animals he mentions—the hare—is named in Lev. xi. (or in Deut. xiv., from which that chapter is derived).

Paley tells us that the first promulgators of the Christian religion were men of "probity and good sense": but it is far more probable that they were, like Barnabas, silly, conceited, mendacious, and what we would now call old "bounders." ABRACADABRA.

Times of Tears.

SEE how they swing life along through the days, these ordinary pleasures and pains with their rich red drapings, their thousand shades, their art free from guile, and their philosophy in homespun! There is no room for God in the crowded thoroughfares of life's ordinary sorrows and joys. He is banished, but not, it may be, deliberately. Rather unconsciously than from clearly conceived desire is God forsaken in the laughter and tears of the everyday life. And, sometimes, when the mind is wearying in the drab plethora of the modern religious art that sings of God's many marvellous manifestations, it is refreshing to turn to the commonplace and see truth.

There is so little evidence of God in it that, after the ponderous weight of words, after the glaring colorings of religious experts, after the poetry and prose of supernatural passion, all flung heedlessly upon the commonplace by those inspired painters, we are surprised to find a strangely artistic plainness about the ordinary happenings of our lives.

God is not essential to our lives, nor to our happiness, nor to our sadness. Everything around us proclaims it very complacently. Everything proves it. Everything upholds the simple plain truth of it. Elaboration there is none; nor is there the least endeavor to force its evidence. You see it clearly, and feel it easily. God is not here. And, when I reflect upon this strange truism, there arises in my mind the old sense of the marvel of it all. God is not here. The great exertions of priestcraft to disprove it are like gossamers trailing after the sun to die in the west. The huge organism called the Church is a mirage whose last visioned palm melts with the taste of the real waters of truth. The verbal splendors of the glories of God are so many wind driven doves that fall dead and unnoticed by the waysides of the commonplace. God is not here. The natural passing of the hours, the ordinary fleeting of the days, gives God no opportunity. To be with us he must be brought.

Banal experience tells us that God, when he *does* come into the average mind, comes as an intruder. Whatever the heights of happiness we may be enjoying, whatever depths of despair we may be suffering, the entrance of God is heralded by a chilly breeze through the corridors of the brain. His welcome is cold in varying degrees. Never does the average mind glow warmly with appreciation. If merriment touch our moments with sunshine, God's welcome is zero. If we are nursing the little devils of human sadness the degree of cold generally corresponds with their number. We are more inclined to question the propriety of his entrance at these times than we are to bless him, or rather the people who announce his arrival, for without them he does not exist.

The ordinary person, it is noticeable, prefers to shake the wise head, smile somewhat sadly, and say, "Ah! you don't understand; you can't understand. Nothing can comfort me." And if the little devils are very numerous, and their prongs very sharp, God's welcome is very unsatisfactory. The average human mind simply won't tolerate God's soothing presence. It is more of a slight on the sincerity of the sadness than anything else. To be very sorrowful, then suddenly to be aware of the divine joy, and to use it as if it were really joy, is pretty much like playing the fool. Christians understand this; but, peculiarly enough, they do not seem to comprehend that it is rather hard lines on God.

Sometimes, too, the introduction of God is the introduction of the author of the sorrow; but not so much nowadays as it used to be. Still, there is a goodly number of people who feel themselves, in some dimly conceived way, opposed to God at these periods. Pastors tell us so, at any rate; and we believe them. And to bring God into the grief is like bringing the robber to anoint the wound with solace. Naturally enough, this is resented, in a quiet, furtive manner. Besides, is there not a double dose of bitterness in it? The burglar is recognised, and so also is the utter hopelessness of expecting a return of that which he stole. What God takes God keeps.

As I looked into the fire just now, I noticed, reclining against a caked mass of chirls, a white-hot piece of coal shaped like a cross, and glowing amidst blue flames. Perhaps it is an omen, a warning to me for this blasphemy. Who can say?

While God's presence is chilly, nowadays, during all the ordinary sorrows of commonplace life, there is yet a warm corner for him when the cold arms of death reach out from the darkness, as pastors put it, to encircle the body of someone dear to us. There is not so much God at the first crisis of human life, birth, in modern times; still less at the second crisis; but he still draws near at the third and last. Perhaps it is a crude, hard thing to say; but it seems that when decay begins God's opportunity comes.

The day may not be far distant when the only occupation allotted to priestcraft will be that of bidding farewell to the bodies of the dead. Gradually has God been shut out from the times that are draped with the dark curtains of sorrow in the lives of the common people. Already he has totally disappeared from their times of sunshine and happiness. Only death is left him.

And even here the warm corner is not without its discomfort. Minds are less sure of him than ever they were; and the twinge of heart-pain is not made any less severe by the mind's fitful struggles to think itself into a belief the heart cries out against. No matter for how long the dove of heaven may have fluttered through the skies of religious beliefs, no matter how strong may be the conviction that God dealt the blow from the kindliness of his great love, neither the strength nor the age of the belief influences the dull pain one whit. The heart closes around its own woe. God, and his consolation, play only on the surface, when they play at all. The average person, at these times, hangs around the consciousness an impenetrable egoism, through which I doubt, often, if even the dearest friend can enter. And the truth that is human tells us that a sister, a brother, a father, or a mother, well-beloved, comes nearer to the average heart than all the gods that were ever spun from fables and fears of man's mind.

When death speaks to us, a harder, and sadder, perhaps, realisation of the verities surges over our minds; and in the process there is a self-concentration that debars God. Unaccustomed to the strong faith of our philosophy, the average person pleads for an immortality his sorrow denies; and he pleads against a vague conviction that the after-life is a dream. With death in the darkened room close by, the ordinary mind is dubious of the heaven above; but, in its longings, despite the teachings of modern religion, it adheres more to the idea of resurrection than to that of an incomprehensible immortality. Only when the minister arrives does God make his

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entrance. The doubts are lulled. Resurrection gives place to immortality. The contradictions are smoothed down. The minister panders to the desires; and the closed door of the mind opens to let in—an instinct. The minister takes God away with him, and leaves immortality.

Without the idea of an after-life there would be no God. Immortality really keeps God in the picture. Nowadays God is a cosmic force, his supreme activity the making possible of another life where the old loves, cut asunder by death, will be relinked. Sensitive people, actuated by desire, and deluded by religion, still think the idea of immortality is a feeling, an instinct, something that lowly whispers to their hearts the graphic statement that it is something. This is the instinct of immortality. It only operates when the sorrow is somewhat assuaged by the balsam of the commonplace, when the curtain of egoism has been lifted by the pressure of the demands of the days. In times of tears there is no God; and immortality comes only as a longing, a sudden rush of the spring-waters of human love, when the mind discovers that the opportunities are lost for ever.

There is more truth in the commonplace times of tears and joy than in all the mighty works of religious learning; and some day, when the priests and pastors have been vanquished by the Army of Freethought, the people will marvel and wonder at the gullibility of their forefathers.

The white cross in the fire has crumbled to ashes. Underneath there is still the glow of red cinders. That, too, will disappear; but sleep will not come less soundly because the cross has crumbled; nor will the commonplaceness of life lose its social strength and health because the fires of religious faith are burning out.

ROBERT MORELAND.

National Secular Society.

THE Second Half-Yearly Meeting of London Members was held on Tuesday, March 31, at Chandos Hall, Strand.

Mr. Cohen was elected to the Chair, the President, Mr. G. W. Foote, being unable to attend on account of illness. A letter from Mr. A. B. Moss was read explaining his absence for the same reason. After the Chairman's opening remarks, the discussion was opened by Mr. Cunningham, who regretted that the resolution remitted from the last Conference, to arrange public demonstrations in places where the Freethought movement was not making satisfactory progress, and the resolution moved at the last half-yearly meeting, that Branches should be asked to break new ground by holding meetings at places adjacent to their present stations, had not yet been carried into effect; and, as a recommendation to the Executive, moved a resolution embodying both the foregoing, but making it apply more particularly to the Metropolitan areas. This was seconded by Mr. Rosetti.

Mr. Heaford thought that the term "Metropolitan areas" should be literally interpreted, and suggested taking advantage of the cheap excursions to provincial towns, and believed many men could be found to do pioneer work of that kind. After further discussion, Mr. W. Davidson moved, as an amendment:—

> "That the Executive be asked to appoint a committee of two to work in conjunction with the General Secretary in organising demonstrations and extra meetings on new ground within the London district, with a view to extending the work of the Society."

This was seconded by Mr. H. Thurlow. The resolution was then withdrawn and Mr. Davidson's motion was put to the meeting and carried unanimously.

Mr. Collinson, North London Branch, moved a resolution expressing the opinion that the interests of the Cause would be furthered by a more systematic method of organisation, and that this could be accomplished both successfully and economically by merging the existing London Branches into one. This was seconded by Mr. Hecht, Edmonton, and gave rise to much discussion. Mr. T. Thurlow was opposed to the principle of relying upon a centre. Mr. Roger pointed out its impracticability, in view of the great distances across London; and Mr. W. Heaford most emphatically protested against it, saying that what was required of the Secularist Party, which was the oldest organised party in Great Britain, was the intensification of local interests, and suggested that the compilation of a directory of Freethinkers would enable them to be brought together whenever necessary. Mr. Davey, Kingsland Branch, objected on the ground that it would destroy home rule. It was suggested that the experiment of amalgamation might be tried with the North London Branches, which lie close together. The Chairman thought the suggestion would be workable, if carried out on the lines of the old London Secular Federation, which all would agree, did good work, and pointed out that where Branches, or local Freethinkers, were in need of assistance in organising, the services of the Executive could be relied upon. Though lost when put to the meeting, it was felt that the discussion this resolution had given rise to, had been exceedingly useful.

A suggestion from the Kingsland Branch that a monthly list of all out-door lectures of the London Branches should be published, and a further suggestion that the Editor of the *Freethinker* be asked to publish condensed reports of Branch lectures, at least monthly, in that paper, were discussed, and the Secretary was asked to lay both matters before the Executive.

Reference was made to the increasing number of requests for N. S. S. members to act as stewards at meetings, and on the motion of Mr. Earthy, North London Branch, it was resolved to recommend that members be invited to add their names to the list of those already willing to act as stewards.

The Secretary promised to arrange a meeting of Branch Secretaries, at headquarters, at an early date.

The Secretary was instructed to convey to Mr. Foote the good wishes of all present, and their hopes that he would soon be able to resume his work for the cause to which he had devoted himself for so many years.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary.*

CUNNING AND CREDULITY ON THE NIGER.

Until quite recently on the banks of the river which flowed beneath the windows of our last station, a human sacrifice was offered at the beginning of each fishing season, to ensure good fortune to the nets. The victim was bound to a stout stake, driven deep into the mud, left bare at low tide, to be drowned by the rising water. One year the man chosen chanced to be of unusual strength. By straining every nerve he burst the bonds which held his huge limbs, and found himself free once more, but with no place of refuge, since every town was closed to him, and to take to the mangrove swamps meant not life but a lingering death. In this desperate strait he decided on a daring stroke. Back to the beach he swam, where townsfolk were merrily holding his death-feast. It chanced that he was blind of an eye, so no sooner did he near the shore than he began to upbraid them, in the "Juju's" name, for daring to offer a blemished victim—stating that the Spirit had sent him back as unworthy, and with the command that a better should be substituted. Unquestioningly the people obeyed. A perfect victim was chosen and offered up, while the resourceful one-eyed deceiver lived out his life to a peaceful close.—*P. Amaury Talbot in the "Times."*

Obituary.

It is my painful duty to record the sudden death, at the age of 61, of Mr. John Easton, whose stalwart figure and genial expression was generally conspicuous at all meetings, lectures, etc., in Newcastle that had for their object the advancement of intellectual progress. He had a wide circle of friends, who will never forget the cheerful smile, the sterling and honest outspokenness of this admirable man, whose generous and sympathetic heart never failed to respond to others' troubles. His loss to the Newcastle Branch of the N. S. S. will be most keenly felt by those with whom he has taken an active share of the work for over twenty years. Being also one of the active workers of the Tyneside Sunday Lecture Society, of which he was a member since its inception in 1883, he was followed to the grave by a large number of friends from both Societies. Here, what the deceased had often expressed his fear of, happened. Despite the fact that a written request to be cremated, and that his funeral be a Secular one, had for some time been carefully prepared, a parson was engaged and buried him with the usual "Sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection," much to the disapproval of many of his best friends. On March 30 Mr. Easton went to bed healthy and apparently well, and had slept peacefully away before anyone was aware of the fact. He leaves a widow, four grown-up sons, two daughters, and an aged mother, twenty-three years older than himself, to mourn their loss. We share their grief, but rejoice that he lived.—J. G. BARTRAM.

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THE
Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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The prude and the devotee are cheek-by-jowl.
—VICTOR HUGO.

Tricks of Trade.

SOME time ago there appeared a number of letters in one of the papers on the question of the dishonesty of business men. The dishonesty alleged was concerned chiefly with untruthfulness in selling. Merchants, it was said, were not above stooping to misstatements concerning their goods, and the falsehoods commenced at the top filtered right the way down to the humble shop-walker. He was compelled to tell lies to customers. If an article was inferior, he dare not say so. If it possessed faults, he was forced to hide them. For a shopman to be loyal to his conscience and honest to the people who purchased was to invite dismissal. It was impossible under these conditions for a man to lead a "Christian life," and it was solemnly alleged that many people declined to confess themselves Christians because they felt the standard of morality set to be too high, and shrank from a false confession on the most sacred of subjects.

I read these protests against the dishonesty of business men and remained unmoved. Of course, it is wrong for people to adulterate their goods or to tell lies to their customers; and yet I did not feel the evil to be of so serious a kind after all. It would be better if every salesman told the whole truth and nothing but the truth about his goods, but a lie is only serious in proportion as it is likely to obtain currency. If a man tells me something that I do not believe, and which he knows I shall not believe, it seems to me that things remain much as they were. When a dealer assures me that he is getting a living by selling his goods at less than cost price, or that he is giving better value than anyone else in the trade, or that he is keeping his shop open solely for the benefit of the public, we all know these things to be part of the small talk of the commercial world. And even though I were charged half-a-crown for an article worth sixpence, that still strikes me as a small affair. There are much greater evils in the world. These things are more annoying than aught else. And, truth to tell, I feel more annoyed at people expecting me to believe these stories than at their being told.

The curious feature about the controversy was that a number of prominent clergymen took part in the discussion, and protested against the practice. This was very interesting, but I felt a little uncertain whether their interference might not be due to the irritation of the expert watching the bungling attempts of the amateur. Part of the protest was based upon the lies told being connected with such paltry matters. Which is rather illuminating. There is *such* a difference between false statements that affect the issue of some hundreds of thousands of pounds' worth of shares and the falsehoods that procure a sale of a yard of flannel at two shillings when the proper price is only one and elevenpence-three-farthings. One could not imagine a Christian gentleman like the Archbishop of Canterbury telling a lie in order to get an article sold for sixpence that was only worth fourpence. This in itself is evidence of the bracing effect of Christianity on character, or perhaps it is only the difference between £15,000 a year and twenty-five shillings a week. Still, it must really demand a fine development of character for men circumstanced as are the bulk of the clergy to refrain from telling lies for the sake of the paltry benefits to gain which shopmen and shopkeepers daily and hourly scarify their moral nature.

To be quite serious, one could imagine a tradesman, irritated by these rebukes, advising bishops and archbishops that before lecturing others it might be as well to reflect upon the number of trade falsehoods connected with their own business. And both on the negative and on the positive side the clerical profession involves quite as many trade falsehoods as occur elsewhere, and some of them of a far more serious character. For the tradesman does not tell his tales in the interests of morality; the clergyman does. And that involves a world of difference. And I am quite certain that, taken on the whole, the morality of the business world, imperfect as it is, is still superior to the morality exemplified by the clergy.

It is said that tradesmen charge for work that is ill performed. Well, so do the clergy. Tradesmen claim that their goods are superior to any others on the market, knowing that is not the truth. What is this but one of the stock claims of the clergy? Commercial men, it is said, work for a monopoly, and crush out by all possible means—fair and foul—their competitors. Agreed; but is not every religion in the world, and particularly the Christian religion, striving to create a monopoly? What was the State Church but a monopoly in religion? What are all the other Churches doing but trying to create a monopoly? And how have they all met competition? The State Church met it by imprisoning Dissenters, cropping their ears, whipping them at cart's tail, imprisoning them thousands at a time, and even selling them into slavery. A commercial monopoly never did these things. A monopoly in oil, or coal, or corn, or copper, is really far less disastrous to a nation than a monopoly in religion. And when events brought other competitors into the field, competitors that threatened *all* Christians alike, a new combination was formed that strove to suppress this competition by the same methods of imprisonment and torture. Really there is not an evil connected with the establishment of a trade monopoly that is not being continuously put into force in order to maintain a corner in religion. And certainly the suppressed truths and suggested falsehoods practised to build up a business monopoly are poor, weak things compared to what is done in connection with religion.

Look at some of the falsehoods connected with the clerical business. First of all, there is the Bible. When a tradesman sells a cotton mixture for pure wool, is he really acting worse than the clergyman who nowadays presents the Bible before a congregation as the Word of God? Everyone knows who knows anything about the subject, that this conception of the Bible is now completely shattered. It is admitted to be so by numerous clergymen, under controversial pressure. And yet one is constantly meeting in religious papers with a dis-

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cussion of the question whether clergymen ought to introduce critical questions into the pulpit. Thoroughly straightforward men, determined on their clients being fully acquainted with the nature of the article placed before them, would answer the question without the least hesitation. If there is one place in the world from which the results of the most critical study of the Bible should be shouted trumpet-tongued, it is the pulpit. For it is precisely the people who attend church who are most in need of such instruction. No courage is needed in making admissions to people outside the Churches. It is people who are within who need to be told the truth. And the discussion as to whether critical questions should be introduced into the pulpit or not is really a discussion as to whether a church is the place in which the truth should be told.

For, mark, all critical questions are not excluded from the pulpit. It is only critical questions, so far as they tend to unsettle orthodox beliefs, that are excluded. Other religions may be freely criticised. Unbelief may be criticised. And both these forms of criticism give rise to a fresh batch of falsehoods. For, just as we have the *suppressio veri* in connection with Christianity, so we have the *suggestio falsi* in connection with non-Christian forms of thought. The better aspects of a religion such as Mohammedanism are ignored and its worst aspects exaggerated. The evils existing in non-Christian countries are deliberately attributed to the prevailing religion. And where religions are treated in this way, non-religious naturally fare worse. Hardly any business man would circulate stories concerning a rival one-half so untruthful and malicious as those circulated by religious preachers concerning their opponents. If the sense of decency did not restrain, the law of libel would. Credit is too valuable an asset in the commercial world for the average business man to ignore the value of a good reputation. But if one will compare the stories told by Catholics of Protestants, of Protestants by Catholics, and by both of unbelievers; if one bears in mind the slanders circulated concerning Paine, and Bradlaugh, and Ingersoll, and other leading Freethinkers, he will see how much below the ethic of the business-world is the ethic of the pulpit.

Only a month or so ago the Rev. Dr. Forsyth was prophesying that there were troublesome times ahead for the Churches when congregations began to realise the bearings of modern criticism on religious beliefs. But why should there be trouble from this source? And whose fault is it that the church and chapel congregations do not already realise the bearings on religious doctrines of modern knowledge? If the clergy had been really interested in telling the truth and seeking the truth, their congregations would have nothing to learn and preachers nothing to fear. The fear was really a confession that congregations have been deliberately kept in the dark about matters on which they ought to have received information. They have looked to their preachers for guidance, and these have misled them. And in what way is the preacher who has refrained from telling his hearers the truth about religion, because he was afraid it would unsettle their faith, superior to the tradesman who tells a lie in order to sell a customer something over the counter? If the preacher has a genuine article for sale, he need be in no fear about a decline of custom. He is really alarmed lest the growth of knowledge should have the same influence on his profession that a Fraudulent Marks Act has on certain unscrupulous traders.

It would require a very bulky volume to deal at any length with all the various falsehoods that have been put into circulation at various times in the interests of their faith. There have been documentary falsehoods in the shape of tampering with existing writings and forging new ones. Manufactured falsehoods in the shape of spurious miracles and false records. Personal falsehoods relating to opponents and the suppression of the truth concerning Christian leaders. Falsification of history secured by suppressing facts and creating an atmosphere that made the publication of the truth almost an impossibility. Falsehood connected with the influence of Christianity on civilisation, and of the state of pre-Christian civilisations. One may allow unconscious distortion of truth that arises from the operation of strong religious prejudices, but Christianity has gone further than this. There has been a constant tissue of falsehoods deliberately concocted in the supposed interest of religion and morality.

And these falsehoods belong to a much more serious order than those associated with business life. For they strike at the root of character itself. People who have been taught that religion is the most valuable thing in the world, but who have *not* been taught to associate habits of mental uprightness therewith, are hardly likely to be very scrupulous in matters that they consider of less importance. It is bad to adulterate goods, bad to tell lies in the interests of trade, bad to suggest lies about one's competitors in business. But it is more serious to debase the moral currency of a people, to treat with contempt the exercise of some of the most valuable qualities of the mind, and besmirch the character of those whose real fault has been that they have had the courage to inquire and the honesty to speak. The falsehood of the shopkeeper may, indeed, leave us poorer in pocket, but the falsehoods told in the interests of religion have left the race poorer in all those qualities that do most to dignify human nature.

C. COHEN.

The Glorification of Murder.

NOW that Lent is over once more we may congratulate ourselves upon the fact that it is yearly getting to mean less and less even to Christians themselves. That this is the case is evident from the lukewarm and languishing manner in which it is usually observed. Lent is a fast of forty days, excluding Sundays, from Ash Wednesday till Easter; but how many are there who really fast all that time? It is related of George Whitefield that he partook of nothing during these forty days but coarse bread and sage tea; but even in his day the practice was rare. And yet fasting is ecclesiastically represented as an essential element in the religious life, because it conduces to the mortification of the flesh and is a certain means of securing the Divine favor. It is defined by the Church of England as "a withholding of meat, drink, and all natural food from the body for a determined period"; but in all communions the number of those who starve the flesh to feed the spirit is comparatively very small. Even in Lent of fasting there is astonishingly little. Many thousands of sermons are delivered, and innumerable are the services held; but the wicked flesh receives scarcely any punishment at all, beyond that involved in listening to the preachers and repeating prayers. The discourses given during this period deal generally with what the divines call fundamental articles in the Christian Creed, such as the Fall, the Incarnation, the Cross, and the Resurrection. The Rev. J. Neville Figgis, D.D., Litt. D., for example, has just favored the congregation at St. Mary Abbots, Kensington, and the religious press, with a series of Lenten addresses, in which an attempt is made to restate several doctrines that are regarded as vital. We frankly admit that Dr. Figgis is an extremely able defender of the faith, and that if his defence of it is not a success it is not his fault, but must be accounted for by the absolute indefensibility of the faith. Let us examine a few of his points.

In the sermon on Sin the reverend gentleman makes a most startling admission. According to him sin is a disease, the cure for which is Christ. Now, London accepted Christ fourteen centuries ago, and has been a Christian city ever since. Yet this is what Dr. Figgis says:—

> "The home of moral horror is to be found in brilliant Athens and grand Rome, in Paris with its graceful

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polish, in Venice with all her gilded splendor. *and it may be in modern London* [the italics are ours], not in the Polynesian Archipelago."

No Freethinker ever supplied a better example of the moral impotence of the Christian religion. Here is another fine sentence: "It is not to barbarous people that we go for examples of moral perversion; it is to ages of culture and amid scenes of refinement"—in fact, to modern London, where Christ lives and reigns. The sad thought is, that from this "home of moral horror" missioners have gone out to convert the Polynesian race to the religion under which London has become a glaring example of "moral perversion." Indeed, Dr. Figgis gives himself, a minister of Christ, a terribly bad character. He dramatically exclaims, "John Neville Figgis, torn by temptations, impure, cowardly, vain, selfish, worldly."

Dr. Figgis defines sin as "a foreign thing" which "ought not to have been." "Sin is a corruption, a disease," he adds; "it need not have happened." We are firmly convinced that sin, as here defined, does not exist, but is solely a theological invention. It is the business of the pulpit to keep the sense of it alive in the minds of the people; but, as Mr. Arnold Bennett informs us, the malady known as conviction of sin, from which our ancestors used to suffer so much, has almost entirely vanished from educated society, and it has vanished simply because science has shown us the unreality of sin. It is sheer impertinence to call humanity a damned race. We are imperfect and often do wrong; but we are not damned. There are many grievances to be redressed, many evils to be washed away, and many forms of tyranny to be overthrown; but society is not damned. It is merely in the throes of evolution, gradually throwing off the things that annoy and hurt and establishing the conditions essential to its well-being.

Dr. Figgis is an anti-evolutionist. He believes that humanity has experienced "an initial catastrophe," generally known as the Fall. Adam fell and became the father of a fallen race which is powerless to rise again. If it is ever to stand upon its feet again it must be raised by someone of superhuman strength. In other words, we are lost sinners and cannot save ourselves. Dr. Figgis says:—

> "Supposing our condition loudly calls for deliverance, and supposing that we are conscious that we cannot deliver ourselves. Then whatever does deliver us must come from outside. It must be the work of a person not ourselves; and it must therefore be objective. Crude language may be used to express this objectivity, but its necessity is inherent. The whole possibility of conversion rests on the fact that we can point the sinner to something beyond himself—Jesus did it, did it all, long, long ago."

As we reject the reverend gentleman's second supposition, that we cannot deliver ourselves, we naturally reject the inference he draws from it. Numerous are the conditions from which society needs to be delivered, but history assures us that each deliverance already effected has come from within, not from outside. The spectacle that meets our eyes to-day is society in the process of slowly delivering itself. Upon his second baseless assumption Dr. Figgis builds a most remarkable theory of the atonement. He vainly endeavors to distinguish between the *fact* of the atonement and any *theory* of it, forgetting that to call the death of Jesus an atonement at all is to offer a theory of it. The important thing to be borne in mind here is that we are said to be responsible for our fallen condition. We are accounted guilty before the bar of Divine justice, and in front of us is hell-fire, in which we deserve to burn for ever. Therefore, we need forgiveness as well as deliverance, and the Scripture declares that "apart from shedding of blood there is no remission." Consequently, "the atonement is a thing so tremendous that it cost God the death of his Son." Why God could not deliver and pardon mankind without killing his Son, or how such a horrible murder enables him to do either, we are not told; and it is a greater mystery still how faith or trust in that murdered Son brings salvation to the lost. On such points Dr. Figgis is discreetly silent. Utterly ignoring them, he speaks of the atonement as a thing so tremendous that to many it will seem "too good to be true." To us it is a thing so hideous, so brutal, that our whole nature revolts at the very thought of it. To the reverend gentleman, alas, it is "that great act which has reversed all the values of the world," whatever he means by such a statement, which to us is meaningless.

Dr. Figgis imagines a man who is too great a sinner to be forgiven even through so tremendous an atonement. "I can never be forgiven," he cries. "But God loves you," the preacher assures him. The sinner exclaims, "Ah, that makes it only worse. I have done it, done it to all eternity, and the world can never be the same as if I had not." "But God is love, and he will never shut you out." "I shut myself out; so ugly a thing shall not be in his sight—my loving Father! I am a traitor, and I cannot, cannot ever be in his sight again." Now listen to the appeal Dr. Figgis makes to this self-condemned sinner:—

> "What hope is there for such? This hope: Let the man say that his treachery to love has been the cause of an act so beautiful that its splendor outshines all the whole world of spiritual values apart from it, and that it is through him in the sense that but for this sin this beauty would not be. Then he can be reconciled. It is the addition to the value of the world of this act of supreme devotion, and the fact that it would not have been but for human sin that allows the sinner to think of himself as forgiven and the past as done away with."

Such is speculative theology as expressed by this clergyman—a series of ridiculous conclusions based upon a series of unverifiable assumptions. Our charge against it is not merely that it is unreasonable, but that it is monstrously immoral as well. The Gospel preached by Dr. Figgis shocks our conscience and wounds our sense of right. The only truth in it is that had it not been for the doctrine of sin we would never have heard of it. The full salvation which it offers to those who believe it is wholly imaginary, an emotional affair only. If you believe that Jesus died for your sins God justifies you, and to justify means not to *make* just but to *declare* just. That is to say the moment a fiend of the deepest dye accepts the finished work of Christ, God looks upon and treats him as if he had always been a beautiful angel. "This declaration of our righteousness when we are still sinful," Dr. Figgis tells us, "is made to us as sharing in Christ's death through faith.....Jesus Christ has become the meaning of us." That, we claim, is a thoroughly immoral Gospel. Our only comfort is that it is not true, and that this is being found out by an ever-growing number of our fellow-beings.

J. T. LLOYD.

Christian Apologetics.

II.—HERMAS AND CLEMENT OF ROME.

FOLLOWING Barnabas, the next two "apostolic fathers" are said to be Hermas and Clement of Rome—the first being declared to be the Hermas named in Rom. xvi. 14, and the second to be the Clement mentioned in Phil. iv. 3. It appears to be tacitly assumed by Christian apologists that no writer named Hermas or Clement could have lived in the second century.

Now, we have the testimony of what is called the Muratorian Canon, one of the most ancient documents extant, that the author of the "Shepherd" was Hermas, the brother of Pius, bishop of Rome, and that it was written while that prelate was "sitting in the chair of the church" in that city (*i.e.*, between A.D. 142 and 156). The only writing of Hermas, the "Shepherd," may therefore be placed at A.D. 145—150. The character of the work may be summed up in three words—"a pious fraud" or "a

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fraudulent revelation." The book consists of three parts — visions, commandments, and similitudes. The visions the author claims to have seen in an out-of-the-way field, where, he says, they were explained to him by an angel in the form of "an old woman, arrayed in a splendid robe." The commandments and similitudes, he tells us, were delivered to him by "the angel of repentance," who appeared to him as "a man of glorious aspect, dressed like a shepherd." He received the command, he says, to write these down as he was told them, and he did so. These commandments, etc., are a mass of clotted nonsense, too absurd to have emanated from anyone save a second-century Christian. That the work is a tissue of falsehoods from beginning to end no one now denies. Modern Christian apologists generally ignore this fact, and appear to think that they do away with a big Christian fraud by calling the book "the *Pilgrim's Progress* of Ante-Nicene times." Had the book been given to the world as a work of fiction, like that of Bunyan, such a description might be allowable; but this was not the case. The "Shepherd" was given to the Christian world as a revelation made by God to his servant Hermas, and was received as such, and was copied, and read in the churches as "scripture." As already stated, this lying book and the misleading "Epistle of Barnabas" were found in the oldest MS. of the New Testament—the Codex Sinaiticus. It should also be noted that this pious fraud was not the work of a heretic, but was the production of an orthodox Christian. The following extracts will give some idea of the author's pretended revelations:—

> TENTH COMMANDMENT: "Put all sadness from thee; for it is the sister of doubting and of anger.....For every cheerful man does well, and relishes those things that are good, and despises sadness. But the sad man does always wickedly. First, he doeth wickedly, because he grieveth the Holy Spirit, which is given to man, being of a cheerful nature. And again he does ill, because he prays with sadness unto the Lord..... For the prayer of a sad man has not efficacy to come up to the altar of God," etc.
>
> SECOND SIMILITUDE: "The rich man has wealth; howbeit towards the Lord he is poor: for he is taken up with his riches, and prays but little to the Lord, and the prayers which he makes are lazy and without force. When, therefore, the rich man reaches out to the poor those things which he wants, the poor man prays unto the Lord for the rich; and God grants unto the rich man all good things because the poor man is rich in prayer, and his requests have great power with the Lord."

I now turn to a paragraph in which the writer mentions Clement as a contemporary. In Vision II. the angel in the form of an old woman says to Hermas:—

> "When you have written down all my words, the elect shall become acquainted with them through you. You shall write therefore two books, and you shall send one to Clement and one to Grapte. And Clement shall send to foreign countries, for it is his office to do so. And Grapte shall instruct the widows and orphans. But you shall read the words in this city [*i.e.*, Rome] with the presbyters that preside over the church."
>
> Note: Grapte is supposed to have been a deaconess.

It would thus appear that Hermas was himself a presbyter of the church at Rome, of which church Clement was corresponding secretary. We have seen, however, that the author of the "Shepherd" was not noted for veracity. The question arises, then, Can we accept his statement that Clement was a contemporary? There can be no doubt whatever that *in this case* we can, and the reason is obvious. However great a liar Hermas may have been, it was not in matters of this kind that he exercised his talent. He desired his book to be accepted as a revelation from heaven by the members of the church at Rome, to most of whom he was well known. He could not, therefore, have spoken of one, whom everybody knew to have been long since dead, as then living, unless such was actually the case. He only lied in connection with matters in which his falsehoods could not be disproved.

Moreover, in his day, and for many decades later, there were men and women in the Christian Church who professed to see visions and receive revelations from God, and their claims were admitted by all the churches. Hermas, therefore, had no fear of his fraud being detected. Hence, though we reject, of course, his fabricated visions and revelations, and his statement of being commanded by an angel to write copies of his book for Clement and Grapte, we cannot, as a matter of reason, doubt the fact that those persons must have been living when he wrote his book. We may therefore take it that Clement was one of the dignitaries of the Church of Rome some time during the episcopate of Pius.

The document which is properly associated with the name of Clement of Rome is an Epistle to the church at Corinth, written in consequence of dissensions in that church connected with the office of presbyters. The Epistle is addressed—"The Church of God which sojourns at Rome to the Church of God sojourning at Corinth." As a sample of the language employed I select the following:—

> "Our apostles knew, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that there would be strife on account of the office of the episcopate.....We are of opinion, therefore, that those appointed by them, or *afterward by other men of repute with the consent of the whole Church*, and who have blamelessly served the flock of Christ, in a humble, peaceful, and disinterested spirit, and have *for a long time* possessed the good opinion of all, cannot be justly dismissed from the ministry" (par. xliv.).
>
> "Take up the Epistle of the blessed Paul. What did he write to you *at the time when the gospel first began to be preached!* Did he not, by the Spirit, admonish you concerning himself, and Cephas, and Apollos, because that even then ye had begun to fall into parties among yourselves?.....It is disgraceful, beloved, yea, highly disgraceful, and unworthy of your Christian profession, that such a thing should be heard of, as that the most steadfast *and ancient church* of the Corinthians should, on account of one or two persons, engage in sedition against its presbyters" (par. xlvii.).
>
> "And we have sent faithful and prudent men, *that have walked* unblameably *among us from youth until old age*, who shall be witnesses between you and us" (par. lxiii.).

It is evident from the Epistle itself that the writer was not contemporary with Paul or the apostles. The words I have italicised clearly show that a long period of Church government, during which the church at Rome had gained an ascendancy over the other churches, had elapsed when the Epistle was written.

Clement appears to have been of too kind and gentle a nature to have been entrusted with the control of a church that had assumed authority over all the other churches. Such a church would require as its head one with more force and determination of character. Though Clement was living when the "Shepherd" was composed, it is quite possible that his Epistle to the church at Corinth may have been written much earlier, say in the episcopate of Hyginus, the predecessor of Pius (A.D. 138—142).

In 1873 a document called the *Didaché* or "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles" was discovered in a library at Constantinople, which document is assigned by Biblical critics to A.D. 80—100. The following passage in the "Teaching," which no Christian advocate appears to have noticed, enables us to fix approximately the date of its composition:—

> "To every one that asketh thee give, and ask not back: *for to all the Father desireth to have given of his own free gifts.* Blessed is *he that giveth* according to the *commandment*, for he *is guiltless*. Woe to him that receiveth; for if, indeed, one receiveth who hath need, he shall be innocent; but he who hath no need shall give account, *why he received, and for what purpose*, and shall come under judgment" (par. i.).

Where do we find the "commandment" to which reference is here made? Apologists, of course, refer us to Matt v. 42, which reads:—

> "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away."

This passage does not, however, explain what is said in the "Teaching" about giving and receiving, and of the receiver being innocent or guilty according as he received with or without need. Neither does the

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exhortation in Tobit (iv. 16) to "Give of thy bread to the hungry" throw light upon the matter. We turn now to the "Shepherd," and we find under the heading "Second Commandment" the following injunction:—

> "Give to all the needy in simplicity, not hesitating as to whom you are to give. Give to all; *for God wishes his gifts to be shared amongst all.* They who receive will render an account to God, *why and for what purpose they have received.* For the afflicted who receive will not be condemned; but they who receive on false pretences will suffer punishment. *He, then, who gives is guiltless*.....Keep therefore these *commandments*, as I have given them to you."

Here we have, beyond all doubt, "the commandment" referred to in the "Teaching." When the two passages are compared there can be no two opinions on the subject. Hermas, too, is quite original in his Visions, Commandments, and Similitudes, and has taken nothing from either the Old or New Testament. Moreover, the reference in the "Teaching" to an existing and well-known "commandment" is conclusive. The "Teaching" was therefore written some considerable time after the "Shepherd"—and not until the latter had been received by all the Christian churches as "scripture." This would probably be about two decades before the time of Irenæus (A D. 185), who quotes it as such.

ABRACADABRA.

The Idea of God not Universal.

> "The child is born, not into the religion of nature, but into blank ignorance; and, if left entirely to itself, would probably never find out as much religious truth as the most ignorant of parents can teach it."—PROFESSOR FLINT (Professor of Divinity), *Theism*, p. 23.
>
> "It is true that no one may boast that he knows that God and a future life exist; for, if he possesses such knowledge, he is just the man for whom I have long been seeking."—EMMANUEL KANT, cited in Huxley's *Hume*, p. 179.
>
> "Everyone is born with a nose and five fingers, and no one is born with a knowledge of God. This may be deplorable or not, but it is certainly the human condition."—VOLTAIRE, cited by Wheeler and Foote, *Voltaire*, p. 88.
>
> "After all that has been so plausibly written concerning 'the innate idea of God'; after all that has been said of its being common to all men, in all ages and nations; it does not appear that man has naturally any more idea of God than any of the beasts of the field; he has no knowledge of God at all; no fear of God at all; neither is God in all his thoughts. Whatever change may afterwards be wrought (whether by the grace of God, or by his own reflection, or by education) he is, by nature, a mere Atheist."—JOHN WESLEY, Sermon xcv., *On the Education of Children*.

THE ordinary believer, who has been trained from infancy to believe in the existence of a God, finds it very difficult to understand the position of the Atheist who has no such belief. He thinks that the unbeliever must have some hidden motive for rejecting a belief which his training and education has taught him to think must be self-evident to everyone else.

Indeed, there are no lack of "Anti-Infidel" works in which we are plainly told that we wish to disprove the idea of God and a ruling Providence so that we may lead wicked and debauched lives without fear of having to answer to an Almighty Judge in some after-life; little does the average, and often the educated, man know about ideas outside, or contrary to, his own religious beliefs. For our educational system, even among the upper classes, rigidly excludes any teaching as to the natural evolution of religious ideas. Nay, its first object is to maintain the current mythology, founded upon the Bible, and established as the State religion of the country.

The fact of the matter is, that the great majority of the world's inhabitants are without any belief in the existence of a God. And, far from the belief being innate, intuitional, or arising naturally in the minds of children without its being taught, it is, as John Wesley emphatically declared, true that if children were brought up from their birth "without being instructed in any religion," there is little doubt "they would have no religion at all. They would have no more knowledge of God than the beasts of the field, than the wild ass's colt."*

We have demonstrated proof of Wesley's statement, in the fact that uninstructed deaf-mutes are wholly destitute of religious ideas, as Herbert Spencer has pointed out in the following extract:—

> "The deaf Dr. Kitto, in his book called *The Lost Senses* (p. 200), quotes the testimony of an American lady who was deaf and dumb, but at a mature age was instructed, and who said 'the idea that the world must have had a Creator never occurred to her, nor to any other of several intelligent pupils, of similar age.'
>
> "Similarly, the Rev. Samuel Smith, after twenty-eight years almost daily contact with such, says of a deaf-mute, 'he has no idea of his immortal nature, and it has not been found in a single instance that an uneducated deaf-mute has had any conception of the existence of a Supreme Being as the Creator and Ruler of the universe" (Rev. Samuel Smith, *Church Work Among the Deaf and Dumb*, p. 4).†

Laura Bridgman, who, from the time she was two years old, was deaf and dumb, blind, and even without the sense of taste, thus having only the sense of touch, but who, by persevering instruction, attained a relatively high intellectual condition, says Vignoli, "A careful study of her case showed that she had been altogether without intuitive knowledge of causes, of the absolute, and of God."‡

Similarly, the blind deaf-mute, Edward Meystre, "had no idea of God, and could not be brought to form such an idea, despite every effort that was made, and although he had very good intellectual abilities."§ The reason for this is obvious, for if a child is born totally deaf, it will also be dumb, because a language must first be heard before the sounds of which it is composed can be spoken. Therefore the reason why deaf-mutes are destitute of religious ideas is because they have not learned them from others through the medium of language, which proves the truth of John Wesley's statement, that man "is by nature a mere Atheist."

A further proof of this is the fact that not only many tribes of savages have been found without any idea of a Supreme Being, but some highly civilised nations are in the same condition.

Professor Max Müller, the great Orientalist, says: "As to atheistic religions, they might seem to be perfectly impossible; and yet the fact cannot be disputed away that the religion of Buddha was from the beginning purely atheistic."‖

Professor Monier says of the Buddhists and Jains:—

> "With them there is no Supreme Being, no Supreme Divine Eternal Soul, no separate human eternal soul. Nor can there be any true soul-transmigration. A Buddhist and a Jaina believe that the only eternal thing is matter."¶

Dr. Findlater, in his article on "Buddhism" in *Chambers' Encyclopædia*, observes:—

> "Contrary to the opinion once confidently and generally held, that a nation of Atheists never existed, the Buddhist peoples are essentially Atheist; for they know no beings with greater supernatural power than any man is supposed capable of attaining to by virtue, austerity, and science. Indeed, some of the Buddhist nations—the Chinese, Mongols, and Tibetans—have no word in their languages to express the notion of God as supreme ruler."

Finally, Professor Rhys Davids—and there is no greater authority in this matter—observes: "It will seem strange to many that a religion which ignores the existence of God, and denies the existence of the soul, should be the very religion which has found most acceptance among men."** Thus, the religion

* Sermon xliv., "Original Sin," *Works of Wesley* (ed. 1829), vol. vi., p. 59.
† Herbert Spencer, *Ecclesiastical Institutions* (1885), pp. 671-2.
‡ Tito Vignoli, *Myth and Science*, p. 207.
§ Buchner, *Force and Matter*, p. 392.
‖ Max Müller, *Introduction to the Science of Religion*, p. 35.
¶ Monier Williams, "Buddhism and Jainism," *Contemporary Review*, December, 1879.
** Professor Rhys Davids, "Buddhism," *Encyclopædia Britannica* (ninth edition).

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which counts the largest number of adherents knows nothing of a God.

Of savage tribes, as Darwin remarks,—

> "there is ample evidence, derived not from hasty travellers, but from men who have long resided with savages, that numerous races have existed, and still exist, who have no idea of one or more Gods, and which have no words in their languages to express such an idea."*

Sir John Lubbock (Lord Avebury) observes: "Those who assert that even the lowest savages believe in a Supreme Deity affirm that which is entirely contrary to the evidence." In some cases, he says:—

> "travellers have arrived at these views very much to their own astonishment. Thus Father Dobritzhoffer says: 'Theologians agree in denying that any man in possession of his reason can, without a crime, remain ignorant of God for any length of time. This opinion I warmly defended in the University of Cordoba, where I finished the four years' course of theology begun at Gratz, in Styria. But what was my astonishment, when, on removing from thence to a colony of Abipones, I found that the whole language of these savages does not contain a single word which expresses God or a divinity. To instruct them in religion, it was necessary to borrow the Spanish word for God.'"†

Says M. Bik:—

> "It is evident that the Arafuras of Vorkay (one of the southern Arus) possess no religion whatever.....To convince myself more fully respecting their want of knowledge of a Supreme Being, I demanded of them on whom they called for help in their need, when their vessels were overtaken by violent tempests. The eldest among them, after having consulted the others, answered that they knew not on whom they could call for assistance, but begged me, if I knew, to be so good as to inform them."‡

Of the Australian tribes, Messrs. Spencer and Gillen tell us:—

> "The Central Australian natives—and this is true of the tribes extending from Lake Eyre in the south to the far north and eastwards across to the Gulf of Carpentaria—have no idea whatever of the existence of any Supreme Being who is pleased if they follow a certain line of what we call moral conduct, and displeased if they do not do so. They have not the vaguest idea of a personal individual other than an actual living member of the tribe who approves or disapproves of their conduct.....We know of no tribe in which there is a belief of any kind in a Supreme Being who rewards or punishes the individual according to his moral behavior, using the word moral in the native sense."§

Mr. Gideon Lang tells a story of a friend of his trying to make an intelligent Blackfellow understand the immateriality and immortality of the soul. "One day," he says, "the teacher watched, and found that he went to have a hearty fit of laughter at the absurdity of the idea of a man living, and going about without arms, legs, or mouth to eat."‖

The naturalist Bates tells us that "None of the Indian tribes on the Upper Amazons have an idea of a Supreme Being, and consequently have no word to express it in their own language."¶

Robertson, the historian of America, says:—

> "Several tribes have been discovered in America which have no idea whatever of a Supreme Being, and no rites of religious worship.....Some rude tribes have not in their language any name for the Deity, nor have the most accurate observers been able to discover any practice or institution which seemed to imply that they recognised his authority, or were solicitous to obtain his favor."**

"Father Baegart," says Lubbock, "who lived as a missionary among the Indians of California for seventeen years," affirms that "idols, temples, religious worship, or ceremonies were unknown to them, and they neither believed in the true and only God, nor adored false deities"; and M. de la Perouse also says that they had no knowledge of a God or of a future state."* The same writer also tells us "Hearne, who lived amongst the Northern American Indians for years, and was perfectly acquainted with their habits and language, says the same of some tribes on Hudson's Bay" (577).

Of the Veddahs of Ceylon, Sir J. Emerson Tennant does not hesitate to say, "They have no religion of any kind—no knowledge of a God or of a future state; no temples, idols, altars, prayers, or charms" (*Ceylon*, ii., p. 441). Mr. Bailey, long a resident among them, confirms this judgment. "They have no knowledge of a Supreme Being! 'Is he on a rock? on a white ant-hill? on a tree? I never saw a God' was the only reply I received to repeated questions. They have no idols, offer no sacrifices, and pour no libations."†

They were as destitute of religious ideas as the Papuans of the Aru Islands, who, when Mr. Bik sought for information as to their idea of immortality, replied, "No Arupura has ever returned to us after death; therefore we know nothing." When told by the missionaries that God was everywhere, and in everything that is for our good, one of them replied, "Then this God is certainly in your arrack (spirits), for I never feel happier than when I have drunk plenty of it."‡

In spite of the overwhelming evidence, from which we have only selected a few examples, of the existence of tribes and nations without any idea of God, there are still people who maintain the opposite opinion. We will consider these in our next article.

(*To be continued.*) W. MANN.

* Charles Darwin, *Descent of Man* (1875), pp. 93-4.
† Lubbock, *Prehistoric Times* (1872), pp. 579-80. The Abipones are a tribe of South American Indians.
‡ Lubbock, *Origin of Civilisation* (1889), pp. 214-15.
§ Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes of Central Australia*, p. 491.
‖ Bonwick, *Daily Life of the Tasmanians*, p. 174.
¶ Bates, *The Naturalist on the Amazons*, p. 294.
** Robertson, *Historical Works* (1829), vol. i., p. 123.

* Lubbock, *Prehistoric Times*, p. 577.
† Rev. F. W. Farrar, "On the Universality of Belief in God and a Future State," *Anthropological Journal* (1864), cxviii.
‡ Bonwick, *Daily Life of the Tasmanians*, p. 171.

Acid Drops.

The Devon County Education Committee has decided that two lessons in religion, each one occupying forty minutes, shall be given in the secondary schools under its control. Canon Pryke says there is great interest taken by the teachers in this religious lesson, and is proof, offered by those most qualified to judge, that secular instruction is insufficient. We take this proof with the proverbial grain of salt. To our mind it is rather proof that the teachers have been "got at," and dare not show any dislike to the proposed religious instruction. The clergy have ways of managing these things, and if a clergyman asks a teacher his opinion on the value of religious instruction, there is little doubt as to the kind of answer he will get. It is, indeed, one of the counts in the indictment against religion in the public schools that it condemns so many teachers to a life of hypocrisy. If they are straightforward in the matter, their career is blocked, and promotion becomes almost an impossibility. And, naturally, there are very few that will risk this. If teachers could speak their minds honestly on the question, we believe that the majority would sooner see religion out of the schools than in it.

When men like Canon Pryke talk of the insufficiency of secular education, one would imagine that the nation had practical experience on the matter. This, of course, is not the case. Education in this country has never been free from the influence of religion, which, up to 1870, was mainly under its direct control. And no one who knows the history of education in England would claim that the results were satisfactory. Indeed, it was the utter inefficiency of education in religious hands that forced the Government to step in and undertake it as a national responsibility. Moreover, it is forgotten that, except for time given to religious instruction at the beginning or end of the lesson, State schools are really secular schools. And all teachers know that the religious instruction given is precisely that which is gone over in the most perfunctory manner, and to which the children pay the least attention.

How things have changed in the Churches! Exactly fifty years ago the heresy of Bishop Colenso was convulsing the

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religious world. And on April 9, 1864, a "Pastoral" was ordered to be read in all the Anglican churches in the diocese of Natal, stating that the ecclesiastical authorities had, "after long and anxious deliberation," decided that Bishop Colenso "had not been charged falsely with erroneous teaching," but had "openly proclaimed opinions which are at variance with the belief of the Church in all ages." It was, therefore, decided "to deprive him of his office as Bishop of Natal, unless he shall, within a specified time, retract the false teaching which has been condemned." We all know how it ended. Colenso did not "retract," and his heresy remained. To-day the teaching which was "at variance with the Church in all ages" has become orthodox. Every opinion for which Colenso was condemned is now accepted by every educated clergyman in the country. And if Colenso were alive to-day he would discover in the teachings of eminent dignitaries of the English Church heresies that he in his boldest flights never dreamed of uttering.

According to a provincial paper, Mr. Fergus Hume, the novelist, will shortly lecture on "The Christ." The subject is scarcely as sensational as *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab*.

"Burns was more than a poet; he was a prophet and a reformer of the Scottish clergy," says the Rev. Erskine Nicol, of Westcliff. Especially when the great poet sang "The Church and State may go to hell; but I'll go to my Anna."

"In almost all the religions right conduct has been urged on man by means of a substantial bribe," writes Mr. C. Collum in *The Quest*. Mansions in the skies sounds substantial as a bribe, but the priests get something more solid for the promise.

Those newest of new painters and artists, the Cubists, Futurists, and Post-Impressionists, intend bringing out a periodical with the quaint title, *Blast*. Probably it means the blast of a trumpet; but it appears like a word from a Christian Evidence lecture.

Bishop Gore, the once heretical contributor to *Lux Mundi*, has issued an open letter to the clergy of the diocese of Oxford. He says therein:—

> "An 'advanced' school of Biblical Criticism, on grounds, however, rather philosophical than strictly critical, has reached the conclusion that certain miracles—those which by contrast to the miracles of healing are called 'nature-miracles,' such as our Lord's feeding of the five thousand, or the stilling of the waves by His word, or the raising of the dead; or, again, the miracle of His own birth of a virgin mother, and the resurrection of His dead body from the grave—are for us to-day incredible, not chiefly on grounds of the evidence in each particular case, but on grounds of general scientific and historical principle."

Bishop Gore will have none of this, and has evidently decided to stick to a more orthodox conception of the creeds which clergymen are ordained to preach. He asks:—

> "Is it consistent with the sincerity which ought to attach to public office, and especially to public office in the Christian Church, that a man should pledge himself to the constant recitation of these Creeds, as an officer of the society which so strenuously holds them, if he personally does not believe that these miraculous events occurred, if he believes that our Lord was born as other men, or that His dead body did in fact 'see corruption'?"

We quite agree with Bishop Gore that it is not consistent with sincerity for a clergyman to remain in a Church while repudiating the plain meaning of its teaching by putting a construction upon its doctrines which they were never intended to bear. Such a practice reflects little credit upon the man, and still less upon the religion in which he has been trained. If Christianity had ever made intellectual uprightness one of its teachings, and had insisted upon it, there would now be no need for the Bishop's "Open Letter." Men would feel that when they disagree with a religion their proper place is outside. Only we would observe that it is the Christian Churches themselves that have made honesty of speech and fearlessness of thought two of the most costly luxuries in which men can indulge. People have not been encouraged to develop these qualities in themselves, and they have naturally ceased to expect their expression in others.

To this we would add one other observation. Suppose the clergy were really seized with an epidemic of honesty, and left their pulpits so soon as they discovered that they no longer held the plain meaning of Christian doctrines; how many would remain? Not only in the Church of England, but in all the Churches? Clearly, we should soon have an outcry about empty pulpits as well as about empty pews. For there is hardly an educated clergyman in the country—and certainly none of the leading ones—who do accept Christian doctrines in a plain, straightforward sense. Their chief energies are being given to demonstrating that Christian doctrines cannot mean what they have always been taken to mean, and to proving that they really mean a great deal of what Freethinkers have always taught concerning them. Really honest men do not ask, "What can I make a thing mean?" They ask, "What did it mean to those who wrote it?" And if what it meant to them is not in agreement with fact, it is only the exercise of common honesty to say that it is false. Dr. Gore is afraid that the clergy will, if they are not careful, "lose both the reputation and the reality of sincerity." If he will come down out of the clouds and face facts, he will discover that they have largely lost that already.

The *Church Times* opens its Easter number in quite a tearful vein. It laments that "as each year comes round we find what we believe to be the historical fact of the Empty Tomb more and more called in question, and that even by men who exercise the sacred ministry among us." This is very sad—for Christians, but we feel quite cheerful at the news. It is a confession that the effects of Freethought propaganda is making itself felt. Of course, we knew it was doing this all along, but usually Christian writers pretend to ignore the fact. The "historical fact of the empty tomb"! We are more impressed with the historical fact of empty heads.

"The world's great heart is aching, and nothing but Jesus will cure it," says the Bishop of Chelmsford. Whether the world is so afflicted is an open question; but at any rate it is a more difficult piece of joinery than the Carpenter of Nazareth can manage.

"One Laugh Three Hours Long" is the description of an entertainment being given at a metropolitan place of amusement. A longer laugh could be obtained by reading the stories in the Bible.

The late Mr. Prime Taylor Coulson, originator of the famous Cambridge sausages, who died a few days ago, was known as the "Sausage King." Royal persons need feel no alarm, for the "King of Kings" was a carpenter.

Defenders of the Design Argument will be pleased to hear that a Hackney baby, whose death was the subject of an inquest, had webbed toes and fingers. This condition, said the child's grandmother, had occurred in the family for several generations. This sample will not satisfy the quacks.

What wonderful Atheists are met—by Christians. We have, naturally, come across a good many Atheists in our time, but we have never been fortunate enough to meet the kind religious people so often encounter. There is the weeping Atheist, who is full of regrets that he has been compelled to give up the belief in God, and who envies the religious man his serene and comforting belief. He appears to be a very common type, but he has never come our way. Rev. F. C. Spurr, on his way home from Melbourne, met another extraordinary specimen, a Frenchman by nationality. He had no hostility towards religion; on the contrary, he had something like an affection for it. Stranger still, he thought that some kind of moral instruction was needful for France, and he would prefer this to be religious rather than nothing at all. We wonder whether Mr. Spurr was surprised at finding an Atheist who believed in some kind of moral instruction? Or did he expect that the Atheist believed the world would be able to get on without it? The old religious method used to be the presentation of an Atheist who repudiated all morality. Now we have an Atheist who believes in morality but who doesn't quite see how we are to get it in the absence of religion. And both are built up on the common assumption that there is something antagonistic between Atheism and morality. Really, the Atheist does not object to moral instruction; his chief complaint is that religious teachers are such poor hands at the job.

One of the religious journals asks "Does God Suffer?" We should be inclined to answer in the affirmative, if it is assumed that he reads all the apologists say in his defence.

According to a *Times* telegram, the Greek archbishop, Germanos, is to be tried by court martial on the charge of having superintended, during the last Balkan war, the

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formation of bands of Christians which participated in the massacre of Moslems at Kavala.

The Bishop of Winchester has received authorisation by Order in Council to borrow £100 from the governors of the Bounty of Queen Anne for improving the laundry at Farnham Castle. We have no doubt that there is much in connection with the diocese that needs cleaning.

The *Christian Commonwealth* publishes an article on "The Testimony to Immortality of Non-Christian Religions." We should hardly have thought this necessary even in a Christian journal. Certainly none of those who reject the belief in immortality would question the universality of the belief. Part of the modern case against a future life rests, as a matter of fact, upon the universality of the belief. If it could be shown that only a few races believed in it, and these amongst the higher ones, a much stronger case could be made out for it. But this is not so. It is universal amongst the lower races, and it is only questioned with advancing knowledge. If the Freethinker is right in asserting that the belief in a soul or double, and consequently in a future life, originated in the savage mistaking the nature of certain subjective and objective experiences, then, as the human mind is everywhere the same, and under primitive conditions, at least, is faced by the same circumstances, we should expect men everywhere to arrive at substantially the same conclusions. And this is what we actually do find. The "soul" is a product of primitive psychology. And as modern thought has revised primitive conclusions elsewhere, so it has revised them here also. The universality of religious belief is no proof of its truth, but rather of the reverse.

Bradford has just been witnessing an orgy of revivalism which ought to remind people that there is often a fine line only between religion in some of its forms and insanity. According to the *Yorkshire Observer* report, after the service had been in progress for awhile—

> "Everyone knelt down on the floor, and then began one of the most remarkable scenes it is possible to imagine. The preacher commenced a prayer, in which he called upon the Almighty and invoked the presence and blessing of Christ in terms which under ordinary circumstances would be described as irreverent and insulting to the point of blasphemy. The Deity was extolled in words of such familiarity and ardent personal fervor, with interjections of such fiery sentiment that the congregation set up an accompanying chorus of moans and ejaculations. The prayer became more and more fervid and less and less coherent; the people groaned and mumbled inarticulate phrases, swaying to and fro and trembling with the intensity of their ecstasy. Some cried out aloud, clutching the benches and burying their heads in their arms; others simply rocked themselves backwards and forwards, wailing as if in agony."

A young woman then began to preach, becoming more and more inarticulate, and finally collapsed, writhing on the ground in emotional rapture. An old woman followed suit, and then men and women were together jabbering all sorts of sounds which were doubtless intended to prove that the "gift of tongues" had come upon them. The scene was not an unusual one in the history of revivalism, and it illustrated what religion becomes when the controlling influence of the intellect is lacking. The regrettable thing is that there should be people amongst us who do not hesitate to trade upon the pitiful state of these poor semi-demented creatures.

"The true Puritan can perhaps never be the true saint," says a writer in the *Times* Literary Supplement. Had the writer been a Nonconformist, he would have denied the possibility to the followers of the Government religion.

The connection between cookery and Christianity is not confined to the roasting of missionaries. One London firm sold a quarter of a million hot cross buns, which were retailed at "penny each, or four for threepence."

Of all the "blessed words" in the language there is none more so than that of "instinct." It has a scientific sound that seems peculiarly attractive to some minds, and it is most often little more than a cover for ignorance, or an excuse for avoiding a little hard thinking. People are said to do this or that by "instinct," or to have an "instinct" for this, that, or the other, when they do and have nothing of the kind. Mr. T. J. Hardy has just written a book on *The Religious Instinct*, and a very pertinent criticism of the work is that the volume is based on the non-existent—which, by the way, is not an unusual feature of religious writings. There is no such thing as a religious instinct. One may possess ideas about religion, or one may have beliefs about religion, but no one has a religious instinct. If people are left alone, and remain uninstructed, they are likely to drop into the animistic interpretation of things and become religious. In that case their religion is the outcome of theorising about things in the absence of adequate knowledge. Or, if they are not left alone, but are trained in religious ideas, they may also become religious. In both cases their religion is acquired. But if, instead of being either left alone, or trained to believe in religion, religion is eliminated altogether from their education and they receive proper instruction on all other topics, what becomes of the "religious instinct"? It is simply non-existent. Man has no instinct for religion, but he is susceptible to it, just as he is susceptible to numerous diseases. And he tends to acquire immunity to both.

Mr. Hardy says that "nothing could be more detrimental to religion than the constant intrusion of 'difficulties' on the notice of mixed congregations." Quite so. If people are to be kept religious, the fact that there are difficulties in the way of their belief must be carefully kept from them. They must be brought up in the full belief that difficulties only exist for immoral or perverse people. That is really the principle on which all religious teachers work. They keep all sorts of information away from those under their charge for fear it may unsettle their belief. If they do not tell lies, they suggest falsehoods. For it is suggesting falsehoods when a growing generation is barred from access to the reasoned opinions of people who have tested the "faith" and found it wanting.

The supply of Biblical films appears to be somewhat limited. "The Messiah," "Daniel," and a few other subjects made up the Easter programs. Now the manufacturers are booming "The World, the Flesh, and the Devil." This ought to attract the "unco' guid" more than faked films of fables.

Among recent wills we observe that of the Rev. H. H. Allott, vicar of Warton, Warwickshire, and of Stifford, Grays, with a value of £20,701, also Rev. G. Granville, of Warpeton, Warwick, with a value of £25,199, Rev. T. Maude, of Selborne, Torquay, £8,295, Canon Bristow, £12,405, Rev. M. W. F. St. John, Gloucester, £8,690. All bore their inflictions with true Christian fortitude.

"Now that the talk is of Ireland, one recalls a story of Hartley Coleridge. That unfortunate youth then had as dinner neighbor an Irish enthusiast whose talk was all of Popish evils. Hartley listened in silence, but after dinner he took the Irishman aside and said with all solemnity: 'Sir, there are two great evils in Ireland.' His hearer agreed. 'The first,' continued Hartley, is Popery.' 'Most truly, was the answer, '—and the other?' 'Protestantism,' replied Coleridge as he moved quickly away."—*Daily Chronicle*.

"We know that our Lord loved his country and his family," writes the Dean of Durham in *Lloyd's Weekly News*. As the "Chosen People" have been outcasts for many centuries, he had a curious method of dissembling his love. As for his family, he publicly insulted his mother, and, if Christian dogma be true, he was his own father.

At the annual meeting of the Hotel Association, Lord Bessborough remarked that "the old Sunday had passed away." The witty writer of "Asterisks" in the *Star*, commenting on this, says, "Instead of the day of rest, we have the day of restaurants."

The City Council of Vancouver proposes keeping the Japanese children in that city in schools different from those which the white children attend. The Japanese Consul has protested against this, and has pointed out that very undesirable relations between his country and Canada may arise if this proposal is carried into effect. What a lovely influence Christianity has upon the relations of human beings to be sure. We do not think that any nation of the ancient world would ever have dreamed of a proposal of this character. And yet we find Christians full of the cant of brotherhood and of talk about the love and kindness that Christianity brings into the world. It might, of course, be argued that such a proposition as this has nothing to do with Christianity. But it is very evident that Christianity has not sufficiently civilised its followers to make it impossible.

Concerts are given in various prisons on Sundays, and popular hymns are special favorites. It is one of life's little ironies that there is a special call for "Abide with me."

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To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £128 3s. 5d. Received since :—Aberystwyth, £1 1s.; J. G. White, 10s.; C. D. Morris (West Africa), £1 1s.

B. KOLAKA (Calcutta).—We do not see what the N. S. S. can do concerning the missionary movement in India beyond exposing it whenever opportunity offers. We note your observation that Christianity in India is "a mere show kept up with the aid of money from England, and that the missionaries "are simply picnicking at the expense of others, and having the best of everything. Unfortunately, there are so many people at home who have an interest in keeping up the sham, and so many people on the spot who do not care to speak out on account of the ill-will that would be manifested. All we can do, and all you can do, is to keep on pegging away until the truth on the matter becomes more general than it is at present.

E. LECHMERE.—Mr. Foote will quite appreciate your good wishes for his recovery, and is, indeed, making good progress towards complete health. You may depend that his pen will not be idle in these columns once he is out of the doctor's hands.

A. FAWN.—See "Sugar Plums."

A. MILLAR.—It is always pleasant to learn that one's efforts meet with appreciation. We take it that the reason why the *Freethinker* keeps to so high a level is that none of its writers are "hired" in the journalistic sense of the word. With all it is a labor of love, and to that sort of work a man always gives of his best. Plenty of writers may be bought, but theirs is not usually the kind of writing that appeals to sincere men and women. And there is no mistaking that the *Freethinker* has a curiously effective way of getting "home" to the minds of those who read its pages.

T. M. BROWN.—We despair of making the matter sufficiently intelligible and interesting to our readers.

A. KOHN.—We do not see that "Mr. G. W. Foote" is under any obligation to answer your letter by post, or even at all. You ask "whether the Life of Bradlaugh by Mackay is allowed to be sold now?" Why do you ask *him* the question? And why do you expect *him* to answer it?

ABERYSTWYTH.—There is a good deal of truth in what you say. We shall certainly act on some of your advice.

H. ROSETTI.—Mr. Foote appreciates the West Ham Branch's resolution of sympathy and encouragement.

A. SCOTT.—We see nothing calling for special comment. Thanks all the same.

J. BRYCE.—Received. Mr. Foote, as you will see, is utilising the burst of good weather in getting back into fighting form.

G. E. QUIRK.—Will deal next week with the points raised in your letter. We are greatly afraid that your chance of getting a reply, from the Freethought side, in the paper you name is very remote. Whether that particular paper is aware or not of there being "two sides to a question," it takes care that only one shall appear.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid :—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Special.

I AM regaining my strength gradually, but surely. I am not, however, capable of work at present; although I hope my pen will be represented in next week's *Freethinker*. I infer this from the fact that I have just been reading a new book with real pleasure,—which is a sure sign of vital recovery. My voice, too, which I completely lost for a time, is coming back to me. Per contra, I am distressed to hear of the breakdown of my old friend, W. W. Collins, of Christchurch, New Zealand. He is a younger man than I am, and he had a healthy look when he lived in England. After all, therefore, I may venture to hope that he still has a good many years of service to render to the Freethought which has been the love of his life. I am thinking, also, of Miss Vance, who is almost fighting for her life in a London hospital. Her dreadful affliction of blindness intensifies the sufferings she experiences from other ailments, and her loneliness must be terrible in such a situation.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

A correspondent who takes an interest in the *Freethinker* has been trying to get the Ealing Public Library to accept a copy of this paper weekly. The Librarian replied rather curtly that a similar offer was made last December and declined, and that the Committee decided not to accept it; and, therefore, they are not likely to accept the offer if it is submitted to them. Perhaps not; but we think it is the duty of the Librarian to submit the offer just the same, and the gentleman who made it should see that it goes before them. The Committee may have become wiser or more liberal in the interval. We are asked how the matter could be advanced. The only plan we can suggest is to get people of a liberal turn of mind to join our friend in asking that the *Freethinker* be accepted. It is simply intolerable that a paper should be barred from a public library because certain of the Committee do not agree with its opinions. We have no doubt that there are enough people in Ealing in favor of justice being done to all ratepayers, if only they can be got at. And if the Library Committee will not act fairly, there is always the elections, at which the matter can be raised.

Now that the summer months are approaching there are many ways in which friends of this paper might help in the matter of circulation. In the first place, the offer to send free specimen copies to likely subscribers is still open, and this has already been the means of introducing the *Freethinker* to new readers. Next, as summer is the time when most people travel about more than at other periods of the year, there are always plenty of opportunities for doing some unobtrusive but very useful propaganda work. Those who do not file their *Freethinker* may profitably utilise them in this direction, once they are done with. The great thing is to get the paper known. Were the paper as well known as it ought to be, it might easily become a "property" in the financial sense of the term. There are only two ways of securing this. The one is by extensive, and expensive, advertising. The other is by the personal enthusiasm of all who care for the Freethought cause. The first method is beyond our power. We have, therefore, perforce to rely upon the second.

Freethinkers, particularly those whose memories go back to the earlier Bradlaugh days, will learn with regret that Mr. W. Ramsey has fallen upon evil days. Mr. Ramsey has for many years been a worker in all sorts of advanced movements; he was one of the three sentenced in 1883 during the *Freethinker* prosecution, and has of late years lectured constantly at the Freethought open-air stations in London. An attack of paralysis has now prevented him following any kind of occupation, and, like many other workers in advanced causes, he now finds himself without resources. A meeting of representatives from various London bodies, held at the Finsbury Radical Club, decided to raise a fund for his benefit. An appeal will be issued, which will be supported by Mr. J. Dent and Mr. B. T. Hall, of the Club and Institute Union; Alderman Jeffrey and Councillor Garrity, of the Metropolitan Radical Federation; Messrs. Herbert Burrows, H. Snell, G. Standring, W. Darby, Miss A. Stanley, Miss E. M. Vance, and others. Miss E. M. Vance has undertaken to receive subscriptions on behalf of the fund from readers of this notice, which will be duly acknowledged. The Committee is a representative one, and we hope that the response will be a generous, and above all, a ready one. The need is urgent, and he gives twice who gives quickly.

We are just in time to acknowledge the receipt of a card from Mr. F. J. Gould, informing us that he sails for England on the *Mauretania* on April 23. Mr. Gould has just spent three weeks in New York, giving public lessons under the auspices of the Child Welfare League, of which Mrs. Walston Brown (*née* Eva R. Ingersoll) is president. Mr. Gould appears to have had a very successful tour, and his many friends on this side will welcome his return. An article from his pen on "Educational Problems in America" will appear in these columns at an early date.

The Bethnal Green Branch N. S. S. commences its summer work in Victoria Park this afternoon (April 19) at 3.15. The lecturer is Mr. Darby. East End Freethinkers will doubtless see that the lecturer has a good audience round him. There is nothing like it to spur a speaker to do his best, and even to listen as one of a large crowd is, somehow, more enjoyable than when one is only an item among a "faithful few."

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Modern Poets.

IT is rather late in the day to poetise about war. The clatter and bluster of the war correspondent during the Balkan carnage has robbed the poet of his legitimate theme. Since those unhappy days of suppressed truth and deliberate lying we have looked with suspicion on most designs to point a moral and adorn a tale in connection with war. International scandals have been brought to light and armor-makers have figured pitiably in these disclosures. Therefore it was with grave misgivings that we read "The Wine Press," and we must confess that the epilogue was quite up to our expectations. We had one moment of a sense in which we thought that we were face to face with a truthful and reasonable attitude towards the problem, but that vanished when we came to the end.

The majority of our present-day poets are either incapable of rising above the level of popular applause and approval, or they fear to express in their language any sentiment that is likely to shake orthodox foundations. There is William Watson: he danced in the twilight of anæmic Agnosticism, but now he has rattled back to the haven of convention. We have only to read his "Moonset and Sunrise" to see that he prefers to be on the side of the angels. Following in his steps is one more poet—splendid, virile, and a natural singer; he also prefers to ruffle no feeling of good taste or defy any canon of what passes for respectability. Must we conclude that our modern poets are so many stuffed lions?

When we began the Prelude to "The Wine Press" we knew that we were on familiar ground:—

> "Sandalphon, whose white wings to heaven up-bear
> The weight of human prayer,
> Stood silent in the still eternal light
> Of God, one dreadful night."

Milton, in the valley of his genius, was never guilty of such banality. He could use reverential characters to command respect; but imagery of this kind is very feeble, and excites nothing but contempt. "White wings" and "dreadful night" seem to have a far-away echo of the nursery, and we venture this cheerfully: Sandalphon's function possesses at least one quality which we never suspected before—that of originality.

> "His wings were clogged with blood, and foul with mire,
> His body seared with fire.
> 'Hast thou no word for me?' the Master said,
> The angel sank his head."

Now observe the harmony of construction. Are angels material or not? We ask this question in the best of good faith, and we make due allowance for poetic license. What baffling problems are presented in these eight lines! They positively bristle and shout aloud to any critical reader not blinded by religious or non-religious prejudice. We should have thought that the question in the seventh line was slightly superfluous, but apparently it was considered necessary. We are reluctantly compelled to point out these absurdities to the Hall Caines of the Muse. It is with no surprise that we find the poet producing such an ill-balanced picture as that in the Prelude. If heaven could be visited, and authentic information obtained, we venture to think that religious prose and poetry writers would not provoke our sense of the ridiculous in this manner. If angels are invisible, they cannot have bloodstained wings; if they *are* visible, then it is childish to write even poetically that they up-bear the weight of human prayer. We leave the poet to take his choice of the two anomalies.

Sandalphon appears in heaven to announce that two nations are at war, and they are both invoking the Lord God of Sabaoth. This is one of those Rabelaisian situations that frequently occur in connection with the Christian faith, and one does not know whether to pity the object of Christian worship or to pity those who imagine that the Lord takes sides in the squabbles of his own children. We, as Freethinkers, will have none of this omnipotent being who is entreated, cajoled, pacified, and thanked year in year out. Neither shall we bow down to one who is supposed to be on the side of the victorious or of the defeated. To us the God of the Old Testament, when presented in the modern manner, is no more acceptable now than he was when we read of him during our childish purgatory called Sunday-school and compulsory church attendance. One important point not to be overlooked in this presentation of the Lord is this: he is not yet divorced from blood and slaughter; he still continues to be made in the image of his makers. Personally, if we needed a God (and we have not yet had that experience), we think we could choose from the world's Pantheon a much better specimen. We might go to Greece, or to India, or to Norseland. From our bookshelf we take out *Heroes and Hero-Worship*—we have not read it for ten years—and we open it and find underlined:—

> "We must get rid of Fear; we cannot act at all till then. A man's acts are slavish, not true but specious; his very thoughts are false, he thinks as a slave and a coward, till he have got Fear under his feet. Odin's creed, if we disentangle the real kernel of it, is true to this hour."

We commend the above to those who approach their own deity on their—knees. The Norse belief taught valor as its chief virtue; how easily would all other virtues take their place after that? England still staggers about in her choice of a deity with all the vices of the Old Testament and none of the virtues of present-day enlightenment. If we had no other signs of this, "The Wine Press" would convince us.

The story is one of a young man, Johann by name, called to war. He leaves his wife and child to bear arms against the Turk. With the Greek Allies he fights the hated Moslems, and at a later time is forced to fight against the Greeks. He eventually returns as a crippled invalid to find his wife and child murdered, with all the accompanying rites of the soldiers of the Cross, and his friend crucified. In the madness of despair he kills himself:—

> *O Christ of the Little Children,*
> "Over his naked blade
> Johann bowed, bowed and fell
> Gasping, Sonia, Dodi, tell
> Your God in heaven, I grow so weary
> Of all that He has made."

It was at this point that we thought we had arrived at a masterly treatment of a situation chiefly brought about through religion. But no; we read on:—

> "Conquered, we shall conquer!
> They have not hurt the soul,
> For there is another Captain
> Whose legions round us roll,
> Battling across the wastes of death
> Till all be healed and whole."

There are two more verses in a similar strain, and then we have the Epilogue, the concluding two lines of which we quote:—

> "One path of love and peace climb'd higher,
> Make straight that highway for our God."

With these we shall quote the last verse of William Watson's "Moonset and Sunrise," with its anti-Turk title and its childish prattle:—

> "Enough, if hands that heretofore
> Labored to bar His road,
> Delay henceforward nevermore
> The charioteers of God,
> Who halt and slumber, but anon
> With burning wheels drive thundering on."

Blank verse was the measure of Shakespeare's genius, but he was compelled occasionally to substitute the rhymed couplet at the end of a prologue or an act. This was caused by the demand of the vulgar patrons of the theatre. The reader will now perceive why we have quoted the two modern poets. Their conclusions are identical, and we think that we have indicated the reason of this common failing in the present day. War is a hateful business, but it is doubly so when our accepted singers have neither the Norse virtue nor the vision to throw overboard this vulgar pandering to the mob. If

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civilisation means an advance from the simple to the complex, then the introduction of the Deity into the problem of war is nothing more or less than demoralisation.

WILLIAM REPTON.

The Associative Principle in Evolution.

HERBERT SPENCER has very convincingly shown that the evolutionary process, inorganic, organic, and super-organic, consists fundamentally of an advance from an indefinite, incoherent state to a definite coherent state. In the sphere of inorganic evolution this is shown throughout by those aggregations and redistributions of matter with which physics and chemistry deal. Organic evolution shows it in the aggregations of cells into tissues, organs, and organisms, with all those ever-increasing differentiations and complexities of structure and function which form the subject-matter of morphology and physiology. Super-organic evolution shows it in the increasing coherence and definiteness which accompany the development of social communities among man and the higher animals, as dealt with, in the case of man especially, in the science of sociology. And among human societies this universal world-process culminates in ethics.

Through organic and super-organic evolution the advance from an incoherent to a coherent state manifests itself in that associative principle which seems to govern all living things, from the primitive cell to the member of a developed human society. As this associative principle—manifested in its three great divisions of sexual association, parental association, and communal association—forms the basis of ethics, it will be of considerable interest to trace its working from the very beginnings of life to its culmination in human communities, and thus to examine, as it were, morals in the making.

The growth and subdivision of a simple cell is a purely mechanical affair—a matter of equilibria between nutrition and waste; between the forces of aggregation and those of disruption. As the volume of a cell—the quantity of living matter it contains—increases more rapidly than its surface, and as all nutrition has to reach this living matter by way of the surface, there must come a stage in the cell's growth when the extent of surface can only permit of a supply of nutriment just sufficient to compensate for the waste. The cell then reaches a condition of equilibrium between nutrition and waste, and ceases to grow.

But the equilibrium is essentially an unstable one. The surface of the cell, by the very fact of its being the surface, is under different conditions to the interior of the cell, and the molecular elements of the protoplasm at the surface must, therefore, be different from the molecular elements of the interior. The protoplasm of the surface layer, by reason of its being in immediate contact with the surrounding medium, would probably be more adapted to rapid assimilation of the nutritive materials. It would probably contain a larger proportion of molecular motion—probably be of a more dynamic and active habit than the protoplasm of the interior, which would, on the other hand, exhibit a more inert, static, or sluggish character. As the cell reaches its limiting state of equilibrium, and the amount of nutriment assimilable through the surface reaches its minimum, the active surface protoplasm would tend to assimilate a disproportionately large share of it. We know that the vital functions of a cell have to be regarded as a sort of contest between the anabolic and katabolic forces of the protoplasm. As long as the amount of nutriment available through the surface is more than sufficient for the performance of these functions, the contest could go on without any disturbance of the cell's equilibrium, but, as the available supply of nutriment reaches its limit, the contest between the predominantly katabolic surface protoplasm adn the predominantly anabolic interior protoplasm would become sufficiently acute to disturb the already highly unstable equilibrium and bring about a disruption of the cell. The process of cell division would be initiated.

But this cell division would rarely be an absolutely equal division. It would very rarely happen that the plane of cleavage would pass exactly through the centre of the cell, but in the vast majority of cases the cell would divide into two portions not absolutely equal. Now, it follows from simple mathematical principles that when a spherical body, surrounded by an outer layer of material different from the inner mass, is divided by a cleavage plane into two unequal parts, the proportions of outer to inner substance in the two parts differ from each other and from that in the parent body. The smaller fragment would contain a larger proportion of outer layer to inner mass than the parent body possessed, and the larger fragment would contain a smaller proportion of outer layer to inner mass than the parent body possessed. Thus, when our supposed heterogeneously formed cell divides into two unequal "daughter cells," the smaller of the two would contain a greater proportion of active surface protoplasm than the large. Successive subdivisions would continue and increase this differentiation, and there would thus eventually be evolved two functionally different kinds of cells—small, energetic cells containing a preponderant share of active, dynamic molecular elements; and large, inert, static cells manifesting an essentially sluggish and passive habit. Now, these are well known to be the distinguishing characteristics of "male" and "female" cells—of sperm and ovum—and thus we reach the conclusion that possibly the very earliest steps in cell division may also have initiated the first step in the great associative principle—the differentiation of sex.

Without further following up this hypothesis, we find that, as a matter of fact, sex differentiation does take place very low down in the organic scale, and hence our proposed survey of the associative principle will have to begin almost at the beginning of life itself.

Though among the protozoa, reproduction is generally non-sexual, it is often effected by processes which may be described as partially sexual. Thus, in the gregarina, reproduction sometimes takes place after the previous fusion of two individuals, and in paramœcium, an infusorian form, fission is sometimes preceded by conjugation. Though in most cases the individuals uniting are alike, in some cases they are unlike in form and size, thus seeming to foreshadow the beginnings of true sexual reproduction. This is seen among the infusoria in vorticella, where the stalked form becomes joined with a small, actively swimming form. Among the radiolaria there may be simple fission, or there may be a breaking up into minute germs or zoospores. All these various methods of reproduction seem distinctly to indicate the beginnings of sex differentiation.

Among the metazoa, sexual reproduction is practically universal, but it presents many intermediate forms before the perfect type is reached. Thus, in the porifera, sexual reproduction does not seem to be completely established, though sometimes ova and spermatozoa become developed in certain parts of the organism—the female elements in the deeper layers and the male elements in the more superficial ones—and fertilisation of the former by the latter probably takes place. There is also a form of budding by gemmules which escape and develop into new sponges.

In the cœlenterata sexual differentiation takes a further step, but is not yet completely established. In hydra, non-sexual reproduction by budding takes place in summer, and sexual reproduction in winter. In the latter case, the mature ovum becomes exposed to the water by rupture of the cells surrounding it, and is fertilised by spermatozoa floating in the water. It then is shed from the parent, and eventually gives rise to a young hydra. Here we see the beginnings of sexual reproduction between distinct individuals, but it is effected in a more or less irregular and hap-

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hazard fashion. This is a characteristic which we find, indeed, in all the processes of evolution, none of which proceed straightforwardly to their goal as though under a definite and purposive guidance; but we see it nowhere more clearly than in this gradual advance of the associative principle. There is no steady forward march in serial order here, no cut-and-dried plan of progress; but all is tentative, groping, experimental, full of irregularities and overlaps, of deviations and even retrogressions.

In the composite hydroids there are some beautiful examples of division of labor into nutritive and reproductive functions—the "hydriform" zooids or polypites attending to the procurement and assimilation of food, and "medusiform" zooids to the business of reproduction. This may be regarded as a foreshadowing of the development of distinct sexual organs in the higher metozoa. Indeed, in the same sub-kingdom, among the actinozoa—corals and sea-anemones—there are always distinct reproductive organs, both sexes being sometimes represented in the same individual, but often in separate individuals. Thus, even as low down as this, we begin to pass from hermaphroditism to complete sexuality.

In the vermes the sexes are often distinct, especially among the higher worms, and in the echinoderms they are almost universally so.

Among the molluscoidea, the polyzoa—in those cases where sexual reproduction occurs—are always hermaphrodite, and their colonies are formed by continuous generation. Among the brachiopoda we have either distinct or united sexes, as also among the lower classes of the true mollusca. But the typical gastropods have the sexes separate, and among the cephalopods—the highest class of the mollusca — the sexes are always distinct. The remarkable modification of one of the "arms" of the male octopod cuttle-fish for reproductive purposes is very noteworthy.

With the arthropoda we see the sexes much more definitely separated, and sexual association thus more fully developed. The crustacea are generally uni-sexual, but parthenogenetic reproduction occurs in some of the lower orders, and in the degenerate cirripedia—barnacles and acorn-shells—the sexes are generally united. Nor is this the only instance we shall notice of a degenerate condition being accompanied by a correspondingly imperfect form of sexual association. The arachnida and myriopoda are unisexual, but in the special division, protracheata, the curious primitive form, peripatus, has the sexes sometimes united. The insects are all unisexual, but some parasitic and degenerate forms can reproduce parthenogenetically. Among the higher insects the development of secondary sexual characters (differences in outward appearance between males and females) give rise to forms of great variety and beauty. As is well known, among the social hymenoptera the "workers" are sexless; thus furnishing a case where the normal sexual association has been profoundly modified by the extraordinary degree to which the communal association has been carried in this order of insects.

Passing on towards the vertebrates, we find hermaphroditism in the tunicates or ascidians, which are generally believed to be a degenerate type of vertebrata; but in all true vertebrates there is sexual reproduction, and except in some fishes the sexes are separate. Sexual association may therefore be regarded as reaching its full expression only in this, the highest of the sub-kingdoms. However, the association is by no means equally developed throughout, but passes from an incomplete form in the lower classes to its most perfect manifestation in the mammalia. In most fishes and amphibians the ova are fertilised by the male after deposition by the female, but in the three higher classes sexual congress is universal. And with the progress of evolution through this sub-kingdom we find the sexual relationship becoming increasingly definite and increasingly permanent, till finally, in the higher orders of the mammalia, an ethical element emerges, and the mere physical impulse becomes largely supplemented by a moral emotion.

We have next to consider the second great stage of the associative principle—parental association. This takes its rise very early in evolution, but not, of course, as early as that sexual association we have been examining; though, like all other results of the evolutionary process, the order of the three stages of association is by no means strictly serial. Parental association begins long before sexual association attains completion, and communal association begins long before parental association reaches its final development.

Parental association can scarcely be said to exist below the sub-kingdom of the arthropoda, but here we can detect the faint beginnings of an instinctive care for the offspring. Among the crustacea, female crabs and lobsters carry their eggs about until they are hatched. Some female spiders make a sort of nest for their eggs, and guard them carefully. Among insects elaborate provision for the safety of the eggs is sometimes made, and the parental care displayed among the communities of the social insects is well known. But here, again, the normal course of parental association has been remarkably modified in accordance with the highly developed social organisation, the care of the eggs and larvæ being attended to by the whole community of "workers," and not by the actual parents.

Among the lower vertebrata parental association continues to develop, but it remains in the instinctive stage, and is aided in many cases by structural modifications. In some species of fishes the females carry the ova on the belly till hatched, and in others a pouch for the eggs is formed by the skin and ventral fins. The male stickleback makes a nest of grasses and weeds in which the eggs are guarded. In some cases the male carries the ova about in the pharynx, while in others abdominal brood-pouches are developed.

The amphibia exhibit various arrangements for the care of the eggs and young. In the Surinam toad the eggs are placed by the male on the back of the female, where they form small pits in which the young are hatched and developed. In another case there is a large pouch on the back of the female for this purpose. Sometimes the male carries the eggs in a pouch around its throat, and in the case of the "obstetric frog" the male winds the string of eggs round his legs and buries himself in moist soil till they are hatched.

Among reptiles parental care, though not very frequent or pronounced, assumes a more purposive character. Some female snakes and crocodiles guard their eggs and young, haunting the localities where the eggs have been laid and attacking fiercely any enemies which may approach. The female python is said to coil itself around its eggs and thus to facilitate the process of incubation.

But it is among the two highest classes of the vertebrata that parental association acquires its most definite, permanent, and developed form, and the instances are so numerous and so familiar that it is needless to cite them. No one who considers the care which the fiercest birds and beasts of prey devote to the welfare of their young—the eagle bringing food to her fledglings, or the lioness licking her cubs as they gnaw the meat she has provided—can fail to see clear instances of morals in the making. And among both birds and mammals, as is well known, the parental association becomes closer in proportion to the helplessness of the offspring when hatched or born, and to the length of time which elapses before they are able to help themselves.

We now come to the last and highest development of the associative principle, viz., communal association, or the association of individuals in communities for mutual protection, aid, and the achievement of the corporate welfare. Here intelligence plays the predominant part, and communal association, in the true sense of the word, is only seen among the birds and mammals. The communities formed by the social

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insects are indeed wonderfully organised and most perfectly adapted to their ends, but it does not seem likely that intelligence plays any part in them. The very perfection of the social arrangements in these communities—the mechanical precision with which the various functions of the social life are performed—indicate that they are brought about by blind instinct alone, and that reason, intelligence, and moral sense do not exist. But the social insects no doubt represent the highest possible achievement of terrestrial evolution along the line of instinct.

Among the three lower classes of the vertebrata the frequent groupings of large numbers of individuals in one locality seem to be the result of unavoidable conditions incidental to their manner of life rather than of deliberate choice—and deliberate choice may be regarded as the essential feature of communal association in the true sense of the term. The groupings of fishes and frogs in large numbers are due to circumstances of spawning, in which vast numbers of eggs are hatched in one locality. Crocodiles and aquatic lizards dwell together in lake or river merely because their restricted habitat compels them to do so. They would get on just as well, or better, if each pair dwelt in solitude. In all such cases the aggregation brings no mutual advantage; no aid is given or required; no real communal life is held. It may be that this is due to some failure of brain development inherent in the whole line of reptilian evolution, aided by the oviparous habit of reproduction, and this would be almost sufficient to account for that extraordinary break in the continuity of animal evolution which seems to have taken place at the close of the Mesozoic period. Here the feeble beginnings of bird and mammalian life, aided by the awakening power of the great principle of association, might easily defeat in the struggle for existence the huge, powerful, but unintelligent forms of reptile and amphibian life of the Triassic and Jurassic ages.

It is only among birds and mammals, then, that communal association really obtains, and instances of this are too familiar to need mention. It is only necessary to point out the broad fact that among both birds and mammals the degree of completeness to which the association is carried varies generally with the degree of intelligence of the species, till, reaching its culmination in man, it forms the groundwork of rational ethics.

Our brief survey has shown that the associative principle, commencing with the very beginnings of life in the form of sexual association, extends throughout the whole of organic nature known to us. And as the associative principle forms the basis of ethics, we reach the conclusion that the whole course of organic evolution has exhibited—dimly and vaguely, but none the less surely—a sort of preparation for the final development of the ethical principle. From the dawn of life we see evidences, first vague and feeble, then definite and strong, of morals in the making.

This throws an instructive light on the supposed antagonism between what Huxley called the "cosmic process" and the "ethical process"—the subject dealt with in his well-known essay, *Evolution and Ethics*. He fully recognised that the "ethical process" was itself a product of the "cosmic process"; but none the less insisted on the antagonism between the former, as exhibited in the moral order obtaining within human societies, and the latter, as exhibited in the natural order under the iron law of the survival of the fittest obtaining outside human societies. And the seeming paradox becomes all the more prominent when we regard the ethical process, not as an ultimate product of evolution making its appearance in human societies only, but as a fundamental element of organic evolution in general.

But the apparent paradox seems to be due to a tacit assumption that there exists some sort of purpose in the cosmic process. The idea of an "antagonism" between two processes must really imply that each of them has some end or design opposed to that of the other. Once we get rid of the idea of a design in the cosmic process, the notion of its being either antagonistic or favorable to the ethical process disappears, and the fact that the latter has been actually brought about by and forms part of the former involves no paradox whatever. On the contrary, this very fact that the cosmic process has itself evolved an ethical process, the full operation of which it is constantly tending to hinder, affords, to any unprejudiced mind, a very convincing indication that the universe is subject to an eternal and unalterable necessity absolutely preclusive of any element of design.

A. E. MADDOCK.

Correspondence.

IRISH UNREST.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—It is really remarkable that, despite the cause of Irish unrest being so obvious, not one of the numerous journalists who have written pages on the subject has, as yet, given a true account of it. Many and various reasons have been put forward, but all ignore the real cause.

Without hesitation I say (and I think every unprejudiced person will agree with me) the real root of the trouble is religious antagonism. It is all due to that grand Christian gospel of love one another. Unfortunately, the Christian translates the words love one another thus: love one another if they are of the same creed as yourself. Thus we have the continued rivalry of Christian against Christian.

To make myself perfectly clear, let us imagine we could take all Protestants out of Ireland. What would be the result? Why the Home Rule Bill would now be passed and in force. On the other hand, let us imagine we could take all Roman Catholics out of Ireland. What would be the result? Why Home Rule would probably not be thought of.

As the two courses I have mentioned are impossible, I can only suggest one remedy. Someone with a tremendous personality and influence, and more patience than the proverbial Job, is required to start the task of reconciling the two sects and teach them to live in peace and harmony side by side. In fact, he must get them to practice what they preach, *i.e.*, love one another. That accomplished, Irish unrest will be a thing of the past.

MANCUNIAN.

DIPHTHERIA ANTI-TOXIN.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In the course of his articles on "Organisms Antagonistic to Health," Mr. T. F. Palmer says that all known anti-bacterial products are specific; the anti-toxin of diphtheria has no preventive or remedial effect on any other disease. If this be so, can he say why firms of manufacturing chemists, on the strength of medical authority, recommend it for such diverse diseases as the following: Scarlet fever, quinsy, measles, cancrum oris, tuberculous disease, ocular inflammation, exophthalmic goitre, rhinorrhœa, asthma, whooping cough, boils and carbuncles, chronic skin diseases, hæmorrhage, erysipelas, and so on?

I suggest that the alleged "anti-toxin" has just as much, or as little, relation to these diseases as it has to diphtheria—that is to say, none at all. Can Mr. Palmer safely affirm that "anti-toxin" has any real existence, and that it is not a purely imaginary substance?

J. E. ELLAM, *Secretary*.

The Manchester Anti-vivisection Society, 9 Albert-square.

TO-DAY'S EVANGELISM.

(SAYINGS OF THE REV. WILLIAM SUNDAY.)

If any minister believes and teaches evolution he is a stinking skunk, a fraud, a hypocrite, and a liar.

There goes old Darwin. He's in hell sure.

Here, you young bulls—some of you come and take these heifers out on the grass. (A rebuke to giggling girls.)

Stand up there, you bastard evolutionist! Stand up with the Atheists and the Infidels and the w —— mongers and the adulterers and go to hell.

I'd stand on my head in a mud puddle if I thought it would give me greater power with God.

And, oh say, Jesus, better take along a pair of rubber gloves and a bottle of disinfectant, but if you can save him, Lord, I'd like to have you do it.

To hell with that kind of a minister.

—*Truthseeker* (New York).

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BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Mr. Darby, a Lecture.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, Miss Kough, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7.30, R. Rosetti, sen., a Lecture.

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Criminals are observed to grow more anxious as their trial approaches; but after their sentence is passed they become tolerably resigned, and generally sleep sound the night before its execution.—WILLIAM HAZLITT.

The Consolations of Religion.

HOW much Christians pride themselves upon the comfort their religion brings to stricken souls! It does not trouble them that very often Christianity itself is the cause of the unrest its doctrines are supposed to allay. The larger number of those who write in all sincerity about the comfort they have derived *from* religion are exactly those who have been made uncomfortable *by* religion. The evangelist's object has always been to arouse in people what he calls a "sense of sin"; and this, in plain English, meant frightening them with the fear of hell in the more orthodox times, making them feel generally uncomfortable under more civilised conditions, and then offering another dose of the doctrine that caused the trouble as its only certain cure. He supplies a quack remedy for a purely imaginary disease. Without Christianity these people would never have needed the comfort of religion. They would have lived a fairly comfortable life and died without, as someone once remarked, the consoling knowledge that there was a hell to go to.

Who is it that talk loudest of the comfort that Christianity brings them? It is a commonplace of observation that the most worthy persons are precisely those who derive the least comfort from their faith. The more sensitive a man is, the more intelligent he is, the more fervently he strives to do his duty, the more he is tortured by doubt as to whether he is really saved, or even whether he is worthy of being saved. On the other hand, the more callous and the more brutalised he is, the more confidently he talks of the beatific rewards awaiting him in the next world. Look at the accounts of Salvation Army converts. There is the burglar, retired from the cares of his profession at an age when to follow it becomes more and more difficult. The almost chronic drunkard, the wife-beater, the thief, the loafer. One never gets any doubt as to the reward waiting for them now they have accepted Jesus. They are quite sure they are saved. Their past lives seem to give them added importance in their own eyes, and they evidently feel it is the same in the eyes of their Savior also. They realise that they are rare catches, jewels in the Savior's crown; the past evil of their lives is their principal claim to favor, and many, as they gloat over their past misdeeds—to the envy of those listeners who have led more humdrum careers—appear to feel genuinely sorry that they were not worse.

Turn from them to the lives of really admirable men in Christian history, and you at once miss this note of confidence. *They* are often oppressed with doubts as to their ultimate salvation; they realise that their salvation may not be so certain as some would believe. The very excellence of their lives, the sensitiveness of their nature, the keenness of their intelligence, gives birth to doubts that stupidity, coarseness, and brutality are secure against. The genuine saint—to use a religious term but with ethical meaning—is tortured by doubt. The convicted murderer dies without a glimmer of suspicion as to the certainty of his eternal salvation. What a religion that makes a good man doubtful of his own worth and fills the brute with an unshakable conviction of his own value!

Have I overstated the case? Let us see. On Monday, April 13, four men were executed in the United States. Three of the four were Jews, the fourth was a Roman Catholic. But they were all religious, and so may be taken together as they all died in the same way. They were united in death as in life. They were the agents of ex-police Lieutenant Becker, who is under sentence of death, but whose sentence is deferred pending appeal. Becker was, and is, a pious man—a Roman Catholic—who spends part of his time in prison in religious meditation, and confesses remorse for only one deed in his life, that of remarrying after being divorced. Another of the crew, Jack Rose, saved himself by turning States' Evidence, and is now doing a flourishing business as a travelling evangelist. A pretty gang! All of them pious, all convinced of the truth of religion, all probably as ready to expatiate on the immoral consequences of unbelief, as they are certain of their own salvation.

All these men were convicted of graft and murder. They had blackmailed the public, organised vice, and drawn profit from its existence, and had murdered when blackmail was refused or a witness appeared who was likely to prove troublesome. The particular offence for which these four men were executed was that of murdering a witness who was ready to give evidence against them. Two of the four men have left messages warning other people of their sinful ways—it is quite characteristic of the type to set up as moral preceptors to their fellows—and admit that they had "praying fathers and mothers." Poor fathers and mothers! The poor old people had doubtless prayed that their sons would grow up good men. They had prayed over them as little children, as youths, as mature men. And the answer to their prayers was electrocution in an American prison. What a commentary on the efficacy of prayer!

Before the four men were executed a prayer meeting was held in the corridor of the prison. The meeting was led by a Roman Catholic priest, but a couple of Jewish Rabbis joined in, as did also the prison chaplain. Two nuns who were present belonging to the Franciscan order, told "Dago Frank," the Catholic criminal, that on the morning of the execution the whole of their order would pray for their souls for two hours. These people had a most appreciative audience. Schmidt, the lecherous priest who brutally murdered his paramor, was present and joined in the service. Twelve other men under sentence of death, with three Chinamen, also convicted of murder, followed suit. The whole of them went on their knees and followed the service with attention, and, one may add, with conviction. The Litany was read to them, they recited the Lord's Prayer, they doubtless rose from their knees full of faith in a sure and glorious resurrection. It was a touching scene. Not many people have the same care bestowed upon their immortal welfare. One needs to be sentenced to death for a sensational murder to secure such treatment. Ordinary folk

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must get to heaven as best they can. A small detachment of specialists was told off in this case to see that their passage was secure. If orthodox Christianity be true these men are to be envied. Other people may end their days in suspense, "Lefty Louie," "Dago Frank," "Whitey Louis," and "Gyp the Blood" met their deaths untroubled by the slightest doubts. "Go thou and do likewise" seems the not illogical moral of the whole business.

From the gramaphone playing of "Whispering Hope," the evening before the execution, down to the electrocution, there was no break in the religious serenity of the proceedings. Nothing occurred to shock the officiating ministers of religion. "Dago Frank," the first to be executed, "carried a crucifix in each hand and was escorted by a priest." "Into thy hands, O God, I commend my spirit," he murmured at quick intervals. He was, says the report, "a young man, with beautifully cut features and dark, innocent eyes." One can imagine the beatific expression on his face as he took his last farewell glance at the world. "Listen, Israel; there is only one God," were the last words of "Gyp the Blood." What "Lefty Louie" said we are not told, but judging from his share in the religious services, we may assume that his last moments were equally pious. "Whitey Louis" attempted to make a statement, but it was cut short by death.

With all, not a single word of regret for their past careers. With only a few moments to live, they could not, perhaps, be expected to think of this world. Bent upon saving their souls, we ought not to expect that the clergymen who ministered to them should remind them of it. Their business was to save the souls of the prisoners. The prisoners business was to see that their souls were saved. The thieves on the cross were not sent to paradise because they regretted their past misdeeds but because they believed in Jesus. The four blackmailers and murderers were saved because of their religious belief. It is a glorious thing, religion! It can make the murderer anxious about his soul at the foot of the scaffold. But it can neither stop him getting there, deserving to get there, nor feel sorry towards the society he has outraged when he has arrived there.

Religion cannot divorce itself from the responsibility for these men. If they had been Freethinkers we should have heard much of the demoralising influences of unbelief. Articles would have been written, sermons would have been preached, tracts would have been written, all pointing out to the world where men land once they have given up faith in God and in a future life. It was not so in this case. They came of a religious stock. Two of the four, at least, had "praying parents." They had lived all their lives in a society saturated with religion, and they accepted religious ministrations up to the end with thankfulness and appreciation. What had religion done for them? Or, better still, how had religion served society in relation to these men? Of course, religion did not teach them to blackmail and murder, but at least it had not prevented their doing both. It had given them the faith that moves mountains, for it had evidently convinced them that, in spite of their past careers, their future was safe. But it could not make them decent citizens. Doubtless, some of the clergymen will "improve" their sermons with many reflections as to the way in which religion appeals to *even* the sin-saturated mind of the condemned convict. But they would do wisely to act carefully in the matter. It may be that some of the congregation might reflect that a low state of mental and moral development, and the power of religious appeal, have, perhaps, something in common.

Would I deny the dying convict the comfort of religion? I would neither deny it nor enforce it. It is no vital interest to me how men die; it is of far greater concern how they live. Society has no special interest in death-beds; it has a very great concern in active lives. What concern is it of mine or yours that these men die with the words of religious conviction on their lips, if they have lived up to that last moment dabbling their hands in all kinds of villainy? Neither their lives nor their characters can have undergone any change. They do but add cowardice to their bad qualities. They do not regret what they have done, they merely regret having been caught doing it. The man who breaks every social law, and then pays the full penalty with a jest on his lips, is really a less disgusting spectacle than the blackmailer and murderer marching to the scaffold with a crucifix in either hand, buoyed up by the hope of eternal salvation. A religion that cannot keep men from reaching the state of these men, but can only secure their salvation at the last moment, may be a good religion for the gaol and its inmates; but it is no creed for honest men and women.

C. Cohen.

The Anglican Church in a Bog.

The Kikuyu conference is bearing fruit with a vengeance, and of several kinds, one of which is persecution. We learn, on the authority of Dr. Wirgman, Archdeacon of Port Elizabeth, that the evangelical Bishop Peel, of Mombasa, who favors the idea that Anglicans and Nonconformists should sit together occasionally, specially on the mission fields, at the Lord's Table, has himself, "by his actions, and with no authority but his own, virtually broken off communion with the diocese of Zanzibar." The Bishop of Zanzibar is at present in this country for the purpose of explaining and defending his vigorous protest against the unorthodox and unanglican proceedings at the Kikuyu assembly; and in his absence from his bishopric Dr. Peel was requested to hold an ordination, which he positively refused to do. This refusal, Dr. Wirgman contends, "was an act of severance from a diocese in full communion with the See of Canterbury, as his own diocese still professes to be." Now, the island of Zanzibar and Mombasa, another small island close to the mainland of British East Africa, are within easy communication with each other, and it is alleged that native communicants from the former, who visit the latter in search of work, are threatened with "suspension from Communion if they make the sign of the Cross at the reception." Here is the Low Church, which boasts of its evangelicalism, persecuting the High Church, which glories in its orthodoxy. But "far worse, and even wicked," Dr. Wirgman adds, "was the action of the Mombasa clergy who refused to hear the confessions of their poor people and to give them Absolution, as the Prayer Book directs." Dr. Wirgman considers this to be "a more serious act of schism even than the Bishop of Mombasa's refusal to ordain." In our opinion all these happenings at the Anglican Mission only proves that the Christian religion is the most violently disruptive agency that has ever been inflicted upon a deplorably gullible race, illustrating so pathetically the truth of the words attributed to its alleged founder:—

> "Think ye that I am come to give peace in the earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division; for there shall be from henceforth five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. They shall be divided, father against son, and son against father; mother against daughter, and daughter against her mother; mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law" (Luke xii. 51-53).

The state of things at home is even worse than it is in the mission fields. For months religious factions have been at daggers drawn, denouncing and threatening one another in the most furious fashion. The *Catholic Herald* calls the Anglican Church "that city of confusion," out of which Miss Jessie Southwell, secretary of the Universities' Mission, has just fled to find peace in the true fold "where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest." The Kikuyu controversy has enabled the same organ to write derisively of "the Anglican chaos." Both

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descriptions are accurate, and we find the Bishop of Oxford candidly admitting that the Church he loves is in danger of becoming "a mere concensus of jarring atoms, held together by some external bond." We hold that the Bishop's malediction is at this moment fulfilled. There is no such thing as orthodoxy in the Church of England, nor is it possible to establish a standard of orthodoxy therein, as it is at present constituted. Its various canons are not binding on the laity. These may hold what opinions they please; and in reality so may the clergy. But what about the Thirty-Nine Articles? someone may ask. The Articles exist, and there is an Act of Parliament authorising the punishment of any clergyman who disbelieves them, it is true; but the court, in every case, construes the Articles, and the interpretation is such that a trial for heresy cannot succeed. Fifty years ago the Convocation of the Province of Canterbury passed judgment upon the famous *Essays and Reviews;* but the Lord Chancellor, speaking on behalf of the Government, declared that it was "simply nothing, literally no sentence at all." One of the authors of that heretical volume became Archbishop of Canterbury, and another an illustrious Master of Balliol.

We now see how utterly futile is Bishop Gore's appeal to "the ancient fundamental faith of the Catholic Church as expressed in creeds and conciliar decisions of the undivided Church." As a matter of fact, all creeds and conciliar decisions are dead except in the Church of Rome. What have the great scholars of the Established Church been doing during the last fifty years? Quietly, unobtrusively burying the Articles of Religion. "Meanwhile," exclaims Dr. Gore, "the great body of the Church has been blind or indifferent to what has been going on." The clerical scholars have come to the conclusion that most of the miracles recorded in the Bible "are for us to-day unbelievable, not chiefly on the grounds of the evidence, but on grounds of general scientific and historical principle." The Bishop's sole argument for the retention of the belief in the miracles thus rejected is derived from the fact that it has always been the fundamental belief of the Catholic Church. He calls upon his clerical brethren of all grades, in a peremptory tone, "to undertake the painful duty of thinking." However peremptory that call may be, it will not be heeded except by those who are, to some extent at least, prepared to follow their reason. Men occupying the Bishop's position are perfect strangers to honest, genuine thinking. It is *believers*, not *thinkers*, who can hold and defend the orthodox creed, and old-fashioned believers are rapidly dying out. Thinking nearly drove the great Newman to raving madness; and to escape from thinking for himself and becoming an Atheist, he joined the Church of blind believers. Dr. Gore's greatest book, the Bampton Lectures on the *Incarnation*, is not the production of a straightforward thinker, but a theoretical theologian, whose one object is to explain, which he does most lucidly, and defend, "the ancient fundamental faith of the Catholic Church." We never read a clearer exposition of the faith than that well-known work provides, but as a defence of the same, it fails at every point. It is distinctly not a faith for twentieth century *thought*, but for mediæval *credulity*. We are convinced that the Bishop does hold it in all sincerity, but, apart from his social sympathies, his lordship is not a modern man; and the modern man is not likely to respond to his bugle call.

Passing from the Bishop's antiquated theology to his equally obsolete theory of the Church, we find that the absurdity of his position increases. In this respect he is a Catholic outside the jurisdiction of the Pope. The Kikuyu controversy has opened his eyes to the grim necessity of converting "a Protestant-minded country" to the Catholic idea of the Church. That is the mission of the Anglican High Church party. The Catholic conception of the Church, as interpreted by Dr. Gore, is as follows:—

> "I venture to say that nothing is more certain than that in the New Testament as it stands, and, I believe, in the strict truth of history, the Founder of our religion instituted a visible Church in such sense that membership of the new covenant in Christ coincided simply with membership of the one visible Church. I think that careful reading of the New Testament will show how much of the moral discipline of Christians was meant to lie in the obligation of all Christians to submit to the authority—the binding and loosing—of the one body."

Then he defines the Sacraments as "covenanted instruments of the spiritual gifts of Christ to the individual, the means of communion with Christ, and also social ceremonies, ceremonies of a society, so that the institution of sacraments served to emphasise, through the Christian's whole life, the fact that communion with Christ, under the new covenant, was not otherwise to be looked for than in the communion of the one visible Church." These Sacraments, to be efficacious, must be administered by episcopally ordained clergymen. Now, if the Anglican Communion is to hold together, whether in the mission field or at home, the following "contentious positions" must be rigorously maintained:

> "The requirement of episcopal ordination for the regular ministry; the requirement of an episcopally ordained priest to celebrate the Eucharist; the requirement of episcopal confirmation by laying on of hands, or at least of the readiness to receive it where it can be had, before admission to communion."

If that idea of the Church and its ministry be true, it necessarily follows that the overwhelming majority of English, Scotch, and Welsh people must inevitably be everlastingly damned. The saving mercies of heaven flow only through episcopal channels, and if you lie outside these you are doomed to eternal perdition. The Bishop will not admit this openly, but it is to this that his system logically leads. It is a signal blessing to this land that the Church of Rome is represented in it as well; but the curious thing is that the Roman Church persistently laughs this Anglican claim to scorn. The Pope indignantly declines to recognise the validity of Anglican orders, just as Anglicans refuse to admit the validity of Nonconformist orders. Just as Rome will not enter into fellowship with the English Church, so the English Church shuts its doors at the approach of any non-episcopal communions.

Thus is the Christian religion reduced to a contemptible absurdity by its own champions. Fancy a God of infinite love, a Savior of boundless compassion, or a Holy Ghost of omnipotent graciousness, being tied down to the stupendously mean line of action sketched out by the good Bishop of Oxford. And yet we are truly thankful to his lordship for coming out in his real colors. He has thereby rendered a genuine service, for a time to Rome, and permanently to the cause of Freethought.

J. T. LLOYD.

Educational Problems in America.

BEFORE leaving the hospitable American shore, I would like to give readers of the *Freethinker* a brief account of the object and incidents of the tour which I undertook in the United States, beginning October 6, 1913, and ending in April, 1914. The object was to show parents and teachers, and particularly teachers of the public schools (that is, the schools of the people, roughly corresponding with, but taking in a larger variety of social classes than, the English Council schools), how the subject of personal and social conduct may be made interesting and stimulating to young minds. I did this by means of public demonstration-lessons, delivered to girls and boys, usually aged eleven to fourteen, who sat with their backs to adult audiences and talked with me as if nobody else was present. On the departure of the class, the meeting was always thrown open to discussion, though, as a rule, I did not find American audiences much inclined to put questions or raise doubts. When, a year or so ago, I was in India, I experienced a different situation, for the Hindu mind

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delights in controversy on ethical and philosophical topics.

At the moment of writing, my tour has not concluded, but I suppose that, by the end of April, I shall have given about 280 lessons to different groups of American children, met more than 20,000 people, and visited thirty-two cities in eleven States, ranging from New York in the east to Missouri in the middle west. In all places, except New York, I was officially associated with the local school boards. My program in New York was framed by the International Child Welfare League, of which the late Colonel Ingersoll's daughter (Mrs. Walston Hill Brown) is the president; and a supremely kind-hearted president she makes.

It is a great mistake to suppose that the moral and civic instruction which I have for many years advocated involves preaching and moralising. To me, the word *moral*, in connection with teaching, represents something sparkling, imaginative, courageous, dramatic, and joyous. I have often said to audiences that, as a teacher, I want to be as attractive as the moving picture show, or the writer of the blood-and-thunder tales which fascinate the plastic young heart and brain. As I conceive the business of character-training, the chief instrument should be, not so much a perpetual talk about what "ought" to be done as a recital of what is done, and has been done. The history of the world brims over with records of (to use a Platonic phrase) the true, the beautiful, and the good. I have read a colossal amount about the crimes and imbecilities of the human race; but I do not hesitate to affirm that the tale of what is noble and wholesome is richer in quantity and more extensive in its range. My idea of moral instruction is the revelation of these splendid actualities to the imagination and reason of the young. It is as if one said to the youth who will soon take the place of the elder generation:—

> "This is the kind of world you are born into. This is the stage you are beginning to tread. Such are the manners and customs of this human cosmos; and he who would play the man should understand what the love, order, and progress of our race has meant, and means, and is likely to mean for ages yet to come."

Is not this a very different attitude from that of the melancholy people who consider that the civilisation of the past has been more or less a failure, and a chaos, and who desperately advise the young to leave the bad world better than they found it? We who write in the journals and discuss ethics and philosophy are too apt to think that the morality of the race has chiefly been expressed in speech and literature. As a matter of fact, the morality of the race has been chiefly expressed in kindly deeds and daily industry by men and women who spoke rather bad grammar, had small incomes, and possessed few distinctions or accomplishments. For tens of thousands of years such people cultivated honest fruit and corn, and reared babies to vigorous adulthood and social co-operation; and these were truly eminent services, which constitute the real Bible of Humanity. Moral instruction is the revelation of this continuous neighborly action from the primitive epoch to the rise of this morning's sun. This action, indeed, is civilisation itself. So that we may put the case in another way, and assert that moral education is the transmission of the message of civilisation to the individual child. The message has been uttered by Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, Swinburne; by the fabulists and allegorists of Asia and Europe; by the Greek, Roman, Hindu, and Christian parables and mythologies; by the legends of the saints of all faiths; by novelists and ballad-makers; in short, by the grand old, and yet ever-renewed tribe of the story-tellers.

The revelation should be positive rather than negative. By this I mean that the accent should be placed upon the sane and generous rather than on the evil and mean. If you tell of the valor of Socrates in openly expressing his thoughts on human morality; if you tell of the great-heartedness of Trajan in pausing to answer the widow's prayer; if you tell of the courage of Picquart in exposing the wrong done to Dreyfus,—you are holding actions up to admiration; and Wordsworth has said, in an immortal line, that "we live by admiration, hope, and love."

So-called moralists,—dull, wizened, and kill-joy pedants,—have tortured the soul of childhood with solemn warnings, ponderous maxims (such as "Procrastination is the thief of time"), and terrific narratives of bad boys who got hanged or jailed for life, or descended to a drunkard's grave; and other tales of the skull-and-cross-bones order. This is the cynicism of ancient Diogenes in his tub; the dualism of the Gnostics, who regarded all the material world as evil; the Calvinism which damned man as born in iniquity; the Philistinism of the nineteenth century which supposed the working class was specially created to do plumbing and scavenging and to have its faults corrected by drawing-room committees. Of course, we want faults corrected, especially among the professional and college-taught classes; of course, we must condemn vice; of course, we must employ police, prisons, and punishments; of course, we must enforce the menacing but necessary "Thou shalt not." But the genuine work of education is to energise and inspire, to encourage and unfold; to move the heart by the thought of the best things in man's history, and to develop that magnanimous love which spurns meanness, pities weakness, and glories in promoting fellowship, music, and mutual service. This is the positive spirit of the twentieth century contrasted with the decadent spirit which treats morality as a machine for chastising sin.

In a preceding paragraph, I referred to the Christian mythology. But I should never use such a phrase when addressing the young citizens in the public school. In their presence the voice of philosophical criticism and controversy must be hushed, and the teacher must speak, not as a Jew, a Christian, an Agnostic, a Hindu, a Moslem, a Parsi, a Theosophist, but as a representative of the general community, detached from party issues of all kinds. For years, I have had the high privilege of illustrating this respectful neutrality of the civic platform, and I have taught the children of the various schools of belief and speculations just enumerated. I have done this hundreds of times publicly, so that men and women might hear and judge for themselves. In the United States, for example, I have seen, commingled in one audience, Christian Scientists, Rationalists, Presbyterians, Hebrews, and, occasionally (and to my delight), one or two young Hindu students. Once, I taught a class in a schoolroom, and on one side of the children sat a Lutheran pastor listening, and opposite him a group of Catholic sisters robed in black and white. I apologise for the personal character of these evidences; but only in such ways do I find it possible to render clear the meaning of the civic basis of ethical teaching in the people's schools.

F. J. GOULD.

Philadelphia, Pa., U.S.A, April 5, 1914.

The Patron Saint of England.

> "Our ancient word of courage, fair St. George
> Aspire us with the spleen of fiery dragons."
> —SHAKESPEARE, *Richard III.*

ON the back of a half sovereign, that painfully rare object, you may see a design of a man on horseback apparently killing a cockroach with a carving knife. This is meant to portray St. George and the dragon, and the man is supposed to be the patron saint of our "tight little island." The inclusion, during recent years, of the harmless, necessary Union Jack among the symbols of our most holy religion has led to a renewed interest in the personality of St. George, and it was, indeed, fondly hoped that, by the help of the Almighty and the editor of a halfpenny paper, many otherwise decent citizens might be per-

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suaded to observe April 23, St. George's Day, by wearing roses.

The suggestion, as might have been expected, fell flat; but it may prove interesting to many to be informed who the saint was, his connection with English history, and his association with the national flower.

We regret exceedingly to find that the saint's biography is not pleasant reading, and quite unsuited for the perusal of young persons, and the still more youthful "buds" of the Primrose League. Historians agree in disclosing a pitiable story of a misspent life. From the highest to the lowest, from Gibbon to William Smith, they describe the saint as an unadulterated rascal. Even Emerson can find no redeeming traits in the saintly sinner's character. Hear what Emerson has to say:—

> "George of Cappadocia, born at Epiphania, in Cilicia, was a low parasite, who got a lucrative contract to supply the army with bacon."

This is a bad start; but for the moment we refrain from levelling the guns of our criticism at the holy army contractor.

> "A rogue and informer, he got rich and was forced to run from justice."

This seems to suggest that St. George sold pigs which had died natural deaths, was a swindler, and had learnt the art of sprinting at the psychological moment.

> "He saved his money, embraced Arianism, collected a library, and got promoted by a faction to the episcopal throne of Alexandria."

Like the Army contractors who did business in the South African War, St. George had his saintly head screwed on the right way. As for his collecting a library, his previous commercial reputation was sufficiently bad to prevent the booksellers allowing the saint any credit. We may be equally certain that his ordination as a right reverend father-in-God was also against the public interest.

> "When Julian came, A D. 361, George was dragged to prison. The prison was burst open by the mob, and George was lynched as he deserved."

There is something very distressing in the idea of a bishop being "jerked to Jesus." If the saint had died of *delirium tremens* we might still have remembered prayerfully that even bishops are but human. This lynching is a dreadful business, and we read through a mist of tears Emerson's peroration:—

> "And this precious knave became in good time Saint George of England, patron of chivalry, emblem of victory and civility, and the pride of the best blood of the modern world."

A lemon-hearted cynic might liken the history of the patron saint of England to a disgusting page from the earlier books of the Bible, or the *Newgate Calendar*. Some modern historians, realising the disgraceful nature of George's career, have made desperate attempts to whitewash the career of the holy man. They have succeeded, after silent meditation among the tombs, in deceiving themselves that George was not George, but another gentleman of the same name. Criticism, sharp as Shylock's knife, cuts their nonsense to pieces. The tutelary saint of England, like so many Biblical heroes, was a blackguard, and there is an end of it.

A far more serious matter is that the founder of the religion, of which St. George was so distinguished a follower, would not command the smiles of Mrs. Grundy. For Jesus was merely the son of a working man, and he was born in a stable. He insulted his mother publicly, and used the Pankhurst methods of controversy. People who disagreed with him were called "vipers," "devils," and "dogs." From the time he disputed with the "doctors" until he whipped the money-changers, he proved himself a true militant in propaganda. He would never have been fitted for a working-party at a tin tabernacle or an evangelical lawn-tennis meeting.

What is worse is that Jesus was not a teetotaler. On the contrary, he even encouraged people to keep their spirits up by pouring spirits down. He also associated with "publicans" and sinners. As these tradesmen are the backbone of the Church party, this need not scare us, but what does Upper Tooting think of Mary Magdalene? Jesus's views on sociology approximated very closely to anarchy. The topsy-turvy ideas he had concerning the distribution of wealth, his panegyrics of poverty, his denunciation of riches, all have a flavor about them. But the last straw, the thing that places the Carpenter of Nazareth beyond the pale of respectability, is that he did not respect the clergy. Small wonder that he left his country for his country's good. Surely, an executed criminal is not a fit patron for the handsome knights, fair dames, and fairer buds of the Primrose League.

Fortunately, English society is too firmly anchored to be washed away by the paltry spray of superstition. Here, we are thankful to remember religion is a plaything, and not a reality. It is an organised hypocrisy worked in the interests of the governing classes. Under the spiritual sceptres of Buddha, Confucius, Mahomet, or even Mumbo Jumbo, precept is united with practice. But here, on virtuous English soil, we lightly tread the Primrose League path until the poppy of oblivion is scattered on the graves of George, the pork dealer, and his master, the carpenter and joiner of Nazareth.

MIMNERMUS.

Darwin and Design.

IN a very early stage of his intellectual development, the idea must have occurred to man that, if God was the author of everything in the universe, every creature from the monad up to man, and every faculty they possessed, must have been designed by the omnipotent and all-wise Ruler of the universe for some special and wise purpose. It would be difficult to determine the exact age of this argument, or who among the ancient philosophers put it forth with the greatest clearness and force. It is certain, however, that it may be found among the writings of some of the Greek philosophers, and that it has been presented through many centuries under various guises. Since the conflict between reasoners who have argued for a materialistic basis for all phenomena and those who have taken the spiritualistic or dualistic view, the design argument has had a prominent place in all important disputations on the existence of Deity.

No one, I think, will deny that, so far as this argument is concerned, its great popularity in Europe has been due to the excellent way in which it has been supported by the memorable illustrations of Paley, from which it was sought to demonstrate an exact analogy between the watch and its maker and the universe and its supposed author.

Even according to the early belief of Darwin himself, there was nothing inconsistent in the ideas of natural selection and design. God might have designed the universe, the naturalist affirmed, and have imparted to it the potentialities from which all forms of life have since sprung. In that case natural selection would be but the working out of God's plan or design. A little thought, however, will be sufficient to convince us that in this the great naturalist has misunderstood the argument as it is presented by the theologian; for, according to all theistic reasoners up to within the last few years, when they have been compelled to accept the doctrine of evolution or be considered unworthy of the consideration of scientific or thoughtful men, God designs things just as we find them to-day—civilised man, with good eyes and perfect frame; that he did not design an animal or a variety of animals, and allow a number of other animals to be developed from them that are now considered distinct species; but that he created the variety of existing creatures just as we find them to-day in the various countries of the world.

Before we consider the value, or otherwise, of the design argument in the light of modern thought, it

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is worthy of notice that coming, as it does, distinctly under the head of arguments of the mode *à posteriori*, that is, reasoning from effect to cause, it must be acknowledged to be a purely scientific argument. In answer to the question, "To what class of inductive argument does this one—from marks of design in nature—belong?" John Stuart Mill, in his posthumous essay on *Nature and Theism*, answers:—

> "The species of inductive arguments are four in number, corresponding to the four inductive methods—the method of agreement, of difference, of residues, and of concomitant variations. The argument under consideration falls within the first of these divisions—the method of agreement. This is, for reasons known to inductive logicians, the weakest of the four; but the particular argument is a strong one of its kind."

Now, my own opinion is that Mill attached to the design argument greater value than it really deserved. The point upon which he laid much stress was the improbability of the principle of the survival of the fittest "being sufficient to account for the degree of perfection found in some of the organs of man, such, for instance, as the eye"; but even this hypothesis he did not think so absurd as many suppose.

It would, he says,

> "require us, for example, to suppose that the primeval animal, of whatever nature it may have been, could not see, and had, at most, such slight preparation for seeing as might be constituted by some chemical action of light upon its cellular structure. One of the accidental variations which are liable to take place in all organic beings would, at some time or other, produce a variety that could see in some imperfect manner; and, this peculiarity being transmitted by inheritance while other variations continued to take place in other directions, a number of races would be produced who, by the power of even imperfect sight, would have a great advantage over all other creatures which could not see, and would, in time, extirpate them from all places, except, perhaps, a few very peculiar situations underground. Fresh variations supervening would give rise to races with better and better seeing powers, until we might at last reach as extraordinary a combination of structures and functions as is seen in the eyes of man and of the more important animals. Of this theory, when pushed to this extreme point, all that can now be said is that it is not so absurd as it looks, and that the analogies which have been discovered in experience favorable to its possibility far exceed what anyone could have supposed beforehand. Whether it will be possible to say more than this is at present uncertain."

Neither Mill nor Darwin, however, lived long enough to learn of the vast mass of evidence that has since been accumulated in support of this theory. Later writers on Evolution—especially Haeckel—have brought forward an overwhelming amount of evidence to demonstrate that functions precede organs, and that some animals now exist that see without organs, or that are conscious of the presence of light or of some distinct object.

But what is the value of this design argument when examined in the light of reason and common sense? It is affirmed in the first instance that nature manifests marks of design as a whole, or in objects taken by themselves; that it is inconceivable that these manifestations could have been brought about by any number of haphazard occurrences, or by occurrences that have happened by the inherent properties of bodies—indeed, these manifestations carry with them the evidence of having been produced by some intelligent agent behind phenomena which Theists unanimously proclaim to be God. Then we have the illustration of the watch, and upon that is founded an argument that there is a complete analogy between the maker of a watch, with all its complicated mechanism, and the alleged maker of the universe. Although this argument is rather out of date to-day, it is worthy of notice for the benefit of young Freethinkers, who may have it presented to them in one of its manifold guises, and who may not have heard or seen an examination of it in the light of reason and common sense. Well, here it is. It is said: "Here is a watch: obviously that watch did not make itself. Mechanism of so complicated and delicate a nature could not have so arranged itself without the aid of an intelligent person behind it. If that is admitted, then it is acknowledged that watches are made; that they are constructed by intelligent persons. If a watch," it is then argued, "requires an intelligent person to make it, how much more does the universe, infinitely more complicated and admirable in its working, require an intelligent Creator to produce it?" Or, to take another familiar illustration: "Look at the human eye. See what a delicate and beautiful organ it is—how admirably adapted for the purpose of seeing. Could it possibly occur that, in a universe such as this, an organ so perfect in all its parts could come to be possessed by man and the lower animals by any process short of Design?" The human hand is sometimes adduced as another effective piece of evidence of the existence of a designing mind in the universe.

Now, man cannot possibly transcend his own experience; and all his judgments are necessarily based upon it. And it will be observed that this argument from marks of design is one purely drawn from experience. A man sees a watch made, or sees a man whose business it is to make watches; he therefore concludes that all watches are made. If, however, instead of being made by hand, they were fashioned by machinery, the materials only being required to be placed in the cavity of a machine, he would still know that watches were made and that the machinery was constructed by the ingenious mind of some man. It is merely, so far, a matter of experience, and not a question of complicated structure at all. In point of fact, if a man saw a wooden watch that contained no wheels, no mainspring, and that was of no practical use, he would still conclude that it was made. He would know the man who made it; or, at worst, he would know a man who knew the man who made it. On the other hand, a savage seeing a watch for the first time would be very unlikely to think that it had been made. He would be very likely to think, if it was a watch in good going order, and if he heard it tick, that it was alive. Why? Because he has no experience of watchmakers. But if a watch is made, the maker is not also the manufacturer of the materials out of which he manipulates it. These are already at hand; his design, or contrivance, consists merely in skilfully arranging certain parts to produce a certain result. In this case, therefore, there is no analogy between the maker of a watch and the maker of a universe. According to all Theists, God is also the maker of the materials out of which he produces so many designs. Now, while man has some experience of watchmakers, he has absolutely none of universe-makers, and, therefore, he cannot say that the universe was made. Moreover, there is, in reality, no resemblance whatever between the natural processes of nature and the artistic works of man. Nobody ever saw anybody who made a tree; and there is absolutely no analogy between a manufactured article and the natural processes of nature, such as the growth of a tree from the seed or a human being from a germ. Unless we knew the Deity and understood his capabilities, it would be merely assumption on our part to affirm that he was the maker of trees, or indeed, that he was the maker of anything. In another article I will deal with the question of the alleged design of the human eye by an all-wise and all-good God; but, for the present, let me urge the young Freethinker to apply the rational tests which I have applied above to all arguments of this order that may be advanced by theologians and he will find that, in every case, they are utterly fallacious and unconvincing.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

We call men *dangerous* whose minds are made differently from our own, and *immoral* those who profess another standards of ethics. We condemn as *sceptics* all who do not share our own illusions, without ever troubling our heads to inquire if they have others of their own.—*Anatole France*, "*The Garden of Epicurus.*"

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Acid Drops

Lord William Cecil and half-a-dozen other clergymen have issued an appeal for another day of prayer for China, following the example set in April of last year. It will be remembered how Christian preachers, from the Bishop of London downward, piled falsehood on falsehood in connection with that day of prayer. Christians at home were led to believe that China was pleading for the prayers of Christians, and that the conversion of China was imminent. "The intercession of the Churches," say the signatories to the present appeal, "was immediately followed by a relief of the situation." What a terminological inexactitude! As a matter of fact, China has been in continuous trouble ever since, and conditions now seem to be very serious indeed. And the prayers of the Churches, instead of hastening the Christianisation of China—if they had any consequence at all—led to the promulgation of Confucianism as the State religion.

Sir Thomas Clouston, M.D., says that in his experience of 2,000 alcoholic cases, nine-tenths of them took to drink before they were twenty five years of age. We may point out that the same thing holds good of religious conversion. They are both essentially complaints of adolescence.

Rev. H. Montgomery, ex-Moderator of the Irish Presbyterian Church, writes to the *Times* expressing his thanks for "the stream of intercession" that has gone up from English Christians on behalf of his "distracted country," and hopes for "earnest intercession to the Great Deliverer" to give light to all concerned. Now, we wonder whether the "stream of intercession" or the Ulster Volunteers has been the more effective? And is the "Great Deliverer" Sir Edward Carson or someone else? The worst of these pious folk is that they mix things up so terribly. Now, if they would only turn out Sir Edward Carson and disband the Volunteers, and trust to the "stream of intercession," one would then be able to see what it was worth. As it is, things are mixed up terribly.

The imitation of Christ must not go so far as having nowhere to rest one's head—at least in a Christian country. At an Essex police-court last week two homeless men were charged with sleeping in the open. One was fined five shillings, and the other was sent to prison for seven days with hard labor.

In accordance with an ancient Easter custom, a number of old women picked up sixpences from a tombstone in a churchyard at St. Bartholomew the Great, City, E.C. The clergy have picked up many sixpences from tombs and funerals.

Mgr. Tynan, rector of St. Mary's, Burnley, is of opinion that Christianity in this country is but a thin veneer. This is shown by the fact that Good Friday has been made a day of pleasure. During his long experience in the priesthood, the reverend gentleman has learned, further, that "on Good Friday and Christmas Day—the days of Christ's death and birth—there were more sins of impurity and other mortal sins committed than on any other day in the year." What a significant admission of the total failure of Christianity by one whose profession it is to defend it. Occasionally we get the truth from most unexpected sources.

In the *Church Times* recently, the Bishop of Oxford teaches that no one can be a true minister of the Gospel without being episcopally ordained, and that no saving and sanctifying grace can come through the Sacraments unless they are administered by a man so ordained. That is a polite way of saying that Nonconformist ministers are all quacks. We agree; the only difference between Dr. Gore and ourselves being that we regard all clergymen, whether episcopally or non-episcopally ordained, as persons who pretend to possess and do what they do not possess and cannot do. The ministry is in its very nature fraudulent, and all who believe in it are gulled. The man of God is only one of many illusions.

Mr. Israel Zangwill, writing in the *Evening News* says that "the miracle of the Shakespeare's divination of Shylock remains, unless he saw a Jew in the mirror." "Angels and ministers of grace, defend us"! If Shakespeare were a Jew, he had less to do with bacon than his most ardent admirers imagined.

According to the papers, "elastic houses" are being erected on the Duchy of Cornwall estate in Kennington. Modelled on Noah's Ark, we imagine, and made of similar materials.

It is, as we have often pointed out, almost an impossibility for a Christian to deal fairly with historic facts where his own religious prejudices are involved. Christians never have done this, and we do not believe they ever will. And, unfortunately, Christian conviction seems to give the mind a fatal twist which dulls it to any sense of duty as to finding out what the facts are, or of responsibility for misstating them. Mr. R. J. Campbell, in a recent sermon, referred to the case of slavery in the old Roman Empire, and of the relation of Christianity to the system. And the references contained all the stock misstatements and exaggerations. He did point out that "servant" in the New Testament really means slave, and it would have been as well if Mr. Campbell had also pointed out that the mistranslation is itself an example of Christian dishonesty. In other writings the word is universally translated "slave." In the New Testament it becomes "servant." Why? The answer is, of course, that it was so translated to cloak the fact that Christianity endorsed the slave system, and was so far actually behind some of the best contemporary ethical thought.

But, Mr. Campbell says, the slaves in Paul's time "were the absolute property of their masters, bought and sold in the open market, liable to ill-usage without redress, and even to be put to death at their owner's caprice." And he adds, "There were kind masters.....but these were probably the exception." Well, if the slaves in Paul's time were really in the condition stated, the endorsement of the system by Paul becomes all the more villainous. But is this picture a true one? As a matter of fact, public opinion had always placed a limit to the power of the master over the slave, and this opinion in Paul's time was reflected in legal enactments. At the time of Nero the murder of a slave was illegal, masters were forbidden to sell slaves as gladiators; if they were cast out for sickness and recovered, they became free men; private prisons for slaves were abolished; a judge was appointed to hear their complaints, and empowered to punish masters who treated them cruelly; it was forbidden to sell separately husband, wife, and children; and if a master died without direct heirs, his slaves were entitled to a share in the estate. All this where Mr. Campbell asserts slaves were without redress! And, we have only to add, all authorities agree that generally a slave could purchase his freedom with a few years' savings.

Mr. Campbell says that "Slavery had to go in time because it was seen to be incompatible with the spirit of Christ. A man could hardly be a consistent Christian and continue to own slaves." Perhaps Mr. Campbell will explain in the light of these statements how it happened that the number of slaves actually increased under Christianity; while there was a complete cessation of remedial legislation, with a repeal of some of the beneficent measures named above. As a matter of fact, slavery in Christian times, and particularly in modern times, was, as Lecky said, "carried on upon a scale and with circumstances of atrocity little known to the ancients." Another great authority upon the slave trade—perhaps the greatest—Professor Cairns said:—

> "The ancients kept the bodies of their slaves in bondage, but they placed no restraint upon the mind, and no check upon education; and they acted consistently with their principle, since a natural termination of slavery then existed, and one day or other the slave might be set free and become the equal of his master.....The education of slaves amongst the ancients prepared the way for their emancipation."

Under Christianity slavery became perpetual. The slave family was broken up and sold piecemeal. In Christian America, little more than seventy years ago, South Carolina punished with six months' imprisonment anyone who taught a slave to read or write. Virginia inflicted a similar penalty. In Georgia there was the same punishment for teaching a slave to read either written or printed characters. Louisiana inflicted twelve months' imprisonment, and Alabama from 250 to 500 dollars' fine on anyone who attempted to educate the slaves. This nearly 1,800 years after the "spirit of Christ" had made slavery impossible. And the man who thus falsifies historic fact is one of the leading lights of modern "advanced" Christian thought! When the leaders are such, what can one expect from the rank and file?

Historically, the Churches held on to slavery to the end. In the ninth century, some of the leading ecclesiastics, including Pope Adrian, were selling slaves to the Mohammedans. In the eighteenth century Voltaire notes that the Church owned over 50,000 slaves. Between 1783 and 1793, 878 ships belonging to Liverpool carried no less than 303,737 slaves. This represented to Liverpool an annual

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value of nearly £1,200,000. The Rev. John Newton, author of the celebrated Olney Hymns, actually commanded a slave ship during the time he was studying for the ministry. According to a paper presented to the House of Commons in 1770, out of a total of 74,000 slaves sold annually by five European countries, Christian England sold 38,000. In America scores of resolutions were passed by churches supporting slavery, and many of the churches actually owned slaves. In the American Methodist Church, out of 14,000 clergymen, only 241 could be found who would sign a protest against slavery. What a commentary on the power of "the spirit of Christ."

That delightfully religious periodical, the *Daily News and Leader*, describes the new Criminal Justice Administration Bill, which provides for more lenient punishment of juvenile offenders, as "the most Christian Crimes Bill." Why Christian? The root idea of the Christian superstition is the punishment of the innocent for the guilty, and it teaches infinite retribution for finite offences.

"Nine-tenths of all work is drudgery" is the startling dictum of Dean Inge, "the gloomy dean." Yet the Christian Church has ever sought to make the "day of rest" as dull as ditchwater.

Mr. Bernard Shaw put some crimson flowers of speech into the mouth of a flower-girl in his latest play, *Pygmalion*. If the eminent dramatist is not more careful, he will be confused with the philological members of the Christian Evidence Society.

That Christianity is saturated with superstition has again been demonstrated in a striking manner. At Catanzaro, Italy, the peasants stormed the cathedral because the Bishop deprived the religious processions of all forms of Paganism. "The Bishop," adds the report, ironically, "and the priests ran away."

A relation of the German Kaiser has become a priest of the Romish Church and preached a sermon in a Parisian church where a fashionable crowd flocked to hear him. It was a novelty to see a royal prince wearing petticoats; as a rule they only chase them.

The Vicar of St. Mary Major, Exeter, seems quite happy because "in spite of their dwindling numbers their collections had gone up, and not down." So the vicar is content, and says they are getting what they want—quality, not quantity. It looks as though what they want is cash, not congregation. Both if they can get them; but of the two, the former most.

We desire to do justice, even to the Church. Rev. J. Neville Figgis says "the belief gains ground that the Church is a body of respectable persons; that real sinners have no place in her." We can assure Mr. Figgis that he is quite mistaken. A great number of people are quite convinced that there are as many sinners in the Church as elsewhere. They are of a more saponaceous character than those outside, but that is all. We do not like to see the Church unjustly accused, and by one of its own ministers, too.

What an amiable gentleman the Bishop of Sodor and Man must be! Mr. Charles Gill, who is trying to form a Farm Laborers' Union on the island, wrote to the *Ramsay Courier* protesting against the Bishop discharging his old gardener and employing an Englishman in his place. He says there are plenty of Manxmen to do the work, and it is a disgrace to the Church that such things should happen. Except for the discharge of an old servant, we do not see very much in the complaint; but the Bishop denounces it as an untruth "so foul that one would not expect to be uttered by anyone outside of hell." Further, "he wondered why God allowed some people to live, and was sometimes impressed with the need of a second flood, so that the world might begin over again." Which proves, as we said, that the Bishop is a very amiable man, and an apt preacher of the doctrine to turn one's cheek when the other is smitten.

A picture in a recent issue of the *Daily Telegraph* represented a Catholic priest and two altar-servers going round the houses of Earlsfield and sprinkling them with holy water. A pail of limewash or of Condy's Fluid might easily have been more efficacious.

In the days of faith, particularly the Puritan times, some of the names given to children were very quaint. From a jury list in 1700 the names of some of the good men and true were: Kill-sin Pimple, Fly-debate Roberts, Be Faithful Joiner, Fight the Good Fight White, and Weep-not Billing. What a change nowadays, when even Biblical names are out of fashion.

A writer in the *Daily Mail* suggests the painting of buildings in gay colors. A novel idea. Imagine the churches and chapels of the Man of Sorrows painted in all the colors of Joseph's coat.

The Rev. Joseph Shaw, a member of the Epsom Guardians, has offered to swallow all the microbes found in the crevices of the workhouse infirmary flooring. It is contended that the crevices harbored germs. Maybe the reverend gentleman is relying on the Biblical promise that no deadly thing can hurt a believer.

Mr. P. W. Wilson, M.P., says, "Just causes never die. Causes rooted in the errors of mankind live on until the errors are exorcised." Exactly! But when, as in the case of the Christian superstition, error is heavily endowed, the process is a slow one.

"Neither a peace palace, nor even a large fund for paying peace lecturers is necessarily a step nearer to the establishment of real peace," says Mr. C. E. Maurice. This is true, especially as priests of the Government religion bless guns and battleships, and consecrate regimental colors.

Rev. C. Haldon writes to the *Times* that in twenty years experience "not a single person has ever voiced to me an objection to the Athanasian Creed, and not one of the hundreds of incumbents that I have met has mentioned it as a difficulty." Mr. Haldon has had a most remarkable experience. One would be interested in getting the cranial developments of the people he has come across. We have no reason to suppose that his clerical life has been spent in ministering to the inmates of an idiot asylum.

The Vicar of Shrewsbury has expressed the opinion that a "damn" now and then is a good thing. Well, if anyone should be an authority upon the subject it is a dignitary of the Church. Charles Haddon Spurgeon is credited with saying that there are times when a man must swear—or burst. It is astonishing, by the way, what a number of ordinary "cuss-words" had their origin in religious expressions. We fancy this will turn out to be its most permanent contribution to civilisation.

John Bull, at the conclusion of a slashing criticism of the Bishop of London's Bill to secure the closing of publichouses on Sunday, asks "Why doesn't the Bishop of London get married and settle down? He will never be any good till he does." Well, it is just possible that had the Bishop married and settled down as a young man—and possessed the right kind of wife—a good many of his absurdities might never have seen light. Whether a man is an enforced celibate, or one by natural taste, his views of life are apt to be jaundiced, and if he possesses in addition strong religious fervor, the result is certain. We do not complain, however; the appointment of F. W. Ingram to the Bishopric of London was not at all a bad stroke of work for Freethought.

A Brighton centenarian has two "children," a daughter aged seventy-five and a "baby" son aged seventy-one, and the newspaper reporters are making headlines of the matter. What type would the printers use if Adam or Methuselah were alive to-day?

A churchwarden and Sunday-school superintendent in Belfast, who has just completed a term of imprisonment for embezzling was a witness in the Belfast Bankruptcy Court the other day. It turned out that he had spent £27,000 on women, but he said "They were not immoral women, before my God." Judge Craig told him that he had "better leave God out of this. He does not trouble much about bankruptcy business." We agree, but what we should like to know is what on earth God *does* trouble himself with? Perhaps Judge Craig, or someone else, can inform us.

Fleet-street was once the wonder-place of London, and some marvellous exhibits were shown by enterprising showmen. Ben Jonson alludes to "Jonah and the whale being shown at Fleet Bridge." Nowadays, even the clergy would have to be put on the rack to speak of the lodging-house whale.

The litter of the streets and public conveyances caused by newspapers and periodicals is becoming a nuisance. "Littery London" is not confined to Fleet-street.

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To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £130 15s. 5d. Received since :—J. E. Stapleton, 2s. 6d.; A. Vickers, £1; Mrs. Helena Parsons, £2 10s.; A. Galpin, £1 1s.; W. Dodd, 10s.

A. GALPIN (U.S.A.).—We note your kind wish that your subscription to the President's Honorarium Fund were "ten times as large."

C. PAPE.—Someone has evidently been testing the extent of your credulity. No such document has ever been discovered. There were during the middle Ages various letters from the Virgin Mary and Jesus afloat. Possibly your informant has been giving you one of these old stories.

E. B.—Many thanks for cuttings. As you will observe, they generally come in useful.

J. BREEZE.—Sorry to hear the news in one part of your communication. The cuttings enclosed are just symptomatic of the present state of the Churches. The problem all round is how to placate the liberal-minded without frightening others of an opposite kind.

F. J. S. GILBERT (Biloxi, U.S.A.).—Pleased to know you appreciate the *Freethinker* so much, and think that "the British people should be proud of such a paper." We believe *some* of them are, and we are content to get along with that.

WE regret that, owing to pressure on our available space, we are compelled to hold over the third of "Abracadabra's" articles on *Christian Apologetics* until next week.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid :—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

We may reply to a number of inquiries by saying that Mr. Foote's health is now much improved, and that he appreciates the inquiries that have been made concerning him. He intends being present at the Board meeting of the Secular Society, Ltd., and at the meeting of the Executive of the N. S. S., both of which take place on April 30. Branches who have business for the Agenda should forward their motions by that date if possible. The last date for sending in is May 2.

A correspondent reminds us that with the beginning of May the *Freethinker* completes thirty-three years of its existence. This is not an old age, and we believe we may say without boasting that no signs of old age are observable in its columns. But it is a *good* age, considering all the difficulties attendant upon running a paper of this kind. Only those who have given themselves to a great cause would care to face all these difficulties, and not only face them when they arise, but *expect* them. We take pride, too, in the fact that during all those years the *Freethinker* has never lowered or sullied its flag. It has never stooped to compromise, and it has been repaid by the personal respect and devotion of thousands of its readers. We believe we are right in saying that the *Freethinker* is the only paper in London—perhaps in the country—that has been under the same editor for so long a period. And that, too, is no small achievement. All things considered, it would not be a bad thing if the readers of the *Freethinker* turned May into a birthday month, and each one resolved to present the paper and the cause it represents with at least one new subscriber. That should not be a difficult matter in a very large number of cases, and it would form the best of birthday congratulations.

Our reply to "Anti-Cant," of a couple of weeks ago, on the question of "Brotherhoods," has brought to hand several letters, one of which is deserving of more than a line or two in the "Answers to Correspondents" column. This gentleman writes that he has made it a practice of attending several brotherhood meetings, and finds that while in some considerable latitude of opinion is permitted, in other cases—the majority—"they are simply occasions for goody-goody preaching, as a rule, religious gatherings under another name." In any case, the opportunity for a Freethinker speaking his mind on religious questions seldom arises. Still, he is satisfied that he is doing good work in attending these meetings, and in broadening the minds of those who attend by, apparently, a policy of permeation. In conclusion, this correspondent agrees that if Freethinkers would speak out when religious questions are introduced in non-religious associations, they would soon find their position changed for the better.

There are several points raised in this letter, all of which deserve a word of two of comment. One point is whether these brotherhood societies would really permit a free expression of opinion on religion? We do not believe for a moment that it would be tolerated. Those who tried it would be made to feel that their room was more desirable than their company, and would be forced, in some way or other, to leave. Of course, they are welcome there—even though their opinions may be known—while they keep their mouths shut. In the first place, their presence serves to keep up the pretence of no religious tests. Secondly, it keeps them out of "mischief" elsewhere. If they were not listening at a brotherhood meeting they might be listening, or talking, elsewhere, and their doing so might lead to further injury to the Churches. Every man they can get there is so much gain to the Churches. This fact must never be forgotten.

Finally, is it quite certain that the policy of permeation is the wisest or the best one at present? In the absence of all possibility of anything else, something may be said in its favor, but there is an unfortunate tendency to take the policy of permeation as an end, rather than as the means to an end. It is safe, it is comfortable, and, therefore, it is attractive. But permeation does not seem a pressing need to-day. What is needed is rather outspokenness. There are thousands, hundreds of thousands, of non-believers who *ought* to speak out. There is a much larger number of believers who need instructing as to where they really are in matters of religion; and, therefore, the real need is for greater boldness of thought and speech, not a mere broadening. You may broaden a river until it becomes a swamp; and you may broaden thought in such a way that it becomes of no value to anyone. And we have watched the effects of this policy of permeation in more than one instance. We have seen Freethinkers commence a Sunday Lecture Society, with the intention of breaking down religion. What has been the result? With the exception that the meetings were held on Sunday, the lectures have developed into a class of a very harmless character, such as do not injure superstition to any particular extent. Nay, they have positively helped the Churches by withdrawing from the direct attack many men and women who might otherwise have been conducting a vigorous campaign against superstition. Our advice is to let those societies conduct their own work in their own way and with their own people. Those Freethinkers who really take pride in their opinions, and who duly appreciate their value to the community, will best advance their cause by working for the direct organisation and propaganda of Freethought in their respective localities. The real way to make people respect your opinions is to lead the way by respecting them yourself.

We are asked to announce that Miss Vance has received a number of subscriptions towards the W. J. Ramsey Testimonial. All of these will be duly acknowledged when the Committee of the fund has made its final arrangements.

Some Notes.

I AM sorry in one way, but glad in another way, that I referred somewhat too seriously to Miss Vance's position in the metropolitan hospital where she is undergoing special treatment for her old trouble—rheumatism, which, of course, is affected for the worse by the conditions involved in her later malady of blindness. I misunderstood some expressions, and the tone of my remarks rather belonged to my own mood. I learn now that the hospital treatment is doing Miss Vance some good. Nevertheless the essence of what I said remains true. After all, being a very careful writer, though liable to mistakes, like everybody else, including writers who are not careful,—I did not state that Miss Vance actually was "fighting for her life." I added the word "almost," which shows that even then I felt the need of some qualification in that extremely brief sentence. I do not find that she is in any special danger at present, but her danger is general and continuous if nothing can be done for her relief. I hope I have made the

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matter fairly clear; anyhow, I must leave it there now.

* * *

Mr. Cohen's paragraph on the case of Mr. W. J. Ramsey tempts me to say that it was not a real kindness on the part of those who have taken his case up to treat me as too ill to be troubled or consulted about it. I wish to say, at this earliest opportunity, that I sincerely desire to have my name associated with the effort that is being made to mitigate the lot—as far as it can be mitigated—which Nature is dealing out to him in his last days or years, as the case may be. It is one of her most malignant forms of execution. I shall send my subscription as soon as I see the name of the general treasurer of the Fund projected by various bodies of sympathisers in his behalf. Mr. Ramsey went to prison with me in 1883 for the crime of "blasphemy." I am afraid the responsibility was all mine, but he accepted the share he was charged with, and took his portion of the punishment without weak complaint or foolish boasting. I care to remember nothing else now. He participated in the public subscription raised for the "prisoners for blasphemy" then, but it was not a colossal figure, and the lapse of thirty years, and the approach of the final need of his life, are enough to justify a last appeal for an old Freethinker who has always been, in his own way, a hard worker for the movement.

* * *

The death of Mr. Hubert Bland reminds me of something which the newspapers do not report, and which his latter-day friends would not wish to recollect. Long ago he stood as the Secular Education candidate for the Finsbury Division of the London School Board. I have not time, or spare energy, to look the matter up in the old pages of the *Freethinker*, but I think it was the London Secular Federation, which still existed, and of which I was still President, that invited Mr. Bland to enter the lists as the "secular" champion. It also found the cash for the campaign. Mr. Bland kept his contract faithfully, but I don't think he succeeded in convincing anybody that he was very much in earnest. His wife took part in the public meetings, and was in all ways an attractive speaker. Both of them were Socialists; Mr. Bland, indeed, was one of the founders of the Fabian Society. They did not catch the Socialist vote, however. I fancy Mr. Bland had too few marks of the "'orny-'anded son of toil" to satisfy them. His military appearance and his monocle may have suggested Satan canvassing the "saints" at the door of the tabernacle. I was in the thick of the fight myself, for it was soon evident that the purely "secular" vote was all we could rely upon.

* * *

The *Referee* comes into my house on Sunday, though I seldom read it. But I gave a good look at it last Sunday. I wanted to see if my "intellectuals," as Charles Lamb would have said, had suffered from my recent illness. I turned to "Mustard and Cress" by the great "Dagonet." There were two emphatic witticisms by this distinguished journalist. He remarked that "the vacation [of Easter] was over" but "the Government had not vacated." He also remarked that the wax treatment for gout was appropriate, as "gout always made one waxy." After these wonderful efforts of the distinguished journalist and playwright I felt reassured.

* * *

My recent illness was primarily the result of overwork. Behind the scenes, more than before the footlights, the past six months has been a very trying period. I say no more at present; I may have to say more in the near future. A good deal of the troublesome work has to be faced again. I *am* facing it again. At the same time, I am doing my best to nurse my strength back into fighting form. So thanks to Mr. Cohen again for his saving me for a time the editorial worry of the *Freethinker*.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Idea of God not Universal.—II.

(*Continued from p. 246.*)

"We only know of the supernatural through human thought. The dog, the bird, the elephant may dream, but the dream leaves no result in their sensoriums. Man only has faith, he only sees a supernatural existence, out of humanity there is no God; nay, with man the sentiment of a universal Deity is but, as it were, of yesterday. The united balance of physical action that now pervades the kosmos had persisted through untold periods of time, before man existed there were no temples, no prayers, no rites, no ghosts or gods. Then the sun shone and the tides flowed as now; life came and went, and came again, and the Ichthyosaur and the Dinosaur were the princes of the earth; days, years, and cycles passed without the presence of charm or spell, of sacrifice or fetish, or god-power being feared."—J. H. KING, *The Supernatural* (1892), vol. ii., pp. 266-7.

"In spite of the vulgar prejudice, it is certain that belief in imaginary beings worthy of the name of 'gods' is far from universal. There are two principal causes which keep certain tribes or races outside or above these errors: either a brain so ill-developed that it is incapable of any speculation, or else our own clear practical sense, or an innate common sense too strongly born."—LETOURNEAU, *Sociology* (1881), p. 276.

"'I cannot entertain the slightest doubt in my mind,' says the famous anthropologist *Broca*, 'that there are among the lower races people without worship, without dogmas, without metaphysical conceptions, without general creeds, and consequently without religion.'"—BUCHNER, *Force and Matter*, p. 382.

HERBERT SPENCER says:—

"From various parts of the world, witnesses of different nations and divergent beliefs bring evidence that there exist men who are either wholly without ideas of supernatural beings, or whose ideas of them are extremely vague. 'When Father Junipero Serra established the Mission of Dolores in 1776, the shores of San Francisco Bay were thickly populated by the Ahwashtees, Ohlones, Altahmos, Romanons, Tuolomos, and other tribes. The good Father found the field unoccupied, for, in the vocabulary of these people, there is found no word for god, angel, or devil; they held no theory of origin or destiny.' This testimony, which Bancroft cites respecting the Indians of California, corresponds with the testimonies of old Spanish writers respecting some South American peoples. Garcilasso says that, 'the Chirihuanas and natives of the Cape de Passau.....had no inclination to worship anything, high or low, neither from interested motives nor from fear.' Balboa mentions tribes without any religion as having been met with by Ynca Yupangui; and Avendano asserts that in his time the Antis had no worship whatever."*

All the Indian tribes now existing are credited with a belief in a Great Spirit; but when the Spaniards discovered America, and sought to introduce Christianity among the inhabitants, they found them quite destitute of any idea of a Supreme Being, as we have seen by the testimony cited by Spencer. Junipero was a Spanish priest, and Garcilasso one of the earliest historians of America, who had the intimate knowledge of the native language necessary to a knowledge of native beliefs.

Mr. R. Dorman, a competent authority, writes:—

"that the Great Spirit of the red man or Supreme God of the Indians is almost certainly nothing more than a figure of European origin, reflected and transformed almost beyond recognition in the mirror of the Indian mind."†

Mr. J. H. King, who cites Dorman, also cites the high authority of Stephen Powers, who goes further still. In the "Ethnological Report of the Geographical Survey of the Rocky Mountains" (iii., p. 413), published by the United States Government, he writes:—

"With the exception, perhaps, of a few tribes in the northern parts of the State, I am thoroughly convinced that the great majority of the Californian Indians have no conception of a Supreme Being. Nearly all now speak of the Great man, the Old man above, the Great One above, but they have the word and nothing more. This is manifestly a modern graft on their ideas, because this being takes no part in their affairs, is

* Herbert Spencer, *Principles of Sociology* (1885), vol. i., p. 280.

† *Anthropological Institute Journal*, xi., p. 361.

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never mentioned in the real and genuine aboriginal mythology or cosmography, creates nothing, upholds nothing. They have heard of the white man's God, as some of them have taken enough interest to translate the word into their own language, as Pokoh, Lush, Sha, Komus. It is an idea not assimilated. The Indian asked knows no more than the name, but questioned on man, fire, and familiar objects, his interest is aroused and coyote (the Prairie Wolf) comes forward; the coyote did everything, made everything, that his father told him, and his father's father. I affirm without hesitation there is no Indian equivalent for God. There are numerous spirits, chiefly bad, some in human form, some dwelling in beasts and birds, having names which they generally refuse to mortals, and haunting chiefly the hills and forests. Some of these spirits are those of wicked Indians returned to earth, others appear to be self-existent. There are great and potent spirits bearing rule over many of their kind, and there are inferior. All these spirits are to be propitiated and their wrath averted. There is not one in a thousand from whom the Indians expect any active assistance; if they can only secure their non-interference all will go well. Nature was the Indian god and the only god he knew, and the coyote was his minister."*

Like the native Americans, the natives of Africa knew nothing of a Supreme Being until the belief was introduced by Christian and Mohammedan missionaries. Sir John Lubbock observes: "Among the Koosa Kaffirs, Lichtenstein affirms that 'there is no appearance of any religious worship whatever'" (Lichtenstein, vol. i., p. 255). And "Dr. Vanderkemp, the first missionary to the Kaffirs, 'never could perceive that they had any religion, or any idea of the existence of God.'"†

The Rev. F. W. Farrar, in an article dealing with this subject, contributed to the *Anthropological Journal* (1864), says of the Africans, "The missionary, J. Leichton, tells us of the Mpongwes that he found among them neither religion nor idolatry; and another missionary, the Rev. G. Brown, tells us of the Kaffirs, 'That they have not in their language any word to use as the name, or to denote the being, of a God—of any God.'"

According to one account,—

"the nearest approach to it appears to be the word 'Tixo,' which means 'wounded knee,' and was the name of a celebrated medicine-man a few generations back! The natives of Cape Mount, when questioned by Smith about their religion, said they obeyed their chiefs, and troubled themselves about nothing higher."

And, again, "Of the Kaffirs the missionary Soultheiss also says that 'they have no religion, never pray, know nothing of a higher Being, and believe only in the existing life.'"‡

In the face of all this evidence, Dr. Livingstone declared of the Africans, "There is no occasion for telling even the most degraded of these people of the existence of a God, or of a future state, these things being universally admitted."§ Yet it is a fact that only on the previous page (157), speaking of the Bakalahari who live at Motlasa Wells, he says, "When we kneel down and address an unseen Being, the position and the act often appear to them so ridiculous that they cannot refrain from bursting into uncontrollable laughter"; and of a tribe of Bechuanas, that when a missionary attempted to sing to them—

"the effect on the risible faculties of the audience was such that the tears actually ran down their cheeks. Nearly all their thoughts were directed to the supply of their bodily wants, and this has been the case with the race for ages" (p. 157).

He admits—

"the want of any form of worship, or of idols, or of formal prayers or sacrifice, make both Caffres and Bechuanas appear as among the most godless races of mortals known anywhere. But, though they all possess a distinct knowledge of a deity and of a future state, they show so little reverence, and feel so little connection with either, that it is not surprising that some have supposed them entirely ignorant on the subject" (p. 158-9).

Well, the belief in a God without "any form of worship, or of idols, or of formal prayers or sacrifice," is scarcely worth dignifying with the name of a "belief." And, indeed, he tells us that once, speaking to a native about God, "I discovered that, though he was employing the word which is used among the Bakwains when speaking of the Deity, he had only the idea of a chief and was all the while referring to Sekomi" (p. 159), Sekomi being a native chief.

Moreover, when Livingstone said that the Kaffirs had a clear idea of God, he was not competent to express an opinion; for he tells us explicitly, "I have not had any intercourse with either Caffres or Bushmen in their own tongues" (p. 159). Therefore, he could not possibly know what their ideas upon the subject were. In spite of his sweeping assertion that all the African tribes had a belief in God, he tells us of the Bambiri, "They pray to departed chiefs and relatives, but the idea of praying to God seemed new, and they heard it with reverence."*

In his *Last Journals*, Livingstone says of the Matambwe:—

"They have all great reverence for the Deity, and the deliberate way in which they say 'We don't know Him' is to prevent speaking irreverently, as that may injure the country. The name is 'Mulungu.' Makochera afterwards said that 'He was not good, because he killed so many people.'" †

It is evident that Livingstone was so prejudiced in favor of the belief in God himself that he could not realise that people could exist without the same belief; and when they declared their ignorance of any such being, he puts it down to their "reverence," an idea wholly foreign to the savage mind, as we shall see when we come to consider the ideas and capabilities of thought of the uncivilised.

In the last passage quoted, Livingstone tells us that the name of God is "Mulungu." Now, the Rev. Duff Macdonald, an African missionary, and well acquainted with the language, says:—

"In all our translations of Scripture, where we found the word God we used Mulungu, but this word is chiefly used by the natives as a general name for spirit. The spirit of a deceased man is called his Mulungu, and all the prayers and offerings of the living are presented to such spirits of the dead."‡

Sir Richard Burton, the famous traveller, linguist, and explorer, who is said to have mastered forty languages, observes:—

"Dr. Livingstone, with his usual peremptory and unsatisfactory way of laying down the law upon every question, affirms that 'the existence of a God and of a future state has always been admitted by all the Bechuanas.' A far better authority, Dr. Moffat (*Missionary Labors*, p. 245) remarks concerning the Bachwanas (Bechuanas), whilst owning that they are acute reasoners and minute observers of men and manners, that 'to tell them, the greatest of them, that there was a Creator, the Governor of the heavens and earth—of the fall of man, or the redemption of the world—the resurrection of the dead, and immortality beyond the grave—is to tell them what appeared to be more fabulous, extravagant, and ludicrous than their own stories about lions, hyænas, and jackals.'"§

The same veteran missionary declared of the Bushman, "He knows no god; knows nothing of eternity."‖

W. MANN.

(To be concluded.)

* J. H. King, *The Supernatural*, vol. ii., pp. 180-1.
† Lubbock, *Origin of Civilisation* (1880), p. 215.
‡ Rev. F. W. Farrar, "On the Universality of Belief in God and in a Future State," *Anthropological Journal* (1864).
§ Livingstone, *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa* (1857), p. 158.

* Livingstone, *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa*, p. 605.
† Livingstone, *Last Journals*, vol. i., p. 45.
‡ Rev. Duff Macdonald, *Africa, or the Heart of Heathen Africa*, vol. ii., p. 59.
§ Burton, *Abeokuta and the Cameroons*, vol. i., p. 178.
‖ Rev. Dr. Moffat, *Missionary Labors and Scenes in South Africa*, p. 15.

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Correspondence.

"ORGANISMS ANTAGONISTIC TO HEALTH."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—It will be admitted by all Freethinkers that theologians are apt to run in ruts, to accept dogmas in blind faith on the authority of someone else, and to pass them on unquestioningly to others. In a like spirit, the pseudo-scientist of to-day blindly accepts the germ theory of disease, warns us against flies and germ carriers, writes confidentially about things like toxins and anti-toxins which have never been seen or chemically demonstrated, parrots a fairy tale as to the supposed actions of invisible agents, confuses causes and results, disease and disease germs, micro-organisms and animal parasites, and builds up a whole body of doctrine, including the usual kind of legendary narrative, which he expects others to swallow as "facts."

And yet the whole theory rests upon a foundation of sand, owing to the failure of the alleged disease germs to comply with three simple rules laid down by Koch, which, had they been the malign creatures they are represented to be, they ought certainly to have complied with. These rules are very simple:—

"1. The alleged specific germ should invariably be found in connection with the disease it is supposed to have caused.
"2. It should not be found apart from it.
"3. It should, when injected into an animal, give rise to the same disease."

Alas! even the editor of the *Lancet* has been obliged to confess that "these postulates are seldom, if ever, complied with."

But the association of a particular germ with a particular disease has become a dogma. If the patient clearly has malaria, but one of the various illusory blood tests shows *Micrococcus Melitensis* to be present, his case is labelled "Mediterranean Fever." If, in connection with laryngitis, the Klebs-Loeffler bacillus be found, the case becomes one of "diphtheria." Nay, if you are perfectly well, and are found to harbor some alleged specific germ, you are accused of being a danger to the community. The diagnosis of disease has been turned topsy-turvy by this method of deciding everything by the germ, and a class of experimenters who are bacteriologists before they are physicians has arisen, regarding men but as a battle-ground for microbes, and vying with each other in producing ever-increasing numbers and varieties of disease-inoculation, under the mistaken idea that the way to get rid of bad matter is to pump more bad matter into the body. In their wake has sprung up a large and enterprising class of serum and vaccine manufacturers, and the Lister Institute presses its nostrums for sale with as great a pertinacity as a Holloway and a Beecham have displayed. "Keep the blood-stream pure" is no longer considered the ideal counsel for health; our medical men who rave about the supposed danger of germs entering the body by natural means think nothing of inoculating them in countless thousands direct into the blood-channels, which nature has so well protected from interference by their covering layers of cells.

Concerning this Alfred Russel Wallace wrote:—

> "The medical profession appear to hold the view that pathogenic or disease-producing microbes exist for the purpose of causing disease in otherwise healthy bodies to which they gain access—that they are, in fact, wholly evil. It is also claimed that the only safeguard against them is some kind of 'anti-toxin' with which everyone must be inoculated to be saved from the danger of attack by some or all of the large number of such diseases which affect almost every organ and function of the body. This view seems to me to be fundamentally wrong, because it does not show us any *use* for such microbes in the scheme of life, and also because it does not recognise that a condition of health is the one and only protection we require against all kinds of disease; and that to put *any* product of disease whatever into the blood of a really healthy person, is to create a danger far greater than the disease itself."

And now comes Madame Henri's claim to have discovered that germs change one into another—that the alleged specific germ for anthrax, by treatment with ultra-violet rays, turns into a differently shaped organism capable of causing a disease differing in every respect from anthrax! If the ultra-violet rays can do this outside the body, may not conditions inside the body bring about equally startling changes? Here we are back again at the question—Are not these germs the normal inhabitants of our bodies, changing their shapes in accordance with varying states of health, found now in association with one disease and now with another? The theory that they are specific was started by Pasteur, a man with no medical training or experience. Like Jenner, who bought his degree of M.D. for £15, he led a profession much more qualified to decide such matters than himself, had not its love of sensationalism and hero-worship given him his opportunity. It is said that a new idea starts as a heresy and ends as a superstition. The germ-theory, once accepted and hailed as a dogma, soon became a superstition, and all those who have found flaws in it and dared to voice them, especially when they have been medical men, have been penalised for so doing.

Most laymen imagine that the association between an alleged specific germ and its disease is so close and unmistakable that it is easy of detection. This is not so. So difficult, in fact, has it been to decide between the claims of rival germs to produce the same disease that the honors have frequently been given to one and afterwards filched from it and handed on to another. Pages of Mr. Stephen Paget's book, *Experiments on Animals*, were devoted to claims (including, be it noted, statistical claims concerning the success of a serum obtained from the germ!) for a certain germ of yellow fever which was afterwards denounced as the wrong one. The same thing happened with the sheep-pox germ. As an example of the cocksureness of bacteriology, beside which the cocksureness of theology must take a back seat, I quote from Sir John Simon: "By these experiments on sheep it has been made quite clear that the contagion of sheep-pox is something of which the habits can be studied as the habits of a fern or moss can be studied." But the "contagion" alas! was not the germ. "Sheep-pox," said Sir Stewart Stockman to the Royal Commission on Vivisection, "has been shown not to be due to these organisms." Sleeping sickness was a few years ago put to the credit of an altogether different organism from the one now fashionable, and that on the authority of the Royal Society.

There is not a single germ which complies with Koch's invaluable test laid down in the postulates I have quoted. Human tuberculosis is known to be set up in certain manufactories by lung-irritation; it has been produced in guinea pigs by inoculation with silver wire or cotton. Sir Douglas Powell naively states that the tubercle bacillus is far more virulent "when mixed with other infections"! The disease is notoriously more rife among the slum children who seldom taste milk than among those in constant danger of imbibing the bacillus.

Confectioners are not decimated by disease as they ought to be, seeing that flies usually swarm in their neighborhood. Draining swamps gets rid of malaria apart from any question of mosquitoes. Plague is got rid of wherever stone houses are substituted for mud hovels in India. Smallpox vanishes as sanitary science marches onwards and vaccination declines.

The articles contributed to the *Freethinker* by Mr. T. F. Palmer lead me to believe that he has not made any independent study of both sides of this question. He is so certain that he has been told the truth about these germs without any possibility of error that he is ready even to vouch for the hotly disputed stable-fly theory of infantile paralysis (Pettersen and Landsteiner proving that it exists too far north for the stable flies to live), and he asserts that "the natural healthy healing of wounds is absolutely dependent upon the absence of bacteria or the presence of some powerful anti-toxin," although Dr. George Stoker's classical experiment showed that an ulcer treated with corrosive sublimate to kill the bacteria refused to heal, whereas another ulcer on the same patient, at the same time, in the same part of the body, treated with oxygen whereby the bacteria swarmed and multiplied, healed up to perfection. And his experience was amply confirmed by Dr. Granville Bantock in his own surgical work.

But the germ theory is "orthodox." The position of the medical profession towards it is displayed with absolute accuracy, and consequently with humor, in Mr. Bernard Shaw's play, *The Doctor's Dilemma*. The same keen-witted critic pointed to a fact which merits the attention of all Freethinkers when he suggested that the law of the conservation of energy operates in human credulity, and that every atom of it withdrawn from theology has been diverted to what passes for science. "If people will believe in tales and miracles," he writes,

> "is it not better that they should believe that Balaam's ass spoke, that Joshua stopped the sun, that Samson cracked the pillars, that Jonah was swallowed alive by a whale, and that the blind Syrian saw men as trees walking, rather than that they can live for ever with sound bodies if only their men of science will shrink from no cruelty, and they themselves from no filthiness in the pursuit and use of magical inoculations? The truth is your ordinary man cannot reason, or perform any other skilled mental operation..... The scientist comes along and says to him: 'My friend, by a diabolically cruel process I have procured a revoltingly filthy substance. Allow me to inject this under your skin, and you can never get hydrophobia, or enteric fever, or diphtheria, etc. I have even a very choice preparation of unmentionable nastiness, which will enable you, if not to live for ever, though I think that quite possible, at least to renew in your old age the excesses of your youth.'"

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This, be it noted, is actually what has been offered :—

"The ordinary man jumps at the bait.....As to filth, science has taught him that dirt is only 'matter in the wrong place.' It has not taught him that disease is only matter in the wrong condition, and to inject matter in the wrong condition into matter in the right condition [healthy flesh, to wit] is to put matter in the wrong place with a vengeance."

Much more might be written on this interesting topic, but I fear to encroach further upon your space. May I, in conclusion, urge your readers to study the numerous critical writings of Dr. Hadwen, the President of the British Union, and if they want to hear the subject discussed from both sides, to try to induce any doctor of their acquaintance to debate with him on the germ theory of disease.

B. H. KIDD, *Secretary*,
British Union for Abolition of Vivisection,
32 Charing Cross, S.W.

A Mission to Wowsers.

(There is great need of a mission to convert the poor heathen wowsers.—Tasmanian paper.)

SHALL they perish, O my brothers?
Let us rise and call the others—
Let us start and save the heathen,
  Save the pulpiteering crew;
Save the wowsers, save them early!
Won't you help us, Maud and Pearlie?
Girls, I beg you do a hustle,
  For I think it's up to you!
They are heathens all benighted—
Some are sepulchres and whited—
O be forward, men and brothers,
  Help us, sisters, night and day;
Shall the heathen wowsers perish?
I beseech you, save and cherish—
Help us load Australia's wowsers
  In our earnest mission dray!

For the wowser in his blindness
Needs the hand of Christian kindness—
Stroke the curate, pat him softly,
  I implore you, Kate and Jane;
Lead him back to life and gladness,
And remove his look—whose sadness
Seems to ooze across the landscape
  Like a melancholy stain!
Let each wowsing tax-expounder
Cease in sin to moan and flounder—
Lead him back again to manhood,
  Make him human, I implore;
Bishop, rector, solemn deacon—
Show to each a gladsome beacon,
Let us save them with this mission
  Whilst our gay girls shout "Encore!"

Think, my brethren! Turk and nigger
Have their missions waxing bigger,
And the Chow is pawed and prayed for,
  And likewise the Cherokee;
But I find no earnest mission
Saving wowsers from Perdition—
Therefore rise in haste, my brethren!
  Rise in scores and follow me!
Let us save these pious wowsers
With the drab and dismal trousers—
Sisters, kneel, and urge each curate
  From his wowsing to refrain;
From Perdition let us snatch 'em—
Girls, get busy! Skip and catch 'em,
For the wowser hath his weakness,
  So we shall not mish in vain!

Join the mission, friends, I urge ye!
Help us save the solemn clergy—
Men who know not joy nor pleasure,
  Help us, daughters and mammas;
Seek the mournful wowser-chappie—
Make him cheerful, make him happy;
Parents, hearken to these pleadings!
  I implore you, good papas!
Mish in earnest! Mish with vigor!
Shall we save the Chow and nigger—!
Shall we pray for brown and brindle
  Whilst the heathen wowsers groan?
O my sisters, be not bashful!
Pass the plate, sweet emblem cashful—
Mish with me; and raise an anthem,
  Joy infecting every tone!

See the heathen, joyless vicar!
Lead him gently to his liquor,
Let the damsels dance before him,
  Bearing jars of purple wine;
Softly lift 'em, consecrate him—
If he's single, likewise mate him—
Round this mission-temple's doorway
  Let Hymeneal symbols twine!
Days are these that call for labor—
He who hath a wowsing neighbor,
He who meets with persons solemn,
  Let him mish with words of cheer;
Ah, the joy! The speechless rapture
O'er wowser-cove we capture—
Oh, the hymns of praise ascending
  When we lead him to his beer!

Shall they perish? That's the question!
So I make this great suggestion—
Doth the wowser in thy township
  Call in vain, dear friends, to you?
Save the wowsers! Help this mission!—
They are leaping to Perdition—
Sisters all, with me go forward
  Towards the heathen in the pew!
Hark! the trump at last is sounding!
Let us mish then, gaily bounding—
Let us lead the heathen wowsers,
  Bringing Whiskers to the fold:
Make them Men!—aye, make them human!
So get busy, Men and Women—
Will you? Won't you? Can't you? Don't you
  Mean to mish like soldiers bold?

—*Truth* (Melbourne). ROLAND SMITH.

THEN AND NOW.

Rev. A. J. Waldron says he does not believe in the resurrection of the body, and adds that there would probably have been a different account of the affair had psychical research reached its present stage when Christ was crucified. We agree, not only as regards psychical research, merely in relation to the resurrection, but to the whole story. Imagine anyone coming along to-day with the story of Jesus, from the birth to the resurrection. People would have examined the evidence, and they would have criticised the reliability of the witnesses. They would have said that here was only a rehash of a very old superstition. They would have pointed out that the woman who first saw the empty tomb was one who had been "possessed of devils"—probably an epileptoid subject. They would have known how common were delusions of sight and of hearing. They would have rightly seen in Paul's conversion either a sunstroke or an ordinary attack of epilepsy. They would have laughed at the miracle of the loaves and fishes, of walking on the sea, of conversations with the Devil. If the whole story were told for the first time to-day, there is not a daily paper in existence that would waste a couple of columns on printing it.

If the knowledge available to-day had been present two thousand years ago, the story simply could not have been told. Such legends, to originate and to gain credence, require a peculiar environment. The general mind must be saturated with supernaturalism. It must regard such things as only slightly out of the usual order, and there must not be current a degree of positive knowledge with which they conflict. In the time of Jesus these conditions were all present. People were ready to believe in more stories of the supernatural because they already believed in a goodly stock. Jesus, performing miracles, was only doing what religious leaders had always done and were still doing. The resurrection was no more wonderful than a thousand-and-one other stories in which the people believed. That is why the Christians of the earlier centuries accepted Pagan miracles as readily as their own. They questioned none, and swallowed all that were offered. Whether they came from God or the Devil was the only question at issue; but they were all genuine. That is also why it was so easy to start a new religion then, and so impossible to inaugurate a new one to-day. The thaumaturgist was then hailed as an instrument of Deity. To-day he is described as either an impostor or a lunatic.

The picturesque Easter ceremony of the washing of the feet of choirboys, in imitation of the humility of Christ when he washed the disciples' feet, was performed by the Catholic Archbishop. This "imitation humility" is merely an annual feature of a lordly and profitable business.

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INDOOR.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Mr. Miller's, 8 Mathias-road, Stoke Newington, N.): Monday, April 27, at 8, Business Meeting —Election of Conference Delegate, etc.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Mr. Rosetti, jun., a Lecture.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, Mr. Rosetti, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, E. Burke, "Evolution."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

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Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXXIV.—NO. 18 SUNDAY, MAY 3, 1914 PRICE TWOPENCE

Every separate act of a religious ceremony becomes a fraud and a criminal satire when performed by a cultivated man of the nineteenth century.—MAX NORDAU.

The Wicked Atheist.

THE wicked Atheist is almost an extinct being. I do not mean the Atheist who may do something wicked, but the one who is wicked because he is an Atheist, or, more accurately, an Atheist because he is wicked. That was the original type as pictured in religious literature, and he had a very long, a flourishing, and —to the religionist—a useful career. He was the "'orrible example" held up at religious meetings for the edification of the devout, and as a lesson to those with a tendency to stray. He became an Atheist because he was naturally bad, he gloated in performing deeds of villainy after he became an Atheist, and, useful to the last, he died shrieking for forgiveness to the God whose commands he had laughed at and whose forbearance he had outraged. He had a long career in the religious world. Peace to his ashes! One is rather surprised that the Churches did not combine to erect a monument to one who had served so well the sermoneer and the tract-writer.

Then gradually the world experienced "piping times of peace." Atheists became more numerous, and better known. Those who knew them observed that if they were not better than other people, they were certainly no worse. When they died they failed to raise the neighborhood with their terrified shrieks, and they never—no, never—sent in hot haste for the local parson or district visitor to explain to them the kind of hell to which they were going. So the wicked Atheist gradually disappeared. Instead of blackguarding, religionists began to sympathise with him, or to slobber over him. It was *such* a pity that so intelligent or so good a man should be an Atheist! His Atheism must be due to some accident in his career, or to want of development of some part of his nature. Perhaps he had been over-devoted to science, as in the case of Darwin; or he had met with poor types of believers who had disgusted him with religion; or it may have been that his spiritual nature was undeveloped. In any case, the Atheist came to be treated as an erring friend rather than as a social outcast. Atheists were not to be cursed; they were simply to be pitied.

Now, all at once, I have come across the wicked Atheist again. It is like meeting a long-lost friend, and I rejoice accordingly. He has been discovered away in the highlands of Scotland, and his discoverer is Mr. W. D. M. Sutherland. I haven't the ghost of a notion who Mr. Sutherland is; but every man must *begin* to be famous—if he is to be famous at all—and I hasten to give this gentleman all the possible publicity in my power. Mr. Sutherland is writing a series of articles in the *Ardrossan and Saltcoats Herald* on "Dangerous Types," and he gives the place of honor to the Atheist. As an Atheist, I appreciate the compliment, and thank him. There is nothing like being at the top of your profession, whatever it is, and Mr. Sutherland does not belittle the Atheist by lumping him in with a lot of miscellaneous and mediocre villains. He is the chief of his tribe, and Mr. Sutherland shows his courage in tackling the chief first of all. The others he will, presumably, wipe out at his leisure.

But, if I may venture a word of criticism, Mr. Sutherland is ill-advised in the opening of his article. He goes back to the time of Micah, and he points out that in his time things were pretty bad in the land of Judah. Things were then so bad, he says, that they could not be much worse. Now, if this doughty Christian went on to show that these people were Atheists, one could understand the opening of the article. But they were not, and Mr. Sutherland does not say they were. They were all pious; they belonged to God's chosen people; they were on intimate terms, so to speak, with Deity. And if under such conditions things became as bad as they could well be, it does not look as if an absence of Atheism is any guarantee of righteousness in a nation. I don't like this opening much, because it makes the Atheist's pre-eminence in wickedness sort of questionable.

Things are "vastly better with us," says Mr. Sutherland, but there are still men with us who "do evil with both hands earnestly." More, "they are many." Worse, "they are not getting fewer." And "one of the worst and most dangerous types of these men is the type we call Atheists. The type who believe, or say they believe, there is no God." Mr. Sutherland will have no half measures. "The Atheist believes there is no God." This is very bad indeed; but if the Atheist were allowed to put in a word, he might only say that he is imitating—on a more thoroughgoing scale—the example of believers. For all of them say of somebody's God that he does not exist. I do not know how many gods there are in the world; they are very plentiful, anyhow. But I do know that any Christian brushes the whole lot out of existence—save one. And nearly all the other believers follow his example. The Atheist need not trouble himself to deny the existence of God. All he need do is to go amongst believers and agree with all of them when they dismiss each other's God as a myth. And that is all the Atheist does, as a matter of fact. He agrees with the Brahman that the Christian God is a myth. He agrees with the Christian that the Brahman God is a myth. He agrees with them all—and he is blackguarded by them all for his amiability and catholicity.

Mr. Sutherland divides Atheists into classes. Some are passive, others are active. The former may be excused, it is the latter that rouses his antipathy. He says, "I call every active Atheist—and with few exceptions, every Atheist I have known has been active—has been missionary, I call every active Atheist a bad man." Mr. Sutherland could forgive the Atheist who keeps his opinions to himself, but the one who seeks to make Atheists of other people is past forgiveness; he is wholly, irredeemably bad. And the reason for this is not so much religious as it is ethical. If, he says,—

> "you get men to believe there is no God—you will get them to believe there is no sin, for there is no God for them to sin against—and that there is no future state. Now what follows? What follows is this. It is a matter of simple logic. Get men possessed with the idea that there is no God, and no sin, and no future state, and they will do what seems right in their own

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> eyes.....Work it out in your mind. I imagine—try to imagine—the majority of men and women in this country Atheists. What will happen is this. Immorality will stalk about in broad daylight, with brazen face and cruel hands, anarchy will be rampant, and Ichabod will be written across the face of the nation's history."

There it is. The logic, as Mr. Sutherland says, is simple. If men only do right because they believe in God and in a future state, then if they cease to believe in these things, the justification for doing right will be gone. If Mr. Sutherland only refrains from stealing because he believes there is a God watching him, then it is as plain as a pikestaff that he will steal if God does not keep an eye on him. The logic of the situation is clear—much clearer, indeed, than the facts. For these are somewhat puzzling. When we look at the people who actually do wrong, who commit sin, as Mr. Sutherland would say, we find that these are not—save in a very small percentage of cases—Atheists. Certainly they are not those active Atheists whom Mr. Sutherland specially detests. Taking the inmates of our prisons, they are nearly all pious. Most of them would be genuinely shocked if they were called Atheists. In fact, I have long been conscious that as an Atheist I am not receiving value for that proportion of my rates and taxes that go in the upkeep of prisons. This is not being spent for the detention and reformation of Atheists, but almost entirely for the benefit of Theists. And this is hardly fair. Why should Atheists have to pay rates that are spent almost exclusively on Theists? There are several million non-Theists in Great Britain, in all probability, and no one can pretend that they furnish their fair proportion to the prison population. Christians are getting more than their fair share here as elsewhere.

And, again, I feel that Mr. Sutherland's warning is ill-advised. On the authority of Christians we know what a trouble it is to lead a decent life. They are always talking about "moral restraints," of the many temptations there are to do wrong, of the stern discipline needful to do right. They emphasise the attractiveness of vice and deadly dullness of virtue. Now, it is plain that, at present, Atheists have not awakened to this view of the subject. If they are really "doing evil with both hands earnestly," they are evidently not aware of it. They are under the impression that virtue is really more attractive than vice, that the latter imposes more "restraints" than the former, and that people can be good without God and the future state. They may be laboring under a delusion, but they think so. They think that friends, and family, and society remain just what they are whether there is a God or not. They foolishly, perhaps, think that duty and loyalty in these directions bring their own rewards, and that nothing further is necessary.

In all of this they may be wrong, but at least they think so, and they apparently act up to it. And is it wise of Mr. Sutherland to go about disabusing their minds, pointing out that there is reason why they should behave themselves, and inviting them to a career of villainy, so long as they retain their present opinions? Why should Mr. Sutherland go round disturbing the faith of these poor, simple-minded Atheists, and encourage them to start out on a career of vice? Mr. Sutherland gives his reason. It is because the Atheist "is doing his best to ruin the immortal souls of his neighbors, and because he is threatening his country with the greatest and worst peril—the substituting of immorality and anarchy for religion and law." But, surely, the power of religion over the minds of those who believe should be proof against the attacks of the Atheist? Surely, the high character evoked, the discipline enforced by religion, should be proof against both immorality and anarchy? The value of all training lies in its power to evoke the quality of resistance that is necessary, and the discipline of religion should by now have made its followers secure. It almost looks as though Mr. Sutherland is *afraid* of Atheism; as though he feels that when the Atheist sets out on his missionary labors religion can hardly withstand his attack.

Mr. Sutherland's warning would be incomplete without historic examples. "If Atheism," he says, "ever becomes dominant, this fair land of ours—this great land—will be doomed and go down in darkness and disaster as surely as every other land in which it became dominant was doomed." Rather vague, but still impressive. It does not say where Atheism was dominant, or in what lands it has been dominant. That would have been to distract its readers' attention with queries as to whether the lands mentioned really were atheistic or not. So one is left with the general impression that all "doomed" lands were somehow or other atheistic. This is a wise policy, and shows that Mr. Sutherland, if he has the innocence of the dove, is not without the cunning of the serpent. Francis Bacon was of opinion that Atheism did never perturb states, and that it left a man to sense, to philosophy, and to natural piety. But Bacon lived a long while ago. And he was not an essay-writer for the *Ardrossan and Saltcoats Herald*.

C. COHEN.

The Reign of Cant.

LIKE many other words, "cant" comes to us from the Greek. Originally, *kanthos* denotes the corner of the eye, or the iron which bounds a wheel. In its Latin form, *canthus*, it bears practically the same meaning. Primarily, then, "cant" signifies a corner, angle, niche, and from this all its other meanings are derived. So, likewise, to cant is primarily to incline, set an angle, tilt over, tip upon the edge. The passage from the primary to some of the secondary significations is exceedingly difficult to trace; but it is to be borne in mind that in all its varieties of meaning, "cant" represents something on the slant, something that lies obliquely to something else, a departure from the natural and simple. Thus a canting rogue is a vile person who employs the language of honesty and honor, and a canting hypocrite one who resorts to all sorts of expedients to prevent his hypocrisy from becoming known. Some there are who maintain that we owe the word "cant" in its secondary connotations to two Scottish preachers and leaders of the Covenanters, who flourished at the commencement of the seventeenth century, and whose surname happened to be Cant. It was a characteristic of those men of God that they cursed all who made use of the Prayer Book, and advocated the excommunication of those who refused the Covenant, while in their grace before meal they invariably "prayed for all those who suffered persecution for their religious opinions." In reality the Cants did but furnish an apt illustration of this modern meaning of the term. Ben Jonson, a little earlier than the Cants, uses the word in the sense of professional slang in the following lines:—

> "The doctor here,
> When he discourses of dissection,
> Of *vena cava* and of *vena porta*.....
> What does he do but cant? Or if he run
> To his judicial astrology,
> And trowl out the *trine*, the *quartile*, and the *sextile*.
> Does he not cant?"

Now, ethically speaking, in all forms of cant there is an element of insincerity, of conscious or unconscious deceit. It is said of Zachary Macaulay that he "never canted" (*Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay*, p. 68), by which saying is meant that he did not speak theoretically, sentimentally, or as the mouthpiece of a party, but from direct observation and knowledge of the facts in any given case. The majority of people, however, indulge continually in mind-corrupting cant. They belong to a faction, or represent a system, loyalty to which, at whatever cost to individual conviction, is their all-controlling principle. This is profoundly true of politicians at the present time. You know exactly what they will say on every conceivable subject, if you are aware of the views of the party to which they may happen to

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belong. Each political party has its Shibboleths upon the correct pronunciation of which it rigorously insists, with the result that if any member, on any occasion, says Sibboleth, he is cast out as a cumberer of political ground. This naturally leads to political dishonesty and dishonor, to the sinking of individual personality in that of the party as expressed by its leaders. Party government is, consequently, bound to be more or less corrupt and corrupting. And yet it is in religion that cant is seen at its lowest and worst. Religious factions are more numerous and more bitterly exclusive than all other factions combined. To know a person's religious opinions you only require to ascertain to which denomination he or she is attached. There is always a pope, a creed, or some common law or other, by whom or which people's religious views are determined and controlled. The Anglican Church is peculiar in that it embraces within its pale three great and distinct schools, the High, the Broad, and the Low; and, as a rule, you have only to look at a clergyman to discover in which school to locate him. "I can smell a Presbyterian forty miles," brutally exclaimed cruel Judge Jeffreys at the Bloody Assizes on Sedgemoor; but brutal as the exclamation was on that infamous occasion, it was merely an exaggeration of a fact patent to all. Enter any church or chapel you please, and you need not wait long to learn what set of beliefs it stands for. Why, it is plainly written on the very countenance of almost every professing Christian what brand of Shibboleths he or she is in the habit of pronouncing. Well, the inevitable consequence is, that cant is on the throne in every Christian community, and that there can be no such thing as absolute religious sincerity. Woe to anyone who has the audacity to say *Sibboleth* when all around him are shouting *Shibboleth*. The best Christian is nothing but a faithful parrot repeating phrases carefully stored up in the memory.

Webster defines cant as "the use of religious phraseology without understanding or sincerity; empty, solemn speech, implying what is not felt; hypocrisy." That definition is inaccurate only in so far as it regards cant as implying the absence of feeling. We know from experience that the hollowest cant ever uttered is often most profoundly felt; but we also know by the same means that feeling is the most unreliable thing under the sun. Let any born orator play in his own inimitable style upon the keys of the heart, and there is instantly a whole flood of emotional response. George Whitefield had only to intone the word "Mesopotamia" with his wonderful voice, which was like silver bells in tune, to make his hearers cry out in the intensity of their feeling. Yes, the worst cant ever conceived is often most tremendously felt even by the canter himself. What is a canter? "A person given to hypocritical ranting, specifically, in the seventeenth century, a Puritan"; but then it is possible for a man to play the hypocrite quite successfully to himself, a feat which countless myriads are perpetually performing. We must not forget that there is unconscious as well as conscious hypocrisy. The difference between the two is that there is hope for the victims of the former, while those of the latter are quite hopeless.

Our contention is that all technically religious utterances are unadulterated cant. Take the popular pulpit talk about God and Christ. In public prayers and discourses God is invariably referred to as being absolutely supreme. He sits upon the throne of the Universe as Lord of lords and King of kings. He is also described as the greatest of all workers; and while his servant is on his knees or standing as his spokesman in the pulpit, he is everything and the servant nothing. But the moment the preacher ceases to pray to and speak about God, he acts and calls upon his people to act as if they did everything and the Divine Being nothing at all. Billy Sunday, the eccentric American evangelist, talks endlessly about the all-saving power of the Cross, the all-conquering Christ; but as he was entering his motor-car after one of his sensational meetings, a drunken man accosted him, to whom the man of God spoke thus:—

> "Hello, old chap. Just cut away from the dirty whisky gang, and come around to-night and I will fix you up. Straighten up now and be a man. Here's two apples for you."

Outside the tabernacle Billy was an entirely different man, quite equal to doing the job himself. What infinite twaddle flows unceasingly from the pulpits of Christendom week after week, and yet how quickly it is forgotten when work has to be done, which can only be accomplished by exclusively human agencies.

Or take the cant about the indestructible, ineffaceable religious instinct said to be implanted in every human being, whose natural and irresistible cry is the following:—

> "As the heart panteth after the water brooks,
> So panteth my soul after thee, O God.
> My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God."
> —Psalms xlii. 12.

We are confidently assured that there is not a tribe, however savage, without its idea of and desire for a deity. It is not at all uncommon to define man as a being who cannot help being religious, and who must have an object of worship above the skies. Big books have been published and innumerable sermons preached in confident support of this thesis. Do the authors and preachers really believe what they so earnestly advocate? Apparently they do as long as they play the part of theoretical apologists for their religion; but no sooner are they ever so remotely threatened with the withdrawal of religious instruction from Government supported and controlled schools than they recklessly fling their theological thesis to the four winds, exclaiming, "Once the secular system of education has been introduced the Christian religion shall be doomed to complete extinction." In the same way, as they sorrowfully witness the gradual secularisation of the Sabbath, they angrily say to the spirit of the age: "You wicked thief, why do you rob us of our field-day? If you succeed in entirely stealing this day from us, you will sound the deathknell of Christianity itself."

No one takes religion seriously, not even the preacher himself. In practice every Christian is an Atheist. In reality no living being trusts in God. Even those who pretend to believe in special providence take good care to be their own providence as far as ever they can. On Sunday the man of God authoritatively calls upon his hearers to rely alone upon the Lord, which some of them do sentimentally while the Lord's Day lasts; but for the rest of the week they all rely upon themselves as wholly as if there were no God to rely on. Religious belief does not count in life's daily struggle, thereby proving itself to be the merest cant. But the reign of cant even in the emotional realm is at last seriously menaced; while the reign of reason and common sense, which will be the reign of the people, is looming higher and higher as the sure promise of the future. The passing of the gods has always meant, and always will mean, the COMING OF MAN.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Phenomena of Procreation.

THE father of all life is the sovereign sun, and from that early day in the history of our world when our solar sire came wooing the virginal earth the offspring of their union have ever been endowed with the powers of reproduction.

Organic reproduction is a form of growth which assumes the function of generating new organisms from existing organisms more or less similar in character. All individual organisms, both animals and plants, tend to lose their vigor as they grow older, and death is then a mere matter of time. Their power to produce descendants is therefore essential to the perpetuation of the species. Countless reasons exist for the belief that the first living creatures were one-celled plants and animals, and that from such simple organisms all succeeding forms have

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been evolved by the moulding energies of all-creating Nature.

As all are now aware, single-celled animals like the amœba, paramecium, and others reproduce themselves by mechanical division of their cell-bodies into two equal halves. The two new organisms thus formed act precisely like their parent cell; they feed and grow, and when they reach the limit of growth they themselves divide until in a short time a numerous family is established. The paramecia, for example, when favorably circumstanced, divide about three times in forty-eight hours, which means that the original paramecium splits into two, these into four, and these again into eight in a couple of days.

In a certain sense these lowly creatures are immortal, as the parent cell, although it sacrifices its individuality when it reproduces, never, apart from accident or disease, can it become worn out to the point of death. For as soon as it attains its maximum size it divides into two young animals, and this process is by them repeated generation after generation.

This persistent procreation is, however, subject to an important limitation. In certain circumstances the paramecia arrive at a time when self-division ceases. At this period conjugation becomes necessary, and this is consummated in the following manner: Two of these organisms come together, and through their tender cell-walls part of the nucleus of each one travels across to join the nucleus of the other. Being thus rejuvenated, the two tiny creatures separate, division recommences, and their descendants continue to reproduce themselves for some considerable time before conjugation is again called for. Very many other unicellular organisms have been observed in the act of conjugation.

One-celled plants perpetuate themselves in a similar way: bacteria, yeast, and the green coating on walls and tree-trunks are all examples of this nature. The organisms above mentioned illustrate a type of reproduction in which sex plays no part. The individual cells are sexless, but all possess the power of procreating their kind. With them the generative process merely takes the form of constant growth and multiplication, and is therefore termed asexual reproduction. Sexual generation, which is so general among the higher plants and animals, is to these simple organisms unknown.

But the genesis of sexual generation is soon detected in the ascending order of life, just as reminiscences of an earlier asexual generative process are encountered among the many-celled or multicellular plants and animals. The hydra reproduces itself asexually in conditions of abundant nourishment, and other favoring circumstances. The animal throws out a bud which develops in a few days into a miniature hydra. This soon separates from the parent body, and commences an independent life. In a normally suitable environment the hydra grows apace, and several buds may be developed at the same time, and the young animals thus begotten begin to reproduce themselves soon after their detachment from their parent. But in less propitious conditions, where the water is stagnant and food is scarce, the growth of the hydra is arrested and budding ceases. The animal now evolves sexual structures (ovaries and spermaries), which develop egg-cells and sperm-cells.

> "When the spermaries of a hydra are mature, the sperm-cells escape and swim freely in the water. A single ovum or egg-cell develops in an ovary, and is fertilised by the entrance of a single sperm-cell. The fertilised egg-cell forms an embryo, and becomes surrounded by a hard shell or cyst. The protected embryo falls to the bottom of the pond, and it may remain there for some time. Dry dust scraped from the bottoms of ponds during midsummer drought may contain embryos which will develop into hydras soon after being placed in water."

Fundamentally considered, reproduction is what Huxley described as continuous and discontinuous growth, and this underlying principle is made abundantly clear by a further procreative characteristic which this same interesting and instructive hydra displays. If a hydra be severed into two or more pieces, each fragment will develop into a perfect hydra. This very remarkable aspect of reproductive power comes under the heading of regeneration. Regenerative phenomena are by no means special to the hydra. A divided earthworm will develop into two perfect worms; a starfish may be broken into pieces, and each will refashion itself into a complete animal. Far higher organisms, such as frogs and lizards, will regenerate lost tails or toes. It is not suggested that regeneration is a normal generative process, but its existence proves the close kinship between procreation and body growth.

The colonial hydroids are near relatives of the hydra, and these animals produce buds which do not wander from the parent organism, but remain attached, and grow into branches resembling those of a tree. A single hydroid which itself has arisen from an egg will in this manner develop into a tree-like group which displays a hydroid at the tip of each twig. Some of the hydroids change into medusæ or jelly-fishes, separate from the colony, swim in the water, and generate eggs and sperms. Each fertilised egg grows into a young hydroid, which fixes itself to some solid surface, and then, by repeated budding, a new tree-like colony is formed.

The majority of worms are sexually generated, but some reproduce themselves asexually. Certain marine worms develop new organisms at their anterior segments; occasionally several such segments may be seen, so that the parent worm has become a chain of young worms. In course of time the chain breaks up, and the various individuals which formed it in its unbroken state are now enabled to begin an independent life.

In the vegetable kingdom, especially under cultivation, asexual reproduction is almost universal. Plants frequently propagate themselves without the aid of their generative organs. And some of the most striking examples are to be found among those plants whose sexual apparatus is most perfectly developed. Although these normally reproduce themselves from seeds which are formed by the agencies of floral structures, they may be as well, or better, produced from roots, cuttings, and even leaves.

The runners of the strawberry plant are prostrate branches which, at some distance from their parent, take root in the soil and send up a vertical stem, while the runner withers away. The plant thus spreads itself over a wide area; as many as fifty new plants may be established in this manner in a single summer. Fruit bushes extend themselves by producing new plants from subterranean branches which assume the functions of roots. The fallen leaves of the bryophyllum will develop into independent growths of this garden plant. A leaf or even a fragment of a begonia leaf will form a perfect plant. Many beautiful flowering growths flourish better when bulbs are set in preference to seeds. The hyacinth, narcissus, daffodil, the tulip and crocus, and various lilies are always most successfully cultivated from bulbs.

In purely natural conditions, where the presence of the gardener is unknown, numerous blossoming plants will propagate asexually from roots, leaves, stems, and bulbs. Under cultivation, slips from almost any botanical growth may be made to take root in conditions natural to the plant. Among favorite flowering plants, the geranium supplies an instance of this. Cuttings from the vine and the willow almost invariably take root and flourish in a suitable soil.

Our standard choice fruits cannot be secured from seed-sown trees; grafting and budding are the only known methods for the certain propagation of the finest varieties of apples, pears, peaches, plums, and cherries. The cultivated tubers of the potato plant, which are in reality the thickened branches of the underground stem, will, when planted, reproduce the excellent qualities of that useful vegetable; but no potatoes worth eating can be produced from seed.

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Seedless apples are necessarily propagated from cuttings:—

> "The millions of seedless orange trees in California have descended from a single tree which grew from seed but could not itself produce seed. Without man's help, such a variety could not have multiplied."

Phanerogams are those vegetable forms that normally propagate by seeds which are produced in the floral organs or sexual structures of these flower-bearing plants. A glance at the reproductive structures and functions of a bean plant will illustrate the general laws which govern the fertilising processes of blossom-bearing vegetation as a whole. The bean will grow almost anywhere, and anyone sufficiently interested can therefore easily acquire first-hand knowledge by watching the plant as it passes through its successive stages of development.

The bean flower is more or less familiar to all; its color and beauty attract the most careless observer. Nor is its striking appearance merely accidental, for its arresting loveliness serves to secure the visits of those insects that are essential to the production of its seeds. When, in search of honey, the bee alights on the petals of the flower,—

> "the stigma and the upper part of the style are exposed and pollen is brushed on the bee's body by the hairs of the style. Then the bee goes to another flower, and when its style touches the bee's body, the stigma will touch some pollen from the first flower; and at the same time the hairs of the style will brush on to the bee some pollen from the second flower. And so, as the bee goes from flower to flower, it will brush pollen-dust on stigmas and get pollen-dust brushed out from the anthers by the hairs on the styles below the stigmas. There is very little chance that the stigma of a flower will get pollen-dust from anthers in the same flower. This may sometimes happen when a bee leaves a flower and at once goes back to it, carrying pollen-dust received on its first visit."

The preceding quotation will probably become clearer to the non-botanical reader if a brief description of the sex organs of flowering plants is appended. The male organ is the stamen, which is made up by the stalk or filament, and the anther which bears tiny grains of pollen. In the middle of the flower is the female organ, the pistil, which consists of the ovary and the style which extends upwards and has the stigma at its termination.

As we have shown, self-pollination is usually prevented and cross-pollination most frequently secured. Darwin, in the course of lengthy and elaborate experiments, kept beans protected with netting which prevented all access of insects to the flowers, with the result that seeds seldom formed. There is now little doubt that the agency of insects is indispensable to the production of healthy seeds. When the pollen particles have once been placed on the stigma they soon swell, and each pollen grain sends forth a delicate tube which grows down into the tissues of the style and enters into an ovule in the ovary. There the pollen tube embraces an egg-cell, and the passage of the protoplasm from the end of the pollen tube into the egg-cell consummates the act of fertilisation. In a very short time the fertilised egg-cell splits up into many cells, and these form an embryo within the ovule which develops into a seed.

Among non-flowering plants is the fern, whose generative processes are, consequently, of a less evolved order. The stems of our native ferns are usually semi-prostrate on the soil or buried from view beneath the earth, although the noble tree ferns of the tropics have splendid upright stems. Fern fronds bear on their under surfaces elevations and ridges entirely foreign to anything seen on the leaves of flowering plants. These structures contain spore-cases (sporangia) which develop spores. When the sporangia are ripe, they burst and scatter their contained spores over the surrounding soil, from which they suck up water and begin to germinate. The first stage of the developing fern is that of the prothallium, which, when full grown, evolves male and female organs on its under side. Each ovary develops an ovum, and each spermary produces numerous spiral sperm-cells provided with cilia. These cilia act as swimming-organs, and the sperm-cells are urged through the water previously absorbed from the soil, and move towards the opening of the ovary, and once inside, they come into contact with the egg-cell. One sperm-cell suffices to ensure this act of fertilisation.

The egg-cell now divides itself again and again; an embryo is evolved, and this develops into a small fern plant. We thus see that the ordinary fern first reproduces asexually by means of spores which grow into prothallia, and then these, in their turn, reproduce with the aid of sexual organs, and generate new fern plants. These phenomena furnish an excellent example of the law of the alternation of generations.

Spore development represents an earlier evolutionary process of procreation, which was once universal among the ancestors of the blossom-bearing plants. Traces of this more primitive mode of reproduction are still to be detected in the floral structures of the highest order of plants. Detailed study of plant morphology has revealed the fact "that inside the pistil of flowers are microscopic groups of cells which represent the prothallium that lives independently as a stage in the life-history of ferns and other lower plants."*

T. F. PALMER.

(To be continued.)

The Idea of God not Universal.—III.

(Concluded from p. 267.)

"The assertion generally passes current that the idea of an Omnipotent Being is familiar to all people, even the most barbarous. My limited experience argues the contrary. Savages begin with fetishism and demon-worship,.....the deity is the last and highest pinnacle of the spiritual temple, not placed there except by a comparatively civilised race of high development, which leads them to study and speculate upon cosmical and psychical themes."—SIR RICHARD BURTON, *First Footsteps in Africa*, p. 50.

"If we may believe the testimony of travellers,—*who are generally prejudiced in the opposite direction*, and who frequently implant their own belief, which is found there by subsequent voyagers,—there are not only isolated tribes, but whole nations who are so degraded as to live with no knowledge of their Creator."—REV. F. W. FARRAR, "On the Universality of Belief in God, and in a Future State," *Anthropological Journal* (August, 1864), cxxvii.

"And in what condition are these, or the other Indians who are still scattered up and down in the vast continent of South or North America? Religion they have none; no public worship of any kind! God is not in all their thoughts."—REV. JOHN WESLEY, "The Imperfections of Human Knowledge," Wesley's *Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 181.

"It is impossible to take religion in its strict sense as the faculty of believing in a God; if so, half of the population of the globe would be destitute of it. Taking Buddhism alone there are three or four hundred million votaries of this 'religion without God, founded on charity amounting to madness' (Laboulaye)."—DR. PAUL TOPINARD, *Anthropology*, p. 152.

MR. LAUDER LINDSAY cites the statement of Dr. Mouat, who says of the Andaman Islanders:—

> "They have no conception of a Supreme Being. They have never risen from the effects they see around them to the most imperfect notion of a Cause. They have never ascended in thought from the works to a Creator, or even to many creators—that is to say Polytheism" (Mouat, *Adventures and Researches among the Andaman Islanders* (1863), p. 303).

He also quotes the testimony of Lieutenant Low, of H.M. Indian Navy, who similarly remarks of them: "They do not believe in the existence of a Supreme Being, and perform no religious ceremony of any sort" (Low, *The Land of the Sun* (1870), p. 168).†

"Of the inhabitants of Pleasant Island, Mr. T. Beckford Simpson tells us, 'They have no religion of any kind, neither do they believe in a future state, but they appear to have some slight idea of an evil spirit.'"‡

* Bigelow, *Reproduction of Organisms*, p. 389.
† Lauder Lindsay, *Mind in Animals*, p. 206.
‡ Pickering, *Races of Man*, p. 62.

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Mr. Bonwick, in his work on the Tasmanians, has compiled a long list of tribes and races without belief in a God, from which we extract the following:—

> "Mr. Bates says that the Mandurens of South America have 'no idea of a Supreme Being.' Sir Samuel Baker declares that the Nile 'flows through a land of barbarians without a belief in God.' There is not a trace of it among the Papuans of New Guinea or the Negritos of the Phillipine Isles. Mr. B. H. Hodgson found no word in the Tamil language of India for God or Soul. Dr. Mouat calls the Andamanders 'mere undeveloped children,' and records, 'They have no conception of a Supreme Being. Mr. Mouhot refers to the wild Bannavs of the forests of Annam as having 'no idea of a Supreme Being, Sovereign, and Creator of all things."*

The Rev. F. W. Farrar tells us that when Wallace, the naturalist, was among the wild tribes of the Moluccas and New Guinea,—

> "he endeavored to ascertain what were their ideas respecting the Creator of the universe, but he could only get from them a confession of total ignorance of the subject. It was difficult to distinguish the real opinions of those savages from the opinions they had heard. If they were told by any traveller that there was an invisible Creator of the Universe, so far as they were capable of receiving such an idea, they would receive it, and repeat it afterwards when questioned on the subject; but so far as he was able to ascertain, they had no such idea whatever. They had no desire for knowledge, but were contented to go on in their own ways. They have, indeed, some vague ideas of the existence of unknown powers; diseases, for instance, were supposed to be unnatural, and to be caused by some supernatural agency, but that was very different from the belief in a God. The intellectual capacities of those tribes were so feeble that he doubted whether they could be made to appreciate or understand what was meant by a God."†

The Rev. F. W. Farrar cites many other travellers to the same effect, and in his paper on the subject, given to the Anthropological Society, he said—

> "his object in bringing the subject before the Society was to obtain testimony on one side or the other. He should have been delighted if the opinions he had stated, on the authority of various travellers, had been refuted by other travellers; and that was his main object in bringing the question forward" (ccxxi.).

Surely, one would think if testimony to the contrary existed, it would scarcely have escaped the search and inquiry of such a widely read critic.

But if all the savage tribes existing to-day believed in a God, yet there must have been a time when they had no such belief. For if man has evolved, by slow degrees, through countless ages, from lower animal forms, as science proves, then the belief in a God must have arisen at some time since he evolved from animal to man. There is no race at present existing without a language, yet there must have been a time, during the early evolution of man, when he was like the lower animals—speechless.

But the evidence which the Rev. F. W. Farrer failed to find, the late Mr. Andrew Lang attempted to provide in his book, *The Making of Religion* (1898), in which he attacks Sir John Lubbock, who, in his works *Prehistoric Times* and the *Origin of Civilisation*, deals with the evolution of religion. He also states that these works have been "confuted" by M. Roskoff, of Vienna, who has devoted one entire section of his work on the religion of savages to a criticism of the same works.

Shortly before his death, Sir John Lubbock (Lord Avebury) published a reply to his critics in his last work, *Marriage, Totemism, and Religion* (1911), in which he observes:—

> "Mr. Lang's view of the whole subject is not only very different from, but the very opposite of mine. He believes that the lowest savages had a simple, pure, and beautiful religion which gradually deteriorated; while I believe that our primitive ancestors started without religion, and that, speaking generally, as they rose in civilisation their religious conceptions rose with them. So far as religion is concerned, Mr. Lang believes in a golden age long past and succeeded by one of iron" (p. 156).

To use Mr. Lang's own words, among "the lowest savages there exists, not a doctrinal and abstract Monotheism, but a belief in a moral, powerful, kindly, creative Being."* "Turning to races yet higher in material culture, we find a crowd of hungry and cruel gods" (p. 280). And "The Supreme Being is succeeded in advancing civilisation, and under the influence of animism, by ruthless and insatiable ghost-gods, full of the worst human qualities. Thus there is what me may really call degeneration, moral and religious, inevitably accompanying early progress" (p. 276).

In reply to this curious attempt to read evolution backward, Lord Avebury replies:—

> "Why should men proffer costly sacrifices and bribes to the inferior deities, rather than prayer to the Supreme? What evidence is there that savages ever had any living faith in their 'High Gods' or ever did pray to them? Mr. Lang's theory seems most improbable, and only to be accepted if supported by the strongest evidence. He looks to a golden age in the past; I hope for one in the future. He devotes a considerable portion of his important work on *The Making of Religion* to cases of clairvoyance and second-sight, crystal-gazing, and demoniacal possession, and dwells on the stories of Mr. Home floating out at one window and in at another; of Mrs. Piper, Miss X., etc., etc. Speaking of such superstitions, he says: 'I regard them, though they seem shadowy, as grounds of hope, or at least as tokens that men need not yet despair.
>
> "For my part, I look forward with hope; but if I were to despair, it would be to see some of our ablest intellects still clinging to the most childish superstitions of the darkest ages and the lowest savages."†

Lord Avebury then deals in detail with the evidence brought forward by Mr. Lang in support of his theory, and shows that it will not stand examination.

M. Roskoff's attack is somewhat different to Mr. Lang's. He attacks Lord Avebury for holding that the lowest savages have no religion whatever—an interesting question about which many big books have been written. But, before dealing with this question, it would be well to understand something of the modes and capabilities of thought among primitive races.

W. MANN.

* Bonwick, *Daily Life and Origin of the Tasmanians*, p. 170.
† Rev. F. W. Farrar, *Anthropological Journal* (August, 1864), ccxx.

* Lang, *The Making of Religion*, p. 278.
† Lord Avebury, *Marriage, Totemism, and Religion*, pp. 160-1.

Keats and Colvin.

> ".....that special strain of underbreeding which Keats shared with Leigh Hunt."—SIR SIDNEY COLVIN, *Times*.

Sir Sidney Snob prates of Keats' "unbreeding,"
After a hundred years have swelled his fame;
Dead but five days, e'en snobs will be unheeding
Alike Sir Sidney's breeding, birth, and name.

V. B. N.

WHAT ABOUT ADAM?

Assuredly we must believe
That man has been eclipsed by madam;
We hear so much of Christmas Eve,
And never a word of Christmas Adam.

KIKUYU "HOWLERS."

A class of London Schoolboys has just been asked to write essays on "Kikuyu." Here are some extracts:—

"The three bishops were overworked and were in need of a long holiday."

"They objected to the services being given in Scotch."

"The extreme heat experienced in these districts upset the bishops and made them quarrel."—*Public Opinion*.

There is an idea abroad among moral people that they should make their neighbors good. One person I have to make good; myself. But my duty to my neighbor is much more nearly expressed by saying that I have to make him happy—if I can.—*Robert Louis Stevenson*.

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Acid Drops.

We have received the following letter from a Staffordshire clergyman, and this seems as good a place as any in which to deal with it. It runs:—

> "A week or two ago, when in Birmingham, a man politely offered me a new copy (April 5) of the *Freethinker*, and asked me to read it. My being in holy orders accounted probably for his offer. Well, Mr. Editor, I have read nearly all of it and I am writing to ask why it is published? I could say a good deal more and ask a lot more questions, but I will only ask that and one other. What grounds have we for believing that so-called 'Freethought' (such as contained in the issue of April 5) can possibly appeal to men's intellect, or, rather, to intellectual men? The man in Birmingham, I am sure, means well, and he could not have been more polite; but I cannot conceive why he and others should want to busy themselves in such a way."

We are not surprised that the *Freethinker* does not appeal very powerfully to a gentleman in "holy orders," although it has hit the mark now and then even in that direction. Still, we should have thought that even a clergyman would have realised why this paper is published. Its object is to say what cannot be said in other papers; and, moreover, express what a large number of people feel to be the truth but cannot themselves say—partly because they may lack the power of putting their thoughts into words, partly because they dare not. The primary purpose of the *Freethinker* is to tell the truth about religion. And the clergy need to be told this as well as other people. This may have been the reason why the Birmingham Freethinker handed the rev. gentleman a copy of this paper.

We could not forbear a smile at the question, Whether we thought the *Freethinker* would appeal to intellectual men? In all seriousness, whom else should it appeal to? It does not pander to people's love of sensationalism, or to their taste for pruriency. It does not trade on their passions, play on their emotions, or make profit out of their fears. To some intellects the *Freethinker* would not, of course, appeal. To people, for example, who have been used to soaking themselves in sermons, and who have seriously come to take them for great intellectual efforts. For sheer brainwork we have no hesitation in placing the *Freethinker* beside any paper in England; and this reverend gentleman would be considerably surprised did he know the class of people who read its pages and more or less agree with its teachings. It is one of the carefully nurtured slanders of the religious world that the *Freethinker* is a journal written by illiterate men for illiterate readers. We would seriously advise our questioner to place the *Freethinker* beside any religious journal in the kingdom and compare the quality of both.

Finally, why should we and others busy ourselves in this way? One can only reply, Why not? Our questioner cannot conceive why we should. So much the worse for him, and so much the worse for the credit of the training which has landed him in "holy orders." The promulgation of what one believes to be the truth is one of the greatest of social duties, for the discharge of which the discovery of truth is only a preparation. The Freethinker believes he has got hold of the truth about religion; if not the whole of the truth, at least more of it than the Christian possesses. And, believing this, he sets out to enlighten the Christian and rid him of his error. Imagine a Christian minister, who should be always on the look out to convert people to his way of thinking, wondering why other people should be engaged at the same work. Or perhaps it is that, as the Freethinker has no future rewards to offer, and no future punishments to threaten, our clerical questioner is puzzled to understand why anyone should bother himself in the matter. And if that is so, we can only reply again, so much the worse for him and his creed. A more human creed would have developed a keener sense of social responsibility. It would certainly have caused him to better appreciate the efforts of men, inspired by no hopes of material gain or public applause, going out of their way to confer upon others some of the truth they have themselves discerned.

"Dante's conception of God was one of hideous malignity, Milton's merely puerile." Thus writes a penman in the *Times*. Maybe the journalist prefers the deity of Bramwell Booth or Gipsy Smith.

The *Daily Chronicle* has been complaining of degenerate journalism on the part of the Tory press, which is accused of using such terms as "liar," "rogue," "bully," "traitor," in referring to Liberal ministers. Such quotations could be paralleled easily from the utterances of the Christian Evidence lecturers, but, as they are only aimed at Freethought leaders, the "Liberal" press never notices them.

Temperance propaganda is very vigorous in America, and water is used instead of wine in the communion services at the churches. Certainly water would be preferable to the red ink and vinegar used in some places of worship.

Mr. G. K. Chesterton suggests the new name of "The Limits" as a suitable one for the modern democrats. As G. K. C. adds that "the devils also believe and tremble" at democracy, we agree that the title is suitable in some cases.

American speakers have a fondness for Biblical illustrations in their speech, and frequently the references are somewhat apocryphal. Mr. Thornton, the new manager of the Great Eastern Railway, in his first speech in England, said, "I have always had a great respect for Daniel, the original lion-tamer. When he was in the den of lions they roared, and Daniel smiled because he knew there would be no after-dinner speaking."

According to an insurance expert, the clergy are negligent concerning the risk of fire in the churches under their care, and do not insure them. This is strange, for the parsons are always shouting "fire" in their pulpits.

There is nothing like a good mouth-filling phrase for satisfying the ordinary religionist. Here, for instance, is one from the *Christian Commonwealth*. It is given as a definition of religion: "Religion is the activity of a highly evolved intuition which pierces to and responds to a supersensible reality that attracts it." We take a deep breath, and with a slight rearrangement read it backwards. "A supersensible reality attracts a highly evolved intuition and constitutes religion." It does just as well. That is the beauty of a deeply religious formula. However you take it, it answers the purpose in an equally satisfactory manner. We wonder what Mr. J. Bruce Wallace—the writer of the sentence—imagines it to mean? Try and imagine a religious savage—and all savages are religious—exercising the "activity of a highly evolved intuition"—which men like Spencer and Darwin and Wagner did not possess—and so get ting into touch "with a supersensible reality." Intuition, like instinct, is a word with a meaning, but religious writers rarely seem to be aware of what it means. As it is, they use it as a cover for the first piece of nonsense that comes into their minds. And their readers accept it as profound philosophy because they are in the same condition of ignorance.

Mr. Wallace also discovers that the "main function of science in the service of religion is to destroy effete thought-moulds that have become limitations to the religious consciousness." Really, we were not aware that there was such a thing as a "religious consciousness" any more than there is a heat consciousness. There is a consciousness of religion and there is a consciousness of heat. But this is quite another matter. The functions of every human brain are absolutely identical, the difference arises solely in the degree of development. And as to science liberating the "religious consciousness," we were under the impression that the great work of science had been to show that the things which were accepted as evidence of the truth of religion were really nothing of the kind. That is what science did when it killed spiritual agency in astronomy, in geology, in biology, in chemistry, in the causation of plagues, diseases, insanity, and in other directions. Science has been all along proving that phenomena believed to be religious were really nothing of the kind. Mr. Wallace may call this the liberation of the religious consciousness; other people, not in the habit of drugging themselves with words, will see in it the destruction of one religious belief after another.

The Vicar of St. Luke's, Nottingham, has been complaining of the behavior of the people who come to his church to be married. Some of them, he says, come there in a state of intoxication. The vicar says he would much prefer that they went to a registry office to get married. This is very kind and thoughtful of the Rev. F. J. Taylor, but we can assure him that we have never heard of people going to a registry office in a state of intoxication to get married. Evidently that kind of thing is confined to religious circles.

The Archdeacon of Bath has been warning the clergy under his control of the need for adequately insuring their churches against fire. What on earth is the matter with prayer?

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According to a London evening paper, a blind reporter is to report football matches and record his impressions. We fancy deaf, dumb, and blind representatives of the ordinary press attend Freethought meetings, for their reports never get published.

An American missionary named Tridick has been killed by a lion near Khartoum. Perhaps he upset the animal by singing "Dare to be a Daniel."

Writing in *Lloyd's Weekly News*, the Rev. Charles Brookes, vicar of Ravensthorpe, Northampton, says: "After all, death is nothing more than the end of our lives here, and that we shall go on living a fuller, freer, happier life than any we can hope for here on earth." Is this a free advertisement of the Kingdom-Come business.

A female patient in the Physico-Medical Institution at Kieff, who died, had a temperature of 122 degrees Fahrenheit for some days during her illness, and twice it rose to 140 degrees. The lady should suffer little discomfort even if she went to the wrong place.

The *Catholic Times* is very angry with Sir T. S. Clouston, the eminent surgeon. "With the unashamed and hardened ignorance so characteristic of the exponents of modern science," Sir Thomas Clouston has written of "the implied opinion of the mediæval Christian Church.....that the reproductive instincts were innately evil, and should be repressed and trodden under foot by all religious and moral men and women." This really does not strike us as a very serious exaggeration of the facts of the case. What else did the celibacy of the mediæval Church imply if not this? Of course, celibacy was not the only element in the mediæval religious ideal, but it was certainly a very powerful and a very prominent one. It was by abstention from sexual relationship that most of the "saints" showed their superior degree of holiness, and their marriage would certainly have been regarded as a lapse from a superior to an inferior state. Of course, the Church never went so far as to brand the reproductive instincts as evil, and Sir Thomas Clouston does not say that it did so. But it certainly implied that their exercise was a bar to the saintly life. For generations the truly "saintly" character was a celibate, and if that does not imply the relative evil of the reproductive instincts, one would like to know what meaning one is to attach to it.

In these days of dwindling church congregations, it is interesting to learn, from a recent article in the *Times*, that there is a village "within excursion distance from London" which can boast of a good church attendance. The secret lies in the fact that some long time ago a misguided person bequeathed a sum of money to be given annually to the person who most regularly attended church. Women generally bear off the prize, and the writer of the article says that the one to whom it was awarded last Christmas was "obviously a woman of determination and will." He says, "her face reminded me a little of others seen waiting outside the pit doors of London theatres; it had an expression upon it that seemed to say, 'I am here to get through this business, and here I stay until it's done. When will the doors open?'" Something of the same kind really exists in a large number of churches. Presents of groceries and clothing given to poor people at many churches are dependent upon attendance at Mothers' Meetings and the like. It would not be at all a bad thing for the railways to advertise excursions to the village where church attendance is not dwindling. It would be enough of a curiosity to attract visitors.

At Llanelly, according to the *Daily Mail*, six traders pay thirteen shillings each, weekly, in fines for trading on Sunday. They have been doing this for about six years, and the game still goes on. Some of the Justices who inflict the fines employ workmen every Sunday. Perhaps some of the Welsh Members of Parliament who are so frantically anxious for religious freedom in Wales will call attention to this sample of Sabbatarianism in action.

"How is it," asks the Rev. Dr. Forsyth, "that so much literature connected with religion tends to be poor and thin and sentimental?" Perhaps the answer may be found on the lines of the old maxim that one can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. Religious literature was not always poor and thin and sentimental. Some of the strongest pieces of writing of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were connected with religion. But the world was different then. Men of ability and information could still be religious. Nowadays these are becoming a rarity. It is mostly men who are themselves poor and thin and sentimental who give themselves to religion, and the men are reflected in their writings. When *The Rosary* and *When It Was Dark*, and Mr. Harold Begbie's productions, are boomed because of their religious value, what else could we expect but poor stuff to be the vogue in the religious world?

Dr. Forsyth says that "we have religious novels whose mawkish sentiment is a real danger. They are more mischievous than *Tom Jones*." More mischievous than *Tom Jones*—one of the strongest, manliest, and sanest novels in the language! God help the poor devil who can't read *Tom Jones* without its doing him a mischief. Books of that kind never did, and never will, do anyone harm. When Fielding is coarse, he is coarse as nature is coarse; but he is also tender, and tolerant, and sympathetic, and, above all, wise in a degree that divests his coarseness of all harmful tendencies. It is not such books as *Tom Jones* that are bad books. The really bad books, the books that have the most demoralising influence, are just those that Dr. Forsyth would in all probability commend. Books that are filled with false and misleading views of life, of people, of systems, and of nations. Dr. Forsyth should purify his taste before he again ventures to criticise the first great novel, and still one of the greatest novels, in the English language.

Here is a curious illustration of the value of prayer. It is taken from an official report by Major Hirst, who has been engaged on survey work in the Sundarbans, India. The Major reports that four men were killed by tigers. "The first man taken was a religious person, imported to pray while a surveyor and his squad were at work. His prayers were supposed to keep off tigers, but either he did not pray sufficiently or was unlucky." Another man was seized by a tiger, but the surveyor got a brass rule and beat it about the head until the man was dropped. There it is. Brass *versus* prayer. Surveyor *versus* God. The odds are all in favor of the man and the metal.

The late Cardinal Kopp, the Prince Bishop of Breslau, left a fortune of £350,000. Unless Peter's sight is failing, the former bishop should have some difficulty in getting through the pearly gates.

A little time ago the Methodist papers were full of talk about the great revival that had been taking place in the Church. Now the membership for the year are published, the great revival has resulted in a decrease of 1,282 members. And significant enough is the fact that there is a decrease in Cornwall—one of the hotbeds of Methodism in the country. The *Methodist Times* says that "these figures are frankly unsatisfactory and dispiriting." More so because "competent observers" have declared that "the spiritual atmosphere of the Church has perceptibly been rising." We fancy Dr. Scott Lidgett mistakes a consequence for a cause. What is meant by greater "spiritual fervor" is, we take it, outbursts of revivalistic and evangelical enthusiasm such as the *Methodist Times* has been chronicling for many weeks. But this does not indicate progress; it means decadence. The better balanced, the more normal, types of mind forsake the Churches, and as these go other and lower elements are left to express themselves with greater freedom. Religious movements experience the same thing in their beginnings. And for the same reason: they are outside the main current of social life. When they are brought within its influence this "spiritual fervor" dies out, and religion becomes more or less of a pretence.

Recently a twelve-year-old girl stole half-a-sovereign from her mother. She spent it in buying cheap jewellery, articles of finery, and a Bible. Had she purchased a copy of *Bible Romances* there would have been a moral.

"It is a fact that physicists are, as a rule, more religious or more superstitious than ordinary men," says the *Times* "Literary Supplement." We should like to see the names of the scientists and the places of worship they attend.

Father Robinson, an Australian Catholic priest, wanted a new chalice for his church, and he asked his congregation to give articles of jewellery, which formerly belonged to dead friends, "to God in the name of the dear dead." Imagine an orphan Catholic subscribing for candles for the repose of his parents, and also giving up father's watch and chain and mother's trinkets.

Prayer is said to be able to move mountains, but when it comes to raising cash the bazaar is far more effective. At Bradford the Baptist ladies have raised £2,500 in two years.

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To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £135 18s. 11d. Received since:—T. Griffiths, 10s.; A. H. Smith, 10s.; A. W. Coleman, £1 1s.; J. H., 5s.; Atheist, Edmonton (second subscription), 2s. 6d.; Wm. Jas. Conroy, 10s.

W. J. CONROY.—Thanks for your sympathetic and encouraging letter.

H. A. T.—We don't remember how much money Spurgeon left. In any case, it was all he couldn't carry. You may be sure of that.

A. W. COLEMAN.—Enclosure and instructions received, and the latter handed over to the shop manager.

J. G. F. (Glasgow).—Subscription received and handed to proper quarter.

A. WELLS.—Sorry we do not know anyone to whom the articles you mention would be useful.

A. BRANDES.—*The Shadow Show*, recently reviewed by Mr. Bryce, is published by Methuen & Co. at the price of 6s. net.

J. KING.—John Stuart Mill's praise of the Jesus of the Gospels was, as both John Morley and Alexander Bain, beside many others, pointed out, an extremely ill-advised piece of writing. The character of the Gospel Jesus is a composite one, and the materials for its construction were to hand for anyone who cared to utilise them. Mill's intellectual equipment was not such as entitled him to an authoritative opinion on the matter. We are not attempting to belittle John Stuart Mill in saying this, but only emphasising what should be an obvious truth, namely, that the greatest man will trip when he deals with subjects on which his information is imperfect.

A. J. MARRIOT AND J. G. FINLAY.—Received.

A. H. SMITH.—Sorry to hear of your own indisposition. The splendid weather we are having should enable you to get rid of your cold with dispatch.

P. DAWES.—No apology needed, but pressure of work really does not permit the time to enter into extensive private correspondence except where absolutely necessary. We think you would find many of the pamphlets issued by the Pioneer Press of use to you. Our shop manager will send you a catalogue on request. There are also propagandist leaflets, which can be had on writing to Miss Vance, the N. S. S. Secretary.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

For various reasons it has been found desirable to again hold the Annual Conference in London this year. The Queen's Hall has been engaged for the evening (public) meeting, and there will be the usual arrangements made for the comfort of delegates and visitors, including a Conference luncheon. Those who intend visiting the Conference on Whit-Sunday will expedite the arrangements if they will communicate with the Secretary as speedily as possible, saying what accommodation they will require during their stay, and whether they intend to be present at the Conference luncheon. The last item is of importance, as the number must be notified beforehand.

Mr. Cohen lectures at Failsworth to-day (May 3) at 2.45 and 6.30. Admission to both meetings are free. There should be a good attendance of Freethinkers from Manchester and district.

The London open-air propaganda is now in full swing. Some branches commenced operations a week or two ago. To-day (May 3) lecturing under the auspices of the N. S. S. commences at Finsbury Park (11.30), Regent's Park (3.30), Parliament Hill (3.30). The Kingsland Branch this year holds its meetings both in the morning and evening, commencing May. In Victoria Park Miss Kough commences the evening meeting with a lecture at 6.15. We hope that London Freethinkers will give the lecturers at all these stations the support that they and the cause they represent deserve.

The splendid lead given to Liberals by Mr. Asquith to the deputation that waited on him in connection with the abolition of the Blasphemy Laws is not without avail. At the annual meeting of the South-East Cornwall Liberal Association, Mr. J. A. Elliott moved a resolution to the effect that the Association regretted the revival of prosecutions for blasphemy and the attitude of the Home Secretary in relation thereto, heartily approves of Mr. Asquith's promise to support a Bill for their abolition, and urged the Government to give special facilities to Mr. Holt's Bill for removing the last remnants of religious prosecution. The resolution was supported by Mr. H. Perry Coste, and, among others, a Mr. Foot, who announced himself as a Christian and a Nonconformist. The resolution was carried, and we hope other Liberal Associations will follow suit.

Sir Arthur Quiller Couch sent the following letter to the meeting, which was read by the Chairman:—

> "I am very glad to see that Mr. Asquith has received a deputation, and given it—as I understand—assurance of his personal desire to repeal the absurd 'Blasphemy Laws.' I do not know how far this promise will affect the wording of the resolution you propose to submit to the South-East Cornwall Liberal Association, but—if I am allowed to express a hope—I hope very earnestly that some resolution will be passed strengthening the Prime Minister's hands in repealing these odious Acts. My religious opinions are not yours. It is as a Liberal Churchman that I detest those rusty weapons of persecution. Certainly it seems to me that all Nonconformists, whose religious freedom was won against just such statutes, should have an hereditary interest in destroying them. 'Blasphemy' is the word used by officials of religion, from Caiaphas downward, to silence any speech of which they disapproved. It is not creditable that these laws have been so often invoked of late under a Liberal Government, and I hope the Government will redeem its credit in this matter by sweeping the statutes off the book."

"'Blasphemy' is the word used by officials of religion, from Caiaphas downward, to silence any speech of which they disapproved." That is well said, and it says in a sentence all that can be said.

According to the Bishop of Willesden it is "the duty of the Church to see that justice is done to the workers." We congratulate the workers on this discovery. It will rank with Newton's discovery of the law of gravitation.

Scripture contains many truths. One of them is that godliness hath the promise of the life that now is as well as that of the life to come. Proofs of this appear almost daily in the newspapers. Here are some recent ones. Rev. Robert Townson, Worthing, Sussex, left £9,165; Rev. Walter Francis Laufear, of Bath, left £6 531; Rev. Joseph Boord Ansted, of Highbury Hill, London, left £11,865. We like to see the Bible corroborated.

Mr. Dean C. Worcester, who has written an authoritative volume on *The Philippines, Past and Present*, tells an amusing story of popular ignorance of the archipelago. Once a lady said to him, "Deanie, are those Philippians you have been visiting the creatures that Paul wrote his epistle to?"

Mr. T. P. O'Connor, M.P., is a fluent writer, but sometimes his pen runs away with him. Writing of John Bright recently, he said, "the most Radical in religion, like Gibbons, have often been the most Conservative in politics." Presumably, "Tay Pay" meant Edward Gibbon, the greatest of all historians; but all his readers may not know this.

Reviewing Sabatini's book on *Torquemada and the Spanish Inquisition*, the *Daily Chronicle* used the headline, "The Inexplicable Crime Book." This tender consideration for the feelings of Catholics suggests that there are some faithful sons of the Church in the neighborhood of Fleet-street.

The name of the Trinity Brethren is unfamiliar to most people. When John Bright, who was a hard-shell Nonconformist, was President of the Board of Trade, he was asked to dine with "The Trinity." He nearly had a fit, until the matter was explained.

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More Notes.

How easily nations slide into war! I have been thinking of this very sadly to-day, out of doors, seeking fresh life and strength, which is all I have to do now to complete my recovery from a shaking illness. The air is cool and refreshing in the shade, the sunshine is balmy and tonic, the sky is a dream of tender blue and shimmering opalescence, the sea sparkles under the rays of the one real glorious light which "lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Peace and quiet brood over the scene. Everything seems idyllic. The birds thrill the air with music and now and then a note of rapture. One feels that if optimism is false pessimism is not true. Browning sang, or made a happy girl sing, "God's in his heaven, All's right with the world." And heaps of religionists regard this as a justification of God. But is it? Early this lovely morning I heard the boom of guns at sea. Men were learning skill in the art of destruction. The screaming gulls overhead need little further training. They dart with such rapid certainty upon their prey. The sweeter songsters of the wood are all more or less engaged in nature's great work of rapine and murder. Life is fed by death. Eat or be eaten is the general law of animal existence. Behind the beautiful palace lies the gloomy slaughter-house. Good and evil are relative. They are the systole and diastole of the heart of the world. So one must not be surprised that the newspapers bring news, even on this delightful morning, of arms landed on the coast of Ireland for one set of religionists to fight another with,—or, worse still, of a dispute, growing into a quarrel, and now fast developing into a regular war between the United States and Mexico. The former country was basking in the sunshine of peace. It was preparing to celebrate a hundred years of peace with Great Britain. It was making treaties of peace right and left with all sorts of other nations. But suddenly the sky darkened; the lightning flashed the signals of passion, the thunder spoke the voice of anger and hatred; and presently there began to fall the "red rain" which Byron saw with his mind's eye over the field of Waterloo. Yes, I repeat, how easily nations slide into war! I am not taking sides. I eschew politics in the *Freethinker*. I do not read moral or diplomatic lessons to President Wilson. He has plenty of advice (it is a very cheap article) without asking for mine. All I want to say is what I have said twice already—How easily nations slide into war!

* * *

Did you think the millennium was coming? Many voices have been crying "Peace! Peace!" in my time, and Andrew Carnegie has spent millions upon it in all the ways of self-advertisement—to say nothing of diffusing an interest in American Steel Trust Bonds. But how much real good has been wrought by all the shouting and agitation? Some, no doubt, amongst the better class of minds. The "glory" of war is less praised than it used to be in educated and thoughtful circles. The "intellectuals" recognise the military spirit as one of the greatest obstacles to moral and social progress. The "intellectuals," however, are a small number in comparison with the multitude. Their voices are drowned in the roar of the crowd. The mob of to-day is little, if anything, better than the mob of yesterday. It is just as easily practised upon in the name of "patriotism" to serve the ends of the priests of the worship of Mammon, the selfish ambitions of pretended statesmen, and the sinister bigotries of race and creed. I say in the *name* of patriotism; for patriotism itself is necessarily personal; it is the subordination of the individual citizen to the welfare of the nation,—not the subordination of the nation to the greed, pride, vanity, or other bad passions of the individual citizen. To keep calling your own country the greatest nation on earth is not patriotism; it is vulgar, foolish boasting, and usually means that your own country is the greatest nation on earth because it has the inestimable honor of counting you among its native inhabitants.

* * *

No, the millennium of peace, fraternity, and happiness is not coming yet. But blessed is he who works for it knowing he will never see it. Let him smile at being called a fool or a fanatic. Man's head, after all, is not placed upon his neck merely to serve his belly. Evolution is a forward-looking process; the self-preservation, which is its basis of development, is that of the species rather than the individual. The friends of progress, I repeat, may smile at being called fools or fanatics by people without sense or enthusiasm. Let them think of Shakespeare's "prophetic soul of the wide world dreaming on things to come"—and rejoice in the electric touch of the Master's hand.

* * *

My readers may tell me that I am not exactly saying what they want to hear. They can read about the American and other troubles in the newspapers. They expect to hear something about myself in the *Freethinker*. Yes, but I also have this particular thing to impress upon them before the opportunity grows cold. Freethinkers must not despair of the triumph of peace because mankind are such combative animals. The teaching of evolution shows us that peace *must* win in the end. Progress in the past is the certain guarantee of progress in the future. That the process is slow only proves that it is natural. Man is a risen animal not a fallen angel. That one sentence explains everything. Understanding it, one has patience as well as ardor in the battle of humanity.

* * *

And now for the news about myself. My insomnia is the worst complication of any illness I may suffer. Influenza, for instance, gives asthma a chance of attacking me, and the insomnia renders them such aid that I have to depend on medical help for sleep. When I am free of the influenza, and have fought down the asthma, I have another battle to fight for the restoration of natural sleep. It is no joke, but I hate the idea of becoming a slave to morphia or any other drug, so I fight with the determination of winning. Well, that fight is all over again. I feel under no sort of temptation to indulge in drugs. What sleep I get is natural. It is now as good as usual. I am gaining strength daily, I am able to walk about almost as well as ever, and I hope to be soon in tolerable fighting form. I am looking forward to seeing my friends again at Queen's Hall on Whit-Sunday.

G. W. FOOTE.

The instant you assign a motive of any sort whatever for doing right, whether it be the love of God, the love of man, the approval of one's own conscience, or even the pleasure of doing right itself, you admit the principle that the question relates to the weight of motives.—"*Liberty, Equality, Fraternity*," *Sir J. Fitzjames Stephen.*

If you teach a man to keep his eyes upon what others think of him, unthinkingly to lead the life and hold the principles of the majority of his contemporaries, you must discredit in his eyes the authoritative voice of his own soul. He may be a docile citizen; he will never be a man.—*Robert Louis Stevenson.*

Reconstruct, it is said, before you destroy. But you must destroy in order to reconstruct. The old husk of dead faith is pushed off by the growth of living beliefs below. But how can they grow unless they find distinct utterance; and how can they be distinctly uttered without condemning the doctrines which they are to replace? The truth cannot be asserted without denouncing the falsehood. Pleasant as the process might be of announcing the truth and leaving the falsehood to decay of itself, it cannot be carried into practice.—*Leslie Stephen*, "*Essays in Freethinking and Plain Speaking.*"

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Christian Apologetics.

III.—IGNATIUS AND POLYCARP.

THE last two "apostolic fathers" are Ignatius and Polycarp. These I will notice in the order given.

On December 13, A.D. 115, the city of Antioch suffered from the shocks of an earthquake, and many of the houses were thrown down. The emperor Trajan, who was then in the city, very narrowly escaped injury. These shocks were believed by the Pagan population to be a visitation from heaven, and soon the cry "The Christians to the lions!" resounded through the city. Trajan was not a persecutor of the Christians; but in this instance he gave way to the popular desire. Ignatius, the bishop of the Christian church there was arrested, and on December 20 was thrown to the wild beasts in the amphitheatre, to appease the anger of the gods. His bones were afterwards collected by some of his church, and buried in the city. The ablest and most learned critics, who have investigated the circumstances connected with this martyrdom, are agreed upon the foregoing points, among whom are Volkmar, Hilgenfeld, Baur, Davidson, and Scholten.

Now, many years later, some pious Christians placed in circulation the story that Ignatius, after being sentenced to "the lions," was sent to Rome in the custody of ten Roman soldiers, to be cast to the wild beasts there. During this journey, though a prisoner and closely guarded, he is said to have found time to write seven long epistles to different churches, and also to receive visits from friends. Though chained to his guards, he had apparently perfect freedom, and was supplied with writing materials and granted time to compose and write the ninety chapters contained in the seven epistles. To the church at Rome, for instance, he writes, among a heap of other nonsense:—

> "I write to the churches, and impress on them all that I shall willingly die for God, unless ye hinder me. .....I am the wheat of God, and let me be ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, that I may be found the pure bread of Christ.....May I enjoy the wild beasts that are prepared for me; and I pray they may be found eager to rush upon me, which also I will entice to devour me speedily," etc.

In these epistles, too, are found dogmatic teaching and views of church government of a more advanced character than were held in his days. He says, for instance, to the Christians of Smyrna: "He who honors the bishop has been honored by God: he who does anything without the knowledge of the bishop serves the Devil." In another epistle he says: "Let all reverence deacons as Jesus Christ, of whose place they are the keepers." It was also said that Ignatius became bishop of Antioch in A.D. 98, and suffered martyrdom in A.D. 107.

Coming now to the so-called Ignatian Epistles, there are no less than fifteen extant which profess to have been written by this martyr: but only seven are now considered genuine by any critic. It is thus admitted by all that eight Ignatian letters which have come down to our day were the work of pious forgers. Next, of the seven epistles which are held by Christian advocates to be genuine, there are two versions—a long one, and a very much shorter one—and both versions are in Greek and Latin. Of these, rational critics are of opinion that the longer epistles are simply interpolated versions of the shorter ones. Moreover, in the year 1845 Dr. Cureton published three still shorter Epistles, written in Syriac, which had been discovered not long before. Upon examination it has been found that all the quotations of the "fathers" up to the fourth century are contained in these three shorter Syriac epistles—thus pointing to the fact that the seven long epistles and four of the short ones in Greek and Latin are likewise forgeries. But when we consider the circumstances under which the Epistles profess to have been written, we are compelled to put them *all* down as forgeries, written many years after the martyrdom.

The idea of a long journey to Rome, after being condemned by Trajan at Antioch—for that the sentence was passed during a visit of the emperor to that city is not denied by anyone—is in every way perfectly ridiculous. There were both amphitheatre and wild beasts at Antioch. Trajan would himself be a witness of the races, combats, and the martyrdom. No purpose could be served by sending Ignatius to Rome; while the Antiochians would not, without protest, allow themselves to be deprived of a spectacle that was relished by all in that gladiatorial age. Only a crack-brained Christian forger could have originated the Christian story and have concocted the Ignatian Epistles. The story was fabricated to give countenance to the Letters. Hence, since Ignatius is said to have been a bishop for nine years, his episcopate would date from A.D. 106 to 115.

Polycarp is said to have been bishop of Smyrna in Asia Minor for some unknown period preceding the year A.D. 165, at which date he is stated to have suffered martyrdom at the stake. This event is recorded in the Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius (A.D. 325), and in the Paschal Chronicle (A.D. 630): both compiled from pre-existing documents not now extant. An account of the martyrdom is given in an encyclical letter purporting to be from the church of Smyrna to the catholic churches generally. At the end of the letter it is stated that the martyrdom took place on the second day of the month Xanthicus, the seventh before the kalends of May (April 25), Philip of Tralles being Asiarch, and Statius Quadratus proconsul. Eusebius says in his "Chronicle" that Statius filled the office of proconsul—which was an annual one—in the sixth year of Marcus Aurelius (*i.e.*, A.D. 165—166). The latter statement is thus in agreement with the History of Eusebius and the Paschal Chronicle.

Notwithstanding the latter fact, the great Christian apologist, Dr. Lightfoot, has made strenuous efforts to place this event at an earlier date, and, with the assistance of a wiseacre named Waddington and several unwarranted assumptions and baseless conjectures, he has fixed it at A.D. 155. But, I need scarcely say, that until some real historical evidence is forthcoming, I shall adhere to the date given by Eusebius and the Paschal Chronicle. The reason why Christian advocates endeavor to push back the dates of the earliest known Christian writers is obvious. These writings usually contain passages from a primitive Gospel, which our apologists assert were the present canonical evangels. Hence, by placing the writings as far back as possible, and by asserting that the writers quoted "freely from memory" from the canonical Gospels, the latter are apparently proved to be in existence in much earlier times than was actually the case.

Speaking of Polycarp, the early apologist Irenæus (A.D. 185) says in his work on Heresies:—

> "But Polycarp was not only instructed by apostles and conversed with many who had seen Christ, but was also, by apostles in Asia, appointed bishop of the church in Smyrna; whom I also saw in my early youth.....He it was who, coming to Rome in the time of Anicetus, caused many to turn away from the aforesaid heretics to the Church of God" (Her. iii., iii., 4).

From the foregoing it will be seen that Polycarp was in Rome some time during the episcopate of Anicetus (A.D. 156—168). How does Dr. Lightfoot, who places his martyrdom in 155, get over that fact? Oh, very easily. That distinguished apologist was light of hand as well as light of foot, and so took the liberty of altering A.D. 166 into A.D. 154, thus giving Polycarp time to go to Rome in 154 and return to Smyrna to suffer martyrdom in 155.

What Irenæus says about Polycarp being "instructed by apostles" and made bishop "by apostles" is, of course, untrue. We have to look at the following dates: A.D. 28 and A.D. 165. In A.D. 28 the apostles were men, and probably as old as their teacher—thirty years. None of them would be likely to be living (or teaching) after the age of ninety—*i.e.*, after A.D. 88. In A.D. 165 Polycarp's life was cut

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short by martyrdom, though he is said to have then been an old man. Placing his age at martyrdom at eighty-five, then he would have been born in A.D. 80 —that is to say, he would have been eight years old when the last apostle died. Now, teachers of religion in those days did not give instruction to children, but to men: neither did the early Christian teachers appoint little boys of eight to be bishops of Christian churches; they chose mature or elderly men who had long been in the church, and possessed the confidence of their fellow-churchmen.

The Letter narrating the martyrdom of Polycarp contains twenty-two paragraphs, from which I make three short extracts, merely to show the character of second century Christian "history."

> "Now as Polycarp was entering into the stadium, there came to him *a voice from heaven*, saying, 'Be strong, and show thyself a man, O Polycarp.'" — "When he had pronounced his 'Amen,' and so finished his prayer, those who were appointed for the purpose kindled the fire. And as the flames blazed forth in great fury, *we to whom it was given to witness it*, beheld a great miracle, and have been preserved that we might report to others what then took place. For the fire shaping itself into the form of an arch, like the sail of a ship when filled with the wind, encompassed as by a circle the body of the martyr. And he appeared within, not like flesh which is burnt, but as bread that is baked, or as gold or silver glowing in a furnace." — "At length when those wicked men perceived that his body could not be consumed by the fire, they commanded an executioner to go near, and pierce him through with a dagger. And in doing this, *there came forth a dove* and a great quantity of blood, *so that the fire was extinguished*. And all the people wondered that there should be *such a difference between the unbelievers and the elect*, of whom this most admirable Polycarp was one, having in our own times been an apostolic teacher, and bishop of *the catholic church* which is in Smyrna" (par. ix., xv., xvi.).

A portion of this Letter is given by Eusebius in his Ecclesiastical History (iv. 15). The Letter is chiefly of value as showing the kind of legends that were in circulation among the Christians of the second century, as well as the excessive credulity of that age. Polycarp was an orthodox and devout Christian, as may be seen by the following passage in his extant Epistle:—

> "For whosoever does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is Antichrist; and whosoever does not confess the testimony of the cross is of the Devil; and whosoever perverts the oracles of the Lord to his own lusts, and says that there is neither a resurrection nor a judgment, he is the first-born of Satan" (par. vii.).

There is the true Christian ring about this, which is not easily mistaken. Those who do not recognise it should go and listen to some of the Christian Evidence fraternity anathematising more moral, rational, and better informed men than themselves in some of the London parks.

From this brief examination of the "apostolic fathers" we find that not one of the five individuals, so called, lived in apostolic times, and that all their writings were composed in the second century. We also find that the production of those writings was in every case, save one, connected with lying, misrepresentation, and fraud—which primitive Christian characteristics plainly indicate how the Gospel stories originated.

ABRACADABRA.

Puff and Bluff.

A FRIEND of mine recently sent me a copy of the Lancaster *Observer* of March 27, with a marked leading article the title of which puzzled me not a little. The article was headed "Two Philosopher Heroes." The combination seemed to upset all my previous notions of classification. I was acquainted, of course, with the names of a few philosophers, such as Kant, and Schopenhauer, and Mill, and Spencer. And I had read of the heroes of a thousand battles in days of yore, and also of the modern hero of Mafeking, and that other hero whose immortality will ever be linked with that soul-stirring song, "The Cock o' the North." But two heroic philosophers, or philosophic heroes, who on earth could they be?

There is a firm of hosiers in our northern town who trade under the style of "The Two W.'s." And as I glanced at the first paragraph of the article, I found that these philosophic heroes (or purveyors of philosophic second-hands and misfits, as I afterwards discovered) were Two B.'s. It was a curious coincidence. I ransacked my memory to try and recall two heroes whose names began with a B, but the only ones I could discover were General Blucher and General Buller; but as I had never heard their names associated with philosophy, I concluded it could not be these worthy warriors. If there were any two men to whom the title in question might be applied with any kind of fitness, they were surely the Emperor Marcus Aurelius and Julius Cæsar. Did not Longfellow say of the latter:—

> "Here was a man who could both write and fight,
> And in both was he equally skilful"?

But then the names of these two noble Romans did not begin with a B.

As I sat musing thus (my mind the while wrestling with the seeming incongruity of the heading), it occurred to me that a perusal of the article might afford some enlightenment. Then I learned that these two philosophic heroes were an Englishman and a Frenchman, who are at the present time "the centres of the world's attention." And these two brilliant luminaries, who were dazzling the eyes of the world by their philosophic exploits; this firm of "Two B.'s," who had made bankrupt the whole of modern science, whose theological and metaphysical speculations had superseded all knowledge and all research, were—Mr. Arthur Balfour and Professor Bergson.

This writer on the *Observer* evidently makes a third hero (although his modesty prevents him from mentioning the fact), and, curiously enough, his name also begins with a B, the title of the trio being —Balfour, Bergson, and Bunkum.

But let us sample this newspaper scribe's puff of his two philosopher heroes:—

> "Both of them are defending the ideal, as against the crude realism of the age. Both say to science, —'Your verdicts on the cosmos cannot be final, for you only deal with the relative. The absolute lies not in your province. Your discoveries are for the moment; further discoveries will make them obsolete, perhaps absurd guesses at the fundamental verities. Your work is in time and space; ours goes beyond these forms of thought to the timeless and to immortality.'"

How thankful, I thought, we all ought to be to our fellow-countryman, Arthur James Balfour. After all the wranglings of philosophers for centuries, after all the spiritual and mystical speculations of the divines, and the futile efforts of scientists to solve the riddle of the universe, it remained for our Arthur James to pronounce the final verdict on the cosmos!

It appears that Mr. Balfour has been giving the Gifford Lectures at Glasgow. Mr. Balfour's theme was Theism.

> "Not the narrow thesis of the sects, not even the common ideas of Christianity. Mr. Balfour expounds the God of Gods, the Infinite, the eternal, the ever-inscrutable. All that man has evolved of the God-idea Mr. Balfour dissects and explains. Then he synthesises these into a general concept."

If these be not the common ideas of Christianity, at least they are the common phrases that one meets in theological literature everywhere. The God of Gods, the Infinite, the eternal, the ever-inscrutable, are the stock-in-trade of every theologian. For ages they have been expounding the Divine, each according to his own fancy or the desire of his particular flock, and it may be safely predicted that Mr. Balfour's efforts will only make confusion worse confounded. Strange that the writer should think him to be better qualified to deal with the subject

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of Theism than all the professional representatives of Christianity. He says:—

> "Mr. Balfour is the fittest Englishman alive for this gigantic undertaking. He is a born philosopher. Politics has only been an interlude in his life. As a young man he wrote that subtle book on *Philosophic Doubt*. Afterwards he devoted years to psychical research. He was president of the society of that name, and he is still an officer of it, and an active researcher."

He is a born philosopher! Before ever he left the care of his wet nurse, or had cut his wisdom teeth, he began to have philosophic doubts concerning the verdicts of science. When other children were playing with their toys, he was toying quite familiarly with the Berkeleian philosophy. Long before he reached the age of twelve he could discuss with the most learned doctors of the law, and baffle them. And in his mature age he is "the centre of the world's attention." The writer continues:—

> "Mr. Balfour is a student of man, as a spiritual, mental, and corporal being. He knows how much the body affects the mind, and how the mind reacts on the body. And he is quite Spencerian in recognising the immense influence of environment on both. Thus he is fully equipped for his great task of expounding the Divine."

How Spencer's Unknowable could aid Mr. Balfour to expound the Ever-Inscrutable is one of those mysteries known only to newspaper writers like the scribe of the *Observer*. His eulogy of this politico-philosopher really becomes a little nauseating:—

> "Equipped with all science, steeped in all philosophies, an expert in psychology and physiology, Mr. Balfour has a further advantage—he is a religious man."

What was it Goldsmith said of the village rustics and the schoolmaster?—

> "And still their wonder grew,
> That one small head could carry all he knew."

You will notice, dear reader, the reason of all the foregoing extraordinary puff of Mr. Balfour—*he is a religious man*. He might, indeed, be equipped in all the sciences, and steeped in all the philosophies, and be an acknowledged expert in all departments of knowledge, but unless he possessed the further advantage of "being a religious man" he might be non-existent so far as the columns of this provincial *Observer* are concerned. In what way religion proves to be an advantage to a student of science or philosophy we are not informed; but to speak of it giving a man like Mr. Balfour an advantage over intellectual giants such as Mill, or Darwin, or Huxley is not only sheer bluff, it is ignorant impertinence. Religion must have fallen very low indeed when it has to rely on the wilful misrepresentations of such a newspaper leaderette writer.

It appears that all the pre-Balfourian religions required miracles and marvels to make them acceptable to the multitude.

> "The superstitious are unable to comprehend the god of inflexible law. They need miracles and marvels, and they are fully entitled to have them."

This was the most unkindest cut of all. To teach the people for ages to put their trust in a *flexible* God, one who works miracles and marvels for the benefit of his people, who turns live women into pillars of salt, who makes the sun to stand still, and divides the waters of the sea so that multitudes can pass through on dry land, who causes the clouds to shower down bread from heaven or withholds the rain at his pleasure—to teach the people these things as eternal truths, and then, when science has shattered such beliefs, to turn round and taunt them with being superstitious for their faith, is something more than unkind—it is heartless and cruel. If the people of Christendom are superstitious, and need miracles and marvels; if they put their faith in the tomfooleries of Lourdes or the mysterious operations of a Holy Ghost, it is because their religious pastors have taught them that these superstitions were part and parcel of revealed religion. Inflexible law is a fundamental tenet of Buddhism, but it is not and never has been part of Christianity. And neither Mr. Balfour nor any other sophist will ever convert the God of the Bible, with all his whimsicalities, into a god of inflexible law.

The superstitious need miracles, and "they are fully entitled to have them." Thus, when they want to see water turned into wine, or five thousand hungry mouths fed with only twelve barley loaves and a few small fishes; when they want to see a man walking upon the water without sinking, or ascending bodily up into the clouds; when they want to hear a talking donkey, or see a grass-eating king walking upon all-fours, the superstitious are fully entitled to witness these wonders, or have their money returned. But, look you! Mr. Balfour is not in the common religious show business. He is not competing with the Archbishop of Canterbury, who is probably the fittest Englishman alive to conduct the miracle and marvel business. Nor is he to be confounded with the swarms of religious fakirs who, under all sorts of fanciful titles, trade upon the misguided emotions of the ignorant and credulous. Mr. Balfour has an "*elite* following," whom he dazzles with aerial flights that require a philosophic telescope to discern the whereabouts of his movements.

Mr. Balfour's God does not reveal unto babes and sucklings what is hidden from the wise and prudent, nor does he use the foolish things of this world to confound the mighty.

> "Mr. Balfour admits that we can only know God through our personal intelligence. The fool's god cannot be that of the wise man, and *per contra*."

Every man's "God" is thus a reflection of his individual personal intelligence. Quite so. Mr. Balfour's god is an old gentleman of the aristocracy with philosophic doubts as to the validity of the verdicts of science, and a conviction that some kind of religion is necessary for the masses. The savage, not having any use for "a synthesis into a general concept of all that man has evolved of the God-idea," proceeds to make a god corresponding to his crude notions, out of wood or stone. John Smith, the cheesemonger, worships a god exactly corresponding to the thoughts and aspirations of—John Smith, the cheesemonger. The god of the fool (although some fools, according to the Scriptures, have repudiated this theistic insinuation as a reflection on their personal intelligence) has all the weaknesses of his devotee. Which is to say that all gods are man-made, and reflect the mental and moral characteristics of their makers. Mr. Balfour's God is, confessedly, no exception to the rule, and they are all alike useless and unprofitable.

Although this writer has so much to say concerning Mr. Balfour's God (the expression is his), when he comes to deal with M. Bergson, he never once mentions Theism in relation to the Professor's metaphysics. He is evidently conscious that between the "self-creating universe" of Bergson and the Theism of Balfour there is a great gulf fixed, and he very wisely does not attempt to bridge it. M. Bergson's verdict on the cosmos is quite at variance with that of Mr. Balfour's. And if both these philosophers say to science,—"Your verdicts on the cosmos cannot be final," we can reply to these gentlemen,—"Neither can your verdicts on the cosmos be final, since they hopelessly disagree. They are evidently only guesses, more or less absurd, at the eternal verities."

JOSEPH BRYCE.

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WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, J. Rowney, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

FAILSWORTH (Secular Sunday School, Pole-lane): C. Cohen, 2.45, "Some Curiosities of Christian Evidence"; 6.30, "Christianity and Freedom of Speech."

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THE
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Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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There can be no safety in an illogical position, and one's chances of snug quarters in eternity cannot surely be bettered by believing at one and the same moment of time self-contradictory propositions.

AUGUSTINE BIRRELL.

"The God of this World."

BIGOTRY is the very atmosphere in which the Christian religion lives and moves and has its being; and in proportion as Christians cease to be bigots the faith loses its hold upon them. The better Christian a man is the greater is his bigotry. The word "bigot" is of unknown origin, though there is something to be said for the old supposition that it is a corruption of *by God*, a phrase which the French, who often heard it, would easily pronounce as *bigot*. But, whatever the origin of the term may be, there can be no doubt whatever as to its meaning. By general consent a bigot is a fanatical and intolerant adherent of a religious creed; and of all the creeds the Christian is the one in which bigotry flourishes most luxuriously. It is impossible to be a Christian, in the New Testament sense, without being a bigot. Even the Gospel Jesus was the incarnation of bigotry. The greatest of all sins was not to believe in him. He cursed Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum simply because they turned a deaf ear to his Gospel. The Scribes and Pharisees were called all the bad names imaginable solely because they were his opponents. The moment Paul was converted he blossomed into a hot-headed fanatic to whom toleration was unknown. All who ventured to introduce the slightest variation upon the Gospel preached by him were anathematised as enemies of God and man. Unbelievers in Christ were under the dominion of "the god of this world," and, consequently, doomed to eternal damnation. He and his converts alone possessed the light of truth, while all others grovelled in the gross darkness of ignorance and sin.

Now, this attitude of Jesus and Paul has been the attitude of the orthodox Church in all ages. In the strictest sense, toleration is a Christian vice, while persecution is exalted into a high virtue. Between the Church and the world there cannot possibly be any fellowship, because the former is a temple of the living God while the latter must be characterised as a synagogue of Satan. In other words, the Church belongs to God and the world to the Devil. With what delightful self-complacency Christians are in the habit of saying, "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the evil one." Well do we remember the time when Church membership was regarded as essential to salvation, and when to be cut off from it, for any reason, meant to be separated from Christ and driven back into the world of lost souls. We children did not quite know what and where the world was, but we profoundly dreaded it as a God-forsaken and accursed region. Indeed, only the other day, the Rev. John Hutton, of Glasgow, who is now hailed as an authoritative voice in the Free Churches, boldly declared that "the whole nature and principles of the world are opposed to that kingdom of God which Christ came to found." This is doubtless true, but it by no means follows, on that account, that the nature and principles of the world are to be morally condemned. We hold that the world is opposed to the kingdom of God, not because it is wicked, but because that kingdom fails to meet its requirements. At this point Mr. Hutton seriously misrepresents Paul's teaching. The apostle does not say that "if our Gospel is hid, it is hid to them that are drifting away from the serious aspect and view of life." What he does say is this:—

> "If our Gospel is veiled, it is veiled in them that are perishing; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn upon them" (2 Cor. iv. 3, 4).

In Paul's estimation, no aspect and view of life, however honest and serious, could be of any avail apart from Christ. As a preacher of the Gospel, his supreme point was that salvation can be realised, not by character, not by morality, not by good works, but by faith alone. No matter how valuable a member of society a man may be, or with what earnestness he may devote himself to the promotion of human welfare, he is yet eternally lost until he accepts and relies upon the finished work of Christ. What the world lacks is, not "a serious aspect and view of life," not simplicity and sincerity of heart, but trust in the redeeming blood of the Cross. The Pauline Gospel, as stated in the Epistles, is intelligible though false, but as expounded by Mr. Hutton it is unintelligible as well as false.

Let us calmly examine this point. The contention is that the people of the world are blind to all the higher things. Paul maintains that this blindness is due to the active interference of the Devil; but Mr. Hutton accounts for it thus:—

> "The Apostle says there is an eye of the soul, and that fragile, delicate, but most authentic organ, whereby man perceives and knows God, like the eyeball of the natural eye, may be veiled over with a tissue of coarsened fibre.....The delicate mechanism of the soul by which we apprehend the unseen and communicate with God may, through neglect or misuse, lose its power, so that the whole world to which our souls at one time lay open may shrink and retreat, until as a basis for—the supreme concern of—a man's life it ceases to exist."

Here the reverend gentleman builds wholly upon a pure assumption. Of the soul we know absolutely nothing, not even that it exists. Consequently, the eye of the soul exists only in the preacher's imagination. It follows from this that the spiritual world, which it is claimed the soul apprehends and has intercourse with, is as hypothetical as the soul itself. But this gift of spiritual vision is a false inference from a baseless assumption. The vision at best as at worst is an illusion, a will-o'-the-wisp, into which mere belief often transforms itself. Vision invariably grows out of belief, but belief never out of vision. There is a legend that the disciple Thomas disbelieved in the resurrection of the Master, and gave vigorous expression to his unbelief. Soon, however, the Lord appeared and invited the Sceptic to inspect him carefully, and when he saw and recognised him Thomas exclaimed, "My Lord and my God." Then "Jesus saith unto him, Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

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That blessedness may be claimed by all Christians, who believe and *imagine* that they see, but who never see first, and then believe.

Mr. Hutton asserts that non-Christians "are dedeprived of something," and we agree with him. They are deprived of many illusions, doubts, and fears. "They do not see certain things." True; but they do not see them because they are not visible except to believers, which is the strongest possible argument against their reality. Mr. Hutton is of opinion that not to see such imaginary things "is the awful penalty," but we regard it as the reward, of unbelief. To our mind "the awful penalty" is to believe in things of whose existence there is no evidence. Piling on the agony, the reverend gentleman adds that they who "do not see certain things" are tremendous losers—"they lose that without which life is not worth living"; but this is a bare-faced bearing of false witness against countless myriads of people. Mr. Hutton knows full well that in this country alone there are many thousands of unbelievers who find life pre-eminently worth living. Do our scientists live in vain, though the overwhelming majority of them "do not see certain things"? Were Herbert Spencer, Charles Darwin, John Tyndall, and Thomas Huxley, while they lived, merely "doing time," with no other object than to wear out their boots? Only the blindest, most inveterate bigotry could so characterise the lives of such great, bold, and noble thinkers. Who is Mr. Hutton that he should thus sit in judgment upon men incalculably his superiors? It is true that unbelievers do not see that "the world of God's intention is moving towards some wonderful thing from which" they shall be excluded; but has such a vision been vouchsafed to this oracular pulpit orator? We venture to affirm that he knows absolutely nothing, either of God or the world of his intention. Surely, if there were a God, the world of his intention would be identical with the world of his actual creation. He would not *make* one world while *intending* another.

We rejoice exceedingly that we do not see certain things. We do not see the dawning of Christ upon the world for two valid reasons; first, that if Christ were a reality it would be an insufferable insult to him to say that, after two thousand years, he is only just dawning upon the world; and secondly because, as a matter of fact, Christ is not at the dawn of his career, but at the evening twilight. He has had his day, such as it was, and the world is now turning its back upon him. It is false to say that he ever won Europe. Europe never wanted him; he was thrust upon her by force; and the man who began the job was one of the worst men that ever sat upon a throne. No, Europe never desired Christ, and she is now gradually getting rid of him. Neither do we see God, for the simple reason that we are convinced there is no God to see. Life largely becomes what we take it for. It more or less comes round to our way of looking at things. We do take the view that we are in the world to have a good time, to have our way, and see that we get it. And after all said and done, is not Mr. Hutton here for the same purpose? Is he not having a very good time just now? But we do not believe in having a good time at the expense of a terribly bad time for some other people. We believe rather in being happy by doing our utmost to promote happiness all around us. No true man can ever have a thoroughly good time when his neighbors are being crushed down by injustice and greed, unless he is doing his best to destroy injustice and greed by fostering the sense of universal brotherhood.

The God of this world is not a superhuman being called the Devil, but, at bottom, the spirit of goodwill and fairplay. It is a fair, sweet goddess in whom we believe, and her name is Reason. As yet, she is not seated upon her throne, but her feet are on the steps, and her ascent is nearer completion today than it ever was before. As soon as she begins to wield the sceptre with consummate authority, superstition, which is the cause of all bigotry, shall wither away; and with the disappearance of the Fables of the Above shall come into happy force the Facts of the Around.

J. T. LLOYD.

Christianity and Politics.

THE emergence of the religious preacher in the political field is at once the most sinister and the most encouraging of present-day events. It is encouraging because it is a confession of the truth that the purely religious appeal is losing ground. The preacher who keeps strictly to religion finds either a dwindling body of listeners or has to select them from the admittedly least enlightened portion. Others tell him with almost brutal frankness that his message lacks reality; that people cannot be interested in their souls while their bodies are in a state of semi-starvation or while the social environment makes for material degradation. Preachers confess quite openly that under present conditions hell has lost its terrors and heaven its attractions; and they add that if religion is to maintain its hold on people, it must show itself capable of dealing with matters that really interest the man of to-day. And what interests the more thoughtful men and women of to-day is not religion.

So far the phenomenon is encouraging. But it has also its sinister aspect. For even though the parson may be *in* politics, he is not *of* it. His work in church or chapel is the promotion of sectarian influence and interests. And his work in Parliament or on the political platform is still the promotion of sectarian influence and interests. The object is the same; the method of achieving it has changed. His outlook on life is bounded by his sect; his point of view remains that of the religious advocate sworn to subordinate everything to the religious interest. To realise this one need only consider the attitude of Nonconformist leaders in the House of Commons on the question of education, or the recent Sunday Closing Bill introduced into the House of Lords by the Bishop of London. They talk largely of other things—of sobriety, of social justice, of morality, etc.; but it is the religious interest that bulks largest in their minds, and which determines action. They would, if they could, make politics a department of religion; and if this cannot be done, they will at least infect it with the religious temper.

It may be said that the clergy always have been in politics, more or less, and have always influenced the course of political events. And this is quite true. But there is an important distinction between things as they were and as they are. So long as right religious belief is avowedly a question of national concern, the interference of the clergy will at least be open, and people will submit to it with open eyes. If they subordinate other things to religion, it is done consciously, and because they believe it right that things should be so. To-day this interference is not open. It is masked in a thousand-and-one ways. Support is asked for on social and ethical grounds, and is given in the belief that social and ethical reform is being accomplished. And the support, once gained, is used to bolster up religious pretensions. How much support—to take only one instance—would the bald principle of Sabbatarianism gain if preached to-day? It is probable that a majority even of religionists are against it. But by confusing this with various ethical and social considerations—the need for rest, for leisure time in which to cultivate character, etc.—people are induced to oppose the rationalising of the day of rest, and thus play into the hands of the priesthood. And not only play into the hands of the priesthood, but give this class a position of power and importance in the social and political world that it would not otherwise have.

The real question that lies behind all these tricks and turns of the political parson is that of the place of religious belief in the modern State. Is religion

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a mere hypothesis, to be held as one may hold a theory concerning the habitancy of Mars or the origin of language? Or is it something vital to the wellbeing of the State—vital in the sense that no government can neglect it without impairing social efficiency? The very raising of the question is indicative of the decline of the power of religion. In primitive societies religion and sociology are one. Although essentially connected with another world, and with an order of beings other than human, religious belief is so powerful in early times that it colors social life in all directions, and determines the form of all social institutions. Under such conditions there can be no question as to the place of religion in the State. Its place is determined by the universal belief that to displease the tribal gods brings inevitable disaster. In this way religion becomes closely associated with every aspect of ethical and social life, and the association is maintained for so long that the ordinary mind finds it impossible to conceive their separation. Even to-day we find this to be the case in a very large number of instances; although if one carefully analyses the reasons given for the retention of the alliance, we find the real basis to be none other than the fact that religion always has more or less controlled social institutions.

But the growth of knowledge and of the social consciousness offer a fatal obstacle to the power of religion. It must be remembered that in the true sense of the word there is no such thing as growth in religion. What is called such is sheer delusion. To reduce the number of the gods from many to a few, and from a few to one, is not growth. To limit their functions from those of a direct, particular, and universal character to an indirect and general character is not growth. To refine the idea of a personal deity until it becomes the conception of a mere abstract force is not growth. All these are modifications of the religious idea under pressure of advancing knowledge—so many attempts to state religion in such a way that it can conflict with nothing we know to be true because it answers to nothing of which we are certain. The growth of man is not *in* religion, but out of it. He becomes less and less concerned with his gods as he becomes more conversant with the true nature of the forces moulding life.

The consequence of this is, as I have said, that we are all driven, sooner or later, to face the question of the place of religion in the State. And to the modern mind, only one of two positions is logically possible. Either we must direct social affairs from the point of view of religious beliefs, or we must judge religious beliefs from the point of view of social requirements. Either a theocracy or an atheocracy. The first is that which the political parson is really fighting for, although he lacks the courage to say so openly. And it is the one that religionists *must* fight for. So long as men believe that religion is the supremely important thing in life, they are bound to subordinate everything else to it. More; if right living is really dependent upon sound religious belief, if Atheism is—as only a few now say, but as many apparently believe—a growth that threatens social well-being, then the State as a whole has as much justification for enforcing right religious belief as it has for spending public money and using public resources on education. The State can only ignore this obligation on the assumption that it really does not matter what a man believes in religion. It is of no vital consequence. The normal forces of social life are by themselves adequate to social well-being and national progress.

Moreover, the practical evils that follow the attempts to regulate social life in accordance with religions are obvious. Jew hunts, witch-burnings, heresy hunts, persecution in all its forms, social division in its bitterest aspects, have been the fruits of allowing religion to control life. It is not true, as many Nonconformists assert, that religious persecution has to be placed to the credit of the State. Quite to the contrary, the State has invariably been the peace-making partner in the combination. It is the religious influence that has forced persecution upon the State, because to the deeply religious man the heretic, the "blasphemer," was a social plague spot, a centre of contamination, the source of innumerable evils. And, granted the truth of the Christian religion, I, as a heretic, agree with him.

The second position, that we judge religious beliefs from the point of view of social welfare, is the more powerful one, and it is fatal to all forms of religion. For just as soon as people begin to discuss religions from this point of view, they begin to realise that there is not one of the functions of social life that cannot proceed as well without religion as with it. If people can be honest, truthful, just, loyal, good husbands, parents, and citizens, without religion, what justification can there be for the maintenance of huge religious organisations that involve the expenditure of millions of money and the withdrawal from productive pursuits of an army of men who might be otherwise employed? To say that there are still many who need the exercise of religion if they are to be good citizens, only—to use Sir Edward Carson's phrases—passes sentence of death with a stay of execution. It is saying that religion is necessary to socially undeveloped characters. And that is also saying that so soon as these have reached the level of development achieved by the Freethinker, the need for religion will be gone.

It is, indeed, the appeal to utility that is largely responsible for the decay of religion with the general public. The very appeal to utility by believers was, as Mill pointed out, evidence that they were doubtful about its truth. And its use proved it to be a two-edged weapon. To the Freethinker's charge that Christianity was not true, the believer retorted that anyway it was useful, and pointed to the good work done by Christians, the institutions founded by them, etc. The Freethinker did not decline the challenge. He met the Christian on his own ground. He pointed out, in the first place, that the plea was one-sided. It counted the good done by believers, and which was assumed to be the fruit of their belief, and said nothing of the evil which could be clearly shown to be the outcome of religious conviction. In the second place, the Freethinker pointed out that good works are not the fruits of the Christian life exclusively, and, therefore, Christianity cannot be credited with their existence. A Christian is not only a Christian. He is a human being, sharing in all the qualities that result from generations of social life. His Christianity is not something anterior to these qualities, they are merely added to them as the consequence of a sheer environmental accident.

This last sentence expresses what will be to some—and ought to be to all—a commonplace. And yet the whole discussion hinges on its appreciation. For it means that hitherto Christianity has gained credit by a sheer exploitation of human nature. It has claimed credit for that which belongs to humanity. It still does so. The political parson who gives us a sociology with a religious label, who appeals to our sense of truth, or justice, or beauty, on the grounds of religion is still engaged in an exploitation of human qualities in the interests of supernaturalism. The trick has succeeded in the past, and it still succeeds with many in the present. But there can be no question of its ultimate failure. Art and science have now shaken themselves completely free from religious control, and claims independency and self-sufficiency. It is only a question of time for sociology and ethics to achieve a like emancipation. Religion will then be seen in its true nature as a pure supernaturalism that has too long been allowed to obstruct sane views of nature and of man.

C. COHEN.

The only means of realising what is good is to teach it by education and propagate it by example.—*Francisco Ferrer.*

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Primitive Man.

"The savage is a human document, a record of man's efforts to raise himself above the level of the beast. It is only of late years that the full value of the document has been appreciated; indeed, many people are probably still of Dr. Johnson's opinion, who, pointing to the three large volumes of *Voyages to the South Seas*, which had just come out, said: 'Who will read them through? A man had better work his way before the mast than read them through; they will be eaten by rats and mice before they are read through. There can be little entertainment in such books; one set of savages is like another.'*

"But the world has learned a good deal since Dr. Johnson's day; and the records of savage life, which the sage of Bolt-court consigned without scruple to the rats and mice, have now their place amongst the most precious archives of humanity."—J. G. FRAZER, *Psyche's Task* (1913), p. 173.

"There can be no doubt that Darwin's theory ignores a personal Creator, and his direct interference in the transformation and creation of species, there being no sphere of action for such a being.....Even man is neither a distinct creature, formed in a special manner, and differently from all other animals, nor provided with a special soul and endowed with a divine breath of life—he is only the highest product of a progressive selection, and descends from the simious [ape-like] group standing next to man."—CARL VOGT, *Lectures on Man* (1864), p. 449.

ACCORDING to the Bible, God created man perfect, and placed him in the Garden of Eden; but through disobedience—in the matter of eating forbidden fruit—he fell from his perfect state and commenced to degenerate. Luther said, "Since Adam's fall men see nothing, and are stupider than beasts"; and declared, "If Adam's fall had not spoilt us, we should have had no care either. We should have lived without pain, in possession of all kinds of knowledge, and have passed from time into eternity without feeling of death."† John Wesley held the same opinion, and, in fact, it was the belief of all Christians before Charles Darwin shattered it with his *Descent of Man*. Even to-day the majority of Christians give assent to this view, especially among those circles where the light of science has failed to penetrate.

But, as Professor Frazer remarks, science "assumes that civilisation has always and everywhere been evolved out of savagery. The mass of evidence on which this assumption rests is, in my opinion, so great as to render the induction incontrovertible."‡

As the great geologist, Sir Charles Lyell, pointed out,—

> "had the original stock of mankind been really endowed with such superior intellectual powers, and with inspired knowledge, and possessed the same improvable nature as their posterity, the point of advancement which they would have reached ere this would have been immeasurably higher."

Since the immense period of time that has elapsed since man co-existed with the extinct animals, with whose remains his own have been found, continues Lyell:—

> "During those ages there would have been time for progress, of which we can scarcely form a conception, and very different would have been the character of the works of art which we should now be endeavoring to interpret."

Instead of the rudest pottery or flint tools, so irregular in form as to cause the unpractised eye to doubt whether they afford unmistakable evidence of design, we should be finding sculptures, lines of buried railways or electric telegraphs, astronomical instruments and microscopes of more advanced construction than any found in Europe. "Still farther," continues Lyell,—

> "would the triumphs of inventive genius be found to have been carried, when the later deposits, now assigned to the age of bronze and iron, were formed. Vainly should we be straining our imagination to guess the possible uses and meaning of such relics—machines, perhaps, for navigating the air or exploring the depths of the ocean, or for calculating arithmetical problems, beyond the wants or even the conceptions of living mathematicians."§

The older the geological strata in which the remains of ancient man are found, the more rough and rude are the implements he used. If, then, man evolved from the animal world, our best means of getting some knowledge of our earliest ancestors would be by the study of those primitive races now in existence, whose intellectual development has been arrested, and who represent an earlier stage of evolution which the higher races have passed through and left behind. And this is why scientists are so interested in the study of these primitive races, and scientific expeditions are continually being sent to out-of-the-way places where these surviving representatives of primitive life are to be found untouched by our civilisation.

It may be said—it is said—by old-fashioned opponents of evolution who still believe the Bible account of the original perfection of man, that thousands of years before Christ the Egyptians and Babylonians were highly civilised races, living in great cities and building immense palaces, temples, and tombs for their kings and priests. Therefore, these early men were highly civilised.

This is true. Professor Flinders Petrie, a great authority, who has himself made many important discoveries during his excavations in these countries, places the beginning of Egyptian civilisation at from 9,000 to 10,000 years ago.† And even so conservative a critic as the Rev. Professor Sayce quotes with approval the estimate given by Professor Hilprecht for the founding of the Babylonian Temple of Bel, "somewhere between 6,000 and 7,000 B.C.; possibly earlier.‡ That is nearly 8,000 or 9,000 years ago.

But, if the archæologists have traced the civilisation of man back to 10,000 years, the geologists have traced the existence of man back, not for thousands, or tens of thousands, but for hundreds of thousands of years! The last few years have brought to light astonishing evidences of man's antiquity, to deal with which would require a separate series of articles. Suffice it to say that so careful and cautious an authority as Professor Keith, in his *Ancient Types of Man* (p. 102) says:—

> "We know now that the men who lived in Europe during the earlier and greater part of the Glacial period—one estimated to have extended over a period of from 500,000 to 1,500,000 years—were of the Neanderthal type."

This was written in 1911; and the same authority, lecturing to the Royal Dublin Society, last March, on the newly discovered Piltdown skull, which he does not hesitate to place in the Pliocene formation, believes it reveals a history for man "beyond the wildest guess or dream of the most speculative philosophers."§ Sir Ray Lankester is also a believer in the existence of Pliocene man‖.

The beginnings of civilisation are but of yesterday compared with the immense period of time man has been in existence, and those far-away places where the savage still exists untouched by civilisation may be compared to those small islands in the Pacific Ocean, far from the mainland, like Juan Fernandez—the island dear to our boyhood as the home of Robinson Crusoe—where plants are still growing which have disappeared on the mainland, crushed out in the struggle for existence. A naturalist who recently visited the island of Juan Fernandez tells us "It is as if one had been carried back to past geological periods, as if one walked about in a living museum, crowded with rare specimens."¶ So the savage belongs to a past order of things that was

* J. Boswell, *Life of Samuel Johnson* (1822), iv., 315.
† J. A. Froude, "Luther." *Contemporary Review*, July, 1883.
‡ J. G. Frazer, *Psyche's Task*, p. 162.

* Sir Charles Lyell, *Antiquity of Man* (1873), p. 422.
† Hutchinson, *History of the Nations*, p. 6.
‡ Sayce, "Recent Discoveries in Babylonia," *Contemporary Review*, January, 1897, p. 83.
§ *English Mechanic and World of Science*, March 20, 1914, p. 161.
‖ Sir Ray Lankester, *On the Discovery of a Novel Type of Flint Implements below the Base of the Red Crag of Suffolk, proving the Existence of Skilled Workers of Flint in the Pliocene Age.*
¶ Carl Skottsberg, *The Wilds of Patagonia*, p. 137.

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once universal. And that is why science takes such an interest in him, and sends out expeditions to remote and, to ordinary people, inaccessible places, to record his manners and customs, language, superstitions—if any—and modes of thought.

But, as Professor Frazer points out, no existing race of savages can be compared absolutely with the earliest representatives of man; savages "are not primitive by comparison with truly primæval man, that is, with man as he was when he first emerged from the purely bestial stage of existence," for, as he says, all the evidence goes to show—

> "that every existing race of men, the rudest as well as the most civilised, has reached its present level of culture, whether it be high or low, only after a slow and painful progress upwards, which must have extended over many thousands, perhaps millions, of years."*

For instance, no race of savages has yet been discovered without a language—although some of them are very rudimentary, as we shall see—none without stone or wooden weapons or utensils, none without the art of making a fire. No wild animals have ever attained to either of these accomplishments, and probably untold ages passed in acquiring, and improving upon, these arts, and every child that is born has to be taught these things, as he does not bring the knowledge of them with him.

So, again, from the child we can learn a great deal about the thoughts and ideas of primitive man. Many travellers have compared savages to grown-up children. Children have to be taught to reason and think properly—some even then do it very poorly—but the savage is never taught—or, rather, never educated—he grows up thinking the thoughts of a child.

W. MANN.

(*To be continued.*)

* J. G. Frazer, *Psyche's Task*, p. 163.

Christian Apologetics.

IV.—IRENÆUS.

IRENÆUS became bishop of Lyons in the year A.D. 178, and some years later—about A.D. 185 or 186—wrote a book in five parts "Against Heresies." It is from this work we derive the evidence which that bishop bears to persons and writings before, and up to, his days—including the canonical Gospels and their writers. Copies of this great book were in the hands of nearly all the so-called "Christian fathers" who succeeded Irenæus, for several centuries. Hence, everything relating to the Gospels or the apostles contained in this bishop's book we find repeated by later writers, who now and again name Irenæus as their authority, as does Eusebius, for instance; but, in the majority of cases, the statements are copied as undoubted historical facts, without mention of the source. Prior to the time of Irenæus, we hear only of the existence of the Pauline Epistles, the Book of Revelation, and a primitive "Gospel," though we know that all four of the canonical Gospels were written nearly thirty years before the time he wrote. This may be accounted for by the fact that each of the canonical Gospels, being supposed to be merely a revised copy of the primitive Gospel, was at first used only in the church to which the canonical reviser belonged; but that after a decade or two all four became known to the other churches, and, being found to be a decided improvement on the primitive Gospel, came into general use. Irenæus is the earliest writer who names our present Gospels. He says:—

> "Matthew also issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own language, while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome and laying the foundation of the church there. After their decease Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, delivered to us in writing what had been preached by Peter. Luke also, the companion of Paul, recorded in a book the gospel preached by him. Afterwards John, the disciple of the Lord, who had leaned upon his breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia" (Her. iii., i., 1).

The testimony of Irenæus is unquestionable as to the existence of the four canonical Gospels in his day; but what he says about each proves conclusively that he did not know anything about the writers. In the first place, if Matthew wrote his Gospel when "Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome," he did not write a Gospel at all: for Peter and Paul never went together to Rome, and never preached and founded a church there. If we turn to Gal. ii. 11—14, we find that in consequence of Peter's dissimulation at Antioch, Paul in righteous indignation "resisted him to the face," and denounced his conduct before the whole church. Up to this time—about twenty years after Paul's conversion—neither Peter nor Paul had visited Rome; and after this public rebuke, Peter would certainly not desire to go there with Paul, nor indeed anywhere else in that fearless preacher's company. Moreover, from Gal. ii. 7 we learn that an agreement had been made between Paul and the apostolic party that Paul should confine his preaching to the Gentiles, while Peter kept to the Jews—which arrangement appears to have been carried out. To the apostolic party Paul was an interloper, who preached their new religion unasked, and received Gentiles as converts without requiring circumcision or the observance of the Mosaic laws. Instead of fraternising with him, they withstood him, and denounced him as a false apostle. In the time of Irenæus there were several apocryphal writings in circulation relating to Peter and Paul, in one of which—"The Travels of Peter and Paul"—the two were represented as travelling together to Rome, where they preached and founded a church, and afterwards suffered martyrdom. This was the source of Irenæus's statement respecting Peter and Paul at Rome. It was also from three of these apocryphal writings that Luke compiled the canonical "Acts of the Apostles"—which book is, of course, unhistorical.

Irenæus's statements respecting Matthew and Mark were derived from a book written by Papias, bishop of Hierapolis (A.D. 140—150), which work he names and quotes from. The statement of Papias was as follows:—

> (1) "Matthew composed the Sayings in the Hebrew language, and everyone translated them as best he could."
>
> (2) "Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately what he remembered [of Peter's preaching].....but with no intention of giving a regular narrative of the Lord's sayings. Wherefore Mark made no mistake in thus writing some things as he remembered them. For of one thing he took especial care, not to omit anything he had heard, and not to put anything fictitious into the narratives."

It will here be seen that no claim is made for "inspiration" on behalf of Matthew or Mark. As regards the latter, we are to suppose that Peter went about narrating all the sayings and incidents contained in Mark's Gospel, and that Mark remembered them all accurately—so accurately, in fact, that some of them are in verbal agreement with Matthew, and many others in verbal agreement with Luke.

But how came Papias to know the circumstances he has stated about Matthew and Mark? Well, he says he was told so by a presbyter of his acquaintance named John. As a matter of fact, we do not know that he ever saw either of the writings he mentions; neither do we know that he had ever heard of the Gospel of Luke or John—which he has not named. Eusebius, writing with Papias' book before him, says (Eccl. Hist. iii., 39):—

> "Papias asserts that he had heard in person Aristion and the presbyter John, and mentions them frequently by name.....He has set down many things as coming to him from unwritten tradition, amongst these some strange parables and instructions of the Savior, and some other things of a more fabulous nature.....He moreover relates other narratives of the Lord's sayings given by Aristion, and traditions received from the

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> presbyter John.....He also gives the story of a woman who was accused of many sins before the Lord, which is found in the Gospel according to the Hebrews."

From the foregoing it appears evident that Papias had never seen any of the canonical Gospels. He had but a Greek translation of the primitive Nazarene Gospel, to which he had added a large number of apocryphal stories and sayings, some of which even Eusebius recognised as "fabulous." In mentioning Matthew and Mark as evangelists, Irenæus, of course, referred to Matthew the apostle, and to an apostolic Mark—respecting whom nothing certain is known. Moreover, the fact of Mark being stated to have been "the interpreter of Peter" is a proof that Papias and his two friends, Aristion and John, had never seen the "Acts of the Apostles"; for in that book Peter is said to have been filled with the Holy Ghost, which gave him power to speak every known language—whence he would not need the services of an interpreter.

Neither had Papias seen our present Gospel of Matthew: this is evident from what he says of "Judas the traitor." The latter personage is purely mythical. Had the "chief priests" desired to arrest Jesus at night, they had only to commission one of their spies or servants to follow him. The New Testament accounts of the death of Judas are the following:—

> Matt. xxvii. 3—8.—"Then Judas.....cast down the pieces of silver.....and he went away and hanged himself.....And the chief priests took the pieces of silver .....and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in."
>
> Acts i. 18.—Judas "obtained a field with the reward of his iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and his bowels gushed out."

Neither of these conflicting statements was known to Papias: that credulous bishop's account reads as follows:—

> "Judas walked about in this world a sad example of impiety: for his body having swollen to such an extent that he could not pass where a chariot could pass easily, he was crushed by the chariot, so that his bowels gushed out."

This, no doubt, is one of the stories which Eusebius thought was derived from "unwritten tradition." But, in the Acts account, it can be plainly seen that some of the circumstances connected with the story have been discreetly omitted. How, for instance, came Judas to "fall headlong," or to "burst asunder in the midst"? The buying a field does not account for either of these circumstances. Papias's story, however, explains both. Judas being knocked down by a chariot would account for his "falling headlong," and his enormously swollen condition for his "bursting asunder in the midst." Hence the Acts account was made up from that of Papias and from some other, in which the purchase of a field formed part of the story. In Matthew's account the field was purchased after Judas's death.

Coming, now, to the Third Gospel, Irenæus says that "Luke, the companion of Paul recorded in a book the Gospel preached by him." That the Third Gospel was written by one named Luke is certain; for had not the writer's name been known to be "Luke," the Gospel would have been ascribed to one of the apostles. But the compiler of the Third Gospel was not the Luke named in Col. iv. 14, Philemon 23, 24, or 2 Tim. iv. 11: nor was he a companion of Paul. He says himself that he did not live in apostolic times. Speaking of the narratives in the primitive Gospel in use in his days, he says—"even as they, who *from the beginning* were *eye-witnesses* and *ministers of the word*, delivered them *unto us*," etc. Here Luke asserts, and probably believed, that the Gospel narratives which had been handed down to his time (say, A.D. 150) were written by apostles or companions of apostles in apostolic times—the latter period being called "the beginning." Had Luke been a colleague of Paul, he would have been one of the "ministers of the word" in "the beginning"; but he was not. In compiling a Gospel he professed only to make a selection from the Gospel stories in existence in his day, selecting and retaining those which he believed to be the most credible. Luke also made selections from some of the apocryphal writings, which he added to the older primitive Gospel, and revised the whole, altering or omitting as he thought fit, and improving the diction throughout. His work, when completed, was received, *not* as a new Gospel, but as a revised copy of the old one handed down. That the Gospel of Luke *could* have been derived from the preaching of Paul is an idea almost too absurd to be seriously considered. Paul knew nothing of our present Gospel "history"; it had not then been written, or even thought of. He did not know a single Gospel saying; none had then been composed. In the Pauline Epistles we have plenty of Paul's preaching—but no Gospel history. Some early Christian, it is true, has piously inserted an interpolation in 1 Cor. xi. 23—26, which is nearer to Luke's version (xxii. 19—20) than to any of the other Gospels. Irenæus has simply ascribed the four Gospels written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, who lived in the second century, to apostolic men of the same names in the first century.

With regard to the apostle John, Irenæus has identified that unknown disciple with Papias's friend John the Presbyter. He says, for instance: "These things are borne witness to in writing by Papias, *the hearer of John*, and a companion of Polycarp." We have already seen that Irenæus made Polycarp also a hearer of the apostle John, though both these bishops lived half a century too late to see or hear that much-belauded individual. Irenæus may have thought that Papias lived at an earlier period than he actually did; for he says that John the apostle "remained among them [*i.e.*, the Christians] up to the times of Trajan" (A.D. 98—117) which reign he probably took to be the period when Papias wrote.

Irenæus several times bolsters up the opinions he has expressed by some alleged testimony of apostles. Speaking of the age of Jesus, he says: "But from the fortieth and fiftieth year a man begins to decline towards old age, *which our Lord possessed*," and then states that the elders who had conversed with John the apostle "testified that John had conveyed to them that information": after which he quotes John viii. 56, 57 in support of his contention, and concludes by saying that "Jesus did not want much of being fifty years old" (Her. ii., xxii., 5). In another place he says: "As I have heard from a certain presbyter, who had heard it from those who had seen the apostles, and from those who had been their disciples," etc. This alleged "testimony" of apostles and their disciples was, of course, simply Irenæus's way of adding confirmation to some of his doubtful statements. He knew nothing whatever about the sayings or doings of any apostles. His book is useful chiefly as showing what was affirmed of the canonical Gospels in his days, and as describing the various "heresies" that had arisen up to his time.

ABRACADABRA.

Rector: "Are you denying yourself anything during Lent?"

Mrs. Lakeside: "Indeed I am. I'm putting off getting a divorce until after Easter."

A PROSELYTE.

A soldier is allowed to "change his religion," as it is termed, if he can convince his commanding officer that he had good reasons. On one occasion a man intimated his desire.

"Now," said the colonel, "what are your reasons? Have you conscientious convictions in regard to the matter?"

The man intimated that he had.

"And," continued the colonel, "to what denomination do you wish to be transferred?"

Said the case-seeking Tommy, "I disremember the name, sir, but it's them as parades for church half-an-hour later than the others."

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Acid Drops.

The Blasphemy Laws (Amendment) Bill came up for discussion before the Lower House of Convocation of Canterbury the other day. In the course of the discussion, the Archdeacon of Surrey said there were "grave fears that if the Bill were carried in its present form there would be in many quarters a serious outbreak of profanity, a sort of thing which a civilised country, and above all a Christian country, could not tolerate for a moment." Profane is a very elastic word, and may mean either coarse or indelicate speech, or treating so-called "sacred" subjects with irreverence. If the Archdeacon means the latter, we can only say reverence is quite out of place towards a teaching or an opinion that one does not believe worthy of it, and if a Freethinker cares to speak "irreverently" of religious beliefs, there is neither justice nor common sense in preventing him. The utmost that can be done is to make him a hypocrite in addition to his being an unbeliever. And if coarse and indelicate speech is dreaded, the cure for that is not legal enactments, but education and culture. People will speak coarsely while their natures are coarse, and the language of a very large number of our religious fellow citizens is enough to show that this has no special connection with unbelief. Finally, the Blasphemy Laws do not prevent profane language, and never have prevented profane language. If anything, they tend to encourage it. For human nature being what it is, it would indeed be strange if the oppression of an opinion by legal enactment did not drive some people into more violent language than they would use if religious opinion was, like other opinions, left to hold its own without the protecting arm of the policeman and the gaoler.

It seems that there would have been more railway strikes during this last year or two but for one thing. Had they occurred the success of the Baptist Sustenation Fund of £250,000 would have been jeopardised. We do not mean that the railway men did not strike because they saw it would injure the fund; they were only pawns in the hands of Providence. This is what we gather from Mr. Shakespeare's report before the Baptist Conference the other day. That gentleman thanked God for the fund, and said "We have been under his guidance, and have only been the unworthy instruments of his will. As we began the country entered upon a season of unparalleled commercial prosperity. Up to that point there had been disastrous railway strikes which would have made our campaign impossible. But we have worked during a time of comparative peace." So the matter is plain. The Lord did not mind a building strike, or a strike of municipal employees, but he drew the line at a railway strike. For that, he said, would prevent my "unworthy instruments" from collecting the £250,000. Now, we presume, the railway servants are at liberty to strike when they please—unless the railway directors can arrange with Mr. Shakespeare to start another campaign.

When Gipsy Smith asked a Portsmouth audience "How many mean to be better Christians?" the whole of "the vast congregation rose to their feet." We do not for a moment question the need for improvement, but we do question the value of the resolve a week after it is made.

Saint George, the sanctified pork dealer, must have had as many bones as the dragon with which he was associated. For relics of George were once scattered over the land. Canterbury, Lincoln, and Norwich Cathedrals, and St. Nicholas Church, Great Yarmouth, each possessed an arm, and other places of worship had other bony relics.

Beer and Bible trotting in double harness is revealed once more by the transfer of the license of the "Beverley," Canterbury. This house is the perquisite of the parish clerk, who lives there. The new landlord of the "Beverley" is the butler of the vicar. Gospel temperance advocates will note this with glad eyes.

Dr. Crozier, Primate of all Ireland, says he views with "holy horror" the "growing prospect of intensified hatred and separation" in Ireland. Dr. Crozier should reflect that the principle cause of that "hatred and separation" is the religion he represents. If Protestants and Catholics in Ireland could suddenly forget their religion all other causes for difference could be settled in the way that political differences are settled all over the civilised world. The one thing that makes the Irish problem what it is, is religion. It is a "holy" business right through.

The Primate of All Ireland's "holy horror" reminds one of Lever's lines on the two parties in Ireland:—

> "A glorious nation,
> A splendid peasantry, on fruitful sod,
> Fighting like devils for conciliation,
> And hating each other for the love of God."

The Bishop of St. Albans says it is a perilous thing in the twentieth century to tamper with "facts" that have been the creed and life of the Church for nineteen centuries. Perilous to whom? If the "facts" that are "tampered with" are real and valuable, no one need fear. The more they are examined, the more they are criticised, the clearer will their truth and value become. What the Bishop really means is that it will be dangerous for the Church if its creeds and statements are criticised. In this we agree with him, and can only say, so much the worse for the Church. In this world progress is only made by a continuous overhauling of our social and intellectual inheritance. We reject what is bad, retain what is good, and we modify what demands modification. Examination, rejection, and revision are the only means by which the present can prevent the past weighing upon it like a garment of lead. The fact that a thing has endured for nineteen centuries is no conclusive reason for retaining it for another nineteen. It is often a very good reason for its removal.

In a Yorkshire parish no deaths took place during last year. Before we praise God for this special mercy, let us remember that it nearly killed the local undertaker.

A seaside rector had announced his intention of holding an early morning Sunday service for golfers. It is suggested that the service should finish with "Let us play."

At the beginning of the winter the cinematograph proprietors in the County of Middlesex bade defiance to the Middlesex County Council by opening the picture palaces on Sunday. The Council has not taken any steps in the matter up to the present, probably not feeling quite sure of their ground. The matter came up for discussion at the Council's meeting on April 30, and there was a motion that the Council's solicitor be instructed to take proceedings if there were sufficient grounds to secure a conviction. The matter was finally adjourned for another month. The Union of Picture Palace Proprietors had already announced that if one of their number were attacked the matter would be fought to a finish, and we expect this has given the Council pause. For our part, we should not be at all sorry to see a good fight over the matter. It might lead to a wiping away of some idiotic laws that ought to have been repealed long since.

The Bishop of New Guinea, quite unconsciously, let in a little light the other day on the effects of missionary activity. "If a New Guinea lad," he said, "started to buy singlets, coats, and trousers, and to wear them, he degenerated physically and morally." This was only another way of saying that when we separated the native from his tribal customs we invariably succeeded in turning a decent man into a blackguard.

Rev. William Corkey, of Belfast, speaking in London at the meeting of the World's Evangelical Alliance, said that in Ulster we were only "at the beginning of the struggle against Rome.....We feel we are placed by God's will in the front rank of this great struggle to maintain our religious freedom against the efforts of the Church of Rome." The idea of Ulster Protestants in the front rank of fighters for religious freedom is delicious. It reminds one of the old expression about Satan rebuking sin.

A wealthy Swedish merchant has committed the heinous offence of working in his garden clad only in shirt and trousers on Easter Sunday. Two constables saw him at work during divine service and ordered him to desist. The hardened sinner refused and said that he was fully occupied with his business all the week and Sunday was the only time he had for gardening. So the Commissioner of the Police summoned the merchant, and the case is to be heard shortly. The papers report that the matter is exciting indignation all over Sweden. It looks as though the police are converting themselves into theological experts in Sweden as well as in England.

Popular ideas on theology are very vague. Here is a London weekly paper trying to be smart, and saying, "Through the churchyard to the flying," runs a notice at

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Hendon. "Or the frying, according to the life you've led." If that assumption were correct, all Freethinkers would have gone to heaven and most Christians to the other place.

A society paper contains an article on "Eve's Dress." It should not be a lengthy one.

Mr. Bernard Lucas, who has had a quarter of a century's experience of the Indian mission field, says that proselytism has had its day, and has failed. His remarks will not be quoted in future appeals for money on behalf of the missionary societies.

"Ministers have won from Ananias and Sapphira the record held for nineteen hundred years," said the Rev. T. Kingsborough at a Volunteer Church Parade at Kildarton. He was referring to the King's Ministers, but it applies more aptly to the ministers of the King of Kings.

Christians are getting afraid of their religion, and the old Freethought jest that Christ was the first and last Christian will soon be brought home to the man in the street. At the Spring Assembly of the Baptist Union the president, the Rev. C. Joseph made lengthy reference to the Old Age Pensions and the Insurance Acts, and the Back to the Land propaganda. There is not much Baptist doctrine in those three items.

Father Vaughan confesses to having a "tremendous belief" in advertising. He also said that he belongs "to the oldest and biggest advertising firm on this planet—the Roman Catholic Church." We quite agree; and if ever a business in modern times was built up by advertising the Christian business has been. And the curious thing is, that all this advertising has not made it self-supporting. If it were to stop advertising, in a generation the firm would have to close. It cannot rely upon the value of the goods supplied to keep the business up to the mark. Father Vaughan says the Catholic Church "delivers the goods all the time." It is a pity he does not tell us how often they are returned as "not up to specifications."

We have pointed out many times that what the Churches have to fight is neither a man nor an association of men—but life. We are glad to see the *Methodist Times* endorsing this opinion. It says, in discussing the decrease of membership, for the eighth year in succession, "We are living in a secular age.....And the main currents of life at present run strongly against the growth of all the Churches, Methodism included." Quite so; the currents of life not only run strongly against the Churches now, but they will gain in strength with each generation. There may still be, as there has been, set-backs here and there, but the main drift is undeniable. Naturally, the *Methodist Times* qualifies its admission with the remark that "the manifold influences of life tend to obscure its supreme ends and to shut out its highest influence"; but that is pure bunkum. The world is more generally alive to "supreme ends" and "highest influences" than it has ever been before. People were never more ready to spend themselves for an ideal than to-day. And the significant thing is that this sensitiveness to higher ideals and influences has been increasing side by side with the declining power of religious belief.

The modern method of filming scenes from the Bible at picture theatres would seem tame to our ancestors, who preferred greater realism. From the accounts of a City Company in the Middle Ages we learn that 4d. was paid for "hanging Judas; "cock crowing, 4d."; and "setting the world on fire, 5d." The last item seems remarkably cheap.

Mr. Hilaire Belloc, writing in the *Daily Herald*, boasts that he is a Catholic, a creed not common to the writers or the readers of the *Herald*. Does he imagine that Messrs. Chesterton and Lansbury are Mohammedans?

There were three persons before the magistrates at Acton recently, and each individual had a cast in one eye. This fact may be of service to the defenders of the design argument.

"I call it a blessed insult," said the burglar-convert angrily. "Why, what's wrong," asked a fellow worshiper. "Did you see what that d—d old revivalist did?" roared the convert. "He counted his fingers after I shook hands with him."

The *Daily Mirror* quotes a saying that "The first fruit of a life in Christ is love, the love of God and of our neighbor." There are other fruits, such as the Christian Evidence variety, which burlesques its God and insults its neighbors.

The *Times* tells us that "it is plain that at the present time very many devout Church people find the repetition of the Athanasian creed almost intolerable." Translated into simple English this means that the Christian superstition is in the melting-pot.

A correspondent in the Catholic *Tablet* protests against the use of the term "offertory" as a synonym for the word "collection." The clergy are indifferent as to the choice of terms so long as the shekels roll in.

Christians, by the mere force of custom, have acquired the right to do things that in other people would rightly be considered to show want of taste, if not actual impertinence. Some years ago, an East End Mission, by working upon a mentally afflicted son whose parents are Freethinkers, at Stratford, managed to secure his conversion. Both the mother and father are convinced Atheists and members of the N. S. S. Their opinions are fairly well known, and they are both advanced in years, but neither consideration prevented some impertinent busybody belonging to the mission leaving their stupid tracts at the house of the old people. Good taste would certainly have chosen some other occasion for propagandist efforts; ordinary humanity should have left two old people alone in their grief. If Freethought had nothing else to commend it, its lifting people above this kind of thing would speak in its favor. We sympathise with Mr. and Mrs. High in their bereavement, and we trust they will meet with no further annoyance from this quarter.

The congregation of St. Mark's Church, Tunbridge Wells, has been shut out from "divine service" owing to a plague of flies. It is thought that the flies made their home under the slates of the roof last winter, and have been kept alive during the winter by the heating apparatus. A couple of centuries ago there were some poor old women burned for witchcraft over such a matter. The presence of flies was deemed by the famous Matthew Hopkins a sure proof of the presence of familiar imps. In the present case there was no one who saw the hand of the Lord or the tail of the Devil in the occurrence. Simple fumigation did the trick.

The educational value of the press is frequently the subject of after-dinner speeches. The *Daily Mirror* recently contained a number of illustrations showing how to foretell the future by tea-leaves in cups. The editor knows his readers.

In a column notice of that industrious novelist, Mr. Charles Garvice, the *Daily Chronicle* says his works are read by bishops. This seems a left-handed sort of compliment.

"The whole world of humanity is crushed just now by the dead weight of Materialism," writes George Lansbury in the *Daily Herald*. George bears all he can of the burden with "a tolerable grace"—as Lady Teazle says.

According to the newspapers, the number of rifles landed in Ulster varied from 20,000 to 70,000, and the accounts of what happened varied as much in detail. Yet some credulous people imagine that the "Gospels" are more reliable than newspapers, although they deal with far more marvellous events than gun-running.

The *Daily News*, reviewing a new book on missionary work in India, says that "the ultimate evolution of Hinduism may not be to Christianity, but an amalgamation of all that is best in both." It is startling to think of statues of Christ and his disciples squatting, with crossed legs, and contemplating the lotus.

"'I have shot myself,' says Charles John Leigh after taking his life with a gun," runs a heading in the *Saturday Post*. The Psychical Research Society should get into touch with the late Mr. Leigh.

The ancient and picturesque church of Madonna del Sasso, near Locarno, has been entered by burglars, who stole the church plate and also the Madonna's gold crown and jewels. The indignant priests are relying on the help of the police, and not on prayer.

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To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £138 17s. 5d. Received since:—W. H. Deakin, £5 5s.; J. G. Finlay, 5s.; R. Stirton, £1 7s. 6d.

MISS VANCE, General Secretary N. S. S., acknowledges: Benevolent Fund—Huddersfield Branch, 5s.; Edmonton Branch, 5s.; St. Helens Branch, 2s. 6d.; Newcastle Branch, 10s.; Manchester Branch, £1 1s. 6d. General Fund—Edmonton Branch, 5s.; Newcastle Branch, 10s.; Manchester Branch, 18s. 6d.

H. R. WRIGHT.—There is an American edition of Voltaire's works, in English, running to about forty volumes. There was an English translation, published during the eighteenth century, running to some sixty or seventy volumes; but in more recent times only very few of Voltaire's works have been issued in English—*The Philosophical Dictionary*, *Candide*, and two or three others. A collection of his philosophical stories, under the title of *Tales and Romances*, was issued early in the last century and was re-issued either by Edward Truelove or by the old Freethought Publishing Company.

J. G. FINLAY.—Our "work" has always been heavy but never a burden. We have had our heart in it.

D. C.—A blunder, evidently; but not very blameable in an Englishman, to whom "Church" is familiar and "Kirk" almost foreign. Not to our own ears, though; for we have known Burns intimately more than forty years; and we admire and love hime (yes, *love* him) as much as ever. It was an adventurous thing to do, but, as a matter of fact, we have even read "Holy Willie's Prayer" to Scottish audiences, not without applause. And we were born in Devonshire! A county once, at any rate, celebrated for the bravery of its men as well as the lovely complexions of its women. Richard Carlile himself was a Devonshire man, but he never dared the risk of reading Burns to a public audience north of the Tweed.

JOSEPH PEARSON.—We have read your letter carefully, but you ignore the fact that goats cannot be organised like sheep. Freethinkers have more individuality than Christians. This is a fact, though it is not always an advantage. Pleased to see your letter in the *Wisbeach Chronicle*. We have often urged the "saints" to pursue that sort of propaganda.

GEORGE PORTER.—We have ordered its continuance as desired. It was not Holyoake but Hetherington who started the prosecution you refer to. Strictly speaking, it was a public committee. They went for "tolerated" *blasphemy*. Moxon, the publisher, was prosecuted on account of Shelley's *Queen Mab*. A verdict of "guilty" was obtained, but nothing ever happened in the way of a sentence. Judges know how to help "respectable" sinners. Not that Shelley was "respectable." The mere suggestion is worse than blasphemy. But he belonged by blood to the upper classes, although his head and heart were with the people.

W. H. DEAKIN.—Thanks for the generous subscription and pleasant letter.

A. MILLAR.—Pleased to have your appreciation of the *Freethinker*. We can only keep pegging away, and in the long run it is pretty sure to tell.

J. KING.—(1) We note your appreciation of Mr. Mann's articles, in which we concur. (2) Tiele's opinion would turn upon the precise meaning attaching to "gods." If in the more modern sense, he is decidedly wrong. If the term is used to cover the belief in ghostly agencies, he is right. And the ghost is the raw material of the god. (3) We hardly think we should care to print one of the rev. gentleman's sermons as a sample of his style, but our columns are always open to him for a reply to anything we print, and to which he takes exception.

T. MOSLEY.—Mr. Foote is rapidly regaining his old form. Mr. Cohen's last debate with Rev. A. J. Waldron was in the Morley Hall, S. Hackney. There was no report of the discussion—save those that appeared in the newspapers at the time. We cannot reply, at the moment, to your last question.

J. TAMAGNI.—Charles Bradlaugh never *refused* to take the oath in the House of Commons. He merely claimed to affirm, and believed he was exercising a constitutional right in making the claim. The story of his challenging the Deity to strike him dead in the House of Commons is ridiculously false.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

The North London Branch, which was last year responsible for the open-air meetings at Wood Green, has now transferred part of its energies to Regent's Park. Wood Green is already well looked after from a Freethought point of view, and the new move was quite justified by the first meeting on Sunday last. The audience was a good one, and the lecture appeared to give complete satisfaction. Regent's Park has been without regular Freethought meetings for many years, and the new station ought to prove in every way successful.

We believe that the Ramsey Testimonial Committee has completed its arrangements, although we have, by an oversight probably, not received a copy of the official circular which, we believe, is going round. The treasurer of the Fund is Mr. B. T. Hall, Club Union Buildings, Clerkenwell, London, E.C. The subscriptions that have been sent to this office have been forwarded to Mr. Hall, and any other subscriptions that may arrive will be forwarded also. All subscriptions will be acknowledged by Mr. B. T. Hall. We are not aware as to how the Fund is progressing, but, we trust, well.

Both the business and the public meeting of this year's N. S. S. Conference will be held in the Queen's (Minor) Hall, Langham-place, W. Visitors from the provinces will have no difficulty in finding their way there, as it is one of the best known halls in London, and it is well served by motor-'bus service from all parts of London. We must again advise those provincial friends who require accommodation to write as soon as possible to the N. S. S. Secretary, saying what accommodation they require and for how long. The matter of a Conference luncheon is under arrangement, and details will be given in good time. The Conference Agenda will be published in next week's *Freethinker*. We hope to see a good muster of provincial friends. As the Conference is held on Whit-Sunday, there is no difficulty about finding suitable excursion trains.

More Notes.

Very early in my career George Meredith wrote that I was "fighting for the best of causes." He wrote the same thing, although in slightly different language, only a short while before his death. And he added that this cause was destined to victory. These words sank deep into my heart. They gave me inspiration for more than thirty years; they will afford me consolation in what may look like disillusionment or defeat to the very end. For I have a notion that when I cease to work I shall soon cease to live.

* * *

Well, if I have been fighting for the best of causes, I have been fighting against the worst of religions. I have often called Christianity the worst religion in the world. Not only has it been false and fraudulent, it has been wicked and cruel, and it has caused endless tears and bloodshed. Perhaps its worst vice is hypocrisy. No other religion approaches it in this odious and detestable offence.

* * *

Let us take what may be called the hypocrisy of color. Christians pretend that one God is the father of all men,—brown and yellow, and even black and white. They preach that all are brothers in Christ. They carry the Gospel to the "heathen." They declare that the Creator "hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth" (Acts xvii. 26). That is the text. But what is the sermon? Or rather how does the doctrine work out in practice? In America, where the negroes number millions, and largely live amongst the whites, and where the color problem is a really serious one—*too* serious for Americans' political capacity—the "black brother" is brutally ill-treated, and "lynched" in all sorts of ways, from burning alive to being leisurely riddled with bullets. Blacks and whites, in the bulk, are both good Christians. But the white will not let the black worship in the same church with him, or attend the same Sunday-school, or belong to the same Young Men's Christian Association, or join with him in any religious function whatever. That is how the "common Creator" and "one blood" doctrine realises itself in daily life in America. And how is it realised over here? A black man in England is not a common sight; he is rather a curiosity; he does not excite anger and hatred; so there is no lynching of black Christians

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by white Christians on this side of the Atlantic. But when the black brother in Christ is not being exhibited at missionary meetings, as an ebony brand from the burning (in Hell), he is kept in his proper place and not allowed to participate in all the privileges of "God's Englishmen." Jack Johnson's only crime was his color—and the certainty of his beating any white pugilist who stood up to him. This dread of the black man's prowess is now openly avowed. The Home Office has just interfered with another match between a white and a black boxer in London. The illegality of the fight is not alleged, but if the black man won, as was most probable, it would cause great unrest throughout the British empire. The glamor of the white man would be gone. The colored populations would see that white men could be beaten. Nobody knows what might happen if this were plainly demonstrated. The British empire, therefore, rests upon a basis of bounce and brag. This is a fact if we are to believe the Home Office. What a mean and miserable confession for a Christian nation to make!

* * *

When Noah awoke from his drunken sleep, he cursed the descendants of Ham for ever and ever. By some peculiar biological law, Ham's descendants are the negro section of the human race, and it is their function to slave for the rest of their species, in consequence of Noah's blind anger, backed up by the omnipotence of his God.

* * *

The space still left me suffices for a paragraph on two other matters. For myself, my health is still returning, though it doesn't gallop back. I am looking forward to seeing many of my friends at the National Secular Society's Conference, and more, of course, at the evening public meeting in the Queen's (Minor) Hall. There will be plenty of good speakers—including Mr. Cohen and Mr. Lloyd—at the evening meeting. I shall be present as Chairman, and I believe I shall be in good fighting form by then. There ought to be *some* good weather in May. The weather is a thing I cannot control. In all other respects I am more and more approaching my normal condition. If I could only sleep *well* I think I should live for ever. Not that I want a stern discussion on the scientific accuracy of this bold statement.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Phenomena of Procreation.—II.

(*Continued from p. 277.*)

RELINQUISHING the plant world, we will now review those laws of development which relate to the reproductive phenomena of higher animal life. For the purpose in view, this survey of the processes of generation may well be restricted to the vertebrate classes, and these will best be dealt with in evolutionary order.

Broadly speaking, the fish family may be regarded as representing the lowest order of backboned life. The sexes are almost invariably separate, although traces of an ancestral bisexual stage are sometimes in evidence. In the ovary wall of two species of bony fishes, vestiges of the male generative organs are sometimes found embedded, and one of these fishes is apparently capable of self-impregnation. "As in most other vertebrates," writes Professor J. A. Thomson, "occasional hermaphroditism occurs as an abnormality—*e.g.*, in mackerel and herring. The males of bony fishes are usually smaller than their mates, and sometimes very markedly so." The majority of fishes are oviparous and discharge their eggs broadcast in the water or deposit them in the sand or gravel below the liquid medium in which they dwell. The salmon and the sturgeon ascend the rivers for spawning, while the eel goes down to the sea. Many of the sharks and some of the teleostean fish give birth to living young. In the case of the viviparous teleosteans, which are a later product of evolution than the sharks, the eggs hatch out in the ovary; in the sharks the young develop in the posterior portion of the oviduct.

Various of these facts possess striking evolutionary significance, as they serve to link up the fishes with the reptilia, and, in consequence, with the mammals. Two of the viviparous sharks possess reproductive structures which are almost identical with those of certain lizards. Another remarkable approximation towards more advanced living forms is indicated by their reproductive methods. With the fish world in general, the male deposits the milt upon the spawn or eggs, but it becomes evident that the fertilising process is internal when fish produce their young in a living state. As Principal Starr Jordan says:—

> "In the case of viviparous fishes, actual copulation takes place, and there is usually a modification of some organ to effect transfer of the sperm-cells. This may be the sword-shaped form of the anal fin, as in many top-minnows, the fin itself being placed in advance of its usual position."

Parental care is seldom shown by fishes, nor would it be of much service if it were. The eggs laid by fishes are of so vast a number that to guard them from danger is practically impossible. They are therefore left to the care of Providence, with the result that the tiniest percentage ever succeed in reaching maturity. With the viviparous sharks, on the other hand, the young are comparatively strong at birth, and quite able to shift for themselves.

The foregoing considerations are strengthened by the following passage from Dr. Bigelow:—

> "Codfish spawn near the shores of New England between December and April. The hatcheries liberate annually more than 75,000,000 young fry. It is easy to collect the cod eggs for hatching, for in a 20 lb. female the two ovaries (popularly called 'roes') contain more than 2,500,000 eggs, which are so small that a quart bottle will hold about 335,000. Think how abundant codfishes would be if all the eggs of a thousand females were to hatch and grow to maturity, and one-half of these were to be equally prolific females. However, since cods do not appear to be increasing or decreasing rapidly, we are justified in concluding that, on the average, two eggs from each female produce mature individuals. The others are destroyed by enemies or die from diseases."

The amphibia stand next in evolutionary succession to the fishes, and the frog is a typical amphibian. Its embryology has been more thoroughly and systematically studied than that of any other organism. In the adult frog, ovaries and spermaries distinguish the separate sexes. The egg-cells are discharged by the female into the water which the frogs select for their breeding spot in early spring. At the same time the sperm-cells discharged by the male move briskly through the water to meet the egg-cells which they enter and impregnate. The eggs now develop and hatch out into tadpoles. Then, in the course of a few or many weeks, the differences of time varying with the species, they develop legs, lose their tails through absorption and grow into small frogs.

The ovaries of a young female frog contain numerous tiny egg-cells:—

> "Each egg-cell is a spherical mass of protoplasm with a nucleus near its centre. As the eggs grow larger, each one accumulates granules of a material known as yolk; and after a time the yolk comes to occupy one hemisphere of the egg, while the protoplasm is concentrated at the other. Frogs' eggs, examined soon after they are laid in water, are seen to be black (with pigment) in one hemisphere, and whitish (due to yolk) in the other. The black hemisphere contains most of the protoplasm. Each egg is surrounded by an envelope of transparent jelly, which was secreted by the walls of the oviduct as the eggs passed from the ovaries to the exterior."

As soon as the egg-cell has been impregnated by the male element, it prepares for division into two cells. In genial spring weather this process has usually taken place within two hours of its discharge from the parent body. An hour later the four-cell stage is reached, and the cell mass continues to multiply by repeated division until on the second or

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third day a sphere of several hundred cells has been evolved, and from this aggregation of cells the tadpole is slowly developed. When the critical moment arrives, the tadpole emerges from the jelly which encircles the egg and moves through the water. The tadpole, on emerging, appears larger than the egg itself, but this seeming discrepancy is explained by the fact that the tadpole is swollen by the water it has absorbed during development, as may easily be proved by drying the tadpole, when the organism shrinks very materially in size. The time occupied in the evolution of free-swimming tadpoles from the fertilised egg varies with the warmth of the water. Some species hatch out sooner than others; toads' eggs hatch in three or four days, and the same may be said of those of tree-frogs.

Differences of duration in the succeeding stages of metamorphosis are also to be observed. Toad and tree-frog tadpoles, in a high temperature and provided with abundant food, will reach the adult condition a month or two from the period of hatching. This speedy development possesses a survival-value to these amphibians, as their eggs are frequently deposited in temporary ponds which evaporate in late spring or early summer. On the other hand, where water is abundant and a genial climate prevails through the year, the metamorphosis of frogs is prolonged for over twelve months.

It is generally supposed that the tails of tadpoles are cast away in the course of development. This is completely erroneous; for, as a matter of fact, one has only to examine a net full of tadpoles taken at random from the nearest pool to see very plainly that these creatures exist in all stages of development. Some of the specimens have stumpy tails and long legs, while others exhibit intermediate stages between these and tadpoles with long tails and no legs. These varying phases find their explanation in the truth that as the legs develop, the tail dwindles. The disappearance of the tail is due to the activities of the phagocytes (white blood corpuscles) which absorb the tissues of the caudal organ and transfer them to the tadpole's body. The tip of the tail commences to wither a short time after the white blood-cells begin their operations, and this disintegrating process continues until the caudal organ has completely disappeared. Its substance being thus restored to the body, it is forthwith utilised in building up other tissues.

All the higher vertebrates, including man, pass through similar phases to those of the frog, but their tadpole or larval stage, unlike that of insects and amphibia, takes place in the womb, and not in the form of an external metamorphosis. Internal development is universal among mammals. The duck-bill platypus of Australia, which links up reptiles with mammals, is oviparous; but some reptiles, and, as we have seen, some fishes, bring forth living young. The advantages bound up with the lessening of the number of eggs produced are further illustrated by the salamanders, organisms closely related to toads and frogs. The common salamanders deposit an immense number of eggs, but a species which abounds in the mountainous districts of Europe produces two eggs only for each female, and these are retained in the oviducts until they are fully developed, so that at birth they are quite able to face the ordeals of life. In this instance the small number produced in an advanced stage, which guarantees their survival, is amply sufficient to maintain the species.

The early embryological phases of mammalian development, and also those of birds and reptiles, are suggestively similar to those of the frog, and they meet their only rational explanation in the theory of their common origin. In each case the fertilised egg-cell splits up into innumerable cells, which afterwards evolve into the embryo and its wrappings. The resemblances between the embryos of fish, reptiles, birds, cats, monkeys, and men are in their early stages so close that only the expert biologist can distinguish one from the other, although in the course of their later development each embryo evolves into the specific form which characterises its progenitors.

With birds the main processes of development are external, and the eggs require incubation. If the eggs are to hatch out successfully, they must be maintained at a high temperature, somewhat above blood heat, about 104° F. being necessary for those of the ordinary hen. The cock bird fertilises the female at a period when the eggs emerge from the ovary and enter the oviduct, and early cell multiplication proceeds during the twenty-four hours which elapse before the eggs are laid. When the egg is laid, however, it cools rapidly, and all development is suspended. With birds in a wild state, one egg is usually deposited daily in the nest, and the hen bird rarely covers her eggs except at night. After the blackbird, thrush, linnet, starling, etc., has laid her full complement of eggs, she commences her patient brooding over her treasures, and is rarely found absent until she leaves them in search for food for her never-satisfied family.

The majority of birds in a state of nature breed once or twice in a season, and the parent birds are fully occupied in building their nests and feeding and training their defenceless offspring until such time as they may fight the battle of life alone. In poultry farming—particularly that of an intensive character—all this is changed. Fowls are carefully chosen for their egg-producing powers, and many hens will lay over two hundred eggs per year. Needless to say, these birds are not permitted to waste time and energy in hatching out eggs and attending to the wants of chickens.

The eggs of insects and amphibia are usually very minute, and the nutriment necessary to the evolving butterfly or frog is mainly derived from its surroundings. The eggs of birds, on the other hand, are relatively large, and richly stored with food materials for the use of the embryo during the period of incubation. Eggs that have been observed in the ovaries of young birds assume the appearance of small spherical cells, which, as they advance towards maturity, absorb food and grow. In an average-sized fowl's egg the yolk, with its enclosing membrane, is about one inch in diameter, but in a young hen's ovary it is a microscopic cell. The white or albumen which environs the yoke, as well as the shell, are built up around the egg as it passes through the oviduct on its way to the nest. The yolk is the all-essential constituent of the egg; the albumen and hard coverings are additions evolved for the purpose of protecting the egg from injury, and thus fulfil the same function as the jelly which shields the spawn of the frog.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be concluded.)

Bitter Fruit.

"NOTWITHSTANDING the abounding evidences of the fact that the people are becoming more materialistic," the pastor is reported to have said, "and notwithstanding the amount of spiritless Materialist literature produced to-day, we Christians have no cause to be dejected." He continued in the usual spiritual strain, of which, seemingly, he was so proud, to speak about an unvanquishable soul, whose abiding place in the heart of man could never be shattered. This soul, this God's gift, was the only hope of the individual, the only hope of the world. It was the central fact of Christianity, he said; it was brought to us by Jesus Christ; consecrated by his life and death; and so long as our hearts possessed the treasure there would be no need for complaint. Against the consciousness that there lived in us this soulful spark of divine love all the materialistic influences of our lives were futile. The soul, which was God's love manifesting itself in our consciousness, would never perish; and Christianity, being warmed by this wonderful spark, would never grow cold.

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Christians, the majority of them, are not deliberately blind; they are not deliberately untruthful; but there are moments when I think they come pretty near the latter. Perhaps it cannot honestly be named lying. We do not like to accuse our friends of being consistently in support of falsehood. We are not very inclined to call them children, and well-bred children of the father of lies. The accusation is too hard. And yet, their attitude often forces to our lips the word we dislike to utter, even while our minds are busy with extenuations. Custom, ignorance, prejudice, weakness, the demands of human affection, and many other things, crop up to bear the burden of blame. We make excuses for our friends, although impulse would have us brand them. Knowing them well, we feel compelled to question the righteousness of the accusation; but we cannot rid ourselves of the idea that their toleration is tantamount to lying.

They know that all this religious stuff is absurd; that the soul has no more redemptive influence upon the ordinary life of humanity than a politician's prayers; that the spark of divine love vitalising Christianity is blarney. They know that the belauded importance of religion to the people who work beside them in mine, factory, workshop, or field, is moonshine, without moonshine's beauty. And they know that the value of religion, gauged by the results of its activities, the benefits it gives them, is a fantastic idea, meriting contempt and ridicule.

The ordinary Christian fully recognises that the important things of his life must be considered. They must be discussed, and carefully weighed in the balance of good and evil. Things that matter most in the daily round receive the greatest attention, and naturally so; but religion, the soul, the divine spark, and all the rest of the heavenly pyrotechnics, where do they come in? The average Christian is strangely unconcerned.

It is not that the average Christian thinks he need not trouble about the welfare of his faith; nor that it was never meant for practice. It is not that he thinks the pastor's salary releases him from all responsibility. He does not even imagine that the creeds he tolerates are sufficiently strong in their social crystalisation, in customs, in churches, in funds, in membership, to justify his neglect. He does not think that the defenders of his faith are, in themselves, powerful enough of intellect and belief to frustrate any attempts to demolish them. It is not because his mental attitude towards sacred things would be openly flouted by his fellow Christians if he were to use it amongst them in the daily toil, that he gives his religion the cold shoulder. Perhaps it is because of its very obvious individual and social uselessness.

Pastors may pour forth their million platitudes for all the average Christian cares. What matters it? He knows that his church-going is a mere custom. He knows that to take the church environment into his common life would be like taking a sloppy vegetarian dish to a man who relished roast beef. He knows that his religious observances must be indulged in the only environment for which they are suitable, surroundings pre-eminently famous for bringing utter weariness of mind or red-hot resentfulness to those unaccustomed to them.

Moreover, he is perfectly conscious, when he enters the church doors, of the distance he has travelled from the realities of life. He feels it when the minister introduces the common affairs into his remarks. The ordinary Christian's mind, at these times, is retrospective. He looks back upon the things of the past week. He sees them in the colored lights of religion. They have lost their real significance of actuality. They are more dream-pictures than happenings. It is as if they were mere memories drawn from a dream-life than facts remembered in a real life. And when he leaves church he renounces the dreams for the actualities. He forgets the former. The latter crowd them out from his mind.

The little circle of our acquaintances may, I suppose, be taken as the epitome of the larger life of humanity. Coming into contact with the commonplace but interesting characteristics of our friends, having the opportunity to observe the sweep of their minds upon their lives, we draw near, in our thoughts, to the greater humanity. Our deductions may serve as reliable generalisations. We need not fear for the truth of them. We may trace trends of thought; study mental development; observe the influence of a quietly operating sense of freedom, in the lives of our friends, as revealed by the activities of their intelligence; and our conclusions may serve to prove or disprove assertions like those embodied in the quotation.

If it is true that the social mind is changing in outlook towards certain long established opinions, we need not go far from home for evidence to substantiate the statement. We will find it in our own little human circle. Readiness to entertain a once despised idea, willingness to discuss subjects once rigorously excluded from conversation, the lowering of the degree of personal animosity, a more spontaneous inclination to laugh at sacred things, all go to give the lie to the hieroglyphics of the pulpit. We see the change operating in the lives of our friends. They are not unconscious of this different attitude of theirs; nor are the priests; for the webs woven by religionists are never heavy enough, nor thick enough, to hide the commonplace life; and the bitter fruit of reality is always seen through the diaphanous veil of religious mysticism.

Bitter fruit most assuredly it must be, else why so many "unchristian" invectives on Freethought literature? Why so much unbrotherly anger over our vitality? Why so much unJesuslike enmity because we are successful in reaching the young mind? And we, surely we need more love, more kindness, more of that wonderful fraternal consideration, more of the soft laying on of hands than the laying on of knotted verbal whips, from those who are inspired by God; for are we not the greatest of sinners?

Naturally, this is not an appeal for that sort of treatment; but if Christians would only endeavor, for once, to be logical, we would certainly receive more of this attention than we get at present. However, perhaps the whips are better for us and our movement.

So long as the average Christian continues to object to ministerial interference, for this is another characteristic of the times, there will always be the possibility of mental development, necessarily slow, but along secular lines. The bitter fruit will become abundant and more bitter for priests, and less abundant and less bitter for the average Christian. His quiet toleration of Christian customs will disappear. He will hate sham and artificiality; and perhaps he will recognise how closely, in the days past, when the ordinary happenings of his life mocked the ideas his forefathers worshiped, and his priests and ministers served, his toleration approached the category of "lying."

ROBERT MORELAND.

"The Challenge."

THE above is not the name of a special make of sewing machine, and it is not meant to denote the extraordinary qualities of a new brand of pickle. It is simply the title of a weekly religious journal that has just been launched. A company has been formed, and the meagre sum of £25,000 (merely the combination of the annual salaries of two archbishops) is required for capital. In all probability this is a matter of form, for when a balance sheet is issued no doubt "prayer" will occupy a prominent position among the assets. A comparison of the prospectus of this concern and that of an ordinary company proves Mr. Cohen's assertion that commercialism is more honest than clericalism.

The introduction to the prospectus states that "the paper will deal with matters relating to the Church of England," *but* "it will put in the forefront the need of the reduction of sectarian strife." This sounds remarkably like a Chestertonian paradox.

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The paragraph headed "The Fight Against Secularism," will afford some amusement to our readers, so the whole of it is quoted:—

> "Both at home and in the Dominions beyond the Seas there is need for a journal to fight in the front rank against shallow Secularism and subversive teaching on morals. Rationalistic pamphlets are read by the masses to an extent hardly realised by the leaders of the Church. Not only the authority of the Bible, but the value of religion, is freely disputed in park, club, and workshop, while little is done to stem the tide of doubt. A weekly penny paper might do good service in spreading light, and so rescuing many who, for lack of information, fall victims to a plausible but superficial scepticism. It would be of assistance, moreover, in conducting a crusade against the propaganda which attacks the Christian basis of morals, and threatens the foundations of society."

For sheer audacity and cheap bombast these sentiments would be difficult to beat; but, after all, they are only characteristic of bigoted Christians whose sole argument is force. The latter used to take the form of the stake and instruments of torture too numerous to mention, but to-day it is composed of money, misrepresentation, and calumny, all of which have no effect whatever against the forces of intellectualism.

The passage quoted invites amusement. It simply expresses the tricks of a very loathsome trade. At the eleventh hour the merchants themselves are losing their heads, and, consequently, the wildest of assertions are made and the vilest of slanders are circulated. But it is all of little avail, for money and mud are poor opponents of common sense and truth.

THE MAN IN THE STREET.

Correspondence.

"ORGANISMS ANTAGONISTIC TO HEALTH."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—About a fortnight ago I was present at what was probably the last lecture delivered by the late Sir E. Durning-Lawrence on "Bacon is Shakespeare," at Stanley Hall, Tufnell Park. The lecturer roundly abused the memory of "the vulgar and illiterate clown," whom Bacon employed as a mask for his own deathless dramatic masterpieces, and denounced in unmeasured language the orthodox Shakespeareans in general. Sir Durning-Lawrence claimed, in a style somewhat similar to to that adopted by Miss Kidd, that Bacon founded the English language, translated the Bible, wrote the works of Spenser, and created the whole literature falsely attributed to Shakespeare. The address was unfortunately brought to an untimely end by the collapse of the lecturer, who fainted on the platform. But the same impression was made on at least one of the audience as that conveyed by Miss Kidd's truculent epistle. In each instance the doctrines advanced were buttressed by false reasoning, inconsequential comment, and sinister suggestion; and in each case the result is one of utter inconclusiveness.

It is quite unnecessary to traverse the farcical statements of your correspondent in detail. The germ theory of disease is as firmly established as the doctrine of evolution, and will easily outlive the animadversions of its enemies.

That the conditions imposed by Koch are not now supplied is admitted. Every department of science, including that of bacteriology, is progressive. As science advances its concepts undergo modification in the light of later discovery. With reference to the purity of the blood-stream, I, as a matter of fact, emphasised the importance of sound physiological conditions in the interests of mental and bodily health.

The passage quoted by your correspondent from Wallace is very significant, as it represents the Wallace of superstition rather than the Wallace of science. It contains a lame attempt to bolster up the theory that disease germs are part of a providential scheme of things. The view set forth by me—which is unquestionably the view of the overwhelming majority of men qualified to speak on the subject—did not commend itself to Wallace "because it does not show us any *use* for such microbes in the scheme of life." Very pretty, no doubt; but there speaks the Wallace of Spiritualism, the amazing doctrine of angel supervision, and the quite chimerical theory that our insignificant earth, with its favored inhabitants, has been specially set in the centre of the universe by some supernatural power.

Miss Kidd's sneers at the mighty Pasteur, the man who saved the silk industry of France and made Lister's magnificent achievements possible, make mournful reading and stand self-condemned. Her gibes at Jenner are also to be reprobated rather than condoned.

If Miss Kidd were to study, and strive to understand, some standard work on immunity in disease, she would cease to wonder why confectioners are not decimated by disease as they should be from the number of flies that swarm in their neighborhood.

Miss Kidd is mistaken in surmising that I am not acquainted with what the poverty of the language compels me to term the "case" for the other side. In my callow days much time did I innocently waste in perusing the perverse productions of the enemies of medical progress. But that, thank heaven, is of the past; my time is now otherwise employed, Mr. Boffin.

That the stable-fly may carry the germ of infantile paralysis where the stable-fly abounds, is not to contend that the disease is disseminated by that organism alone. This quite simply explains the fact that the disease may be present where the stable-fly is absent, as the meanest tyro in these matters is perfectly well aware.

I hope to return to these important phenomena, and put them to the proof in the columns of the *Freethinker* at no distant date. It seems a pity that no medical authority will deign to discuss with Dr. Hadwen; but if Miss Kidd will supply the platform I could furnish one layman who would be prepared to cross swords with Dr. Hadwen or any other debater she or her friends may choose to appoint.

Miss Kidd's reference to the anti-toxins reminds one of the belated theologians who pitted their puny prejudices against the majestic mind of Galileo. They flatly refused to look through Galileo's telescope at the newly discovered satellites of Jupiter. One of these obscurantists died shortly afterwards and Galileo comforted himself with the reflection that his antagonist probably saw them on his way to heaven.

The introduction into this controversy of the modest and retiring author of *Mrs. Warren's Profession* provides the crowning absurdity of Miss Kidd's stream of invective. The conservation of energy not only operates in human credulity but in the realms of the merry andrew, the purveyor of paradoxes, and the prophet of chronic insincerity. In another and a better world than ours one might have aspired to hope that the man who conserved so little truth or even common honesty in dealing with Darwin, "the mere pigeon fancier," the immaculate conception, spontaneous generation, and the manhood, or was in the godhood of Mahomet, might very fitly be left out from any matter to which science and rationality are essential ingredients.

T. F. PALMER.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON APRIL 30.

The President, Mr. G. W. Foote, happily recovered largely from his recent severe illness, occupied the chair. Other members present were: Messrs. Baker, Berry, Bowman, Brandes, Cohen, Cowell, Cunningham, Davey, Heaford, Judge, Lloyd, Neate, Nichols, Roger, Rosetti, Samuels, Silverstein, Schindle, Thurlow, and Wood.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed. New members were admitted for the Parent Society. Correspondence was also read.

This being the final meeting of the year, the President addressed the meeting at some length upon the general situation, and pointed out that for various reasons it was deemed advisable to hold the Annual Conference in London this year. The Queen's Minor Hall had been engaged for the business and public meetings.

Notices of Motion for the Agenda were reported, and resolutions moved by the Executive were ordered to be referred to the Agenda Committee, Mr. Cohen and Mr. Lloyd being elected for that purpose.

Mr. Davey reported his attendance at meetings called to further the W. J. Ramsey Testimonial Fund, and that an appeal by circular was about to be made.

Other matters of routine business were dealt with.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary.*

Obituary.

With deep regret I have to record the death of Mrs. Edward Moorhouse, one of the kindest and gentlest of women, a true Secularist, who, with her husband, worked for the "best of causes"—especially so during the stormy period of the Bradlaugh and our President's struggles thirty years ago. She had been suffering from a very painful malady for two years, but she lived and died fortified in the principles of the Secularist "faith." Her remains were cremated at the Leeds Crematorium, on the 2nd inst., and our good friend Mr. R. Tabrum read the beautiful Secular Service.—W. H. SPIVEY (Huddersfield).

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15 and 6.15, Mr. Gallagher, Lectures.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 5.45, M. Hope, a Lecture.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, Miss Kough, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, R. H. Rosetti, "Jesus Christ"; 7.30, Mrs. H. Rosetti, "Count Your Blessings."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Finsbury Park): 11.30, Mr. Hope, a Lecture. Parliament Hill: 3.30, Miss Kough, a Lecture. Regent's Park (near the Fountain): 3.30, Mr. Davidson, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, R. H. Rosetti, "Jesus Christ."

PROPAGANDIST LEAFLETS. New Issue. 1. *Christianity a Stupendous Failure*, J. T. Lloyd; 2. *Bible and Teetotalism*, J. M. Wheeler; 3. *Principles of Secularism*, C. Watts; 4. *Where Are Your Hospitals?* R. Ingersoll. 5. *Because the Bible Tells Me So*, W. P. Ball; 6. *Why Be Good?* by G. W. Foote. *The Parson's Creed*. Often the means of arresting attention and making new members. Price 6d. per hundred, post free 7d. Special rates for larger quantities. Samples on receipt of stamped addressed envelope.—MISS E. M. VANCE, N. S. S. Secretary, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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Secretary—MISS E. M. VANCE.

THIS Society was formed in 1898 to afford legal security to the acquisition and application of funds for Secular purposes.

The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularisation of the State, etc., etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

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The Society has a considerable number of members, but a much larger number is desirable, and it is hoped that some will be gained amongst those who read this announcement. All who join it participate in the control of its business and the trusteeship of its resources. It is expressly provided in the Articles of Association that no member, as such, shall derive any sort of profit from the Society, either by way of dividend, bonus, or interest, or in any way whatever.

The Society's affairs are managed by an elected Board of Directors, consisting of not less than five and not more than twelve members, one-third of whom retire by ballot) each year, but are capable of re-election. An Annual General Meeting of members must be held in London, to receive the Report, elect new Directors, and transact any other business that may arise.

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THE
Freethinker
Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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No one appears to perceive that intellectual cowardice is as disreputable as physical cowardice.
—WILLIAM ROMAINE PATTERSON.

More Notes.

Several years ago (I cannot fix the date without laborious reference) I spent a week at Brighton with my wife and one of our children. Their object was to keep me company. My object was to pick up strength after recovering from an attack of influenza. I never bought clothes in my life until I was obliged to, and on this occasion I had to purchase a new overcoat, partly to keep me warm on the windy Brighton front, and partly because my old overcoat —as I was informed, and could not honestly deny— had got to look quite disreputable for a man in my position, walking out with a lady. The new garment was not an expensive one, but it did credit (at the price, as they say) to my tailor, and I rather fancied it. Yes, and I fancied myself in it, too; for I defy any man in the world, or any woman either, to remain indifferent to the elevating effect of new raiment. Emerson was perhaps cynical, though probably quite accurate, when he reported a pious lady as saying that the consciousness of being well-dressed gave her a support which religion was powerless to afford.

But how we are paid out, after all, for giving way to these little flatteries! When I went back to my lodgings one day for dinner I found a Christian Evidence paper amidst a packet of things sent down to me from London. It was of no importance then, and its name is of no importance now. It was one of the many insignificant journals I have known during the past forty years, that have done their poor little best to prove Christianity divine by constant displays of envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness — and absolutely nothing else. "Freethinker" in their vocabulary meant "blackguard," "Secularist" meant "rascal," and "Atheist" meant "scoundrel." Other "infidel" terms were used with similar "Christian charity." Had the writers in these journals possessed any brightness or wit they might have done considerable mischief. The laughter they raised, however, was usually in the wrong place. The moment these "organs" were born they started on the way to oblivion. They lacked the first virtue of a periodical. They were not interesting. People soon get tired of hearing Bradlaugh called a liar, a blackguard, a thief, and other epithets from the venerable collection of what Arnold called "the amenities of theological controversy." Even the "proofs" were not very thrilling when read for the first time. On the second reading they had all the dullness of their stupidity. It was obvious to any person of common sagacity that Bradlaugh (or any other name you like) was only not accused of murder because such a charge involved the production of a corpse. Rank fanaticism provided the only readers of these "defenders of the faith" after a brief career; and the usual appeals for cash to sustain the only real barrier to the wave of infidelity which was surging against the cause of Christ, were followed by death-bed groans, and then—silence. The thing was dead, and forgotten before there could be a funeral, with half-a-dozen mourners. Time, the collector, picked it up and threw it into the bag he carries with alms for oblivion. (I beg Shakespeare's pardon for bringing him, even for a moment, into such company).

Well, one of the contributors to that particular number of that particular sample of Christian Evidence journalism, reported what must have tickled my friends amazingly if they had come across it. I had been seen at Brighton, where I was "living on the fat of the land" (as if I ought to have shown a Christian preference for the lean) and walking about "gorgeously attired." The joke nearly did for me on the spot. My wife collapsed dangerously. Fortunately, the dinner was brought in just then; it was sweet-smelling, we were very hungry, and it appealed to us with all the power that Esau's venison exercised on poor old father Isaac; so we "fell to" as they say at beanfeast dinners, and the devastating effect of that Christian Evidence joke (unconscious, and therefore all the more effective) was arrested.

How did the Christian Evidence reporter learn that I was living on the fat of the land? Perhaps it was a general conclusion. I don't think I ever looked averse to a good dinner. Certainly not in those days. Christians, who are so indifferent to the meat which perisheth, might call a chop and potatoes (with or without tomato sauce, *à la* Pickwick) the fat of the land. In a certain way it is—and in a certain way it isn't. It is a palatable and nourishing dish—if the Vegetarians will let the statement pass, as a relative one, for the sake of argument; but a more luxurious repast is easily conceivable. If I may make a personal confession, I agree with the late George Gissing, and some American friends too, that English cooking is not the worst, but much nearer the best, in the world. I like good food, well cooked, and I like to know what I am eating. I doubt if the very best English public-house dinners (with an appetite, of course; the appetite is indispensable—and preferably after an agreeable walk with a "pal") can be beaten anywhere on this planet. Everything plain, everything nicely done, the meat and the vegetables well-matched, and the sauces in bottles on the table rather than too much in evidence on the plates, and one "sweet" if you want it, and a "pinch" of Stilton, Cheddar, or Cheshire (no longer list)—this, on ordinary days, if not on days of celebration, is a dinner for a man. I do not speak for the ladies. I leave them to speak for themselves. There may well be organic differences of taste in the two sexes.

But the question with which the last paragraph opened has not yet been answered. How did the Paul Pry reporter penetrate the arcana of our daily menu? Was he a friend of the landlady's? Was he acquainted with the servant? Did he "tip" the errand boys at the butcher's, the greengrocer's, and the provision dealer's, where my wife bought our meat, vegetables, fruit, bacon and eggs, and cheese —for information as to our purchases? Or did he extract it from them at Sunday-school on the blessed

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Sabbath afternoon? Possibly, as I have already hinted, the "fat of the land" was a guess, not exactly in the dark. But what was the explanation of "gorgeously attired"? That new overcoat must have given me away. No doubt its value had been immensely exaggerated. But what an imagination the Christian reporter must have had to represent me, and what an imagination the Christian reader must have had to accept the description of me, as "gorgeously attired." Me! Gorgeous! And all on the strength of what was a very common-priced overcoat! Some of my lady friends laugh at that "gorgeously attired" still.

* * *

I have just been informed of another characteristic Christian Evidence story. I have frequently referred to my insomnia. Readers ask me questions about it, and get their answers. Some send me advice on the subject. They all mean well, and they all have my thanks; although I should never edit another number of the *Freethinker* if I followed them all together, nor would life be long enough to follow them all separately. Now insomnia is a curse. I am not proud of it—like the old lady in the hospital who, when the late King Edward was operated on for appendicitis, told a visitor that her complaint was the same as the King's, only she had it in the feet. I am *not* proud of insomnia, although I share it with Lord Rosebery and other distinguished people. I could wish it farewell to-night and "dote upon its very absence" ever afterwards. Insomnia *is* a curse, and the Christian Evidence people say that "God" has sent it to me as a punishment for my "infidelity." It is gravely stated that I may be seen walking by the water at Southend every night, tormented with remorse, and bending under the Almighty's chastisement of the deprivation of sleep.

* * *

Let me pause to tell an old story. Cuvier, the great naturalist, was asked what he thought of the definition of a Crab in a new dictionary. It was defined as a red fish that walked backwards. "Well," said Cuvier, "the crab is not a fish, it is not red, and does not walk backwards. With those three exceptions the definition is a very good one."

* * *

Now I am not "bending"—at least physically; but am as upright as ever, the result of almost daily exercise; I rarely walk about at night, especially in the winter; and I don't look in the least like a man tormented with remorse—or anything else. My life has been singularly free from *pain;* a fact which may somehow be connected with another fact—that the temperature of my blood never rises. As for "remorse" itself, I laugh at the very idea. Any earthly or heavenly Being who punished me for exercising my own intelligence would only prove that he was devoid of intelligence himself. On the other hand, I never wilfully injured a fellow-mortal; I am capable of mistakes, but not of crimes; my temperament is, if anything, *too* sympathetic; I can hardly see a strange child cry in the street without joining in; and there are things in literature—Lear, for instance, over the dead body of Cordelia—which, with all my experience on the platform, I have never been able to read aloud. Not even alone in my study, preparing for a Shakespearean lecture, and practising the recitation of illustrative passages. I have tried, and tried, and summoned up the stern forces of self-control, and reminded myself of the claims of art, but I have broken down every time, with a feeling that all one could do was to grope about, as it were, in the darkness of grief for a consoling touch of the Master's hand.

* * *

Anybody who visits Southend for the sake of seeing me bowed down with remorse by the seashore at night—a sort of Byron of the beach—will make a poor investment of his time and money. I strongly advise him not to trust so much in Christian advertisement.

G. W. FOOTE.

Why We Exist.

A FORTNIGHT ago I wrote three "Acid Drops" in reply to a letter received from a clergyman who had been given a copy of the *Freethinker*. I did not mention the name of the writer of the letter, and do not intend doing so now, as, although there is nothing private about the communication, I am not sure that he would care for his name being made public. He has, however, in another letter, replied to the paragraphs, although he says he would have preferred a written communication. I hardly know why. It is not likely that he would convert me or that I should convert him. Those who have studied the subjects at issue with any thoroughness may be taken to have their opinions fairly well settled, and in such cases the expression that one is ready to be converted really means little more than that each one is willing to receive the other's arguments and reply to them. The chief value of such discussions lies in their giving to the general public an opportunity of seeing both sides of the question stated. And if this reverend gentleman really desires to put his case against Freethought, the columns of this journal are open.

In reply to the writer's wonder why the *Freethinker* should be published, I said that one reason for its publication was that it said what could not be said in other papers. In reply to this my critic says, "I think that to be a mistake. Our press seems open to every shade of thought and opinion." Now, without being either impolite or conceited, I think I may say on that point that I—or any other Freethought advocate—am a much better authority than my critic. We know what it is to try and get our opinions before the public through the channels of the ordinary press. Mildly heretical communications from men whose position makes it dangerous for editors to refuse may appear; but uncompromising expressions of Freethought opinion are boycotted in every paper in Great Britain. Sometimes editors refuse them gladly, at other times they are refused because they dare not print them. This is not only true of papers; it is true of publishers. Quite recently, a manuscript of my own was returned from one of our oldest publishing firms with a confession that, despite a flattering report from the firm's reader, they dare not publish for fear of offending their clients. On the whole, the British Press is, perhaps, as cowardly as any on the face of the earth.

Here is a sporting offer to this reverend gentleman—one that I feel sure the editor of this journal will agree with. If he really feels convinced that "our press is open to every shade of thought and opinion," let him try and arrange for, say, four articles of mine, stating the Freethought position, in either a newspaper of standing or in one of the religious weeklys. In return, let him, or some other clergyman, put their case in an equal number of articles in the *Freethinker*. In that case we shall each achieve our end. He is desirous of converting Freethinkers; we are desirous of converting Christians. And this is clearly the best plan of reaching both classes. If this can be brought about, we shall have had a demonstration that the press of Great Britain is less bigoted than Freethinkers believe it to be.

I am next told it is irrelevant to say that the *Freethinker* expresses what a large number of people either cannot say or dare not say, and in any case there is no proof that we are expressing these thoughts. I confess I see neither the irrelevancy nor the absence of proof. Want of power to verbally express feelings or nascent convictions, and want of courage to say outright what one believes to be true, are among the plainest facts of everyday experience. The first is a natural incapacity, pure and simple; the latter due more to social pressure. When a man finds the welfare of himself and those dependent upon him likely to be seriously injured by the expression of heretical opinions, there is small wonder that he hesitates before speaking out. I do not

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applaud the reticence; neither do I, without qualification, condemn it. The fault lies far more with those who penalise honesty of speech than with those who, for one reason or another, feel bound to bend to the storm.

The guarantee that the Freethought writer or speaker is putting into words what a large number feel to be true, it seems to me, lies in the reception given to his message. No one can elicit response to an idea unless it encounters a mind fitted to receive it. We see this admitted in the expression that public opinion is "ripe" or is not "ripe" for a certain teaching. Even with the teacher himself the idea is with him in a nebulous form long before he is able to express it in words. And when it is expressed its power will depend very largely, if not entirely, upon the extent to which it interprets what other people are feeling upon that topic. The only guarantee really needed that the *Freethinker* is expressing what a large number of people cannot so well put into words is that it is alive. No other proof is required.

In reply to my statement that our object is to tell the truth about religion, we are told:—

> "That statement implies an active, positive setting forth of what is believed to be the truth. But if I may judge from the one issue (April 5) your chief motive is to show that what other people believe is not true—rather than to put forward positive truth."

Now, it might be replied that to prove to a believer that his beliefs are false is a very "positive" piece of work. For this can only be done by showing that the belief is contrary to some known truth or conflicts with some accepted principle of reason. And, as a matter of fact—although one issue is rather a narrow ground on which to judge a paper of thirty-three years' standing—every article in the issue of April 5 contains positive truth of a very important character. They at least indicate to believers a point of view from which to examine religious beliefs that may cause them to appear in quite a new light. And this point of view can only be obtained in specifically Freethought publications. Believers will not hear it from the pulpit, they will not read it in the religious press. Both do their best week after week to ignore the fact that modern thought has completely revolutionised our knowledge concerning religious beliefs. How much will a church congregation learn from the pulpit of the demonstrated truth that all existing notions of Deity and of a future life are derived from the fear-stricken brain of the primitive savage? And this is only one question out of many. For all that the pulpit does to the contrary, the mass of worshipers might still be living in the eighteenth century instead of in the twentieth. And how much of the truth would appear in other directions, but for the existence of an active Freethought propaganda, which, in spite of many serious obstacles, still manages to force some recognition of the truth. And the positive truth is there, and is emphasised, all the time. It is the natural that is used to disprove the supernatural. The strength of man is used to abolish the providence of God; the principle of causation to negative the idea of the miraculous. It is mere petulance to cry out that one is negative because one's belief is threatened.

My critic is surprised that I should say he would be surprised did he know the class of readers to whom the *Freethinker* appeals. Well, what was meant by the doubt expressed in his first letter, whether the paper could possibly appeal to intellectual men? I wrote what I did because I am aware of the carefully nurtured superstition that the *Freethinker* is conducted by illiterate men for illiterate readers. Of course, those who know the *Freethinker* know to the contrary. They know that for sheer hard brain work the *Freethinker* is the equal of any paper published in Great Britain. Those who write in its columns express their views plainly, and without dishonoring compromise. There is no attempt to placate the "respectables," and *their* revenge is to keep alive the delusion that the paper is "gross," "offensive," "ignorant," etc., etc. All quite false, but all evidently useful, since the charges alone are enough to keep the timid and cowardly "respectable" public from giving it the support that it might otherwise receive. Strong and brave men have always recognised the value of the paper; but strong and brave men are, unfortunately, in the minority.

Finally, we have the question of propaganda. I am told that if we had any hope of making men happier, or if we had a better religion, my critic could understand our wishing to convince people. He could "understand the man who believed in nothing, but I cannot see why he should want to destroy such belief, which, he could see, was at least some comfort to his friend who held it."

One feels inclined to reply, "Thou sayest it." This reverend gentleman has supplied one of the reasons for Freethought propaganda in the act of wondering what possible reason there is for its existence. His own attitude shows the need for Freethought work, and I sincerely hope that in future he will read the *Freethinker* with something like regularity. How can a man believe in nothing? All this reverend gentleman means is that the Freethinker does not believe in some of the things he believes in. And it is equally true that he does not believe some of the things we believe. He is as negative to us as we are to him. He would destroy some of our beliefs as we would destroy some of his. What a hard thing it is for some people to realise that the distance between A and B is not a bit greater or lesser than the distance between B and A.

Of course, we see that the religious man's beliefs give him comfort. But why stop there? The statement is true of nearly everybody and nearly everything. Do not the Hindoos find "comfort" in their beliefs? And yet we have missions for their conversion. Does not the belief in the Jewish religion yield comfort? But we have a society for the conversion of the Jews. Does not drinking whisky or eating beefsteak give comfort? But we have ravenous vegetarians and fiery teetotalers pursuing an energetic propaganda. And may it not be that the Atheist finds comfort in his beliefs? Why, then, trouble about correcting anybody? If the rule is good in one direction, it is good in all directions. Are we, then, to let everybody alone? Or are we to conclude that the cry, "Let me alone; I am comfortable where I am!" is the cry of a coward unwilling to play his part in the battle of life? Strange that a Freethinker should have to point out to a clergyman that the duty of determining what is true should rank higher than the desire to feel comfortable!

It may be startling to my critic, but we really have hopes of men becoming better. Nay, we believe we *have* made men better. We have taught men to see in co-operation and intelligence the conditions of human betterment. We have taught them that true rewards and penalties in the sphere of conduct lie in the effects of conduct on our own natures. We have taught that to care for each other for the sake of man is better than hating each other in the name of God. We have taught men that it is saner to judge the value of life from the point of view of this world than from that of some fanciful hereafter. We have taught men to be serious in thought, brave in speech, and straightforward in action. And if these things will not make men better and happier, then the lot of mankind is indeed hopeless.

C. COHEN.

Discredited Apologetics.

BY "apologetics" is meant the so-called science which attempts to vindicate, by defence or defensive assault, the absolute truth of the Christian religion. There are three kinds of apologetics, the fundamental, the historical, and the philosophical, but the present article is concerned only with the historical,

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which deals with the Divine nature and origin of Christianity. The apologists declare that the evidences of the Divinity of Christianity are irrefutable, that all attempts to break their force are utterly futile, and that consequently anti-Christians are without a rag of rationality wherewith to hide the nakedness of their position. Indeed, some of them go so far as to assert that unbelievers build their negative theory on two assumptions, namely, that the Christian faith is not true, and that its teachers do not believe it to be true. In that assertion there is not a single atom of truth. No Freethinker ever takes it for granted, without argument, that Christianity is false, or that its teachers are destitute of belief in its truth. There are those among its official champions who are convinced of its essential falsity, but it is incontrovertible that the majority of them firmly believe it to be true. It would indeed be indescribably absurd for anyone to *assume* that all divines are conscious hypocrites, or that Christianity itself is false. Of course, nothing is easier than to characterise Freethinkers as the victims of prejudice, but nothing can be more difficult than to prove such a charge. On the part of a Freethinker prejudice would signify an unreasonable predilection for the tenets of Freethought, a bias, preconception, or presumption against the Christian faith; but it must be borne in mind that the bulk of Freethinkers are converts from the Christian religion, all whose worldly interests were powerful arguments against their conversion. They renounced their belief alone in obedience to the dictates of reason. Had they listened to the voice of prejudice, they would have remained believers. How utterly unfair it is, therefore, to say that their judgment is now warped because they conscientiously argue against the faith, the truth being that they argue against the faith because they honestly must, not because they have any selfish motive to serve in so doing.

Advocates of Christianity almost invariably describe their opponents as ignorant and narrow-minded, shutting themselves up in a narrow sphere, refusing to examine Christian thought and teaching, and never getting on intimate terms with intelligent Christians. How absolutely false that description is appears from the fact that Christianity is presented to us as an object, not of knowledge, but of belief. An intelligent Christian believer is a natural impossibility, because God, Christ, and immortality are subjects that lie outside the scope of intelligence altogether. A believer in them may be zealous, fervent, pious, and prayerful, but never intelligent. Both a Christian and an Atheist are equally ignorant of spiritual realities, the only difference between them being that the former believes on the authority of a Book or a Church, or of both, and the latter disbelieves because the realities known to him indicate the non-existence of the spiritual realities believed in. In other words, the objects of knowledge testify to the unreality of the objects of belief. He who knows the natural cannot possibly believe in the supernatural. We are told that "spiritual truths and historic statements of Christian teaching stand or fall by the tests of experience, observation, and reason," but a moment's calm thought shows the infinite absurdity of such a claim. Is the Virgin Birth an object of experience? Has anybody ever observed the incarnation of God in Jesus of Nazareth? Can the reality of the life everlasting be subjected to the critical test of reason? Merely to ask such questions is to wholly discredit the statement that "spiritual truths stand or fall" by such tests. Of spiritual or supernatural truths experience, observation, and reason are totally ignorant. They are merely objects of belief, and to charge unbelievers in them with ignorance is to be guilty of obvious irrationality.

Now, it is contended by the apologists that "spiritual truths" ought to be taught to children at the earliest possible age. If "spiritual truths" were objects of knowledge, and not simply of belief, the contention would be justifiable, and there could be no valid objection to the religious education of children. But to make supernatural believers of unthinking children is to be guilty of injustice and unfairness towards them. One over-zealous apologist argues thus:—

> "To say that the future of Christianity is dependent upon its being crammed down the throats of little children before they acquire the art of thinking is as nonsensical as it would be to say that the future of arithmetic, or the future of geographic science, or the future of elementary sanitation is dependent upon its being crammed down the throats of children before they acquire the art of thinking. We teach the children these things because we believe them to be true and part of their useful and necessary equipment for life. I imagine that the most convinced Freethinker would teach a child points of conduct and observance which would conduce to his bodily welfare and surround him with an atmosphere of health and cleanliness from his earliest youth."

The marvel is that our critic fails to perceive that the cases cited are in no sense parallel. Arithmetic, geographic science, elementary sanitation, and the laws of ethics are subjects the truth of which can easily be demonstrated, and it is as such that they are placed in the curriculums of our schools; but "spiritual truths" belong to an entirely different category. We teach our children natural truths because we know that they are verifiable, and that the knowledge of them will be useful to them in their later life; but "spiritual truths" are not susceptible of verification, and to force the little ones to swallow them on the authority of teachers as ignorant of them as themselves is the acme of imprudence and unjustness. And yet we are assured by the clergy that, in the absence of the religious instruction of the young, Christianity would be doomed soon to disappear. So far is this from being nonsensical that the opponents of Secular Education are unanimous in its affirmation. Nobody knows that Christianity is true; but even on the assumption that it may be, it would be fairer to the children to allow them to judge for themselves when they arrive at years of discretion.

Let it never be forgotten that the overwhelming majority of Freethinkers started by assuming that Christianity is true. Not one of them arrived at his present position by assuming that there is nothing in it, all its professors being either selfish rogues or patient dupes. Atheism is the outcome of long, anxious, and painful thought. In this department the thinker assumes nothing but endeavors to prove everything. The critic already quoted regards the phrase that "to think is to doubt" as a demonstrable falsehood, because in his opinion "there is no strong positive belief on any subject whatever which is not the result of thought." With a considerably longer and wider experience than he is as yet able to claim, we beg to differ from him. As a matter of fact, all supernatural beliefs can be traced back to an Age of Ignorance, "a stage to which our anthropologists and explorers have found parallels in every part of the world." As Professor Gilbert Murray so aptly says:—

> "It [the Age of Ignorance or Primal Stupidity] is so typical of stages of thought elsewhere [than in Greece] that one is tempted to regard it as the normal beginning of all religion, or almost as the normal raw material out of which religion is made. There is certainly some repulsiveness, but I confess that to me there is also an element of fascination in the study of these 'beastly devices of the heathen'" (*Four Stages of Greek Religion*, p. 16).

We infer that our critic has never studied the origin and evolution of religious beliefs, and is likewise ignorant of the difference between beliefs and dogmas. Christianity has come down to us as preeminently a dogmatic religion, and everybody knows that dogmas are the result of speculative and philosophical thought. Theologians have never acted as critics of Christianity itself, but always and only of other systems than their own. Every supernatural belief is the result, not of thought, but of ignorance of the laws of Nature; and we maintain that to think critically about Christianity is to doubt its truth. We well remember that in our own case

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doubt invariably dogged the steps of thought, and that continual thinking ended in total unbelief.

The fact is that the so-called science of apologetics has completely broken down. No defence of Christianity serves the intended purpose. That is why such a flood of defences is being poured out upon Christendom from day to day, and why unbelievers are at last more numerous than whole-hearted believers. That also explains why Freethinkers are so violently hated and abused, and so frequently prosecuted. It has at length come to pass that the most damaging attacks on the faith are made, not by avowed Atheists, but by professing Christians within the orthodox Church. At the recent meeting of the convocation of Canterbury numerous petitions were presented, some respectfully beseeching the Archbishop "to vindicate the authority of Holy Scripture, and to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrine contrary to God's Word," and others pleading for freedom of thought and speech. The Council of the Churchmen's Union desired to lay before their Lordships of the Upper House, amongst others, the following solemn warning:—

> "We dutifully and respectfully pray your Lordships to remember how often in the past, when the Episcopate or the Convocations have attempted to pronounce authoritatively upon scientific, critical, or historical questions, they have committed themselves to positions which are now by practically universal consent admitted to be untenable."

The Church of England is now a house divided against itself and, as such, destined to be overthrown. The Bishops of London and Oxford figured as stout defenders of orthodoxy, while Bishops Percival and Boyd-Carpenter were in favor of a larger latitude of opinions. Others, men equally in Holy Orders, were condemned as spreading views of Christianity which denied its miraculous character, and which depicted Jesus as "a certain Palestinian Jew," who was by no means infallible, and who never contemplated, and assuredly never instituted, the Church that bears his name. Well, Jesus is reported to have said that a house divided against itself cannot stand; and Christianity, defended by conflicting and necessarily false apologies, is bound sooner or later to vanish, utterly discredited.

J. T. LLOYD.

"Where No Fear Was."

The Early Poems of Walter Savage Landor, A Study of His Development, by W. Bradley. (Bradbury, Agnew: 1914).

IN spite of the constant growth of new reputations, Landor's fame continues undimmed. Nor is this to be wondered at, for, when alive, he cast the spell of genius upon all who came near him. Southey, who had so many opportunities of judging, has left a magnificent tribute to his memory. Shelley was no less enthusiastic. De Quincey, Carlyle, Dickens, Emerson, and Lamb have all combined in their various ways to render affectionate tribute to that "deep-mouthed Bœtian," as Byron called him. Browning dedicated his "Luria" to him, and Swinburne, the most golden-voiced of recent poets, sat at his feet and found inspiration in his wisdom. How lovingly he refers to him:—

> "I found him whom I shall not find
> Till all grief end,
> In holiest age our mightiest mind,
> Father and friend."

It is given to few to inspire such love among friends, or such fear among enemies. A link between two literary ages, Landor stands a herculean figure in complete steel, towering above his contemporaries, ever ready to do battle for liberty.

Landor's literary activity extended over seventy years. He was a poet embodying revolutionary aspirations in classic language. He was a literary dramatist of great power, and, above all, he was a critic in the widest sense of that much-abused word. The "Imaginary Conversations," on which competent judges have bestowed unbounded praise, is his masterpiece. There is nothing like it in the range of literature. It is a great panorama of historic persons, and includes Plato, in far-off Greece, to our own Porson; Hannibal, of old-world Carthage, to David Hume; Seneca to his own friend Southey. He has painted them all, kings, and greater than kings, statesmen and fair ladies, philosophers and prelates, writers and scientists, of all ages and of all types. Epicurus discusses philosophy in his garden; Montaigne laughs at the worthy Scaliger; Melancthon reproves Calvin.

How, perfectly, too, has Landor caught the relations of the French Court and the great lying Church in the ironic conversation between Louis XIV. and Pere La Chaise, when the king confesses the most damnable crimes and the obsequious confessor imposes the most trifling penances. Scene succeeds scene, each richer and fuller than its predecessor, supplementing one another, and go to make a magnificent picture of "life, like a dome of many-colored glass."

When Landor is at his best, not many are so perfect as he. There are few things more pathetic than his portrait of the unhappy Anne Boleyn. He represents the pious and hypocritical Henry coming disguised to see Anne in the condemned cell. Very touchingly does he express her womanly desire to see her child: "Could I kiss her but once again, it would comfort my heart or break it."

For long Landor's work was "caviare to the general." His masterpiece was venomously and ignorantly described as "the adventures of seven volumes, which are seven valleys of dry bones." This lack of appreciation is the more remarkable because Landor was a real and remarkable genius. In nearly every page of his writing one finds high thinking and rare eloquence. Indeed, a well-edited selection of his works would be one of the most beautiful books in the language. Although he addressed a small audience while he lived, he looked confidently to the future: "I shall dine late; but the drawing-room will be well lighted, the guests few and select."

The chief of Landor's other books is undoubtedly *Pericles and Aspasia*. Another of his works, *The Citation and Examination of William Shakespeare for Deer-Stealing*, provoked Lamb's happy epigram that it could only have been written by "the man who did write it, or he of whom it was written." Landor's poetry is not large in quantity, but few poets have won such recognition with such a small nosegay of verse. The exquisite lines on "Rose Aylmer" have found their way into many anthologies and many hearts, whilst the sympathetic lines on the death of Charles Lamb are an exquisite tribute to a splendid genius. The single stanza, in his own original manner, prefixed to one of his last books, epitomises Landor's life and aims in four lines:—

> "I strove with none, for none was worth my strife.
> Nature I loved; and next to Nature, Art;
> I warmed both hands before the fire of life;
> It sinks, and I am ready to depart."

For those who care for concentration and restraint in literature, Landor's writings are full of delight. As a man he was dowered with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn, the love of love. Withal he was a typical Englishman, with an appetite for the heroic. He showed this when, on Napoleon's invasion of Spain, he went over, and, with his own energy and money, raised a regiment with whom he marched to the seat of war. A man of letters, he was also a man of action.

Landor has been called "a grand old Pagan," and his sympathies were certainly secular rather than religious. The eternal arrogance of priests always roused his opposition, and on this subject he writes with vigor. Speaking of the Bible, he makes Melancthon say to Calvin:—

> "The book of good news, under your interpretation, tells people not only that they may go and be damned, but, unless they are lucky, they must inevitably."

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And again, referring to religious persecution :—

"The unsoundness of doctrine is not cut off nor cauterised; the professor is. The head falls on the scaffold, or fire surrounds the stake, because a doctrine is bloodless and incombustible. Fierce, outrageous animals, for want of the man who has escaped them, lacerate and trample his cloak or bonnet. This, although the work of brutes, is not half so brutal as the practice of theologians, seizing the man himself, instead of bonnet or cloak."

In another page he returns to the attack :—

"There is scarcely a text in the Holy Scriptures to which there is not an opposite text, written in characters equally large and legible; and there has usually been a sword laid upon each."

He has a sly hit at spiritual intoxication :—

"At last the zealot is so infatuated by the serious mockeries he imitates and repeats that he really takes his own voice for God's. Is it not wonderful that the words of eternal life should have hitherto produced only eternal litigation?"

He closes the conversation with the magnificent words, "There is nothing on earth divine besides humanity."

Carlyle finely said of one of Landor's best literary efforts, published when the "old lion" was over eighty years of age: "The sound of it is like the ring of Roman swords on the helmets of barbarians! The unsubduable old Roman!"

The last few years of Landor's life were spent in peace. On reading of Swinburne's visit to the old man shortly before his death, one is reminded of Turner's superb picture, "The Fighting Temeraire," where the old battleship is being towed to her last berth and transfigured by the last glance of day's expiring glory. The symbolism of that great painting is exalted in the harmony between the memories of brave, old Landor and his abiding quiet, for whom for ever—

"All winds are quiet as the sun,
All waters as the shore."

MIMNERMUS.

National Secular Society.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

QUEEN'S (MINOR) HALL, LANGHAM PLACE,

London, W.

WHIT-SUNDAY, MAY 31, 1914.

Agenda.

1. Minutes of last Conference.
2. Executive's Annual Report. By PRESIDENT.
3. Reception of Report.
4. Financial Report.
5. Election of President.

   Motion by Bethnal Green, North London, and Kingsland Branches :—

   "That Mr. G. W. Foote be re-elected President."

6. Election of Vice-Presidents.

   (*a*) The following are nominated by the Executive for re-election: J. Barry, W. H. Baker, J. G. Bartram, E. Bowman, R. Chapman, Victor Charbonnel, E. A. Charlton, C. Cohen, W. W. Collins, H. Cowell, W. Davey, F. A. Davies, J. G. Dobson, W. Dodd, T. H. Elstob, R. G. Fathers, Léon Furnémont, T. Gorniot, John Grange, J. Hammond, W. Heaford, Eugene Hins, S. L. Hurd, R. Johnson, Miss Kathleen B. Kough, W. Leat, J. T. Lloyd, A. B. Moss, James McGlashen, G. B. H. McCluskey, J. Neate, R. T. Nichols, J. Partridge, S. M. Peacock, C. Pegg, Mrs. M. E. Pegg, W. T. Pitt, C. G. Quinton, J. T. Ross, Miss Mary Ross, G. Roleffs, Mrs. Roleffs, Thomas Robertson, Victor Roger, S. Samuels, T. Shore, H. Silverstein, W. H. Spivey, Miss Alma Stanley, W. B. Thompson, T. J. Thurlow, John H. Turnbull, Miss E. M. Vance, F. E. Willis, C. J. Whitwell, Frederick Wood, G. White.

   (*b*) Proposed by Executive :—

   "That Mr. W. Bailey be elected Vice-President."

7. Election of Auditors.
8. Statement by Mr. G. W. Foote *re* the question of the Reorganisation of Secularism.
9. Motion by Mr. A. B. Moss :—

   "That in view of the repeated failures of the Government to settle the Education Question on sectarian lines; in view also of the marked growth of public opinion in favor of a non-sectarian solution of a problem that owes its existence to the rivalries of Church and Chapel, this Conference calls upon the Government to put an end to a dispute that has for more than a generation obstructed the progress of education by restricting all instruction in State-supported schools to purely secular subjects."

10. Motion by Executive :—

    "This Executive congratulates the Prime Minister on his manly reply to the deputation of memorialists on the subject of the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws, and is glad that, although he cannot promise Government support for the new Bill introduced for the total repeal of those persecuting laws, he can yet promise a friendly personal assistance."

11. Motion by Mr. Cowell :—

    "That two Auditors be appointed to audit London Branch Accounts, and that after audit a copy be forwarded to the Secretary to include in Central Balance Sheet for production at Conference."

12. Motion by Half-Yearly Meeting of London Members :—

    "That the Executive be asked to appoint a committee of two to work in conjunction with the General Secretary in organising demonstrations and extra meetings on new ground within the London district, with a view to extending the work of the Society."

13. Motion by Kingsland Branch :—

    "That the present inadequate state of Freethought organisation militates against its effectiveness as a national force in England, and that Freethinkers should, if possible, be united in one National Federation, and that the N. S. S. Executive appoint a committee to inquire and report what steps appear to be feasible in this direction."

14. Motion by Mr. J. T. Lloyd :—

    "This Conference congratulates the Government on the practically assured success of its Welsh Disestablishment Bill, and hopes it will carry the same principle forward in a Bill for the Disestablishment of the Church and other forms of religious privilege in England."

15. Motion by Mr. C. Cohen :—

    "This Conference deeply deplores the continued growth of the spirit of Militarism, both at home and abroad, and regards the growing expenditure of the European nations on war and preparations for war as unimpeachable evidence of the failure of the Christian Church as a civilising force; it therefore looks to the growth of Freethought principles and humanitarian ideas as the only agencies that promise a release from the moral and financial burden of Militarism."

This Conference will sit in the Queen's (Minor) Hall, Langham-place, W.; the morning session lasting from 10.30 to 12.30, and the afternoon session from 2.30 to 4.30. Both are purely business meetings. Only members of the N. S. S. can speak and vote. A public meeting will be held in the evening at 7 o'clock. The President will occupy the chair on all three occasions. A luncheon for delegates and visitors has been arranged at the Café Marguerite, 171 Oxford-street, W., at 1 o'clock.

By order of the Executive,

G. W. FOOTE, *President.*

E. M. VANCE, *Secretary.*

SUPERSTITION.

It has sacrificed countless lives, wasted untold treasures, embroiled nations, severed friends, parted husbands and wives, parents and children, putting swords, and worse than swords, between them; it has filled gaols and madhouses with its innocent or deluded victims; it has broken many hearts, embittered the whole of many a life, and not content with persecuting the living, it has pursued the dead into the grave and beyond it, gloating over the horrors which its foul imagination has conjured up to appal and torture the survivors.—*J. G. Frazer, "Psyche's Task."*

Men who desire to learn must first learn to doubt, for science is only the solution of doubts.—*Aristotle.*

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Acid Drops.

The funniest "thanksgiving" service we ever heard of took place on Sunday. It was organised by the Churches. There has been a great deal of talk about the blind lately. The lot of these unfortunate people has been bewailed, and special efforts are being made to provide them with better means of earning their living and brightening their leisure hours. A bright idea occurred to the clergy. Of course it was something illogical. While so many people were blind many more people could see, and these should thank God for "the gift of sight." It would have been less selfish on their part if they had sunk the thought of themselves and besought God to extend the gift of sight to those who had never had it or had been deprived of it by some accident or some disease. All their "thanks"—and they know it—will never make the "Father of All" display an impartial benevolence to his children.

We have no doubt that those people who have sight will feel deeply appreciative of their own good fortune. But if they are really justified in thanking God for sight — that is, if it comes from God, for otherwise it were absurd to thank him for it—what of the many thousands of people in this country who are blind? Clearly they have a legitimate complaint against God; for if people see because God has given them sight, others do not see because he has withheld the "blessing." To make the thing complete the blind people ought to hold an indignation meeting protesting against the action of Deity in causing their blindness. This is not blasphemy, it is only common sense. The right to praise implies the right to blame. If piety did not invariably dull intelligence every-one attending those services would have asked themselves the question, "Why has not God given to all people the 'blessing of sight' that I have myself?"

This "thanksgiving" idea might be developed. Religious services might be held to thank God for the gift of a good liver or a good pair of kidneys; though it is to be feared that a multitude of religious people, including a large per-centage of the clergy themselves, especially in crowded centres of population, would have to be left out of *such* assemblies. They could join the Holy Willies' meeting, however, and thank God for making them "sae gifted." Two-legged Christians might thank God for giving them the full number of lower limbs, and the one-legged might thank him for not depriving them of both. There is no end to the developments of this idea, and the clergy should really work it for all it is worth.

The May meetings have brought the usual crop of mis-sionary visitors and missionary sermons. The Secretary of the Church Missionary Society, preaching at Bow Church, Cheapside, says that China is now ready for Christianity. We have heard that before, and we fancy all that it means is that Christians are ready to supply it. The only evidence offered is that of a Christian Englishman in China, who said, "China's one hope is in Christ." That, too, we have heard before. More pertinent is the remark which the Secretary says was made to him by a "distinguished states-man in China" some eighteen months ago. He said, "If, as we develop our resources, we spend them on education, on hospitals, and put first the welfare of the people, instead of spending large sums on armaments, will the Christian nations keep their hands off us?"

Now, that sentence has an authentic ring about it. It is the kind of thing a shrewd Chinaman would ask a Christian who was bothering him with all the cant talk about the civilising influences of Christianity. And it must have been a poser. Would the Christian Powers keep their hands off China? Have they done so? Why the only safeguard for China for many years has been the fact that the gang of European brigands could not agree upon the share of the plunder. Piratical expeditions in all directions have been the rule of the Christian powers, and always under the sickening guise of religion and morality. The question of the Chinese statesman was exactly the complaint of the leader of the Turkish Parliament a few years back. He, too, said that they had hoped to devote their energies and their resources to a betterment of the people. But Christian Europe would not have it. It compelled Turkey to embark on a great military development if it was to retain its freedom. It is compelling China to take the same course. From the greed and brutality of Christian nations the non-Christian nations have only one sure protection—that is to be strong enough to make spoliation a dangerous enterprise.

Finally, the Secretary of the C.M.S. asked, "Have mis-sions any part in helping to arrest war?" And, of course, he said Yes. It is a safe thing to say before a religious audience, but it was utterly false. A very large part of the trouble with China in the past has been directly traceable to missionary activity. More than one outbreak there was the result of missionary interference with native justice and native customs. In New Zealand the war with the natives had as a powerfully contributory cause the greed and aggrandisement of missionary societies. In India missionary zeal was one of the causes of the Mutiny. All over the world the missionary has been the advance guard of armed intervention. How *can* missionaries prevent war? They obviously do not make their own people less warlike; and none but a lunatic would argue that missionary interference with native customs make a people more kindly disposed towards those whom the missionary represents.

In a religious contemporary the advertisements include notices to the ruptured, toothless, paralytic, bald-headed, half blind, flat-footed, and the cancerous and dyspeptic. We always thought Christians were on the down grade; we are sure of it now.

A portrait of the late Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, unveiled at the Central Hall, Westminster, is described as "start-ling." Why so? Is the figure holding a copy of *The Atheist Shoemaker?*

The Rev. A. J. Waldron says there are "in reality three Bibles: The Book of Nature; The Old and New Testa-ments; The sum of human experience." He appears to know as little of religion as of irreligion, for the veriest tyro might have reminded him of the existence of the sacred books of the East.

After officiating for thirty-seven years, the Rector of Stock, Essex, has resigned the living. The rector says, in announcing his resignation: "The number of able-bodied men who never, or only rarely, attend public worship shows me that my ministry is to a great extent wanting in due influence on the spiritual life of this parish." We congra-tulate the rector on his candor. Thousands of other clergy-men would say the same were they equally straightforward. And yet the reverend gentleman has no obvious cause to attribute his failure to personal demerit. No man ought to expect to overcome the spirit of his time. In theory the clergy still remain the spiritual guides of the nation; in practice they are becoming of ever-lessening consequence. No one seriously troubles about their spiritual thunderbolts, or is gravely concerned with their supernaturalistic preten-sions. They are mere survivals, and the world bears with them because they have always been here. Here and there one man feels the position, but the majority of the clergy will hang on so long as the world is stupid enough to tolerate them.

It is strange, however, how the cant about the authority of the clergy is kept up. Speaking on the second reading of the Sunday Closing Bill, Mr. Ellis Griffith said in the House of Commons that "leaders of religious thought of all denominations were in favor of some such restrictions as were proposed." One would like to know from Mr. Ellis Griffith what he considers to be the precise value of the authority of the clergy on the subject, and on what facts that authority is based? The clergy as a body are not expert statisticians, sociologists, or scientists. In either of these directions no one counts them as of any weight what-ever. Their views on all social questions are obviously directed by sectarian considerations. Imagine anyone in their senses taking as a guide on a social question of any importance the opinion of a person like the present Bishop of London! Viewed from any rational point of view, the opinion of the clergy carries no weight whatever. We do not say this as a Freethinker, but as an expression of opinion that few thoughtful people would challenge. The power of the medicine-man belongs to the savage, not to the civilised State.

When the Balkan War was brought to a close, Albania was created an independent State, and Prince George of Wied elected as its king. Both the Mohammedan and Orthodox Catholic inhabitants were agreeable, and Dr. Dillon, the eminent authority on Eastern affairs, is of opinion that left alone the Albanians might have worked out their own political and social salvation. But this was to reckon without the opposition of Greek Christians in Albania and beyond its borders. These have mad trouble from the outset, and recent reports, now well confirmed, contain sickening accounts of the barbarities exercised by these modern "Crusaders." In one village, Hormova, over

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200 villagers have been hanged or killed. At Kodra nearly 200 Mohammedan Albanians were crucified, the nails being driven through the chests, hands, and feet of the victims; many others have been massacred or burned alive in their houses. A later report adds that at Hormova the children were cruelly tortured, many of them having their fingers cut off. One thing seems certain, that is, that assuming as true Christian stories of previous Mohammedan cruelties, they were mild compared with the barbarities of these Crusading Christians. For refinement of cruelty the Mediæval Inquisition was an easy first in the world's history. Modern Eastern Christians seem bent on showing that Christianity, in modern times, has not quite lost its power of supremacy in this direction.

Rev. W. H. Thorpe, a missionary home from India, says if there were no Christian missionaries in India there would be "profound unrest," because "as modern knowledge spreads and grows, the disintegration of creeds is bound to follow." Just so; but that is a consequence that no more affects the religions of India than it affects those of Great Britain. What Mr. Thorpe assumes is that, if Christianity is on the spot in India, it will take the place of the native religions. And this is a dream of sheer fanaticism. The educated Hindoo—the one, that is, who is chiefly affected by the spread of modern knowledge—does not become a Christian. He *is* willing, in the absence of other means, to get his education in Western ideas through missionary agencies, but that is all. And some of the greatest native opponents of Christianity in India are those that have been educated in missionary colleges.

Christianity *is* the worst religion in the world. Especially for lies and hypocrisy. Some of our readers will remember how the American clergy chortled over the grief of Mrs. Ingersoll at the death of her husband. They did not even allow for the fact that she had more than most widows to weep over. They laughed at the "consolations" of Agnosticism. Why don't they laugh now at the consolations of Christianity? The American newspapers report that "Mrs. Horne is prostrated with grief." Ingersoll died suddenly in his wife's company; the Rev. Silvester Horne died suddenly in *his* wife's company. The two cases are essentially similar. Yet the Christian wife's grief is treated as perfectly natural, while the Agnostic wife's grief is treated as a warning against "infidelity." The orthodox head is as soft as the orthodox heart is hard.

We are inclined to think that when *John Bull* speaks of the Rev. A. J. Waldron as representing "a surplice with a man under it," and as one who will speak the truth and "damn the consequences," the editor is writing with his tongue in his cheek. The remarks quoted are *apropos* of Mr. Waldron's recent confession that he does not believe in the resurrection of the body. But does that really require much courage and demand a superior sort of a man nowadays? Why, there are probably hundreds of thousands of Christians who have already said the same thing; and in that fact lies, in all probability, Mr. Waldron's rare "courage" in following suit. Imagine, too, the quality of a man who has only just realised that the resurrection of the body is unthinkable! It requires no ability to come to that conclusion, and nowadays it requires precious little courage to say it. Any man calling himself civilised and educated ought to be *ashamed* to confess that he believes so stupid a teaching.

John Bull is on safer ground when it points out that Mr. Waldron is an ordained priest of the Church of England, and is *paid* to teach the doctrine he says is unthinkable (it is not a bit more unthinkable than other doctrines he still preaches), and "to men of honest instinct it is equally unthinkable that the Vicar of Brixton should long remain bondsman to a Church whose tenets he has obviously outgrown. It is inconceivable that he should continue to eat the bread of the Establishment while claiming the freedom of dissent. For is not he an honorable man?" It is to be observed that *John Bull* puts the last sentence in the form of an interrogation.

There is no fear whatever that Mr. Waldron will abandon his post as vicar of Brixton merely because he does not believe in the teachings he is paid to preach. He is only in the position that many others occupy. There are thousands of clergymen, both Conformist and Nonconformist, who do not believe, in any straightforward sense, in the teachings of the Church to which they belong. They remain, they draw their salaries, and they invent numerous devices by which they may interpret doctrines to suit themselves, or delude themselves with vague talk about the advance of thought. As though the advance of thought had anything to do with it. The advance of thought may explain a change of opinion, it will explain a man *leaving* the Church, but it cannot explain, nor excuse, a man continuing in a Church after he has rejected its teaching. To vary the expression cited above, "No straightforward man could continue to eat the bread of a Church while claiming freedom to reject its doctrines." In no other profession would such conduct be considered permissible for a moment. And the curious thing is that, apart from the question of religion, these same men will act quite honorably. It is religion that appears to demoralise them.

Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner does well to contradict the old "watch" story about her father as often as she can. We are glad to see her recent letter to the *Times* correcting a new version of it from the pen of Mr. Stephen Graham. But why talk about "the feelings of Mr. Bradlaugh's relatives and friends" at this time of day in relation to such a matter as this? Mr. Bradlaugh was a public man—he belonged to the world, and he belongs to history. Besides, it is not the wickedness of the "watch" story that anybody cares about now, but its shocking silliness. Whatever he was or was not, everybody is agreed that Bradlaugh was not a fool. It would be perfectly obvious to a man of his intelligence that "God" was not bound to accept a challenge from anybody, at any moment, and at any place; and that the challenge had no logical relation to the question at issue.

A Suffragette tried to burn down Spurgeon's Tabernacle by means of a bomb last week-end. It was very wrong, of course; but she did not succeed in doing much damage. "God's" week-end effort was on a grander scale and far more successful. With one of his earthquakes he destroyed one of the most beautiful parts of Sicily, killing hundreds and injuring thousands of his own creatures. The Suffragette is rightly denounced; not a word is said against "God."

A lady complained to the Rev. Forbes Phillips, of Gorleston, that she was poisoned by the incense at his church. The vicar's characteristic reply was that he would await the finding of the coroner's inquest before dealing with the matter. A palpable hit!

The May meetings are sounding their "annual bray," as Macaulay phrases it. Two of the meetings were presided over by princes and two by dukes. The Archbishop of Canterbury takes six, and the Lord Mayor of London five. Peers preside over twenty-two. What a change since the fishing-nets of the apostles were sold to the rag and bone dealers!

Half of the Baptist ministers have salaries of £100 a year and less, and a quarter of a million of money has been raised to supplement the incomes of the poorer pastors. Who would think that the founder of Christianity was sold for thirty shillings?

Christian preachers, realising that their religion is a stage nearer the melting-pot, are now taking a great interest in social reform. At the Presbyterian Synod, the Rev. J. A. Wilson, in supporting a resolution in favor of a living wage, said there were 50,000 women in London earning only 1½d. an hour. It was only a penny a day in the New Testament.

A new Biblical play, entitled *The Holy City*, was produced appropriately at the Comedy Theatre recently. The scenes include the roof of Mary Magdalene's house, and Christ is supposed to be just off the stage on several occasions during the drama. Perhaps this is less laughable than the attempt to portray the Second Person of the Trinity by means of the limelight and some spangles, as was done in a melodrama some years ago.

"There is nothing in politics, rightly understood, that cannot be a service to God," is a saying attributed to the late Rev. Silvester Horne. It should comfort the hearts of the carpet-baggers and "mugwumps."

The Rev. Father Rance, of Southend-on-Sea, says that people who spend five shillings on a Saturday outing often put twopence in the plate at church on Sunday. How much does he expect them to have left for the collection?

The Rev. A. Newman, of Whittlesea, has made the amazing discovery that Sunday games are unobjectionable. He might conduct a mission among his ministerial brethren.

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To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £146 5s.

W. HEPWORTH (Johannesburg).—We note your correction that the alleged Zulu word "tungi" in our issue for March 15 should have been "tunzi." The error, we feel, is pardonable in a proof-reader in this paper. Our shop manager received your subscription quite safely, and we hope the paper has reached you regularly.

E. RUSSELL.—Your question was answered in last week's issue. The publisher is Methuen; price 6s.

W. BYNION.—We are not surprised that straightforward speaking on religion is not relished at the gatherings you attend. The reverend gentleman to whom we replied in "Acid Drops" of a fortnight ago is not the one you have in mind. You will find a further reply to another letter from the same gentleman in this issue.

A. J. MARRIOTT.—Your letter, beyond expressing your endorsement of Miss Kidd's article and disapproval of Mr. Palmer's opinion, does not add anything material to the discussion. Miss Kidd and Mr. Palmer have both had their say, and so far as we are concerned the matter must now be left. We have only a limited space at our disposal; so far as is possible this must be reserved for those specific objects for which this journal exists.

T. LECONTE (Paris).—Subscription for paper received. We are glad to learn that you find so much pleasure and profit in what you call our "interesting and courageous paper."

ATHEIST (Birmingham).—We do not see how one can very well separate the "ethical system" of the New Testament from the New Testament theology. It is quite evident that it was the theology about which the first Christians were most interested, if not the only thing in which they were interested. And it was certainly that upon which the Christian Church was built. The notion that it was the ethical teaching of Jesus that was all-important is quite a modern idea. It is just one of the means by which modern apologists have tried to commend an outworn superstition to a civilised community.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Special.

THE COMING CONFERENCE.

I SAID the other week that there must be some fine weather in May. Fortunately I never pretended to be infallible. It looks as though the fine weather in *this* May would have to hurry up. Personally I find the lack of warmth and sunshine a bit trying, but I am getting stronger every day, and also every night, for I am sleeping rather better. I have no doubt of being reasonably fit at the N. S. S. Conference on Whit-Sunday at Queen's (Minor) Hall. I hope to meet a good rally of "saints" then, and a larger rally, of course, at the evening public meeting. I have some things to say there which I consider to be of the highest importance to our movement. They occupied my mind a great deal during my recent illness. I believe they will occupy the attention of the Freethought party a great deal in the future. My friends well know that I mean all I say.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

Arrangements for the N. S. S. Conference are now well in hand, and some of the items on the Agenda, which appears in another part of this issue, may have developments that will be of importance to the Secular movement. We hope that London Freethinkers will be doing their best to make the Conference, and particularly the evening meeting a complete success. As it is in London, the advertisement most of necessity be of a personal nature. One cannot "bill" London as one could a small town. Some slips advertising the evening meeting are being prepared, and those who can oblige by their distribution should send their names to Miss Vance, the N. S. S. General Secretary. As will be seen from the Agenda, a Conference luncheon has been arranged, and notice should be given as early as possible by those who intend to be present at that function.

We are sorry to learn that Christian rowdies continue to do their best, and their worst, at Edmonton. Miss Kough was the lecturer on Sunday last, and was subjected to a running fire of interruptions, not in the best of taste or expressed in the choicest language. After her lecture was concluded, and she had left the meeting, the rowdyism became more marked, and the police were compelled to interfere. Under the circumstances Mr. Cohen has promised to deliver a lecture there this evening, and we hope the platform will receive proper support. The meeting will be held on Edmonton Green, and is timed to commence at 7.30. Edmonton Green is near the Town Hall, and can be reached either by tram or 'bus, or by the Great Eastern Railway service.

The *English Review* has always the merit of not being platitudinous and "respectable." This should be an appeal in itself to Freethinkers. The May number contains one of Henri Fabre's interesting articles on Insects—this time on Red Ants. Mr. Frank Harris's symbolic story, "The Veils of Isis," will repay a close perusal. We cannot say we are any more in love with Mr. H. G. Wells's "The World Set Free," which ends in this number. A clever political skit by the editor, called "King Carson," deserves special mention amongst the remaining contents.

Sir Herbert Tree has been speaking very freely to a *Referee* interviewer on Sunday performances in theatres. He is all for legalising them as soon as possible. He denounces the methods by which the clergy of all denominations still fight the Sunday opening of theatres, even where they are obliged to wink at the Sunday opening of picture-shows and concert-halls. It is pretended that the performances at these places are devoted to charity. "Yes," Sir Herbert says, "yes; I *know* that '*charity*.' It comes from — well! I will say no more, lest I should drop into, say, Shavian prose."

We sometimes wish we had the power ascribed to Jesus in the Apocryphal Gospels—that of stretching a plank of wood to a desired size. In that case we might be able to do the same with the columns of this paper, and so find room for much that often has to be left out. Unfortunately, our qualities are of a less picturesque character, and so we regret that we have been compelled to hold over a further instalment of "Abracadabra's" *Christian Apologetics*. We apologise both to our contributor and to our readers, but cannot get thirteen inches into a foot, try how we may.

According to the *Christian Age*, Dr. A. C. Dixon, of the Metropolitan Tabernacle, has been asked to allow his sermons to be translated into Chinese, Russian, Spanish, and other languages. Let us hope that the reverend doctor will expunge his references to Ingersoll before the translations are made. Otherwise, we shall be compelled to have a Chinese edition of the *Freethinker*.

Religion—Protestant as well as Catholic—is ceasing everywhere to control the life of the State. Government in all countries is becoming sternly secular. The preambles of old Acts of Parliament contained usually in formal words a reference to the will of the Almighty. Legislators looked for instruction, not to political economy, but to the Bible. "The will of the Almighty" is now banished to the conscience or the closet. The statesman keeps rigidly to the experienced facts of the world, and will have neither priest nor minister to interpret them for him. Political economy may contradict the Sermon on the Mount, but it is none the less the manual of our political leaders.—*J. A. Froude.*

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Primitive Man.—II.

(Continued from p. 293.)

"Humanity in its misery has put question after question to science, and has lost patience at the slowness of the advance of knowledge. It has declared that the answers already formed by science are futile and of little interest. From time to time it has preferred to turn back, and to delude itself with the beautiful mirage offered by religions and systems of philosophy.

"But science, confident of its methods, has quietly continued to work. Little by little, the answers to some of the questions that have been set have begun to appear. Whence do we come? science has been asked unceasingly. Is not man a being unlike other beings, made in the image of God, animated with the divine breath, and immortal? No, science answers. Man is a kind of miscarriage of an ape, endowed with profound intelligence and capable of great progress. His brain is the seat of processes that are very complex and much higher than those of other animals, but these functions are incompatible with the existence of an immortal soul."—PROFESSOR ELIE METCHNIKOFF, *The Future of Man*, p. 286.

"Instead of having fallen from a perfect religion, man has but slowly emerged from the grossest superstitions. No one now supposes that some God invented architecture or music. We can trace how these arts have grown. Religion, as much as the arts, has developed from rude beginnings. It is a growth of earth, not a gift of heaven, and its manifestations have usually very clear traces of their clayey origin sticking to them."—J. M. WHEELER, *Footsteps of the Past*, pp. 1-2.

DRYDEN, in his play, *The Conquest of Granada*, speaks of a time "When wild in woods the noble savage ran." Jean Jacques Rousseau declared that primitive man, as he first appeared upon the earth, was perfect, both physically and morally. "Man is born free and everywhere he is in chains"* are the arresting words with which his *Social Contract* opens. While men like the Atheist Condorcet were nerved to action by the dream of human perfectibility in the future—which was, indeed, the dominant belief of the best minds of the eighteenth century—Rousseau turned from this splendid vision, regarding it as fantastic mockery. For him, the golden age lay, not in front, but behind. From his glowing imagination he conjures up an idyllic picture of a primitive arcadian state, where pity takes the place of laws and manners, and where the savage enjoys rude health through avoiding the overheated dwellings and over-abundant diet of the rich. So long, says Rousseau, as men lived in hovels, used bows and arrows, and were content with garments of skins, "they lived free, healthy, good, and happy."† Rousseau traces all the calamities, woes, and ills that beset mankind entirely to man's presumptuous efforts to emerge from that happy ignorance in which, he declared, eternal wisdom first placed us. As man has progressed in science and art, so he has lost in health, freedom, and morality.‡ Our best plan, therefore, would be to retrace our steps along the path we have travelled, discarding civilisation by the way, until we again arrived at the primitive state of innocence and ignorance from which we started.

Such were the ideas with which Rousseau captivated Europe, and were destined, later on, to bear fruit in the great French Revolution, the leaders of which were all impregnated with these ideas of Rousseau, whose works constituted their Bible.

But we know a great deal more about savage life, and primitive man, than at the time when Rousseau wrote his *Discourses* (1750-4) and his *Social Contract* (1762). Three sciences have sprung into existence since then—Anthropology, Ethnology, and Sociology—and these have given the death-blow to the idea of the "noble savage" and the beautiful arcadian existence led by primitive man. As that gifted Frenchman, M. Salomon Reinach, well observes: "The idea evolved in the eighteenth century of the free savage, emancipated from all constraints, is irreconcilable with the most elementary facts of ethnography. Rousseau's free savage is not a real savage, but a philosopher who has stripped himself naked."*

The savage is not noble, he is not free, he is no healthier than we are. Lionel Decle, the traveller, tells us that in Africa, in spite of the practice of polygamy and the large number of children born, "More than seventy per cent. die before they reach the age of five months; and for this reason, if polygamy ceases to exist, the native races will disappear from Africa."† Mr. E. D. Morel, another good authority, says that among the Nigerians "Infant mortality is terrible."‡

The average duration of life among adults is also far below the civilised standard. It is well known that missionaries rely a great deal more upon the medicine-chest than upon the Bible for making converts, and every missionary now sent out has to have a knowledge of medicine.

Here is a pen-picture of other aspects of the noble savage. Of the Matabele tribe of South Africa, Mr. Lionel Decle observes:—

> "Honesty, kindness, gratitude, do not exist for them. The thief is not despised because he has stolen, but because he has allowed himself to be caught, and if his crime remains undetected, he is admired by all. The higher powers, whether chiefs or spirits, are respected in direct proportion to what we should call their cruelty and tendency to evil. At the great dance, as we have seen, the great warriors came forward and enumerated the number of people they had killed, not only in war, but also in their own country—for instance, if they had put a man to death by order of the King. Whenever Lo Ben wanted someone killed, every man was anxious to be entrusted with the mission, whether the intended victim were his bitterest enemy or his dearest friend. Kindness is considered by them the result of fear."§

Their women are only worth slightly more than cattle, and are only appreciated for the work they are able to perform; "our conception of love is unintelligible to them" (p. 166). The same author says: "I could tell many stories of unnatural and barbarous abominations among them." But the negro, meaning thereby the Bantu, is not the lowest type met with in Africa. "That distinction," says Mr. Decle,—

> "belongs to the bushman. The bushman is, perhaps, a little more developed than the anthropoid ape, but he remains his first cousin. He makes himself a fire, and we understand his language. The ape cannot make a fire, and at present we do not understand his language. That is all the difference between the two."

He is by instinct "intensely malicious and destructive." And further:—

> "The African black in the primitive state is hardly further removed from the beast. His existence centres itself almost wholly upon one aim—for it can hardly be called an ideal—eating. Thought for the morrow is absolutely unknown to him. Give him his food for a week, he will devour it until he cannot gorge another mouthful, and then he will spoil the rest. He is as little conscious of the past as of the future. Things are wiped from his mind the moment after they have happened; he is absolutely incapable of measuring time, even from the most recent and important events. Only in one way does he bring himself into relation with the past—through the sentiment of fear and revenge. Gratitude is unknown to him. The animal affection of parents for their young rarely extends with the primitive African beyond the years of infancy; after that the relation is forgotten, as it is among the beasts. Love is unknown to him. There is no word in any Central African language meaning 'kiss.'"‖

Added to all this,—

> "the native sees nothing beautiful, wonderful, or attractive in Nature. Flowers and trees, and the most enchanting scenery, are entirely lost upon him. A tree only begins to interest him when it is fit to burn. And yet, though he finds nothing to be enjoyed in Nature, he is quite satisfied with his position. All he wants is plenty to eat and little to do, and these wants are generally perfectly easy to satisfy" (p. 517).

* J. Morley, *Rousseau* (1873), vol. ii., p. 122.
† J. Morley, *Rousseau*, vol. i., p. 170.
‡ J. Morley, *Rousseau*, vol. i., pp. 138-141.

* Reinach, *Orpheus*, p. 20.
† Lionel Decle, *Three Years in Savage Africa* (1900) p. 160.
‡ Morel, *Nigeria: Its Peoples and Its Problems*, p. 214.
§ Lionel Decle, *Three Years in Savage Africa*, p. 165.
‖ Decle, *Three Years in Savage Africa*, pp. 510-511.

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Miss Kingsley, in her *Travels in West Africa* (p. 356), says "You rarely, indeed I believe never, find an African with a gift for picturesque scenery." And Crawford, the missionary, speaking of a gorgeous African sunset, a "dissolving scene which memory makes its own," says of the Negro, "To him this painted poetry is the plainest of plain prose."*

Of course, there are many other tribes in Africa who have made more progress than these, and Mr. Decle is careful to point out, more than once, that he is referring to the most primitive. That he was a competent observer is testified by the famous explorer, H. M. Stanley, who, in writing an introduction to the work, says that Mr. Decle was entrusted by the French Government with a scientific mission "to proceed to South and East Africa, to study their ethnology and anthropology, for which purpose he was peculiarly well qualified by his training and observation" (p. 8).

Gluttony and waste seem to be characteristic of primitive man in all quarters of the globe. J. P. Thomson, in his book on *British New Guinea*, speaking of the feasts at which the natives "gorge themselves," observes:—

> "Native festivity is not infrequently accompanied by great privation brought about through scarcity of food. This degenerative social institution of feast and famine does not confine itself to New Guinea, but extends itself over the whole equatorial zone of the Pacific" (pp. 70, 71).

—Resulting in "thousands of hungry children and weak, lean mothers."

Catlin, who lived for many years among the North American Indians, tells us that a party of Indians returned to camp "with *fourteen hundred fresh buffalo tongues*," not a pound of the flesh or a skin being used, the camp being well stocked with dried meat. "This profligate waste of the lives of these noble and useful animals," says Catlin, "is a fair exhibition of the improvident character of the savage."†

Again, in far-away Patagonia, Carl Skottsberg tells us:—

> "What delight when they come across a stranded whale! Feasts are held as long as anything eatable is left; from all directions the savages hasten up, eat till they are fit to burst, and pull away with loaded canoes. Several of the Indians we met had big quantities of whale-blubber. This does not contradict the fact that the Indian only lives for the day and never thinks of saving anything; he leads a wild life, with meat and blubber one day and nothing to eat the next."‡

Messrs. Spencer and Gillen say of the Aborigine of Australia:—

> "He has not reached the agricultural stage of civilisation, and has no idea of cultivating cereals or of laying in a stock of food to maintain himself during the time when food is scarce. He lives from hand to mouth without any thought of the morrow. When food is abundant he eats in plenty and is quite happy; when it is scarce he accepts the condition philosophically, and, if hungry, merely tightens his waist-belt and patiently waits until such time as he can find something to eat."§

(To be continued.) W. MANN.

Design and Natural Selection.—II.

THE second illustration—that of the human eye—is rather an unfortunate one to put forward as affording design in nature. Nothing is more common than to see persons or animals with defective eyesight; and any imperfection in vision resulting from an inherent quality of the organ is an evidence either of bad design or an absence of design altogether. To allege that an imperfect organ can be the work of of an all-wise and all-powerful Deity supposes that a perfect being can produce a failure.

Nor could a perfect organ, designed by an Almighty God, get out of order; for it is a positive evidence of imperfect workmanship that an organ or instrument becomes impaired or rendered valueless by use. Thousands of people born into the world are born with eyes out of which they cannot see. As Tom Hood, in one of his satirical poems, says of Tim Turpin, who was gravel blind:—

> "And ne'er had seen the skies;
> For Nature, when his head was made,
> Forgot to dot his eyes."

But in this case the deficiency would be chargeable against Deity; for Nature, being neither intelligent nor good, cannot be considered as answerable for her imperfect productions.

There are thousands of persons born blind, and hundreds of thousands whose sight is so defective that they keep the doctors at our ophthalmic hospitals in constant employment. As an optical instrument, the human eye is very imperfect. To enable him to see small objects, or objects at a great distance, man has to call in the aid of the optician, who can manufacture microscopes by which very minute particles of matter can be seen, or telescopes by which heavenly bodies altogether out of view to the naked eye are brought within the range of human vision. "Optically," says Professor H. D. Garrison, of America,

> "the eye is not perfectly planned to guard against spherical and chromatic aberrations, while in mechanical construction it is inferior to the cheapest optical instrument in the market. Astigmatism, or want of sphericity of the cornea, is present in a greater or less degree in every human eye, while the crystalline lens are not truly centred, as Helmholtz has shown, on the optical axis of the eye. The refracting media of the eye, as the aqueous humor, the crystalline lens, the vitreous humor, are not uniformly transparent, and hence rays of light during transmission undergo absorption and refraction, giving rise to various shadows, halos, and fringes, which fall upon the retina, to the great impairment of vision. Even in the best of eyes there are numerous opaque granules, or floating patches, in the humors, giving rise to moving spots or spectres, so well observed, and yet so annoying, while using the microscope, especially if the field is well illuminated. Long-sightedness and short-sightedness are common difficulties, arising from want of proper relation between the refracting power of the eye and its depth, or the antero-posterior diameter. All these difficulties are practically overcome or avoided in even the cheapest photographic cameras in the market, and yet no one has ever claimed that the camera had a miraculous origin, or that the wonderful design manifest in its mechanism proves its designer to have been a God."

Every organ that man possesses is in some respect imperfect—indeed, absolute perfection is altogether inconceivable, there being degrees of perfection only, by reason of comparison with other objects. Thus, as organs, one pair of eyes may be more perfect than another, though each may be defective; and so on.

When, instead of individual objects being taken separately, we take the working of nature as a whole, we find that all animated nature is in constant warfare—the insect against the vegetable, the birds against the insects, the lower animals against the birds, and man against them all. And so terrible is this struggle that, if the Design Argument were really true, many of the designs are of so destructive and horrible a character as to reflect anything but credit upon the wisdom or goodness of the Deity who is the alleged author. Thus we find the claws and teeth of some carnivorous animals are so arranged as to be just suited for the purpose of laying hold of and tearing the flesh of their prey. In fact, in nature the strong oppress the weak, the brutal ride roughshod over the gentle, the lion tears the peaceful deer or the inoffensive lamb; idleness and hypocrisy revel in luxury whilst modest honesty walks about in rags. And how oft indeed the earth has been deluged in blood through the wickedness, the superstition, or the caprice of the powerful! With truth crushed to earth, virtue outraged, misery and suffering perpetually abounding in the various nations of the earth, is it not folly to talk of the

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* D. Crawford, *Thinking Black*.

† G. Catlin, *Manners, Customs, and Condition of the North American Indians*, vol. i., p. 257.

‡ Carl Skottsberg, *The Wilds of Patagonia*, p. 95.

§ Gillen and Spencer, *Across Australia*, p. 197.

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beautiful designs of Omnipotence? Man, assuming in his vanity that everything was made especially for him, has arrogantly declared that everything in the universe was arranged to subserve to his benefit

Curé Meslier, in his *Bon Sens*, relates an Eastern story which fittingly describes this arrogance. A priest, on a pilgrimage, wanders through some gardens; he is surrounded by trees, whose foliage enchants the eye and the perfume of whose leaves is delicious. Some of the trees contain luscious fruit, of which he partakes, and, as he does so, he shouts up in his ecstasy, "Allah, Allah, how good thou art to the children of men! Thou hast made these trees to charm our sight and the fruit to minister to our wants; how good thou art to the children of men." Proceeding on his journey, he goes through still more beautiful gardens. He hears the birds singing in the trees; while the sun in all his glory and refulgence shines upon the face of the earth, and everything seems to breathe an air of joy and peace, and in his ecstasy the priest again exclaims: "Allah, Allah, how good thou art to the children of men." The sun had sunk below the horizon when the priest, still on his journey, proceeded to climb an exceedingly high mountain, on the summit of which, at nightfall, he lay himself down to rest. When, in the morning, he arose from his sleep, he looked on the other side of the mountain, and lo, he saw the corpses of men who had been slain in battle strewn about the earth, and wolves were devouring the carcases, and as they did so they seemed to exclaim in their ecstasy, "Allah, Allah, how good thou art to the children of wolves! Thou hast made these men fight in order that we might have the ineffable bliss of devouring their bodies; how good thou art to the children of wolves!" And it is this arrogant feeling that the earth and the fruits thereof were made specially for him that has caused man to imagine a God designing and arranging everything with a view of making him happy and contented.

That we may understand the meaning of natural selection it is well that the facts upon which the theory rests should be briefly stated. And, first, it assumed that the proposition, that all animated matter has the power to increase beyond the means of subsistence, is one of irrefragable truth; and that, were it not for the constant operation of checks, the number of beings that would be produced under favorable conditions would outstrip nature's capability to provide enough food to enable them all to live. It has been calculated by Linnæus that a plant which produced only two seeds annually, and whose seedlings only produced two, would, in the course of twenty years, produce no fewer than one million of plants. Nature kills off the young of animals and destroys thousands of eggs and seeds. For every seed that comes to maturity, a thousand perish; for every animal that survives and lives to a good age hundreds die young or are destroyed at birth. And nature kills man in precisely the same way. When too many are born a famine kills thousands, and disease kills more. Among the millions of plants and animals that exist no two are alike. Either from inherited qualities or other similar causes there are found to be some variations from other existing beings in every creature born into the world. However slight these variations they constitute an advantage or a disadvantage to the individuals possessing them. These variations take place under two well-ascertained conditions—under nature according to geographical position and the constantly changing conditions of life; under domestication as the effects of habit, and, in regard to plants and the lower animals, the result of artificial selection, or selection by man on account of possessing some superior qualities which were thought worthy of preservation. From the fact of there being more beings in existence, as compared with the amount of food at their command, a struggle for existence is set up in which the "fittest" or those best adapted to their surroundings get the advantage, while the weak and those in other ways unfit for the uneven battle have inevitably to succumb.

And all experience goes to show that it is only to "those who survive" in the great struggle for existence that the theologian points so triumphantly as the evidence of the wonderful designs of an all-good and all-wise God.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

The Phenomena of Procreation.—III.

(Concluded from p. 299.)

WHEN the yoke of an egg is examined, a white spot is seen on its upper surface. This white spot is the germ-disk from which the embryo arises, and all the remaining material contained within the yoke membrane is rich food provided for the needs of the growing embryo. If an egg which has been incubating for several days is examined, the embryo is seen surrounded by membranes, parts of which are provided with blood vessels. The fluid in these tubes is propelled by the pulsation of the embryo's heart, which begins to beat on the second day of incubation. These blood vessels, in the first instance, convey the food particles contained in the yolk, and afterwards from the white of the egg to the expanding embryo. This blood circulation also enables the embryo to obtain oxygen from the air which penetrates the pores of the egg shell, and supplies it with an instrument for expelling the waste matters it produces in the course of development.

The importance of these two circulatory processes, which together constitute the respiration of the evolving bird, is made manifest by the fact that the embryo perishes from suffocation when the pores of the shell become choked with any foreign substance. If the embryo is to develop into a chicken, duckling, or any other nestling, unimpeded access to oxygen, and ability to discharge its waste carbon-dioxide are absolutely essential. Realising this, poultry breeders and bird fanciers make a point of keeping eggs that are intended for hatching, clean before, and during the period of incubation.

Some of the snakes, the crocodiles, and the various turtles are oviparous, and their embryos are remarkably similar to those of the feathered family. Unlike birds, however, reptiles do not brood over their eggs, but resign their hatching to the gracious warmth of the sun. Various snakes give birth to living young, as do some of the lizards. With these viviparous reptiles, the eggs are retained in the oviducts until the young are fully developed, and are then expelled from the body by muscular movement. Viviparous snakes are moderately prolific. "The garter snake sometimes gives birth to as many as 45 in one brood; the rattlesnake produces 9 to 14; the copperhead, 7 to 9; and the water-moccasin, 7 to 14."

Some of the embryological phenomena relating to those organisms in which internal development is universal remain to be briefly outlined. To meet their new requirement, the oviducts of mammals have been enlarged and arranged to enable them to hold their eggs during development. This expanded organ is the uterus or womb. In primitive mammals such as the kangaroo and opossums, a right and left uterus has been evolved through the enlargement of a part of each oviduct. But, in the higher mammalia, the right and left uteri become fused in the course of embryological development, and there then remains one single uterus, which is connected with each ovary by a Fallopian tube. The eggs formed in either oviduct are conducted along the corresponding tube into the womb, where, if they have been impregnated, they evolve into embryos. In all mammals, man among them, the egg cells are impregnated by sperm cells which have joined them after passing through the secretions of the lining membranes of the womb and its tubes. The egg divides almost immediately after fecundation, and may have undergone marked changes by the time, usually a day or two, that it passes from the tube into the womb.

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The number of egg cells fertilised on a single occasion varies considerably with different animals. Apes, horses, cattle, and women usually produce one at a birth, although twins and triplets are far from uncommon. The pig, rabbit, rats and mice, the domesticated dog and cat produce quite a litter of young. The number of offspring appears to depend on the number of egg cells that are matured and fertilised. With different mammals the period of pregnancy is also subject to wide variations, and is to some extent conditioned by the size of the animal. The guinea pig is pregnant for about three weeks; the rabbit and squirrel deliver their young after thirty days. Gestation occupies three months in the lion; four months in the pig; six months in the bear; nine months in the cow, and a little more than nine months in the human female. The whale takes ten months, the horse eleven, the giraffe fourteen, and the elephant twenty-two months from the copulative act to the casting of the young from the womb.

The embryological arrangements for nutrition and respiration previously described in the case of birds become far more elaborate with mammals. The connection established in the egg of the bird between one part and another is in mammals developed into a system of communication between the blood channels of the embryo and those of its mother. This may easily be verified through an examination of the embryo of a rabbit, which answers for a study of mammalian embryos in general. The membranes which encompass a rabbit's embryo are abundantly furnished with blood vessels running towards the embryo's heart. Lining tissue (epithelium) of the doe's womb encircles the embryo, and this tissue absorbs the nourishing blood from the heart and arteries of the parent body. Tree-shaped outgrowths may be seen embedded in the external membranes of the embryo :—

> "These tree-like processes receive their blood supply from the embryo's heart through blood vessels in the umbilical cord attached to the embryo at the umbilicus or navel. As a result of this close attachment of the membranes of the embryo and the lining of the uterus, the blood vessels of the two are near enough to allow osmosis. From the maternal blood capillaries, foods, and oxygen osmose into those of the embryo, and the excretions of the embryo's cells pass into the maternal blood. Solid bodies, like red-blood cells, cannot pass from the maternal to the embryo's blood; and the blood cells in the embryonic blood vessels are formed from certain cells belonging to the embryo. However, the important point is that food, oxygen, and excretions osmose between the maternal and embryonic blood vessels in the membranes which attach the embryo to the wall of the uterus."

The membranes which fix the embryo to the womb are termed the placenta. As a rule, the placenta or afterbirth detaches itself from the womb as soon as the young are delivered, and is itself driven from the body through the muscular motions of the uterus. The embryological phenomena just passed under review substantially explain the large size of most mammals at birth. The provisions for internal nourishment are so elaborate, and the time occupied in the greater mammals for intra-uterine development is so long, that the highly evolved condition of the newly born offspring is easily understood.

The placental structure which attaches the unborn mammal to the womb of its mother and provides a nutritive connection between them is a specially mammalian organ. It is not present in the monotremes, which lay eggs, and its condition in the marsupials is little more than incipient. But with all the higher mammals it occurs in some form or other, "always acting as a double vascular sponge, by which the blood of the mother nourishes and purifies that of her unborn young."

As already intimated, the eggs or ova, after their development within the ovaries, soon reach maturity, and are automatically expelled. If, at this period, they are impregnated by the male element, they evolve into embryos; but if they are not, they soon lose their vitality and perish. Under favorable conditions, then, fertilisation of the ripe egg is accomplished through its union with the spermatozoon. This union is believed to occur in the human female in the upper third of the oviduct, or Fallopian tube, the fertilised ovum afterwards entering the uterus, where it develops the attachments necessary to the nutrition of the embryo or fœtus during its development within the womb.

Direct knowledge concerning the development of the human embryo was far from complete until Wilhelm His published his investigations in his work on Human Embryology. A few isolated descriptions of the appearance of the embryo during the first few months of pregnancy were previously available, and even now the obstacles which bar increased information are very serious. The main sources from which detailed knowledge is obtained are post-mortem examinations, operations, and abortions.

Nevertheless, many phenomena are now clearly demonstrable as a result of observation and experiment. From the fertilised ovum, then, proceeds the embryo, and from this the fœtus is evolved. If we adopt the scheme of His, the ovum phase covers the first two weeks; the embryonal period covers the third, fourth, and fifth weeks, in the course of which, the principal organs make their appearance until in the fœtal stage the embryo passes into the fœtus, when, at the end of nine months, the child is born. The average length of the embryo at the age two weeks is approximately 0·1 ins., at eight weeks 1 in., at three months 2 ins., and at birth 19·7 ins.

One of the earliest ova was described by Peters in 1899, and was ten or eleven days old. In this case, as in various others of later development which were subsequently studied, there was nothing which in the slightest degree distinguished the human embryo from that of other animals. One human embryo about four weeks old which was figured by Mall would pass for that of a rabbit or a dog.

The doctrine enunciated by Haeckel, which that eminent zoologist founded on Von Baer's law: that the development of the embryo or fœtus broadly represents the phases through which its ancestors have passed in the course of evolution, and which is more briefly stated in the expression that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny, remains unshaken. Even Louis Agassiz was powerfully impressed by these facts although he never had the courage to admit the truth of evolution. Some of the universally acknowledged embryological facts are sufficiently striking. At one stage the human embryo possesses gill-slits and a two-chambered heart like a fish; at a later stage the gill-slits disappear and the heart becomes reptilian. At a still later stage a monkey-like tail is present, and even at birth the child uses its feet in most ape-like fashion, and not until it is several months old are the essentially animal instincts replaced by those that are specifically human. As a distinguished naturalist remarks, unless the phenomena of embryology point to evolution they are most mischievously misleading, and apart from their evolutionary interpretation, remain utterly meaningless. It is not claimed that the embryological record holds good in every little detail, but in a broad and general way. In the words of Maitland Balfour, "It may be compared to an ancient manuscript with many of the sheets lost, others displaced, and with spurious passages interpolated by a later hand."

T. F. PALMER.

I say that the State power should not be used to arrest discussion, because the State power may be used equally for truth or error, for Mohammedanism or Christianity, for belief or no-belief, but in discussion truth has an advantage. Arguments always tell for truth as such, and against error as such; if you let the human mind alone, it has a preference for good argument over bad; it oftener takes truth than not. But if you do not let it alone, you give truth no advantage at all; you substitute a game of force, where all doctrines are equal, for a game of logic where the true have the better chance.—*Walter Bagehot*, "*Literary Studies*," vol. iii.

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THE
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Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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The strength of a man's virtues must not be measured by his occasional efforts, but by his ordinary life.
—PASCAL.

The Savage in Our Midst.

THE other day the *Daily Telegraph* devoted a fair-sized paragraph to what it evidently considered an interesting, if not an important, item of news. One of the players in the Ladies' Golf Championship had lost her mascot, a model of a little black pig, which she carried for luck. And the writer went on to describe how the lady, in consequence, played much less skilfully than was her custom. That, of course, one can well believe. If she believed that the possession of the charm brought her "luck," its loss would ensure a certain loss of nerve. That everyone would admit, and I have no doubt the lady herself would admit that this was all there was to say about it. The power of "faith" is not a religious truth, but a psychological one.

Those who are not in the habit of carrying "mascots" or wearing charms have generally little conception of the vogue these things have. During the past two or three weeks I have marked three or four advertisements in widely circulated papers, offering for sale mascots of various kinds, and one advertisement assures possible purchasers that their's is the genuine Eastern article which has brought luck to so many of its wearers, and is being worn by people in the highest ranks of society. The latter one can well believe. From an anthropological point of view, those who move in the higher social circles may be just as primitive as those in a lower stratum, and their beliefs equally crude. Again, one observes on the front of motor-cars miniature "teddy bears" or other articles that are supposed to exert some influence in securing good fortune. Charms are carried about on the person, or hung up in the house, and a real concern is often shown at their loss. People still talk about their lucky or unlucky days, while houses, years, or numbers are still credited with a baleful or favorable influence; and although, in the vast majority of cases, there will be disowned any real faith in the efficacy of these things, their vogue bears evidence to a huge, and often unsuspected, mass of primitive superstition still current.

In a lecture on *The Scope of Social Anthropology*, Professor Frazer well says:—

> "In civilised society most educated people are not even aware of the extent to which.....relics of savage ignorance survive at their doors.....Systematic inquiries carried on among the less educated classes, and especially among the peasantry, of Europe have revealed the astonishing, nay, alarming, truth that a mass, if not the majority, of people in every civilised country is still living in a state of intellectual savagery; that, in fact, the smooth surface of cultured society is sapped and mined by superstition. Only those whose studies have led them to investigate the subject are aware of the depth to which the ground beneath our feet is thus as it were honeycombed by unseen forces. We appear to be standing on a volcano, which may at any moment break out in smoke and fire to spread ruin and devastation among the gardens and palaces of ancient culture wrought so laboriously by the hands of many generations."

Dr. Frazer had in mind, in writing the above, the more glaring examples of savage survivals, such as are found among the peasantry of Europe, but his observations apply to a much more extensive area. It applies to the "educated" classes as well as non-educated. The superstitions may not be as gross in the one case as in the other, but they are there; and, being there, form part of the "intellectual" savagery to which Professor Frazer refers. In the West End of London there are hundreds, perhaps thousands, of fortune-tellers and professional "occultists." Their clientele is not made up of uneducated, but of educated people. Education does not always protect a man against superstition; often, it only provides him with specious excuses for its existence and its exercise. In the case of the savage or uneducated person, we see the superstition, so to speak, in the raw. In the case of the educated man, we have it glossed over with a number of scientific and philosophical terms. But it is the same thing at bottom. There is no vital distinction between the savage offering prayers to the tribal ghosts and the modern believer praying to his magnified, but still anthropomorphic, Deity. It is less brutal to hold a thanksgiving service after a successful war than to butcher one's prisoners in order to please a God who has delivered them into one's hands, but the mind that is capable of the one will be capable of the other, given a different social environment. The one who believes that a man is "divinely called" to officiate as a minister of religion is only perpetuating in a changed form the primitive belief that the tribal god enters and takes possession of the medicine-man in order to express his will. Taking the sacrament is just as much a savage custom as the primitive practice of god-eating. All these religious rites and ceremonies upon which so many dwell are as much evidence of the persistence of intellectual savagery as is the purchase of a charm to scare away a disease, or the wearing of a "mascot" to bring good luck. Animism may be expressed in scientific terms, just as a savage may wear clothes made by a West End tailor. But the language no more robs the idea of its animistic character than the mere wearing of clothes converts a savage into a civilised person.

Most people, when they come across accounts of admittedly superstitious customs or of savage survivals in our midst, smile pityingly, and then dismiss the subject from their minds. But the matter is of a far graver import than such people think. It is, from one point of view, amusing that a lady should be unable to play golf with her usual skill because she had lost a charm in the shape of a little black pig. From another point of view, and bearing in mind how widespread is the superstition, and noting also its connection with kindred superstitions, it is symptomatic of one of the dangers that front modern civilisation. Professor Frazer, in the lecture from which I have already quoted, says that "the community is really dominated by the will of an enlightened minority," and that "the higher human intelligence sways the lower, just as the intelligence of man gives him the mastery over the brutes." In a general way this is, I suppose, true. But the intelligence that sways a society need not be either "higher" or "enlightened" in a cultural sense. It needs only be strong, and strongly directed towards

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a clearly perceived end. I do not think anyone will claim that the intelligence of the early Christians was higher or more enlightened than that of the writers and leaders of Pagan Roman society. The reverse of this was demonstrably the case. But Christianity eventually dominated *that* community, and brought Roman civilisation to ruin. And its success was mainly due to energetic but unenlightened intellects appealing for support to a mass of superstition current in Pagan society.

What has occurred once may occur again. Culture is wider, perhaps, to-day than in the days of the old Pagan Empire, and it is based on a more solid foundation of fact; but its greatest danger now, as then, comes from the presence in our midst of widespread superstition, to which the reactionist may at any time make a successful appeal. On a small scale this appeal is being constantly made, and with some amount of success. Local agitations may still be worked up in favor of a Sabbatarianism that is a living illustration of the survival of the savage principle of taboo. People may still be imprisoned for blasphemy; and a vast number of our fellow-countrymen still seriously believe that the nation would go to the dogs without an Established Church. And one can conceive—even though it is not immediately probable—a conjunction of circumstances that would induce a body of men like the clergy, whose influence is threatened by the advance of civilisation, making a final appeal to that floating mass of superstition that exists around us. Whether the appeal would be successful or not is another question; but the possibility of its being made is always with us, and while that is the case civilisation is indeed "standing on a volcano." Fortunately, the diversified character of modern culture has had the effect of withdrawing strong minds from the Churches to such an extent that its power for evil has been seriously curtailed. But the possibility of having at command, by means of an appeal to their ingrained superstitions, a vast mass of human material is one that may at any time appeal to one or more strong men greedy of power and unscrupulous as to the method by which they acquire it.

The pig-wearing golf-playing lady may, therefore, stand as symptomatic of an aspect of our civilisation that will not be without its significance to those who bear in mind the nature of the causes that determine social change. For whether its consequences be cataclysmic or not, *some* consequence all this survival of primitive superstition must have. You cannot have hundreds of thousands of people believing in luck and charms and magical formulæ, believing in angels and devils, and ever greedy after the supernatural—if only in the diluted form of "occult science" (whatever that may be)—without there being induced a more or less unsound conception of social life. By such minds scientific formulæ are accepted, but they are not assimilated. They become no organic part of the mental life. This type of mind becomes, too, a vast reservoir on which the reactionist will be always able to draw, and on which he is constantly drawing. It is the one real danger that threatens modern civilisation. So far as one can judge, ancient civilisations perished because they were overrun by a people of less culture. This was the danger that was ever before the rulers of old Rome, and against which they were constantly battling. But they overlooked the danger within, and in time that oversight proved fatal. So it is with ourselves. We are not to day threatened by any barbarian invasion. We cannot be overrun by savages from without. We have a thousand-and-one safeguards against that. It is the savage in our midst that constitutes the danger, and how to civilise *him* is the great problem of the future.

C. COHEN.

Guessing is only fertile in proportion to the fertility of the experience it reproduces. If a man knows little, he can infer little.—*George Henry Lewes.*

Notes on Some May Meetings.

STRANGE admissions are being made just now by the leaders of various religious denominations. The Rev. Joseph Hocking, preaching at Burton-on-Trent a few Sundays ago, stated that "the majority of people are living in practical forgetfulness of God, which is evidenced in the general neglect of public worship, of prayer, of the religious services which nourish the life of the soul." He also said that "Sunday, as a Christian Sabbath, seems to be passing away." We all know how entirely true those admissions are, but although he made them quite frankly, Mr. Hocking very inconsistently contended that the Gospel *cannot* be treated lightly. Is it possible to forget God and neglect public worship without treating the Gospel lightly? Can people turn the Christian Sabbath into a holiday without showing disrespect for the message of the pulpit? The fact is that the Gospel not only can be, but actually is, treated with exceeding levity by an overwhelming majority of the people of this island. It is also admitted, not merely that the Church is being gradually shorn of its influence, but that the Gospel is losing its hold of the Church. A writer in the *Christian Commonwealth* for May 13, tells us that the supremacy of Jesus Christ in his own House is now at stake, which is equivalent to saying that the Church has deteriorated in quality. A layman, speaking on the subject of Religion and Business at the recent Presbyterian Synod, expressed the opinion that the people most difficult to manage are churchgoers and teetotalers. Principal Selbie, in his address from the Chair of the Congregational Union, deplored the deadness of the Church, declaring that what they needed was "a new sense of Christ's headship and of the reality of his presence, as well as a new idea of the Church and of their own responsibility to and for it."

Now, the curious thing is that, in spite of these grave admissions, some speakers at the May Meetings maintained that Christ is the King of the world, and that the body of which he is the head rules Christendom. Principal Forsyth, for example, asserted that the Church is the mother of modern Europe, and that historically the attitude of nation to Church was filial piety. Take the following extract:—

> "The Church in its Calvinist, Puritan, and Independent forms was the mother of modern civil liberty. It was in a Church issue and a Church crisis in this land that modern democracy arose. And its worst perils are those that arise, not from being a son of the Church, but her prodigal. The Free Churches, as the legatees of Puritanism, saved the nation when the Anglican Church, which had so greatly blessed it, took a wrong path, and could save it in that crisis no more. If the Catholic Church created England, the Free Churches saved it.....The Church gives to the nations their object in life, their true destiny and moral selves."

That is what the Nonconformists call the highest of High Churchism; but it is so high that it never touches solid ground. It is simply a beautiful castle in the air. The Catholic Church did not create England, nor did the Free Churches save it. England became what it is very largely by setting itself in opposition to the voice of the Church. Modern civil liberty owes nothing to Christianity, though it must be confessed that Protestantism, by its powerful resistance to authority, has rendered an indirect service to the cause of freedom. Dr. Forsyth regards the Free Churches as "the legatees of Puritanism," forgetting that Puritanism was the sworn enemy of liberty and afforded no support whatever to the brotherhood of mankind. We are told on the best authority that the Puritan "loved all that were Godly, much misliking the wicked and profane." As John Richard Green says of him:—

> "His bond to other men was not the sense of a common manhood, but a recognition of a brotherhood among the elect. Without the pale of the saints lay a world which was hateful to them, because it was the enemy of their God. It was this utter isolation from the 'ungodly' that explains the contrast which startles

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us between the inner tenderness of the Puritans and the ruthfulness of so many of their actions" (*A Short History of the English People*, p. 466).

As a matter of fact, the brotherhood of mankind is not a Christian doctrine, any more than the universal Fatherhood of God. According to the teaching of the New Testament and the orthodox Church, mankind are not by nature children of God, but become such by a second birth, nor are they brothers and sisters until they are made Christians. The only brotherhood recognised by Christianity is that of the believers. To say that the Free Churches ever saved the nation is to utter a positive falsehood. The nation is still unsaved, or is in the slow process of self-salvation. The Bishop of Oxford knows quite as much about the nation as Dr. Forsyth, and will only smile disdainfully at the latter's egoistic claim.

Historically speaking, the State never was in love with the Church, though the latter made a long and resolute attempt to dominate the former. The State resented and finally successfully resisted the Church's domineering attitude; and the story of the gradual secularisation of politics is in reality the story of the Church's decreasing power and glory. When was the attitude of the nation to the Church that of filial piety? Certainly that is not its attitude to-day. In proportion as ignorance and superstition disappear, the Christian faith decays. The general neglect of public worship is sufficient evidence that the nation no longer loves its alleged mother. Its filial affection is conspicuous only by its absence. Now, the question naturally arises, why do the majority of people live in forgetfulness of God? Why do they neglect public worship, prayer, and the exercises which it is alleged nourish the soul? The true answer is that supernatural religion and natural knowledge cannot coexist. As light annihilates darkness, so intelligence displaces superstition, and sets man on his rightful throne. Christianity is dying because it is false. Had it been true, not even the gates of hell could have prevailed against it; but being false, not even the gates of heaven can prevent its dissolution. The disintegration of the Church proves the non-existence of the Christian God and the utter powerlessness of the loving Savior of the world. Professor Bartlet said that "every man and woman is raw material for the image of God," while the Bible assures us that man was created in that very image; but we are convinced that every human being is what heredity and environment have made him, and that improvement or salvation is not possible except by means of these two great laws. Dr. Bartlet said further that "the conscience of the average citizen and that of the true member of the Church are very different things in quality and in range"; but we vehemently deny the truth of the statement. The reverend gentleman must be woefully ignorant of the world if he verily believes that an average Christian is a better person than an average non-Christian. The superior conscience is that by which the best citizens are ever guided in their treatment of one another; and we are fully persuaded that the true member of the Church cannot help regarding and treating non-members as children of the Devil who richly deserve eternal damnation. The Nature of Things decrees that a believer can have no portion with an unbeliever, and that Christ can have no concord with Belial. We have renounced the belief in God, Christ, and Belial in order that we may consistently cherish the belief in the brotherhood of mankind. Christianity divides mankind into sheep and goats, placing the former on the right and the latter on the left hand of the God of love; and this false division has resulted in thousands of heartless persecutions and bloody wars.

Mr. Hocking spoke the truth when he told his Burton hearers that the general public no longer troubled itself about the supernatural, the followers of the Lamb being a miserable minority; but he was entirely mistaken when he stated that the people who give up religion "fail to find a true content" and are the victims of "a mighty famine." He no doubt said that because he did not know any better; but he had no moral right to speak in the name of people concerning whose mental condition he was wholly ignorant. It is our solemn conviction that the intellectually emancipated are the happiest people on earth. They look at life from an intelligent and intelligible standpoint, and are never disturbed by supernatural hopes and fears. Neither God nor Devil causes them a moment's anxiety, and their sole object is to promote the wellbeing of society; and than this there can be no higher or nobler end.

J. T. LLOYD.

Primitive Man.—III.

(*Continued from p. 315.*)

"The mental condition of the lower forms of both races [Negro and Bantu] seems very near the other great borderline that separates man from the anthropoid apes, and I believe that if we had the material, or rather if we could understand it, we should find little or no gap existing in mental evolution in this old, undisturbed continent of Africa."—MISS KINGSLEY, *Travels in West Africa*, p. 312.

"Mankind, as it has been well said, advances in *échelons*; that is, the columns march not abreast of each other, but in a straggling line, all lagging in various degrees behind the leader. The image well describes the difference not only between peoples, but between individuals of the same people and the same generation. Just as one nation is continually outstripping some of its contemporaries, so within the same nation some men are constantly outpacing their fellows, and the foremost in the race are those who have thrown off the load of superstition which still burdens the backs and clogs the footsteps of the laggards."—PROFESSOR J. G. FRAZER, *Psyche's Task*, 169.

"He [the savage] is always suspicious, always in danger, always on the watch. He can depend on no one, and no one can depend upon him. He expects nothing from his neighbor, and does unto others as he believes that they would do unto him. Thus his life is one prolonged scene of selfishness and fear. Even in his religion, if he has any, he creates for himself a new source of terror, and peoples the world with invisible enemies."—SIR JOHN LUBBOCK, *Prehistoric Times* (1865), p. 484.

ALTHOUGH the savage is generally abominably cruel, he is not altogether consciously cruel, at least among the most primitive races. It is due in great measure to lack of sympathy and reasoning powers, just as a very young child will pull a kitten or a puppy about, causing pain through lacking the power of reflection. As Sir Richard Burton points out:—

> "The cruelty of the negro is, like that of the schoolboy, the blind impulse of rage combined with want of sympathy. Thus he thoughtlessly tortures and slays his prisoners, as the youth of England torment and kill cats. He fails in the domestication of the lower animals, because he is deficient in forbearance with them; in a short time his violence will permanently ruin the temper of a horse; and he will starve to death the English dog, for which, perhaps, he has paid a high price."*

In a footnote, the same writer adds:—

> "Amongst the traders of the Bight of Biafra there are, I am glad to say, few men so base as to sell an English dog to a negro king or chief; and were a man to do so, he would be loudly blamed by his fellows."

The savage is also, like the child, a creature of impulse. Sir John Lubbock observes:—

> "Some of the most brutal acts which have been recorded against them are to be regarded less as instances of deliberate cruelty than of childish thoughtlessness and impulsiveness. A striking instance of this is recorded by Bryon in his narrative of the 'Loss of the Wager.' A cacique of the Chonas, who was nominally a Christian, had been out with his wife to fish for sea-eggs, and having had little success, returned in a bad humor. 'A little boy of theirs, about three years old, whom they appeared to be dotingly fond of, watching for his father and mother's return, ran into the surf to meet them; the father handed a basket of eggs to the child, which being too heavy for him to carry, he let it fall, upon which the father jumped out of the canoe, and catching the boy in his arms, dashed him with the utmost violence against the stones. The

* Sir Richard Burton, *Mission to Gelele*, pp. 201-2.

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poor little creature lay motionless and bleeding, and in that condition was taken up by the mother, but died soon after.' "*

Mr. Wilfred Powell, who spent three years among the cannibals of New Britain, says :—

"The passion for killing is often so strong in them that I have been told by natives themselves not to walk in front of them when they are armed, lest this feeling should get the better of them, and they might do me an injury. Of course, this is not so strong a feeling with some as with others, but I believe it to be more or less natural to all, especially the wilder and more savage tribes. Moreover, from infancy they have been brought up to carrying arms and to consider every stranger as an enemy, either openly or covertly. A man without arms they despise and look down upon as being no warrior, and if he be a stranger, all the more do their feelings rise against him."†

In the matter of food, nothing comes amiss to the primitive savage. Major Tremearne, who, besides being a competent anthropologist, has acted as Political Officer in Nigeria, remarks :—

"Sir Harry Johnston says that in Liberia some women eat the lice out of each other's heads, that delicacy being the perquisite for doing duty as barber. I do not know if the same holds good in Northern Nigeria, but I should not be surprised to find that it does amongst the Yoruba people, for they will eat anything."‡

One day, when out with Ajai, a most faithful servant and a Yoruba man, the Major relates an amusing incident :—

"Suddenly Ajai made a dart at a large stone, rolled it over, and began cramming things into his mouth with evident satisfaction. I looked, and to my horror saw that he was eating live insects like cockroaches, and turning to the Mado(i)ki, expressed my opinion of Ajai in no polite terms. 'These Yorubawa,' said the great man, with a gesture of extreme disgust, 'would eat anything; I should not eat those cockroaches unless they were cooked'" (p. 243).

Mr. J. P. Thomson also notices the habit, among the natives of British New Guinea, of eating the vermin with which their woolly mops swarm, and observes : "This vile institution seems to exist in many parts of Polynesia, where the writer has observed the practice for many years."§

Charles Darwin, describing the disgusting appearance of the natives on the bleak and barren shores of Tierra del Fuego, who he found it difficult to "believe that they are fellow-creatures and inhabitants of the same world," describes them as feeding on putrid whales' blubber, and says :—

"It is certainly true that when pressed in winter by hunger they kill and devour their old women before they kill their dogs; the boy being asked by Mr. Low why they did this, answered, 'Doggies catch otters, old women no.' This boy described the manner in which they are killed by being held over smoke and thus choked; he imitated their screams as a joke, and described the parts of their bodies which are considered best to eat."‖

A good deal of cannibalism still goes on in New Guinea and some of the South Sea Islands. Mr. Decle observes that "A great deal of unsuspected cannibalism exists in Africa."

The Gallas, according to the testimony of a writer cited by Major Tremearne, "bury their dear ones in the stomach instead of in the ground." Many writers have exercised their ingenuity in devising reasons for this horrible custom, such as famine, sympathetic magic, religious ritual, etc. The truth is, they prefer it to all other food. Major Tremearne observes :—

"There is no doubt that a longing for the actual flavor of human meat is one of the principal causes, it being sometimes preferred 'high,' and being kept in water for the purpose, sometimes seasoned with lime juice. Thus we are told of paddocks where 'human' cattle were kept and fattened for the market like stall-fed oxen, and when in good condition would fetch about twelve shillings each, and of the bodies of even the nearest and dearest being disinterred and bartered for others not coming within the prohibited degrees of consanguinity."*

Karl Lumholtz, who knew the Australian natives well, says :—

"The natives of Northern Queensland and of many other parts of Australia are cannibals. My people never made any secret of this, and in the evenings it was the leading topic of their conversation. The greatest delicacy known to the Australian native is human flesh. The very thought of it makes his eyes sparkle."†

As to the flavor of human flesh, it has often been compared to pork, but it is evident that this was a mere guess. Mr. Decle, while at Ujiji, eat human flesh two or three times, unknowingly, and found it delicious. It happened in this way. The Rinderpest had destroyed most of the cattle and run the price up until they were almost double the price of slaves. Therefore, there was a strong temptation to supply human flesh in place of animal. But, says Mr. Decle,—

"Some of the natives whom I had engaged at Ujiji had been assured by David that nothing could be hidden from me, and they determined to test my power; they accordingly supplied my cook with human food to see if I would find it out, and I confess that I ate it with great relish, unconscious of what it was. David found this out afterwards, but was afraid to tell me about it; however, to avoid a repetition of the experiment, he only brought meat from goats he saw killed himself. It was only afterwards that he told me about it. I then remembered eating a curry I thought excellent, and having brought to me some grilled bones that I enjoyed so much that I asked several times for more of them: these, it appears, were human ribs. So far as I can recollect they had but very little flesh on them, but this had a fine flavor of venison, with a salty taste, one of the reasons why cannibals greatly relish human flesh. I may add that cannibals seldom eat this meat without having kept it for a few days; usually they bury it, and when it is *à point* they feast on it."‡

Further revolting details of this disgusting practice may be read in Major Tremearne's book, but no doubt my readers are—to use a slang expression—"fed up" with the subject; at any rate, the present writer is, and concludes this portion of the study of Primitive Man with a sigh of relief. We shall next consider the intellectual powers, modes of thought, and powers of expression of Primitive Man.

(*To be continued.*) W. MANN.

A Stormy Petrel.

GENERALLY there was trouble when he appeared on the scene. Had he come and gone without a discussion, the circumstance would have been regarded suspiciously, and there would have been inquiries concerning his health. Expecting an argument, his friends seemed to drift into conversation that asked for it. Unconsciously, maybe, they took the shortest possible tack into the stormy regions; and it was really wonderful how absolutely inevitable that storm was.

Often he would say, with a grin, that his friends were simply proving that mind controlled matter; that mind, in fact, put matter to the blush; and that if a religionist desired something very much he was certain to realise it without the assistance of God at all. It wasn't necessary in the least that God should exist that Christians should see him. It wasn't necessary that Christ should have died on the cross. Christians could see him there now. It wasn't essential that the spirit should be created a palpable entity; for Christians could feel it. That

* Lubbock, *Prehistoric Times*, p. 465.
† Wilfred Powell, F.R.G.S., *Wanderings in a Wild Country*, pp. 262-3.
‡ Major Tremearne, *The Tailed Head-Hunters of Nigeria* (1912) p. 243.
§ J. P. Thomson, *British New Guinea*, p. 68.
‖ Darwin, *The Voyage of the Beagle* (Nelson's ed.), pp. 236-8.

* Major Tremearne, *The Tailed Head-Hunters of Nigeria*, p. 183.
† Cited by Leo Frobenius in *The Childhood of Man*, p. 472.
‡ Lionel Decle, *Three Years in Savage Africa*, pp. 311-2.

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was enough. Their unconsciously expressed demand for an argument, he would say, was pretty similar, in many respects, to the mental attitude of religious fanatics when they wanted badly to see God, or be taken into the arms of Jesus, or feel the Holy Ghost in them, or any other of these religious hallucinations. And he would chuckle to himself.

The two favorite topics were Religion and Social Reform. Invariably they became inextricably interwoven as the discussion generated heat. Religion could not be kept apart from social life. Endeavor as he did to separate the two, he found that the task, in the circumstances, was hopelessly impossible. His opponents seemed quite incapable of examining religion on its own merits and demerits. All their lives it had been estimated the hub of their existence. Their morality had sprung from it; the well-being of their lives was the fruit of their religious principles; and their peace of mind had emanated from the love of God. If Christians would only live as Christians, there would be no need of social reform: that was their conviction; and they instanced their own lives as admirable proof of the idea.

So it was that his friends pulled him down from the intellectual plane into the social gutter; and he used the social ailments that have been chronic to humanity ever since one man discovered that his personal strength of body and brain gave him a power he could enjoy over his less efficient fellows—he used the degradations of humanity to confute their statements.

There were times when the argument terminated in maternal tears and much paternal advice; when the mother heart, poisoned by the vile fumes of religion, thought her son was lost for ever, and mourned as a woman does over her dead; pathetic times and tragic, for an unconquerable bitterness would engulf the son's mind, and his enmity towards Christianity surged and heaved, a storm-lashed ocean of anger under sad, gloomy skies. And the paternal advice, so futile in its well-meaning applications, so sincere in its triviality, so impossible of crystallisation, so full of vague incomprehensibilities, but engendered a despair that hung over the storm like spray-drenched air, damp and heavy.

Repeated renewals of the discussion, however, he told me, gradually wore thin the unpleasantness of the conclusions; and it became possible to enjoy an evening's sitting without suffering and mental anguish on either side. Perseverance and discretion, he said, had made their mark. Not that the minds he had influenced had changed their beliefs; they had not; but it was something to have achieved discussion lacking the tragic element, particularly when the people interested were as sincere as it was possible to be in their beliefs of God, and Christ, Holy Ghost, Spirit, and all the rest. It was something, even in these modern days, to break down the old barrier of religious intolerance. It was something, even assisted by the human blood-ties of relationship, to vanquish the dark and devilish belief of complete segregation, because of a mere difference of opinion, in minds trained from infancy in that doctrine. It was something to have destroyed the religious cancer that makes disbelief a horrible crime. But the memories of that maternal grief were not pleasant. They will always be bitter.

Occasionally, when the recollection burned in his sensitive mind, he would ascribe his hatred of Christianity to his mother's tears. "Had it not been for that," he would say, "I might have been easy on the matter. I might have been peacefully philosophical on the subject, content to let time scatter its dust on religious creeds. The quiet, calm methods, very gentlemanly and considerate, might have claimed my support. Instead of intellectual war it might have been intellectual wonder, and nothing more. But we must hate evil; and hatred is never complacent. Warfare is inevitable. With the sensitiveness to evil goes a relentless antagonism. It is war to the death. The man who hates evil best will fight evil best. He will never own defeat. Well, I saw, in those tears, all the horrible crudeness of Religion, all its harshnesses, all its vile, anti-social qualities. The creed that can turn the mother-heart from her son, the creed that fills her eyes with tears, the creed that forces her to her knees in prayer for a lost child, is a despicable thing. It is criminal. It deserves more than contempt, more than mere censure, more than polite animosity. Sometimes, when the hatred overwhelms reason in me, I fancy it merits open rebellion, revolt in deeds as well as words. Scattered over the world there must be thousands, millions, of people who suffer in this ugly way from the results of Religion's bigotry. When I think of the miseries I have endured, and when my mind goes over Humanity, seeing countless thousands suffer, in the home quietness, from these atrocious tentacles of the octopus of Religion, arms that shoot out and suck joy from youth and love from age, there springs up in me an anger I can hardly quell. The tears are so real and so foolish, the sad thoughts so heavy and so silly, the condemnations so unjust, the woe so deep and so absurd, that the blood boils with wrath. And Religion is responsible for this, Religion alone. It would dominate the mother-heart. It would blast and sere the flowers of love, and cast them into the mire. People would not believe me; but it is true. For years the fondness, the natural fondness, was chilled in my veins. My parents were repugnant to me. I came near to hating them. Didn't my infidelity mean immorality? Didn't it mean present and future damnation? Wasn't I a social outcast? I had forsaken the faith of my fathers. Prematurely I had gone to hell. My mother believed all this nonsense. My father's beliefs struggled with common sense, with knowledge; and he endeavored to pour oil on the troubled waters by saying that I was passing through the valley of darkness to the land of light, and that the rays of God's love would be all the more brilliant because of the time of darkness and gloom. I would change, he thought. As I grew older I would see the error of my ways. I was the lost sheep on the mountain, and the good shepherd spared neither pains nor toil to rescue his wandering lamb. And he was always, always successful. For years I endured this, years of the misery of bitter thought. Is it any wonder I should hate Religion? Is it any wonder I should consider it the most disgusting sore on the social body? Is it any wonder I should bemoan my incapability to fight it as it should be fought? I hate Religion with a bitter hatred; and, if my hatred be uncanny in its intensity, remember I have seen my mother weep, not once, but dozens of times, because her son had strayed from the fold. However, the lamb has never returned, but the stormy petrel comes now oftener than before, and the storm always gives his visit a touch of mental life; but the ships are iron-built these days; they weather the storm bravely; there are no wrecks; for which let there be praise."

ROBERT MORELAND.

Concerning Souls.

FOR downright crudity, for absence of the saving grace of utility, there is no religion to equal the Christian one, which maintains an attitude of dignity upon a pile of absurdities. Though we may test it by contemporary religions, or by the newest of new religions, we find that it stands revealed in naked hypocrisy with its pitiful concept of God. "God as the deity of the sick, God as spider, God as spirit—is one of the most corrupt concepts of God that has ever been attained on earth." In this manner Nietzsche summed up the object of Christian veneration. As the Christians have sadly bungled their God-idea, so, in a similar manner, have they debased their ideas of the soul.

In the present age, when commercialism cuts at the root of culture, when Christian materialism (and there is truth in this paradox) has no broader vision

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than that of interfering in prize-fights or transforming its places of worship into glorified music-halls, we cannot wonder that, as the God-idea is low so is its soul-idea on the same plane, and an insult to any person of average intelligence.

We have lately made the acquaintance of Plotinus through the good taste of Messrs. Bell & Sons, who are the publishers of his select works in Bohn's Popular Library, and our copy is liberally marked. Although personally we cannot see our way clear to even accept the Platonic idea of the soul, we were struck by its singular beauty and sublimity, and by its immeasurable superiority to the Christian conception.

Plotinus was an ardent disciple and interpreter of Plato, and, bearing in mind the arresting beauty of his philosophy, we are surprised that the early Christians did not crucify him and all those who were attracted by this good and noble man. We can only be truly thankful that the heavy-footed vandals were otherwise engaged, and so we are enabled to know one who soared as an eagle in the realms of speculative philosophy. It is chiefly in his discourses against the Gnostics that the striking contrast is seen between the Greek soul-idea and the Christian one. The former is achieved through laborious days of study and self-discipline; the latter can be claimed by any brutal murderer who uses to advantage the eleventh hour. By this remark we do not sit in judgment on murderers; we do at least say that if a soul is worthy of hostage in a murderer, it is also worthy of lodging in a guinea-pig. But even here we find ourselves face to face with an absurdity. The animal is denied it by Christians, and probably it has never committed any action more criminal than that of subsisting.

Plotinus was extremely reticent about his birth and parentage. One very striking aspect of this remarkable man's character was that *he was ashamed that his soul was in his body.* When we consider his anti-Christian idea of the soul, such an admission gives us an idea of the loftiness of his character, and we become impatient to know more of one who commenced his philosophy where the Christians finished. To those superior people called God's elect, we venture to think that this idea would cause many heartquakes. Man, in the image of his maker, deliberately stating that he is ashamed of his soul in body; this is blasphemy immortal and divine. But, nevertheless, it is leagues in advance of those crude doctrines used by Christians to frighten women and children. Furthermore, if the blood sacrifice was necessary to save that which is imperishable, the believers in this travesty of a religion would be too ignorant to behold the beauty of such a magnificent conception of the soul as that held by Plotinus.

The Gnostics, against whom Plotinus wrote, were a Christian sect, very active from the first to the sixth century. They held that Christ was of divine origin, and that knowledge instead of faith was the means of reaching heaven. This is an early example of Christian harmony. It is somewhat ironical, too, to find Plotinus at variance with them on the matter of the soul. Their soul-idea failed to satisfy one who had devoted his life to philosophy; he was constrained to shatter and remould it, and, greatest of all, to strip it of that doubly damned exclusiveness which claimed it for the few.

"Nor again is it fit to assert that the soul of the vilest man is immortal and divine." In these words he will not have the soul flung gratuitously to everybody if the Gnostics deny it to "all heaven and the stars that are there, though they consist of things far more beautiful and pure than anything terrestrial."

Poor fallen Gnostics! running round to tag the soul on human beings and forgetting such trifles as the stars. We do not think that the times have changed much. Any victim of the present system called civilisation, be he a murderer or a tyrant, if he can be led to see the error if his ways in time, may partake of glory everlasting. In a comparative sense, the modern Christian and also the Gnostic sects aim at a popular basis for the exploitation of the soul-idea, and, of course, in this manner deliberately court failure. Lovers of animals cannot view with pleasure the prospect of their favorites being soulless; it remains now for some fierce aggressive and progressive branch of Christianity to take up this theory of souls for animals. We should imagine in this Christian country the idea might take root. One pleasing feature of this new departure would be easily observed; most animals in the present day, as far as beauty and fitness are concerned—but there, we think that readers will see our point. Christianity has accomplished so much for mankind that the horses one sees about are better fed and better cared for than the lambs of Christ. We really must return to Plotinus.

That there are many difficulties attendant to a proof of the soul no one will deny, and least of all, Freethinkers. If the proof did not rest on faith and assumption no one would care to disbelieve—Freethinkers included. But the conclusion we came to after reading Plotinus was this: that we, as Freethinkers, are unconsciously treading those paths which lead to harmony with the world, and, although our imperfect efforts meet with no degree of popular success, we must not relax them on that account. Wisdom, temperance, and fortitude were the three degrees whereby the soul, according to Plotinus, was purified. Who shall say that these are not part of the armory of Freethought? And, furthermore, we should be prepared to assert that, logically and by the *tu quoque* argument, we ought to be ready to burn those who do not think as we do.

In the sixteenth chapter against the Gnostics there is a passage of singular truth and beauty, "Again to despise the world, and the gods, and other beautiful natures that are in it, is not to become a good man." We cannot see anything here to run contrary to the principles of Freethought; in fact, we hesitate to call the soul supernatural, as postulated by Plotinus. It would seem that his acute mind had ransacked the whole of the world's philosophy and brought his theories to light, to ennoble existence, and to satisfy intellect; and it was only natural that such theories should be antagonistic to the Christians.

We recall a particularly odious story in connection with a certain Biblical prophet called Elisha. This saint, hero, or fanatic was subjected to a little rude criticism from children, and, as a result, Elisha cursed them in the name of the Lord, so that two she bears came out of the wood and tear forty and two of them. Chronology has it that this incident of love and tolerance must have happened about the year 896 B.C. At a later period, about two centuries previous to this, Plotinus must have lived. In his conclusion, "Against the Gnostics," he delivers these noble sentiments: "It is possible, therefore, not to be a lover of body, to become pure, to despise death, to have a knowledge of more excellent natures, and to make them the objects of pursuit." We are inclined to think that this kind, wise, and gracious philosopher who could set forth such sentiments, would stand as a God himself in comparison to Elisha, whom, it appears, had not the courage to curse in his own name—not even at children. The reader may say that the comparison is incongruous. So it is, and so it is intended to be. It is our candid and sincere belief that not one character in the Old Testament was worthy to sit at the feet of Plotinus. They all seemed to live in an atmosphere of blood and carnage and crudity that was repulsive, and in comparison, Greek thought seems to inhabit another world

The book in question is dedicated by the translator as a tribute of the warmest gratitude to Meredith and his brother William, and we feel confident that every Freethinker, though he may refuse to surmount the difficulties of belief in a soul, will find in it much that is good and true, much gold and little dross, and its modest price will commend it to all.

CHRISTOPHER GAY.

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Acid Drops

To be a "man of science" is no guarantee against talking nonsense, as we have often pointed out. And when he sets out to champion religion, nonsense is almost inevitable. From the summary of a paper by S. W. F. Barrett, read before the Congregational Union, we learn that—

> "The foundations on which the materialistic school of thought rested its negative agnosticism had been rudely shaken, if not overthrown by recent discoveries of physical science. That school founded itself on the molecular hypothesis of matter. The atomic theory had been shattered. An atom of matter, though of inconceivable minuteness—at least 100 millions being found in the smallest point visible under microscopic power—was found to be a solar system in miniature, and it was a solar system in process of eruption. The atoms were neither solid, nor simple, nor immutable, nor immortal."

We are quoting from a summary only, but as it stands the comment is very largely nonsensical, and part of it is untrue as a mere statement of scientific fact.

It is quite a delusion to assume that Materialism as a philosophy is based upon the "molecular hypothesis of matter," or indeed upon any special theory of the nature of matter. Naturally, Materialists, in dealing with the problem of existence, took the conception of matter that was generally regarded as having the greatest scientific warranty. And when a more accurate knowledge showed the need for revising an accepted scientific formula, the Materialist had a full right to demand leave to reshape the presentation of his case so that it would harmonise with that revised formula. As a philosophy, Materialism is quite independent of any hypothesis concerning the nature of matter. Historically, it is a philosophy of nature that sets what one may call mechanical causation against supernaturalistic operations. Is nature, as a whole, such that phenomena occurring at any time are the exact and necessary equivalents of all that has preceded the appearance of such phenomena? If the answer be in the affirmative, the truth of Materialism is admitted. If in the negative, then supernaturalism takes rank as a probably truthful hypothesis. Naturalism *versus* spiritualism, mechanical causation *versus* supernaturalism—hat is the essential issue between Materialism and its opponents.

Now, what discoveries in physical science have been made that tell against the materialistic philosophy? There are none. Every discovery goes to strengthen it, and as a matter of fact it is the accepted working creed of every scientific man, even of Professor Barrett himself. Professor Barrett says the atomic theory has been shattered. If that were true, it could not prove that Materialism was false. But it is not true. The atomic hypothesis is not shattered, and Professor Barrett ought to know better than to make such a statement. That the atom was solid, simple, and indestructible *was not a part of the atomic theory.* Professor Barrett must know that this is true; and his misleading a lot of clergymen gathered in congress is the more inexcusable because they have no desire to contradict him, and will utilise his opinion to propagate false notions. The ultimate and indestructible nature of the atom were deductions drawn from the atomic theory, but were no essential part of it. The atomic theory—and when a scientist uses that term he must mean Dalton's atomic theory—was an assertion of laws of definite, multiple, and equivalent proportions that are as true now as ever, and they form the basis of modern chemistry. The atom remains. Our conception of the nature of the atom is undergoing, or has undergone, a change. That is all that has occurred. To say that the atomic theory is shattered is simply untrue. Professor Barrett may say that before an assemblage of parsons; we question if he would dare to say it before a congress of chemists.

A few items from two days' announcements of latest wills: Rev. L. M. Seir, Somerset, £27,691. Rev. R. D. Plummer, Folkestone, £11,227. Rev. R. F. Thornhill, £15,000. Rev. R. Preston, Altrincham, £8 219. Rev. J. Ainsworth, Molesey, £2,573. Ven. W. Donne, Wakefield, £11,469.

The Rev. F. Dormer Pierce, vicar of St. John's Church, Southend-on-Sea, has been elected Chairman of the local branch of the London Christian Evidence Society. The other officials include a fried-fish merchant and a Church Army "captain." This trinity of Pierce and Plenty will hardly set the Thames Estuary on fire.

The very same men, says Mr. R. J. Campbell, "who in their private lives may be quite exemplary and even devoted to the church, are in their public capacity as administrators and diplomatists, frankly immoral; their policy is dictated not by moral considerations, but with an eye to the main chance." We have often said the same thing, and the moral seems to us obvious. Mr. Campbell's moral is, of course, that the Church must exert power—which is absurd. Things being as Mr. Campbell says they are, what is needed is the recognition that devout religious belief has no necessary connection with right conduct. When that is generally recognised people will not find it so easy to salve their conscience with acts of devotion to a church, and religious belief will not be so freely utilised as an excuse for "unmoral" action. There will be no veil between a man's actions and their social consequences, and self-deception—rascality's most effective assistant—will not be easy. Mr. Campbell is merely emphasising the failure of religion as a moral force without the courage to admit the truth even to himself.

"It is sickening to read," says *Science-Grounded Religion*, a monthly Indian journal published at Lahore, "how, in spite of intellectual education and external civilisation of a high order, the West is going down and down in moral life." It then proceeds to give evidence from English preachers of the moral decadence of Western peoples, and concludes that the attention of Indian ethical reformers is sadly needed. It will be a shock to the complacency of Christians to learn that non-Christian people are struck by their need of moral reformation, and yet it is an old complaint. Japanese and Chinese have said much the same thing. We *talk* of our moral superiority, and repeat the talk so frequently that we have come to take it as an accepted fact. Educated non-Christians who study us at home come to quite a different conclusion. They admit that we are in front of them in scientific attainment and commercial prosperity, but in other directions they are as anxious to improve us as we are to improve them, and with as much justification.

Referring to a forthcoming novel by Miss Corelli, the devout *Daily Chronicle* says it cannot impart the plot, but readers are requested to "watch and pray." This is serious! One lady of the name of Mary has already been deified; we are not keen about a second.

Mr. Max Mayer, the Hatton Garden pearl specialist, says there are plenty of people rich enough to spend £300,000 on a necklace. Christians pretend to despise money, but they don't let the cash pass them by.

In the early years of Calvinistic rule, Geneva must have been a delightful place in which to live. The following is a pen-picture of the way in which the Consistory controlled life, and is taken from Mr. Hugh Reyburn's recently issued *John Calvin*:—

> "The Consistory by no means confined its attention to those who were slack in their attendance at church. It looked after their behavior when they were there. Three men who had been laughing at church—one of them behind the shelter of his cap—were sent to prison. Others who criticised the sermon and said that the preachers of former days were better than those who filled the pulpits now were sharply advised not to absent themselves on that account. Others were dealt with for playing cards on Sunday evenings, for spending their time in taverns, for cursing and swearing, for attempting to commit suicide, for possessing a copy of the *Golden Legend*, for kneeling on a husband's grave and saying *Requiescat in pace*, for using money to get Masses sung, for fornication, for betrothing a daughter to a Papist, for getting a fortune told by a fortune-teller, for eating fish on Good Friday, for making a chalice and other instruments of idolatry, for singing obscene songs, for shaving the tonsure on a priest's head, for saying it was better to have a quartan fever than to let the ministers have charge of one's soul, for saying there is neither devil nor hell, and that if there is Election and Reprobation there is no condemnation for guilt, for saying there are people who get themselves adored and Calvin is one of them, for arranging a marriage between a woman of seventy and a man of twenty-five, for saying that if all who did not believe in Christ would be damned there would be lots of room in Paradise, and for arguing that men should not be put to death for religious opinions. These instances, taken from an extended period, give a fair idea of the matters which engaged the attention of the Consistory during the first years of its operations."

Principal Selbie, of Mansfield College, says that Christians everywhere are beginning to show they have some conscience in the matter of reunion; and show a desire to stand together and speak together with one voice and one mind. What a triumph for Christianity! What a proof of the

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power of Christian love! After nineteen centuries Christian people are *beginning* to think it is time they left off fighting and began to agree together! Well, they never have agreed together, and we venture to prophesy that they never will. And some of the leaders are only anxious for agreement because they realise the increasing growth of an enemy that threatens *all* sections of the Christian faith. In face of a common enemy, they feel the need of mutual concord. The desire for union has nothing to do with a genuine agreement about matters of faith; it springs wholly from the perception of a danger that threatens to destroy them all.

The truth is that religious belief always makes more strongly for division than for union. Essentially religious belief involves a policy of exclusion. It unites a few who believe by excluding the majority who dissent. Each Church shuts out all who disagree with it, and thus proceeds on the direct opposite to social union, which, of necessity, aims at binding together diversified tastes and beliefs on the basis of common and fundamental needs. Hence, while social development makes for a greater union over a wider area, religious development makes for a greater division. Principal Selbie says that "to introduce methods of party politics into religious assemblies is a sheer desecration." Well, we are no lovers of party politics or of the methods of party politicians, but we may point out that in the past political assemblies will compare very favorably with religious assemblies, and also that the tone and character of political gatherings and political movements are invariably worsened by the introduction of religion. Will anyone say that our present House of Commons has been improved by the introduction of a number of religious Nonconformists? Does a religious discussion in the House make members more polite or more considerate to each other? And look at the Irish question! How much has religion improved the tone of politics there?

In the *Englishwoman* a Miss St. John complains that Mr. Israel Zangwill in his play, *The Melting Pot*, has slurred over the fact that the Jews were as bad as the Russians, for had they not killed Christ? This is as sensible as if present-day Suffragettes were made responsible for the behavior of Jael with her little hammer.

During a recent thunderstorm the House of Lords was considering a Bill for the prevention of floods. Why do not the Lords make use of the services of the Bishops, who have special forms of prayer for rain-making and dry weather?

"Learn how to laugh," says the *Christian Age*. Christians will take a lot of teaching, for their Deity is not exactly a Falstaff.

"People are always good-tempered when they are standing in front of a drop of something," said the Chairman of the Southport Licensing Bench. What, *always?* Even before communion port at a shilling a bottle?

Trombone-player Carlile says the duty of the Church is to prodigal sons, and not elder brothers, who are too difficult. Dear! Dear! Cannot the musician-evangelist try the inducement of the fatted calf?

"The horrible discovery by the Albanian gendarmerie, reported by Reuter, of two hundred half-charred bodies of Albanian peasants who had been captured by Hellenic 'sacred bands' and crucified within a Greek church, which had then been set on fire to conceal the deed, comes very near to being the most devilish exploit of the Balkan Christians in recent years. As the Greek recruiting agents have gathered the most desperate and lawless elements into the bands organised against Albania, all their proceedings have been savage in the extreme. Perhaps the Balkan Committee will now issue another pamphlet on Moslem wickedness and Christian virtues in the Near East."—*The Outlook*.

A poor woman at Wokingham killed her six year old child and then herself. In a letter to her husband she asked him "to lead a good life in Christ" and promised to wait "at the pearly gates" for him. The child, she said, she was going to take with her to "the better land." The case is a sad one, as the wife expressed affection for her "dear, loving husband." The only moral we desire to draw is that of wondering when Christians will drop the sickening cant about the strength and courage given by religion to those who believe in it.

In a recent leading article, the *Daily Sketch* describes the modern church services as "too often an all-long sermon, with a few decorations." Once the Church's services were filled with eternal hell and no decorations.

"You can only get the public to move when you frighten them," says Dr. Edwards Jones. The clergy have known this elementary fact for thousands of years, but the hell-fire scare is nearly played out.

The Vicar of Mellor complains that visitors who came to the Choral Eucharist on Easter Day left at various times during the service. We expect they went because they had had enough, and the rational cure would seem to be shorter or more attractive services. But the vicar threatens pains and penalties for those who will not stay to the end. He says: "We must see that the law of the Church in this respect is observed in future. It is punishable by law to leave the church from the beginning of the service to the end." It may be so; but all the same we do not fear that many will be prosecuted for the offence. The Vicar o Mellor has the misfortune of being born too late. Somewhere about the fourteenth or fifteenth century is his proper period.

Rev. John Raper, curate, was on May 11 sued for damages for the seduction of a girl aged nineteen. The offence had been proceeding for about two years. The jury returned a verdict for the father for £400.

"It is an extraordinary thing that all the boys who come here for this kind of offence seem to be regular attendants at church and Sunday-school." The "here" referred to in the above sentence was the Liverpool Police-court, and the speaker was the magistrate, who ought to know what he was talking about. Two boys, sixteen years old, were charged with being found at night with burglars' tools in their possession. Hence the magistrate's comment. Had these two youngsters been in the habit of attending Freethought meetings, the moral—to the religious world—would have been obvious. As they, and the majority of other youthful offenders at the same court, were regular attendants at church or chapel, the religionist fails to see any moral in the situation. And we do not think it necessary to provide our readers with one.

How little it takes to build up a reputation—with some people. A religious weekly we were glancing through refers to the "abounding humor" of Mr. Will Crooks. Here is the sample given. "You can call on the biggest blackguard you like and ask him if he wants to turn the Bible out of the schools, and he'll say, 'No, I may be a bad lot myself, but I want to give the children a chance.'" As Dominie Sampson would say, "Prodigious!" Consider the subtle humor of the remark! If it were not Mr. Crooks, we should call it sarcasm. For who but Mr. Crooks would consider the fondness of the "biggest blackguard" for the Bible a reason for keeping that book in the schools? The "biggest blackguard" had probably been brought up on the Bible himself. And the result was there in his blackguardism. At least, it had not saved his being a blackguard; and it is possible that his children would stand a better chance brought up on some other kind of literature.

One cannot expect a clergyman to read history accurately, and so one is not surprised to find the Rev. Dr. Forsyth declaring that "it was in a Church issue and a Church crisis in the land that modern democracy arose." Naturally, while the whole of a nation's life is dominated by a Church, any change must be connected more or less with the Church. And that is really all there is in Dr. Forsyth's generalisation. Modern democratic movements began in England in connection with a Church crisis because the power of the Church had to be broken before a democracy could arise. For the same reason the French Revolution also commenced with a Church crisis. In either case, had the dominant Church remained unconquered, genuine civil and political freedom would have been an impossibility. The lesson is not, as Dr. Forsyth thinks, that freedom is founded in religious belief, but that the power of religious belief must be broken before freedom can assert itself.

In a letter to his brother—a clergyman—written just before committing suicide, Mr. J. Lucas, ex-M.P. for Portsmouth, gave as the reason for his action the fact of his suffering from a malignant and incurable disease. He also said, "I trust to the mercy of Almighty God, who has blessed me so abundantly." With an incurable disease Sounds like deliberate sarcasm.

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To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £146 5s. Received since:—F. Akroyd, 11s.

MISS E. KIDD.—We regret we cannot afford further space to continue the controversy between yourself and Mr. Palmer. We have been compelled to decline the insertion of several letters for and against for the same reason. Letters addressed to Mr. Palmer, c/o this office, will be duly forwarded.

BY a slip of the pen we wrote "Prince George of Wiel" in our last week's paragraph on Albanian affairs. It should have read "Prince William of Wied."

S. BEARDALL.—Thanks for cuttings and good wishes for Mr. Foote's "speedy recovery." It is useless regretting what one *cannot* do; the main thing is that we can all do something to promote the interests of a cause that we have at heart, and you appear to be doing what you can in your own way. If every Freethinker did the same our movement would soon be "booming."

ATHEIST (Birmingham).—We really do not know how you managed to read into our reply the conviction that people cannot be good without theological beliefs. When we said that you cannot separate New Testament ethical teaching from New Testament theology, we meant that the former had no independent existence there, but was obviously based upon the theology taught. And that in the main has been the conviction of the Christian Churches until recent times.

J. KING.—(1) Pleased to have your appreciation of Mr. Cohen's reply to his clerical critic. The reverend gentleman has not accepted the offer for an exchange of articles, but he has written that he would like to see it accepted, although he fears to undertake it himself. Perhaps he will induce someone else to take advantage of the offer. (2) We do not know that we could do justice to our opinion of Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* in a sentence. Although this work was overshadowed by his *Wealth of Nations*, we are of opinion that the *Moral Sentiments* was by far the greater work. It was a valuable contribution to ethical philosophy, and will always repay careful study.

G. BEDBOROUGH.—The advertisement in the *Sunday Times* of "Bargains in Correct-made Lingerie" is, as you say, about "the limit." Still, it is only what is being done by religious labor homes in this country. Regular dealers are brought into competition with goods manufactured by underpaid labor, and the regular workers suffer in consequence. Sweating for "Christ's sake" is a well-established form of industry.

F. AKROYD.—Thanks for your good wishes for Mr. Foote.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

The Coming Conference.

I BEG to remind the "saints" once more of the National Secular Society's Annual Conference, which takes place on Whit-Sunday at the Queen's (Minor) Hall, Langham-place. The morning and afternoon meetings are purely for business and are confined to members of the N. S. S. The evening public meeting is open to all comers and every seat is free. I hope the "saints" will do their best to advertise this meeting, at which I am booked to take the chair. We cannot offer the "converted infidel" attraction, which is the essential basis of Mrs. Besant's appeal; but her audience in the same block of buildings will still leave some people who prefer Reason to Mysticism.

G. W. *F.*

Sugar Plums.

This is almost the last opportunity we shall have of calling attention to the N. S. S. Conference on Whit-Sunday. There will be a good list of speakers at the evening meeting—including Messrs. Foote, Cohen, Lloyd, Moss, Heaford, and Miss Kough. As admission will be free, this will be a good opportunity for Freethinkers to introduce their Christian friends. It is not often that so many of our leading speakers are to be heard at once, and the most should be made of the opportunity. Those who intend being present at the Conference luncheon should notify Miss Vance at once.

The Secretary of the Edmonton Branch of the N. S. S. desires to thank those Freethinkers who supported the platform at Edmonton Green on Sunday last. Mr. Cohen had a very large meeting, and, with the exception of a few casual interruptions, good order was maintained. A Father Caverner appears to have been the centre of whatever disturbance there has been, and we are afraid that Secularists themselves have been partly to blame for this in making too much of him. We strongly advise them to continue with their propaganda, and ignore the reverend gentleman altogether. In the long run he will find his proper level, and the more thoughtful of the public will soon discover what that is. Meanwhile, those Freethinkers who are not otherwise engaged on Sunday evenings would do well to favor the meeting-place with their presence.

After twenty-four years' open-air lecturing, Mr. Cohen had decided on giving this form of propaganda a rest for awhile, but he has arranged to deliver a couple of lectures in Victoria Park to-day (May 24), afternoon and evening. Weather favorable, there will no doubt be a good rally of East End Freethinkers.

We have received, after considerable delay, a copy of the circular prepared and sent out by the Committee of the Ramsey Testimonial Fund. Only a few subscriptions are acknowledged on the circular, which was probably drafted at an early stage of the Committee's proceedings. We have before expressed the hope that Freethinkers who bear in mind Mr. Ramsey's many years' work for Freethought will subscribe as quickly and as liberally as possible, and we now repeat it. The treasurer of the fund is Mr. B. T. Hall, Club Union Buildings, 127 Clerkenwell-road, London, E.C. For the encouragement of others, we are ready to insert a list of subscriptions to date on receiving it from the official treasurer of the fund.

We are informed that our paragraph in the *Freethinker* for May 10 concerning lectures in Regent's Park was incorrect in one particular. "No regular Freethought meetings" should have read "no regular N. S. S. meetings."

More Notes.

MR. RUDYARD KIPLING consists of a streak of genius in a loud and vulgar nature. The latter still subsists in full vigor; the former seems nearly played out. What has he done worth reading since his "Recessional," which, after all, was only imitation great work? "The Absent-Minded Beggar" with its "Pay, Pay, Pay!" refrain was a disgrace to the nation, and an insult to the Army. That Mr Kipling thought it rather flattering to Mr. Thomas Atkins, and likely to raise money for him, only shows his sense of the fitness of things when he tries to be serious; perhaps one ought to say when he tries to be a serious patriot. Mounted on a political platform, he raves at the opposite party in the language of a barrack stable-yard. A few days ago at Tunbridge Wells he declared that the Government took up Home Rule for the sake of their official salaries, and nothing else. Now no Government in the world is quite as bad as that. Men's motives are very mixed, and no man would ever be in politics long enough to reach the post of Cabinet Minister if he had not *some* disinterested desire for the welfare of his fellow citizens. Even that charge against the Liberal Government (of course it never applies to a Conservative Government) does not satisfy Mr. Kipling. He charges the Liberal, Radical, and Socialist members of the House of Commons with "embezzling the public funds" in voting themselves £400. He hasn't heard, apparently, that the Tories, Unionists, Orangemen, and other members of other parties with fancy names, take the "embezzled" money just as cheerfully as the "thieves" who voted it. Neither has he heard that members of Parliament are paid all over the English-speaking world, to say nothing of most foreign lands. Mr. Kipling has made a lot of money by his books; probably hundreds of times more than Shakespeare

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did; better writers than Mr. Kipling have died of starvation in England. His financial success depended on the fact that he found a popular craze ready to his hand and worked it for all it was worth. Upon this stroke of luck it is that he presumes to talk so insolently to some of his decided superiors. Pausing in his Tonbridge Wells speech to take a glass of water, he said "You've got to clear your mouth for such filth." Such are the manners of "the poet of Empire."

* * *

Mr. Kipling, as I understand, is a professed Christian. He is one of those people who are rather for maintaining the Blasphemy Laws than for doing away with them. Freethinkers must be punished for not respecting the feelings of Christians. Had any Freethinker drunk cold water at a public meeting, on the ground that he had to wash his mouth out after talking about such "filthy" things as Christians and Christianity, Mr. Kipling would, we believe, have justified the blasphemous wretch's imprisonment. Thus it always was, and probably ever will be. Those who are quickest in demanding consideration for *their* feelings are slowest in showing consideration for the "feelings" of others.

* * *

I wonder if the picture of Mr. Kipling as a public speaker in Monday's *Daily Mirror* had any valid pretensions to accuracy. The front view made him look all mouth and spectacles below the eyebrows; and the cerebrum above the glasses looked worthy of an imbecile. Don't do it again, Mr. Kipling. Avoid being caricatured in that way. And by your friends, too!

* * *

Tennyson could write what is not very wisely called patriotic verse. The "Revenge," allowing for the defect of too much boasting put into the mouth of the hero, is a magnificent ballad; and the verse at the end, describing the great storm, moves like the rise and fall of the tempest-tossed Atlantic. Mr. Kipling never did work of that kind, but he gained a word of praise from Tennyson for his "English Flag." That was in 1881. His acknowledgment was about as good as it could be:—"When the private in the ranks is praised by the general, he cannot presume to thank him, but he fights the better next day." Mr. Kipling was "clothed and in his right mind" then. He might have been a better poet if he had preserved his modesty. It was well said by Longfellow in his sonnet to Tennyson that the latter was "not of the dancing dervishes of song." Unfortunately that fate overtook Mr. Kipling. And when he mounts partisan platforms he drops the song but wears the costume.

* * *

Shelley was a partisan—in a sense. He espoused the side of the people against their deceivers, oppressors, and exploiters. And what a gentleman he was! But he was a *great* poet.

* * *

The Christians worship the Bible. But worshipers seldom study their idol; if they do they become iconoclasts. "Money is the root of all evil" was quoted lately in the *Daily Mirror*. There is no such text in the Bible. It is "the love of money." If you want to know what the Bible says, ask a Freethinker.

* * *

"The King has been spending five days with his soldiers" a newspaper says. *His* soldiers! Another thing illustrates the superstition of monarchy. The same newspaper, on the same day, described Queen Alexandra as "a miracle of youth and beauty." I don't like discussing a lady's age, or appearance. But I was a schoolboy when Queen Alexandra and the late King Edward were married; and there is no miracle of youth and beauty about me. The author of the *Golden Bough* has shown that kingship, and all that flows from it, is one of the ancient devices for "gulling the mobs to keep them under." The kings ruled but the priests really governed. The king was *their man*. When he wasn't he soon disappeared. Read the history of King Saul—then that of David.

G. W. FOOTE.

Christian Apologetics.

V.—PALEY'S EVIDENCES.

HAVING briefly noticed the so-called "apostolic fathers" and the apologetic work of Irenæus, I will now take two or three examples from the "Evidences" of Paley, in which the testimony of these early writers to the truth of Christianity are adduced. In Prop. I., chap. ix., sec. i., this well-known apologist makes the following confident assertion:—

> "The four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles are quoted, or alluded to, by a series of Christian writers, beginning with those who were contemporary with the apostles, or who immediately followed them, and proceeding in close and regular succession from their time to the present."

This proposition, Paley says, is proved by the "testimonies" which he brings forward from the writings of the following ancient Christians: Barnabas, Clement of Rome, Hermas, Ignatius, Polycarp, Papias, Justin Martyr, Hegesippus, Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen, etc. The four canonical Gospels, as we have already seen, are named and quoted from by Irenæus (A.D. 185); it will therefore be unnecessary to notice the last three writers. It may also be admitted that these four Gospels were written between the years A.D. 185 and 155—and probably in the order Mark, Matthew, John, Luke. The evidence we require is of their existence in apostolic times—say, from A.D. 80 to 70. When it is borne in mind that the apostles were men when called to the apostleship in A.D. 28, we may take it that if they, or their colleagues, wrote anything at all, these writings would have been produced before A.D. 70, and have been known and named by all Christian writers after that date. I will now call Paley's witnesses in the order named, and for convenience will reply to each before he leaves the box.

I. Barnabas, whom Paley calls "the companion of Paul." In the Epistle ascribed to this individual are found the following quotations:—"as it is written, There are many called; few are chosen"—"he came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance"—"Give to every one that asks."

REPLY: The writer of this Epistle was not Paul's Jewish colleague, Barnabas. He was a Gentile Christian, who wrote in the reign of the emperor Hadrian. The first quotation is almost identical with Matt. xxii. 14—"For many are called, but few chosen." The second quotation reads:—

> "But when he chose his apostles, who were to preach the gospel, [he did so] from among those who were sinners above all men, that he might show that *he came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*"

There is nothing in the canonical Gospels which indicates that the apostles were greater sinners than other Jews of their time; neither is this saying employed in those Gospels in connection with the apostles. The quotation is thus given by the three Synoptists:—

> Matt. ix. 13.—"I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."
>
> Mark ii. 17.—"I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."
>
> Luke v. 32.—"I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners *to repentance.*"

Now, this saying was taken by Matthew, Mark, and Luke from a more primitive Gospel, and Barnabas does not give the name of *any* Gospel writer. In the third quotation Barnabas says:—

> "Thou shalt *not hesitate to give*, nor murmur when thou givest. *Give to every one that asks;* so shalt thou know who is the good rewarder of thy *gifts*. Keep what thou *hast received*," etc. (par. xix.).

The nearest parallel to the foregoing in the canonical Gospels reads—

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Matt. v. 42—"*Give to him that asketh* thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away."

I turn next to the "Shepherd," written by Hermas in the second century, and there read:—

"*Give to all the needy* in simplicity, *not hesitating* as to whom you are to give. *Give to all*, for God wishes his *gifts* to be shared among all. They who *have received* will render an account to God, why and for what they had received," etc.

Here it is quite clear that the third "quotation" of Barnabas was not taken from the canonical Matthew, where nothing is said of "not hesitating," or of "receiving," or of "gifts"—all three being found in the "Second Commandment" of the "Shepherd." The other two quotations were derived from the primitive Gospel in use in Barnabas's time.

II. Clement, bishop of Rome, of whom, Paley says, "ancient writers, without any doubt or scruple, assert to have been the Clement whom St. Paul mentions in Phil. iv. 3 as a fellow-worker." This Clement says in his Epistle:—

"Remembering the words of the Lord Jesus.....for thus he said: Be pitiful that ye may be pitied; forgive that it may be forgiven to you; as ye do, so shall it be done to you; as ye give, so shall it be given to you; as ye judge, so shall it be judged to you; as ye show kindness, shall kindness be shown to you; with what measure ye mete, with the same shall it be measured to you."

REPLY: Clement was an honored presbyter of the church at Rome in the second quarter of the second century. One of his duties was that of corresponding with other churches. His quotations were all made from the primitive Gospel. The parallel passages in our Gospels read as follows:—

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (v. 7)—"For if ye forgive men their trespasses your heavenly Father will also forgive you" (vi. 14)—"whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them" (vii. 12)—"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together" (Luke vi. 38)—"For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged" (viii. 2)—"and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you" (viii. 2).

All the foregoing passages, save one, are in Matthew's Gospel. One of Clement's quotations—"as ye show kindness, shall kindness be shown to you"—is not in any of the canonical Gospels.

III. Hermas, who, according to Paley, was the Hermas named in Rom. xvi. 14. His "Shepherd," Paley says, "contains tacit allusions to the Gospels of Matthew, Luke, and John," but without naming, or quoting from, any of them.

REPLY: This book of fabricated visions and revelations was written about A.D. 150. After reading it through carefully, I can find no allusions, tacit or otherwise, to any Gospel.

IV. According to Paley, "Ignatius, as testified by ancient Christian writers, became bishop of Antioch about thirty-seven years after Christ's ascension..... In his Epistles are undoubted allusions to the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. John."

REPLY: Ignatius was bishop of Antioch for nine years, his career being cut short by martyrdom in A.D. 115. The Epistles which bear his name were forged about A.D. 150—160.

V. Polycarp, respecting whom Paley says:—

"Polycarp had been taught by the apostles; had conversed with many who had seen Christ; was also by apostles appointed bishop of Smyrna.....The Epistle of Polycarp contains nearly forty clear allusions to books of the New Testament—more especially to Matthew and Luke."

REPLY: Polycarp suffered martyrdom in A.D. 165; that is to say, 137 years after the call of the apostles (A.D. 28). Paley has simply repeated the erroneous and misleading statements of Irenæus. Polycarp was a Pauline Christian, who thought more of Paul than of all the apostles lumped together. Though Irenæus says he was a disciple of the apostle John, and used to talk of "his familiar intercourse" with that apostle, Polycarp never once names this beloved teacher, nor this teacher's Gospel, in his Epistle; neither does he make any mention of the other apostles, or of Matthew, Mark, or Luke—or their Gospels. To make up for this remissness he quotes from Paul's Epistles about twenty times, and in one place says: "For neither I, nor any such one, can come up to the wisdom of the blessed and glorified Paul" (par. iii.). But Polycarp does quote from a Gospel; he says, for instance:—

"Remember what the Lord said, teaching: '*Judge not, that ye be not judged*; forgive, and it shall be forgiven to you; be pitiful, that ye may be pitied; *with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again*'" (par. ii.).

This first saying is exactly the same as Matt. vii. 1, and the last (omitting one word) the same as Matt. vii. 21. Polycarp would thus appear to have been acquainted with Matthew's Gospel, though the other two sayings are from a more primitive Gospel.

VI. Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, who, Paley says, "was a hearer of the apostle John, and a companion of Polycarp, as Irenæus attests." The fact that Papias names the Gospels of Matthew and Mark "proves that these Gospels must have borne the names of these evangelists at that time, and probably long before."

REPLY: Papias and Polycarp were certainly contemporaries; but it is very unlikely that one ever set eyes on the other. Papias was a hearer, not of the apostle John, but of a presbyter named John, connected with a neighboring church. Eusebius, who had read Papias's book, comments upon the fraudulent statement of Irenæus, and says that it was disproved by what Papias said himself. Though this ancient bishop has named writings by Matthew and Mark, we have no evidence that he saw either; he was merely told of their existence by his friend the presbyter. Both were written in his day (A.D. 130—150), but were not yet known to all the churches. Papias's book contained sayings from "unwritten tradition" and from the "Gospel according to the Hebrews."

VII. Justin Martyr. Of this writer Paley says:—

"In Justin's works, from which might be extracted almost a complete life of Christ, there are but two instances in which he refers to anything as said or done by Christ, which is not related in our present Gospels. One of these is a saying of Christ not met with in any book now extant—'Wherefore also our Lord Jesus Christ has said, In whatsoever I shall find you, in the same I will also judge you.' The other is a circumstance in Christ's baptism—a fiery or luminous appearance upon the water, which is mentioned in the Gospel of the Hebrews.....All the references in Justin are made without mentioning the author, which prove that the four Gospels were perfectly notorious, and that *there were no other accounts then extant*. But although Justin mentions not the author's name, he calls the books 'Memoirs composed by the Apostles.'"

REPLY: In his first Apology (par. 46) Justin states that the Christians of his day "say that Christ was born 150 years ago under Cyrenius." According to this statement, Justin wrote in the year A.D. 156; for Quirinius or Cyrenius came into Judæa to superintend a registration for taxation in the year A.D. 6—and at no other time. At this date the canonical Gospels had all been written, though they might not yet have come into use in many of the churches. If at this time, as Paley states, they were "perfectly notorious," it is strange indeed that Justin never once names one of them. Paley has given two statements of Justin, which are not found in our Gospels: to these I will now make some additions.

(1) and (2)—adduced by Paley as all that are given by Justin.

(3) Justin says: "For Joseph not being able to find a lodging in the village, lodged in a certain cave near the village; and while they were there Mary brought forth the Christ" (Dialogue 78). In the *Protevangelium* it is recorded that, when near Bethlehem, Mary was taken in labor. "And Joseph found a cave there, and led her into it," etc. In this cave Jesus was born.

(4) Justin says of John the Baptist: "He cried as

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he *sat* by the river Jordan"—"while John still *sat* by the river Jordan" (Dial. 49 and 51).

(5) Justin says of the child Jesus: "For even *at his birth* he was in possession of *his power*" (Dial. 88). In the *Gospel of the Infancy* miracles are said to have been wrought by the babe Jesus soon after his birth.

(6) Justin says of the man Jesus: "For when he was among men, he was in the habit of working as a carpenter, making *ploughs and yokes*" (Dial. 88). In the *Gospel of Thomas* it is stated: "And his father was a carpenter, and at that time made *ploughs and yokes*."

(7) Respecting the teaching of Jesus, Justin says: "Brief and concise utterances fell from him, for he was no sophist" (1 Apol. 14). This statement clearly shows that Justin was not acquainted with the Fourth Gospel. Had he read the long rambling discourses there, he could not have made it.

(8) Justin says of Christ's miracles: "But though they saw such works they asserted it was magical art. For they dared to call him a magician and a deceiver of the people" (Dial. 69). In the apocryphal *Acts of Pilate*, the Jews accused Jesus of working miracles by the aid of magic, after which "they say again, 'Did we not say that he was a magician?'"

(9) Justin says of the mockery at the trial: "For also they reviled him, and set him upon the judgment seat, and said 'Judge us'" (1 Apol. 35). No such proceedings are recorded in the canonical Gospels.

(10) Justin says: "And that these things did happen, you can ascertain from the *Acts of Pontius Pilate*"—"And that he did these things, you can learn from the *Acts of Pontius Pilate*" (1 Apol. 35 and 48). Here we have two plain references to the apocryphal *Gospel of Nicodemus* or *Acts of Pilate*, which Justin cites as a proof of the actual occurrence of certain circumstances he had just mentioned—which circumstances are all found in the extant *Acts of Pilate*.

It is unnecessary to go further. Justin was acquainted with most of the alleged facts contained in the three Synoptical Gospels (and found also in the primitive Gospel), as well as with the stories in the apocryphal Gospels; but as he has never once named Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John, or professed to draw anything from their Gospels, I can see no reason for gratuitously crediting him with a knowledge of them—though all four were in existence when he wrote.

Here I bring this inquiry to a close; for Paley's next witness, Hegesippus, wrote about A.D. 180.

Looking back now at Paley's opening statement—that "the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles" can be shown to have been in existence from the apostolic age—I can only say that such an assertion is truly apologetic. As a simple matter of fact, we have not a scrap of evidence which proves that any one of the five books named was written in apostolic times, or in any part of the first century. Like all modern Christian Evidencers, Paley appears to have had no idea that the Synoptical Gospels contain within themselves conclusive proof that all three were derived from pre-existing writings—whose originators are unknown.

ABRACADABRA.

Those Wasted Years.

WE met again after the lapse of nearly a quarter of a century. I was the speaker at a weekly Socialist meeting, he was one of the audience, and certainly about the last person of all my former acquaintances whom I would have expected to meet at such a place.

When last we parted on the shore (so to speak), the wild waves were saying something about the mysterious ways of God in planting his footsteps in the sea and riding upon the storm. We had both attended the same Bible class in that long ago, and doubtless considered ourselves very good Christians and firmly rooted in the faith.

The Bible class consisted of thirty or forty young men, and was connected with the Presbyterian church of which I had previously been a Sunday-school scholar. We sat around a huge table circled by two rows of seats. The teacher was a Presbyterian elder, but scarcely a typical one, being of a strongly evangelical turn of mind. A schoolmaster by profession, he was one of the most narrow-minded and bigoted men it has ever been my misfortune to meet. I do not say this with any disrespect to his memory. He was naturally kind and genial, and was possessed of a sense of humor quite unusual in a Presbyterian elder. But anything in the shape of heresy or heterodoxy, or that did not agree with his own doctrinal views, seemed to shrivel up all that was human in him. I remember well one Sunday afternoon when the subject of conversation related to the life of the hereafter and the condition of the soul in the intermediate state. For some reason or other, he appealed to me for my views on the subject. I have never had much hesitancy at any time in stating my beliefs, and I replied that I was certainly of the opinion, as the Scriptures themselves state, that "the dead know not anything." The effect of this innocent reply was a display of Christian bigotry that I have never forgotten. Rising from his seat, with all the scorn he could command, this teacher warned the whole class to shun me as a viper. "I warn you all," he said, "to have no dealings with that fellow [mentioning me by name], not even to speak to him." Whether it was the magnanimity of my nature, or the passive effect produced by my religious teaching and environment, I can truthfully say that I did not then, or ever afterwards, feel the least resentment towards the perpetrator of such outrageous conduct. This same zealous servant of God, only a short time ago, on his way to conduct a Sunday morning service, without a word of divine warning, or the chance to bid farewell to those he loved, suddenly dropped down dead in the public street. Which is certainly not very convincing evidence that God's own people, as Christians delight to call themselves, are subjects of his especial care—especially when we set such a dreadful end against the fact that the Atheist is often allowed to die peacefully in his bed.

But to return to my friend. At the close of the meeting, our conversation turned upon the days when we both attended the Bible class, and the influences which had brought about our changed outlook upon life. I found that the evolution of his mind had progressed along lines very similar to my own. It was the utter failure of Christianity in the industrial world to secure anything like economic justice to the toiling masses that had first shaken his faith in the orthodox creed. The later realisation of its failure in every other sphere of life to give a satisfactory answer to the many questions that present themselves to the thinking mind, led to its ultimate rejection. My friend had also come to see that religion, with its hope of a future recompense for the evils and miseries of the present life, was taught the people very largely for economic reasons. The contentment with the present unjust social conditions, which was taught by the Churches as a Christian virtue, was in reality the suppression of all that was noble and manly and dignified in human nature. If the social lot of the toiling masses was ever to be improved, it would not be by religion, but by the application of human thought and human effort. "And to think," he said, "of the years that we wasted sitting round the table of that Bible class, listening to talk which had no relation to any of the concerns of life."

Wasted years! Such was his verdict upon the time we spent listening to the childish fairy tales of a smiling face hiding behind a frowning providence, and a home beyond the skies, and the attempts of the teacher to produce something like theological order out of the chaos of inspired Scripture. My friend, as I afterwards learnt, was not by any means the only member of that class who had come to regard those years in the same light; and it would certainly be interesting to know how many retained the narrow creed they were then taught.

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It may be that in the course of years some are dead and gone to glory; but others, I know for certain, went all to the dogs. While the present writer, sad to relate, became a contributor to the *Freethinker*.

It is surely a serious indictment of religion if it can be substantiated that it is responsible for the waste of so much valuable time. If time be the stuff that life is made of, it has robbed many of us of years of life. To sit in the Sunday-school year after year, singing "There is a happy land far, far away," when we should have been learning to appreciate and admire the many beauties and wonders of the visible world, is not only a waste of childhood's years, it is a sin against its future. To teach a child that man's chief end is to glorify God, and, by implication, that its duties to its parents, its relations, and society are of only secondary or minor importance, is to distort its views of life's claims and responsibilities. It is wasting the time that might otherwise be profitably used to inculcate practical truths which in after life would bear valuable fruit. What matters it that the streets of the New Jerusalem are paved with gold, if want and poverty be the portion of so many here and now, and the wherewithal for present needs be a source of constant anxiety? What matters it that there are mansions above, if countless thousands are compelled to pass the only life they know in disreputable, unhealthy, and overcrowded hovels? Better to improve the life we know than wait for another that we know not of.

The history of Christianity, beginning with its suppression of Greek and Roman culture, and the subsequent long reign of ignorance and superstition; its insistence on the futility of moral effort in effecting any human improvement, and the absurd value it placed on *faith*, all bear witness to the sterility of religious teaching, and constitute a complete justification of its indictment as a time-waster. It has had the control of our intellectual and social life for twenty centuries, and all that it thought necessary to offer for our guidance was contentment with present conditions, no matter how unjust or oppressive, and the Bible, as containing all that it was necessary for man to know.

The few wasted years lamented by my friend are but a drop in the ocean of the centuries of wasted time and life for which Christianity is responsible. Fortunately, the steadily decreasing membership of the Churches is evidence that a growing number of people are finding a better use for their time than to dance attendance upon the preachers of a good time coming—*when you're dead*.

JOSEPH BRYCE.

Priests Afraid of Ridicule.

WHEREVER the priests have the most power, religion has the least. Being neither appointed by the law of Nature, nor the law of Christ, they are only intruders into the affairs of religions; which is therefore under a usurpation, while it is under them. So that their foundation being false, they are in most countries reduced to support it by false facts and deceitful appearances. And as they are thus obliged to cover fraud with fraud, and support one violence by another, it is no wonder that we find it often so carefully hidden under inventions, and deformed by absurdities; and all those inventions and absurdities defended by cruelty and a strong hand.

This strange jumble of fictions they have the front to call by the holy name of *religion*, and gravely to create faith out of lies. And with the grovelling multitude, whose eyes are in the earth, all this passes off well enough. They have fearful hearts and simple heads, and so stand always prepared to be frightened or deluded at the priestly word of command. But because the craft lies subject to daily detection from rational and discerning men, its champions have raised loud cries and strong prejudices against the two principal weapons, by which their cause is most annoyed; I mean the weapons of reason and ridicule; the former of which discovers truth, and the latter exposes fraud.

What civil treatment these reverend *seers* afford to *reason*, I have shown elsewhere; and shall handle in this paper, the business of *ridicule*, which they always represent as impious and profane, whenever it meddles with the cassock; and yet always exercise it according to their talents, without mercy, when the waggish grave creatures are pleased to be arch upon Dissenters or Freethinkers.

To them is no doubt owing, that frequent but false saying, now in the mouth of every ignorant; namely, that it is an easy matter to make a jest upon religion or the priesthood, which, whether they are aware of it or not, is saying that their religion and its priests are a jest. For he, upon whom the jest is made, does, in effect, make the jest; otherwise it is none. Religion and virtue cannot be ridiculed; and whoever attempts it, by showing himself a villain, raises horror instead of laughter, which is the end of ridicule. But the vending of grimace for religion, and setting up for piety without virtue, are the natural subjects of jeer and merriment.

Whoever fears ridicule, deserves ridicule. He is conscious of a weak side, and knows that he cannot stand a laugh. This is the case of sacred grimace, or gravity, which men of sense see to be only a studied restraint laid upon the muscles of the face, and the joints of the body, and teaching them to move, not by the impulses of nature, and the motions of the heart, but by design, either to attract admiration, or obtain credit, or gain followers. And therefore sacred grimace dreads men of sense. However, it is never to be set aside; for this same affected demureness, ridiculous as it is in itself, is a solemn bait to catch the mob, whose respect always follows their wonder. The vulgar are caught, like woodcocks, by the eyes, and led, like calves, by the ears; show and sound lead their fat heads captive. It is therefore no wonder, that in popish countries, a showy chancel, a curious tall steeple, gilded organs, and a delicate ring of bells, keep the many on the parson's side, make them all good churchmen; and always get the better of a plain religion, that has its abode only in the heart, and wants all the above-mentioned marks of the true church. Besides all this, there is more mirth and more holy days in their orthodox faith, than in the contrary scheme, which obliges men to earn heaven with the sweat of their brows, and take pains to be saved.

These, however, are but small instances of ridicule, taken from the force and grimace of an external religion. I shall here give instances much more considerable, as well as much more ridiculous. Do we not see the pretended successors of the apostles, at home and elsewhere, instead of making tents, or converting the world, living voluptuously, and promoting the excise? Do we not frequently see the ambassadors of God, sent to promote virtue and peace, and the observance of his laws, promoting strife, frequenting debauched houses, rooking after wealth, and plaguing and reviling their neighbors? Do we not see holy men, who have the call of the spirit, rioting in all the works of the flesh? Do they not buy livings with money, and then claim them by divine right? Do they not chop and jockey away poor parishes for such as are richer, and yet pretend to have upon their hands the cure of souls; though, by such vile bargaining, they show that they value as little those souls which they have just bought, as they do those which they have lately sold? Do not many of them, though they are void of all merit, yet demand great respect; and though ignorant, pretend to teach and to reveal God's will which is already revealed, and yet live as though there were no God? And do they not, without obeying God, set up to command men? Do they not seek honor from their cloth which yet they dishonor; and do they not for the blackest crimes claim sanctuary from the church, which church is the people, which people they abuse and deceive? Do they not pretend to mend others, but in truth more idle and proud than all others; two qualities neither suited to the welfare of religion nor of human society? Do they not flatter and support the worst of tyrants, plague and distress, and often destroy the best of kings; and in both cases, do they not belie the Holy Ghost, and pervert his meaning? Do they not pretend to be appointed for the good of mankind, and yet always make mankind, wherever they have power, thoroughly miserable, base, poor, ignorant, and wicked? And finally, do they not invent vile lies for vile ends, and then blasphemously make God Almighty to father them?

Here is such a motley mixture of opposite principles and practices, as will always render those who are chargeable with them, the contempt or abhorrence of all men who have eyes and understanding. Jest and scorn will subsist as long as their causes subsist; and clergymen, of all others, will be most exposed to them, while they continue to deserve them, because more modesty, truth, and consistency may be expected from them than from any others. It is but a piece of justice due to religion to ridicule those who, as far as they can, ridicule religion, though they set up for its defenders. Ridicule, when it has no longer matter to feed on, will die of itself; and the clergy, to avoid it, have no more to do but not to deserve it; but to go on complaining, without amendment, is to nourish raillery and satire, by their own actions.—*Thomas Gordon*, "*Independent Whig*."

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BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15 and 6.15, C. Cohen, Lectures.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 5.45, W. Davidson, a Lecture.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.30, J. W. Marshall, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, J. W. Marshall, "The Myth of God"; 7.30, Miss K. B. Kough, "Christianity v. Humanity."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Finsbury Park): 11.30, Mr. Hecht, a Lecture. Parliament Hill: 3.30, Arthur J. Minton, M.A., "What Secularism Owes to the Theologian." Regent's Park (near the Fountain): 3.30, Mr. Rowney, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, Mr. Finch, "The Folly of Being Good."

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The golden rule is that there are no golden rules.
—G. B. SHAW.

Blessed Are the Meek.

NOTHING could be more misnamed than the Sermon on the Mount. It is obviously not a sermon at all, and never could have been delivered straight off to one congregation. In reality it is a collection of religious and ethical maxims, of various value and significance; maxims that had, in one form or another, been floating about the East for many centuries.

The so-called Sermon on the Mount has always been highly lauded in the pulpit, although its teaching has very rarely been reduced to practice, even by those who most vaunted their piety and devotion to Christ. Divines and casuists have, indeed, taught us how to violate every injunction with a good conscience. Where the text is too hard for mortal virtue we have only to regard it as a counsel of perfection, instead of a positive command; and nobody is to be damned for not taking advice. There have always been some mystics, like William Law, for instance, who insisted on the literalness of Christ's teaching. You might not be able to attain to the "Christian Perfection" of the Sermon on the Mount, but you were bound to attempt it, on peril of your eternal damnation.

Other exhorters take the Sermon on the Mount with large grains of salt. They indulge in the greatest liberality of interpretation, and really give us a new Sermon on the Mount, containing not what Jesus Christ did say, but what he would have said if he had possessed the art of making himself understood. It is very kind on their part to make him intelligible, and we hope he is duly sensible of the obligation; but, at the same time, it is to be wished that they were a little more intelligible themselves, and a little more in harmony with each other.

Perhaps the most difficult text for the kind ingenuity of these gentlemen is "Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth." The two halves of this text are as opposed to each other as the front benches in the House of Commons. A table in the one case, and a semi-colon in the other, divides them; but they eternally face each other in an everlasting antagonism.

Meekness is a virtue of which few men are ever proud—if we may be pardoned such a paradox. It is generally commended in others. What it exactly means is rather to be determined by etymology than example. "Moses was very meek above all men," says the Bible (Numbers xii. 3); but as his meekness was capable of rising to murder, we had better drop the illustration. Johnson defines *meek* as "mild of temper; not proud; not rough; not easily provoked; soft; gentle." That is, *meek* is *meek*, for this is all the definition comes to. Richardson is not more helpful, although he gives a long and valuable series of extracts, showing the use of the word by English writers. It is the more scientific Skeat who throws a real light upon the matter. *Meek* appears to be a compound of softness and pliability. The meek person is a piece of human dough, that can be kneaded and moulded by others. A dog is meek when he takes a licking; a woman is meek when she stands any amount of male brutality; and a man is meek when he bows his head to another man's arrogance. Meekness is passive; it can hardly rise to the level of an active virtue; and perhaps it is only not a vice on the principle that it is better to suffer wrong than to inflict it; the *best* thing being to do *neither*.

Whether meekness be good, bad, or indifferent, it will certainly never enable one to "possess the earth." The land of this kingdom is mostly owned by the aristocracy, and they are a remarkably meek body of men. According to Jesus Christ, we have only to be meek enough, and the lords will give us back the land. "Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth." So they will, so they will—in coffins!

So exquisite is the absurdity of this text that an owl might laugh at it. That is, the text as it stands. But you must not let it stand; you must knock it about, twist it and turn it; and it will look a highly respectable piece of morality. Keep, "inherit," but play the devil with the "earth." Make it mean something else; make it mean anything. Tackle it like Bishop Porteus, who wrote as follows: "By inheriting the earth, he [Jesus] meant inheriting those things which are, without question, the greatest blessings upon earth, calmness and composure of spirit, tranquillity, cheerfulness, and comfort of mind. Now these, I apprehend, are the peculiar portion and recompense of the meek."

There now, you meek people, this is your inheritance of the earth. Not broad acres and big rents, not so much as a moderate-sized farm, not even three acres and a cow; but calmness, composure, tranquillity, cheerfulness, comfort, and such blessings, are to be your "recompense"; that is what you will get by giving up the tangible possessions to the people who are not meek, but very much the reverse. They have the solid property, and you have the spiritual blessings which are promised to poverty and meekness.

Jesus Christ may have meant this—only this, and nothing more; but, in that case, what an unfortunate way he had of expressing himself! It takes a bishop to penetrate the obscurity of his metaphors, and even then a great deal has to be taken on trust from the episcopal interpreter.

Let us brush away these subtleties. It appears to us that if Jesus Christ did not mean what he said, it is impossible to say what he did mean. The secret perished with him, and "interpretations" are only conjectures.

The plain truth is that the poor never were blessed, and never will be. Wiser than Jesus Christ was the old Hebrew who prayed for neither riches nor poverty, but the golden mean of sufficiency. Nor will the meek ever inherit the earth. Certainly they have not yet made a beginning. If the people are to become possessed of the land, which is their natural birthright, they will have to abandon meekness, and stand up resolutely for justice. Popular rights are never conceded; they are always wrested from the privileged classes. Kings and aristocracies give way slowly before democratic pressure. Every step of progress involves a heavy battle. And the Church has always befriended the wealthy and titled usurpers, preaching meekness to the people in order that they might *not* inherit the earth.

G. W. FOOTE.

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Does Man Need Religion?

MODERN religion is very largely a matter of phrases. By long usage certain expressions have acquired a value that does not naturally belong to them, but which, by the mere fact of tradition and custom, exert all the authority of rationally established propositions. Words and expressions of a certain kind become, as Oliver Wendell Holmes said, polarised. Particular implications have gathered round them, and these implications prevent those who hear them subjecting them to a careful and rational examination. They do not impose only upon those who hear them; they are equally effective with those who use them. The speaker or writer drugs himself before handing on the narcotic for the use of listener or reader. Observe the solemn and reverential way in which a Christian speaks of the Jesus of the New Testament or the God of the Bible. And consider the difference if the words Joshua and Jahveh were used in their place. Both would mean exactly the same, but in the latter case time has not been busy weaving the same associations, and the mind is left freer to examine the statements placed before it.

This is, indeed, one of the difficulties before the Freethought propagandists. Most of my readers will be familiar with the old *Punch* cartoon of two costers quarreling, and the friends of one of them urging him to "say somefink." "How can I?" was the reply, "'e's bin and gorn and used up all the best words." It is much the same with religion. Being first in the field, and having such a long start, religion has, so to speak, cornered all the best words. It has dominated life for so long that naturally it has become the hardest of tasks to purify the non-religious aspects of life of their religious associations. And the more insecure the fundamental religious beliefs become, the more strenuously religions struggle to retain the use of words that appeal powerfully to man's social nature. Truth, justice, morality, aspiration, idealism, etc,, are all used as though they were parts of essential religion, and by constant association quite separate things are regarded as identical. The tactical advantage given to the religionist by this policy is obvious. The Freethinker is made to appear as fighting against certain things when, as a matter of fact, he is only contending for their independent existence and value.

I was reminded of this truth while turning over the pages of a work by a well-known writer on philosophy, and coming across an expression referring to "Freethinkers whose attitude to the religious problem proves how little sense they have of the deepest human needs." This is a common expression, and in the usual way one passes it by without particular notice. But when a writer of the rank of Hoffding uses it, one may be excused paying it a little attention. Not that its use by him gives it any greater measure of truth; it only becomes more impressive to a certain type of mind. For my own part, I do not hesitate to say that its use is no more than an illustration of the truth that even eminent thinkers are not secure against the tyranny of phrases. For a little independent thinking on the question would at least have shown Hoffding that whether religion is one of man's deepest needs or not is one of the principal issues between the religionist and the Freethinker.

On what ground can it be argued that religion is one of man's deepest needs? Is it that religion is, in a general sense, universal? No Freethinker will dispute that proposition. Human societies everywhere have developed some sort of a religion. That is admitted. The Freethinker is the first to point to the truth of this, and his philosophy is in nowise disturbed by the admission. For on that he has two comments to make. The first is explanatory. He points out under what conditions religious beliefs originate. He shows that they are natural, and therefore inevitable to the human mind at one stage of its development. They do not emphasise a need, they merely express a conclusion that ignorance everywhere draws in the face of phenomena not properly understood.

The second comment is that if religion is, indeed, man's deepest need, it should become more firmly established, more difficult to eradicate, as the race grows older. But everyone knows that the very opposite of this is the case. All over the civilised world religion sits lightly upon an increasing number of people. Millions have rejected it altogether. How, then, can religion be called one of man's deepest needs? A deep and fundamental need cannot be suppressed. If a need is suppressed, its superficial character is demonstrated. But here is something that men and women can get on without; they are —in the light of every rational test—none the worse for being without it. They confess to no sense of loss at its absence. And their number precludes their case being dismissed as the manifestation of an abnormality. It is sheer folly to speak of, as man's deepest need, something that millions deliberately reject, and which is weakening even with those who still retain it.

Let me emphasise the fact that reaching the Freethought position is essentially a question of growth. This is true both historically and individually. The further back we go in human history —taking things generally—the more religious we find people as a whole. The non-religious man is unknown to primitive society. For good or ill, he is a product of civilisation, of culture, of acquired and inherited knowledge. And, individually, it is a simple and easily verified truth that the overwhelming majority of non-religious men and women commenced their lives with a belief in religion. Their Freethought represents sheer growth. Religious belief antedates advanced culture both historically and individually. The man who never thinks about religion, who never tests its teachings, remains a supporter of religion. I do not mean by this that the man who remains religious never thinks about it. Such a statement would be absurd. He may think and *may* remain religious; if he does not think, he is certain to continue so. But the man who does not think about it cannot become a Freethinker. In the main, religion in civilised society is something that a man inherits; it is due to no mental activity on his part. On the other hand, Freethought is something he acquires. He must think. Rightly or wrongly he must use his intelligence. It is a question of growth. And the problem of perpetual motion is simple compared to the task of explaining the process by which man outgrows his deepest need.

The notion that religion is man's deepest need is pure fallacy. It is not even his most enduring need. By a mere accident of association religion has been connected with all the more important affairs. The reign of the priesthood has secured the connection of religion with marriage, with the family, with birth, and with death. It has secured it a place in private and public life, and given religion authority to which it has no valid claim. But the whole process of civilisation consists in breaking down this connection, and in secularising human life. And if this is accomplished; if the purely social aspect of human life, from the cradle to the grave, is once recognised, how long will religion maintain its power? The essential nature of religion is contained in one word —supernaturalism. Divest religion of this, and all that is left is a mere name. And it is not the Freethinker only who says that the supernatural does not exist. It is the message of all modern scientific thought.

What need of human nature is there that is dependent upon religion? It is certainly not the need for beauty, for art, for poetry, for literature. All these have existed, and do exist, quite apart from religion. Family life, with all the affections that cluster round domesticity, are independent of religion. Social existence is equally independent. In all these instances religion does not help; it is helped. When

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appeals are made, in the name of religion, for social justice, what is it that is touched—man's sense of justice or his religious belief? By nature, man is not a religious animal at all. As I have already said, that is something he acquires. But man *is* a social animal; and nothing can rob him of that quality without destroying his character as a human being. In short, once we get above the stage of primitive life, religion ever after lives by exploiting human nature. It has taught people to express themselves in terms of religion, much as the feeling of social solidarity is made to express itself in terms of personal loyalty to a reigning monarch. Those who look a little deeper into things, however, know that just as a feeling of loyalty to a king is no more than an accidental expression of the feeling of social unity, created and strengthened by generations of social life, so the connection of religion with the real needs of life is by nature accidental, and is doomed to disappear as man becomes aware of the true nature of the social forces.

The Freethinker is not, then, blind to the "deepest human needs." On the contrary, he is keenly alive to their reality and importance. His opposition to religion is not based upon ignoring certain aspects of human nature, but upon recognising all and allowing for all. It is too often assumed that the Freethinker denies the "facts" of the religious life. He does not; he recognises them all and explains them all. The issue is not one of a dispute about "facts" or "needs," it is really a dispute on a matter of interpretation. Are we to accept the naturalistic or the supernaturalistic interpretation? That is the whole issue and there never has been any other. The Freethinker admits the value of much that the modern religionist talks so much about, but he points out that complete satisfaction for every aspect of human life is to be found apart from religion. And the proof of the truth of this is found in the fact that such satisfaction *is* found. Millions of men and women, neither the least worthy nor the least intelligent, are finding to-day in social life all that the religionist finds in connection with religion, and their doing so is really conclusive. For just as the majority of these were once religionists, so religionists will one day be where they are. They have passed through the religious phase of development; and their having passed through it is proof, not that religion is one of man's deepest needs, but that it is a new phase of his development, and is to-day as reminiscent of a lower culture-stage as many parts of the body are reminiscent of his simian ancestry.

C. COHEN.

The Beginning of the End.

IT will be remembered that a few weeks ago the Upper House of the Convocation of Canterbury discussed the various attacks that have been made upon the Christian Faith as embodied in the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds, and passed resolutions reaffirming the Church's loyalty to those historical documents. The resolutions were moved by the Bishop of London. The Bishop of Hereford moved a mild amendment for which only three cast their votes, and thus the resolutions were adopted with practical unanimity. According to one speaker, the Church of England was in danger of becoming a secular organisation. On one occasion, while on his holidays, his lordship had the unhappy experience of hearing two extraordinary sermons, the one not naming "our Lord or Christ or Jesus or even God" from beginning to end, and the other being a deliberate attack throughout upon the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection. Incontrovertibly the Bishops acted wisely in issuing a fresh declaration in support of the great creeds. As a matter of fact, Christianity is completely rooted in the miraculous. The Gospel Jesus is a miraculous being who cannot be placed in any known category. Being himself the greatest of all miracles, he naturally performed miracles; and to those who believe in him as such, the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection, and the Ascension are most credible events. The twenty-five Bishops who declared their complete and firm adhesion to the orthodox faith must be regarded as the apostles' genuine successors. They stand just exactly where Peter and Paul stood, and their Christianity is identical with that contained in the New Testament. As Dr. Ingram well said:—

> "The Gospel was shorn of its power when the facts on which it rests were doubted or denied; the Gospel was a Gospel of deeds rather than words. Why otherwise should so many chapters be devoted to the death of Christ? Why should the Apostles have preached Jesus and the resurrection?"

Such has always been the creed of the true Church, and we know at what terrific cost she has often fought for it. To its doubters and deniers she has never shown the least mercy. Some of us remember with what awful cruelty she persecuted the famous Dr. Colenso because he ventured to criticise the Pentateuch, and the Bishop of Oxford maintains that, though she made many mistakes, her opposition to him was fully justifiable. Colenso's offence was that he attacked the belief in the infallibility of the Word of God; and in the controversy that raged so furiously for many years the facts which his criticism had brought to light did not count at all. The Church's doctrine of inspiration could not be assailed with impunity. To find mistakes in God's Book was an unpardonable sin. Bishop Colenso was paid for defending, not assaulting, the Bible. Whether the Virgin Birth, or the Resurrection, happened or not, is not the point at issue, but the fact that it is an article of the faith which every clergyman is ordained to hold and teach. What the Bishops are now entitled to say to every minister in their dioceses is this: If you are an honest man you will leave the Church the moment you cease to believe the Articles of Religion. Now, to a man who really believes in an omnipotent God the question of miracles should present no difficulty whatever. If such a being exists, he can do anything he likes. It is to us utterly incomprehensible that people who call themselves Christians should boggle at miracles. To a believer in the supernatural, the miraculous should follow almost as a matter of course. Dr. Sanday disapproves very strongly of the step taken by the Bishops because, though a minister of the Church of England and a Professor of Divinity at Oxford, he rejects some of the miracles; but he is aware of the insecurity of his position, for in his *Bishop Gore's Challenge to Criticism*, just published, he says:—

> "I was not disposed to put any limit to the Divine power or to ascribe any necessity to natural law as such. I did not for a moment doubt the power of God to make what exceptions he pleased. I only asked for better evidence of his will to make them" (p. 22).

To this the Bishop might reply that no evidence is required other than the continuous testimony of the Church. It is difficult to understand what other evidence could be expected. If the Church is what the New Testament represents her to be her testimony ought to be entirely convincing for all her members, and specially to all her ministers.

The *Church Times*, for May 15, informs us that "there are some who will think that the words of Dr. Sanday alone weigh more than the words of the whole Episcopate," and it must be admitted that as a critic he has done excellent and enduring work; but, our contemporary continues, "our present point is that Dr. Sanday rejects the testimony of the Church, rejects the interpretation of the Creeds put upon them by the authority of the Church, and claims for himself and others the right to exercise the teaching office in the Church with complete independence of judgment." We agree with the *Church Times*. We fail to see how those who reject the Christian miracles can reasonably claim to be Christians. In what respect do they differ from the Unitarians, or from those who call themselves Liberal Christians? We repudiated the belief in

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miracles only because we had ceased to believe in the truth of Christianity itself. We renounced the miraculous because we had already lost the supernatural. If no exceptions to natural law are ever made the supernatural is perfectly useless, and all the claims made for Christianity fall to the ground.

The Bishop of London asserted that, in the absence of miracles, the Gospel is shorn of its power; but we hold that the Gospel never had any power of its own. The Church has been a power in history, and almost always an evil power; but apart from the Church, Christianity has been absolutely non-existent. For many years Jehovah was carried about in a wooden box, and the Christian God has been imprisoned in the Church all through the centuries. The Church's testimony is the sole evidence of his existence, and this carries no weight whatever except with believers. The truth is that the power which the Gospel is alleged to possess and exercise is the power of the people who preach it. The Christ believed in by the Church has never existed except as an object of belief. Dr. Ingram was wholly right when he said that if a non-miraculous Christ were accepted by the Church to-day the next generation would go a step further and think of "the Palestinian Jew moving on the stage of history" as nothing but a deluded man, or as a wholly unhistorical character. All the Bishops were alive to the fact that their Church is gradually drifting away from sound doctrine, and beginning to trample the venerable creeds under her feet. The fact which they so profoundly deplored causes us great rejoicing. The Bishop of Chelmsford stated that on Freethought platforms now, the names of Voltaire, Paine, and Bradlaugh are seldom heard:—

> "A new type had arisen. The appeal of the street corner Infidel was now to the names of writers who were professedly connected with the Christian Church. It might be crude, but it was a great danger. He was speaking some time ago on the authority of the Bible, and a man said: 'You come here and ask us to receive the Bible and the facts of the Bible, and you know that learned men at Oxford and Cambridge tell us that Genesis is a myth and a fable, and others tell us that the first three chapters of St. Luke are not to be believed literally. You have a man at Westminster who criticises everything.'"

Voltaire, Paine, and Bradlaugh did not live in vain. Their labors are now bearing abundant fruit everywhere. Such men as Canon Cheyne and the late Canon Driver have done more to dethrone the Bible than any avowed Freethinker. They are undermining the very religion whose champions they profess to be—a fact for which we are devoutly thankful.

It is not likely that the resolutions so enthusiastically passed by the Upper House of the Convocation of Canterbury will do much to check the rationalising tendency which is so powerful just now in the English Church. Probably they will serve only to strengthen and quicken it. Criticism has come to stay, and reverence is foreign to it. It is the sworn enemy of superstition. It has done great havoc to the orthodoxy of so great a theologian as Dr. Sanday. He has moved considerably since he wrote his famous pamphlet against Dr. Conybeare, and is evidently still moving. He has been as angry now with the Bishops as he was then with the author of *Myth, Magic, and Morals*. Yes, there is a stream of Freethought making for itself a channel within the National Church, and all the Bishops are powerless to turn it back. They may call it all the bad names in their vocabulary, they may move innumerable resolutions against it, but it will flow on and grow stronger under their noses. It is the spirit of the age. It is reason awaking from its long sleep.

J. T. LLOYD.

We are free, and do not want a thundering tyrant; we are grown up, and require no fatherly care. Nor are we the bungled workman of a great mechanic. Deism is a religion for slaves, for children, for Genevese, for watchmakers.—*Heine, "Germany."*

The Tyranny of Terror.

"Goblin Market," "The Prince's Progress," and Other Poems. By Christina Rossetti. The World's Classics. (Oxford Press.)

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI enjoyed the rare privilege of being treated in her own lifetime as a classic author. Now that her complete poetical works are published in a single volume, and reprints of other poems are being made constantly, the final seal of honor may be said to have been set on a great and deserved reputation. That such fame will lessen there is not much reason to anticipate, for it has been founded on the slowly formed but sure appreciation of all good critics and lovers of real literature. It is noteworthy that one family should have produced two such eminent poets as Christina and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Christina shared with her brother the delight in mediæval coloring and theme, and in the sensuous appeal of verse; but, unlike Dante Gabriel, she had a strong strain of superstition in her character, and she soon lost her vision of a brightly hued and romantic world, and turned her eyes to the contemplation of purely religious subjects.

Almost from the first, her verse exhibited a definite personality. It is perhaps her sex which renders her lyrics more bird-like than her brother's verses. It can be nothing but her own constant experience of ill-health which made her dwell constantly on the morbid side of religion.

Death, which to Swinburne seemed own brother to sleep, was to her a more horrific shape, and was a perennial subject for her verse. The constant burden of her muse was the mutability of human affairs. And when to her physical ailments were added love disappointments entirely caused by religious bigotry, there is small difficulty in understanding how Christina Rossetti became a devotional poet; and one of such distinction that only Crashaw, Donne, and Vaughan can be held her compeers. And Donne, be it remembered, mitigated his raptures concerning the Savior by writing poems on such less sacred subjects as seeing his mistress getting into bed.

Many of Christina Rossetti's poems are very short, and are concerned with trite religious themes. In nothing is her undoubted power so much shown as in the fact that so few are commonplace. Had she not had genius, they might have sunk to the ordinary level of pietistic verse, orthodox in purpose and contemptible in execution. The only trait she has in common with the ordinary hymn writers is a certain morbidity in dwelling on the idea of mortality and the pathological side of religion. She disemboweled the Bible. Her brother, Mr. W. M. Rossetti, has even said that if "all those passages which were directly or indirectly dependent upon what can be found in the Bible" had been taken out of Christina's verse, it "would have been reduced to something approaching a vacuum."

Starting her poetical career as the one lady member of the Pre-Raphaelite enthusiasts, she, naturally, showed the effect of that romantic spirit in her first mature poem, "Goblin Market," and in the less extravagant "Prince's Progress," both of which have all the glow and rich tints of William Morris's early works. The meditative and introspective sonnets of even her later years have much in common with this early artistic impulse. But what a change was there! It is impossible not to deplore the narrowing down of Christina Rossetti's poetic interest. Here was a woman of warm blood and a passionate sense of beauty, who with better health and satisfied affections might have interpreted the joy of life. Instead, she turned with morbid pleasure to the contemplation of the fancied delights of a barren religiosity. She was a paradox, an anomaly; a Puritan among Anglo-Catholics, a nun outside the Great Lying Church. Necessarily preoccupied as she was with attenuated religious emotions, her melody with difficulty escapes monotony. And yet again and again the old

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romantic instinct will out. The truth is, she was not a sacred, but, in the highest sense of the word, a secular poet. Her religious bias forced her sympathies into wrong channels. To the real world she became indifferent. With actual life, its questionings, its humors, its perplexities, its despairs, its hopes, its loves, there is no sympathy in her poetry. Beyond the wall of her residence her tired eyes saw but a mad world rushing to perdition. Her idea of wisdom is to withdraw from the tumult into an inner shrine of pious meditation, disturbed only by anxiety for the fate of the Christian Church.

Her piety was essentially of the womanly, prayerful, submissive kind, so attractive to priests of all ages and all countries. It asks no questions, it is posed by no problems. It only kneels in adoring awe. Naturally, her picture of "the world" is grim and forbidding, as given in one of the most vigorous and fantastic of her sonnets:—

"By day she woos me, soft exceeding fair,
But all night as the moon so changeth she,
Loathsome and foul with hideous leprosy,
And subtle serpents gliding in her hair.
By day she woos me to the outer air,
Ripe fruits, sweet flowers, and full satiety:
But through the night a beast she grins at me,
A very monster void of love and prayer.
By day she stands a lie: by night she stands
In all the naked horror of the truth,
With pushing horns and clawed and clutching hands.
Is this a friend, indeed, that I should sell
My soul to her, give me my life and youth,
Till my feet, cloven too, take hold on hell?"

She does not overlook Nature; but, if she notices natural beauties, flowers, birds, it is always through a religious haze. Despite her "nest of new-born sweets," she seldom arrests with vivid, triumphant phrase. She could not rise to the art of Coleridge's—

"hidden brook,
In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune,"

or to the magic of Meredith's—

"hear the heart of wildness beat
Like a centaur's hoof on sward,"

or the impressionism of Keats'—

"Charmed magic casements opening on the foam
Of perilous seas in faery lands forlorn";

but she has a music of her own:—

"When I am dead, my dearest,
Sing no sad songs for me.
Plant thou no roses at my head,
Nor shady cypress tree;
Be the grass green above me,
With showers and dewdrops wet;
And, if thou wilt, remember,
And, if thou wilt, forget."

Her poem, "Sleep at Sea" is full of haunting music:—

"Sound the deep water:
Who shall sound that deep?
Too short the plummet,
And the watchmen sleep.
Some dream of effort
Up a tiresome steep;
Some dream of pasture grounds
For homeless sheep."

These, however, are exceptions. When the spontaneous emotions of a poet is regulated and refined by ascetic priestly traditions, she is at a great disadvantage among singers of free utterance. It is to Christina Rossetti's undying credit that the poet is not merged in the Sunday-school teacher.

At the worst, she is never crude, extravagant, or commonplace. She has that fine quality inseparable from genius, and her lyrics have a fragrance all their own. She challenges comparison with the greatest of her sex. Mrs. Browning is the inevitable foil of Christina Rossetti, and the two suggest each other by the mere force of contrast. The author of the "Sonnets from the Portuguese," "Casa Guidi Windows," and the "Cry of the Children" is the very antipodes of the woman who gave us the shy, devotional "New Poems." There is none, of course, of Mrs. Browning's fluency in Miss Rossetti's work, but the sister poet lacks the warm humanity of the other. Christina Rossetti, despite the magnificent lyric gift, hardly stands the comparison. How should she? A delicate spinster, holding the Christian superstition in the most absolute and the most literal manner. Shadow, instead of light, was her nourishment, and her music was a delicate undertone, not more sorrowful than that of a tree sighing in the wind. We long for something individual. Like the dying farm laborer, we like something concrete. His friends tried to solace him with the joys of heaven. He raised himself for a last word: "'Tis all very well for thee; but give I the 'Pig and Whistle.'" His mortality, like that of most of us, was unequal to raptures "too severe."

Though Christina Rossetti cannot claim the highest place among her sister poets, yet she has evoked such music that she will not be forgotten. She loved the muses without misgiving, and the muses, loving her in return, have crowned her grave with honor.

MIMNERMUS.

Primitive Man.—IV.

(Continued from p. 324.)

"Savages have often been likened to children, but so far as intelligence is concerned, a child belonging to a civilised race at a sufficiently early age, the parallel is fair enough. Thus they have no steadiness of purpose. Speaking of the Dogrib Indians, we found, says Richardson, 'by experience, that however high the reward they expected to receive on reaching their destination, they could not be depended on to carry letters. A slight difficulty, the prospect of a banquet on venison, or a sudden impulse to visit some friend, were sufficient to turn them aside for an indefinite length of time.'

"In fact, we may almost sum up this part of the question in a few words by saying, as the most general conclusion which can be arrived at, that savages have the character of children with the passions and strength of men."—SIR JOHN LUBBOCK, *Prehistoric Times*, pp. 463-5.

"The most obvious source of interest in the doings of infancy lies in its primitiveness. At the cradle we are watching the beginnings of things, the first tentative thrustings forward into life. Our modern science is before all things historical and genetic, going back to beginnings, so as to understand the later and more complex phases of things as the outcome of these beginnings. The same kind of curiosity which prompts the geologist to get back to the first stages in the building up of the planet, or the biologist to search out the pristine forms of life, is beginning to urge the student of man to discover by a careful study of infancy the way in which human life begins to take its characteristic forms."—PROFESSOR SULLY, "The New Study of Children" (*Fortnightly Review*, November, 1895), p. 725.

WE have noticed the feeble powers of reasoning and reflection among the most primitive races. "It is only in man," says Sir Ray Lankester,—

"it is only in man that the power of reasoning—the conscious use of memory, of deciding on this or that course of action by a conscious appeal to the record of the individual's experience inscribed in the substance of the brain—becomes a regular and constant procedure. And in the lowest races of man—as, for instance, the Australian 'black fellows' this power is much less developed than in the higher races, owing to the feebleness of their memory. Just as a little child or an old man recognises the fact that his memory is bad, so does the Australian native confess to the white man that he cannot remember, and marvels at the memory of the white man, who, he says, can see both what is behind and what is to come."*

The life of a man illustrates, on a small scale, the life of the race. The child is born without reasoning powers, memory, language, or moral ideas, and without instruction would attain a very low standard in these matters. "According to this way of looking at infancy," says Professor Sully,—

"the successive phases of its mental life are a brief *résumé* of the more important features in the slow upward progress of the species. The periods dominated successively by sense and appetite, by blind wonder and superstitious fancy, by a calmer observation and a juster reasoning about things, these steps mark the pathway both of the child-mind and of the race-mind. This being so, the first years of a child, with their

* Sir Ray Lankester, "Science From an Easy Chair" (*Daily Telegraph*, April 7, 1914).

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imperfect verbal expression, their crude fanciful ideas, their seizures by rage and terror, their absorption in the present moment, acquire a new and antiquarian interest. They mirror for us, in a diminished, distorted reflection, no doubt, the probable condition of primitive man. As Sir John Lubbock and other anthropologists have told us, the intellectual and moral resemblances between the lowest existing races of mankind and children are numerous and close."*

"The very inferior savage, like our own infant children, does not know what to-morrow means," says Letourneau, and he adds:—

"All travellers are agreed in saying that the majority of the black races in Africa may be compared to our young European children. They have all the lightheadedness, the capriciousness, the want of prudence, the volubility, and the same quick and confined intelligence, as a child."†

Herbert Spencer observes:—

"And how general is this type of unreflectiveness among inferior races is implied by Dr. Pickering's statement that, in the course of much travel, the Fijians were the only savage people he had met with who could give reasons, and with whom it was possible to hold a connected conversation."‡

He also remarks that Sproat's account of the Ahts may be taken as descriptive of the average state. Sproat says:—

"The native mind, to an educated man, seems generally to be asleep.....On his attention being fully aroused, he often shows much quickness in reply and ingenuity in argument. But a short conversation wearies him, particularly if questions are asked that require efforts of thought or memory on his part. The mind of the savage then appears to rock to and fro out of mere weakness."

And again:—

"Spix and Martius tell us of the Brazilian Indians that 'scarcely has one begun to question him about his language, when he grows impatient, complains of headache, and shows that he is unable to bear the exertion'; and according to Mr. Bates, 'it is difficult to get at their notions on subjects that require a little abstract thought.' When the Abipones 'are unable to comprehend anything at first sight, they soon grow weary of examining it, and cry—"What is it, after all?"' It is the same with Negroes. Burton says of the East Africans, 'Ten minutes sufficed to weary out the most intellectual' when questioned about their system of numbers. And even of so comparatively a superior race as the Malagasy, it is remarkable that they 'do not seem to possess the qualities of mind requisite for close and continued thought.'"§

Letourneau observes:—

"But of all savage races none are more childish than the Polynesians. Their thoughtlessness and lightheadedness are extraordinary. It is impossible to fix their attention upon anything for two minutes. The most civilised, the Tahitians, had no idea as to their age; to recall the date of an event that had happened two or three years previously was altogether beyond their power."‖

The same writer also remarks:—

"D'Entrecasteaux bears the same testimony. 'The Tasmanians,' he says, 'express a wish for every kind of trifle, but drop them immediately afterwards; everything seems to distract them, nothing can occupy their minds'" (p. 553).

Lubbock cites Cook as saying that the tears of the South Sea Islanders, "like those of children, were always ready to express any passion that was strongly excited, and like those of children, they also appear to be forgotten as soon as they are shed." And again:—

"At Tahiti, Captain Cook mentions that Oberea, the Queen, and Tootahah, one of the principal chiefs, amused themselves with two large dolls. D'Urville tells us that a New Zealand chief, Tauvarya by name, 'cried like a child because the sailors spoilt his favorite cloak by powdering it with flour.'"

He also gives the statement of Sir Richard Burton to the fact that the Negro kings of Western Africa, "from Gelele to Rumanika of Karaqwah, are delighted with children's toys, gutta-percha faces, Noah's arks; in fact, what would be most acceptable to a child of eight—which the Negro is."*

Of the aborigines of Australia, Sir John Lubbock observes:—

"No single fact, perhaps, gives us a more vivid idea of the mental condition of these miserable savages than the observation that they cannot count their own fingers—not even those of one hand. Mr. Crawford has examined the numerals of thirty Australian languages, 'and in no instance do they appear to go beyond the number four.' Mr. Scott Nind, indeed, has given an account of the Australians of King George's Sound, to which a vocabulary is annexed, containing the numerals, which are made to reach the number five. The term for this last unit, however, turns out to be only the word many. In fact, the word 'five' conveys to them the idea of a great number, as a 'hundred' or a 'thousand' does to us."†

Of the Esquimaux,—

"Dr. Rae, whose partiality for the Esquimaux is well known, assures us that if a man is asked the number of his children, he is generally much puzzled. After counting some time on his fingers, he will probably consult his wife, and the two often differ, even though they may not have more than four or five" (p. 513).

The Indians of Paraguay "could only count up to four." The Abiponea can only express three numbers in proper words. The Dammaras,—

"when they wish to express four, they take to their fingers, which are to them as formidable instruments of calculation as a sliding rule is to an English schoolboy. They puzzle very much after five, because no spare hand remains to grasp and secure the fingers that are required for units."‡

Of these Dammaras of South Africa, Galton says "Each sheep must be paid for separately. Thus, suppose two sticks of tobacco to be the rate of exchange for one sheep, it would sorely puzzle a Dammara to take two sheep and give four sticks." Galton adds:—

"Once, while I watched a Dammara floundering hopelessly in a calculation on one side of me, I observed Dinah, my spaniel, equally embarrassed on the other. She was overlooking half-a-dozen of her new-born puppies, which had been removed two or three times from her, and her anxiety was excessive, as she tried to find out if they were all present, or if any were still missing. She kept puzzling and running her eyes over them, backwards and forwards, but could not satisfy herself. She evidently had a vague notion of counting, but the figure was too large for her brain. Taking the two as they stood, dog and Dammara, the comparison reflected no great honor on the man."§

Lindsay, in his *Mind in Animals*, says that—

"The Veddas of Ceylon are described by Hartshorne as 'quite unable to count.....They cannot count even by the aid of their fingers, having no conception of numbers.' Among the Amazon Indians there are no words for numbers.....Even at the present day many savage tribes of Brazil and Australia cannot count beyond two or four, and can only indicate higher numbers by gestures. Oldfield even describes a tribe who count no further than the number two, and designate all beyond by a word signifying 'many.'"‖

He also says, "The aborigines of New Caledonia 'can with difficulty count the lowest numerals'" (p. 452). These savages were not so far advanced in this matter as the chimpanzee "Sally" at the Zoological Gardens, whose keeper taught her to count up to five.

W. MANN.

(To be concluded.)

* Professor Sully, "The New Study of Children" (*Fortnightly Review*, November, 1895), pp. 727-8.
† Dr. Charles Letourneau, *Sociology*, p. 557.
‡ Spencer, *Principles of Sociology*, vol. i., p. 82.
§ Spencer, *Principles of Sociology*, vol. i., pp. 82-3.
‖ Letourneau, *Sociology*, p. 557.

* Lubbock, *Origin of Civilisation* (1889), pp. 222-3.
† Lubbock, *Prehistoric Times* (1872), p. 448.
‡ Lubbock, *Prehistoric Times*, p. 513.
§ Galton, *Tropical South Africa*, p. 213.
‖ Lindsay, *Mind in Animals*, p. 451.

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Acid Drops.

A great deal is being made of the action of the Rev. E. W. Lewis, a leading Nonconformist preacher, who has given up a post worth £600 a year, in order to lead a life of poverty, preaching wherever occasion offers. Mr. Lewis appears to be taking St. Francis D'Assissi as a model, and we have no desire to say a word against his personal sincerity. Such a life is obviously nearer the New Testament ideal—which is the Eastern ideal—of a preacher of religion than that of men drawing large salaries, and clamoring for funds to raise the salaries of other preachers less lavishly paid. The mendicant preacher is a common figure with all Eastern religions, and we ought never to forget that Christianity is essentially an Eastern religion. It was born in the East, and it has never been really acclimatised to the West. What the West has had has been a Christianity modified in various directions, and so far an unfaithful representation of the genuine article.

But with every allowance for the sincerity of Mr. Lewis, his action only serves to emphasise the hopelessly irrational, non-social, if not anti-social character of Christianity. Consider what this ideal of a perfect man involves. A wandering mendicant preacher, without family or domestic ties; developing what he is pleased to call his "spiritual" nature, but quite obviously leaving the other part of his nature undeveloped. *All* cannot adopt the plan or society would dissolve into fragments. His poverty and self-sacrifice only gain emphasis from the wealth and arrogance of others. But it does nothing whatever to diminish either arrogance or excessive wealth. The Ascetic is much older than Christianity; he has been in the world for thousands of years, and no sane person will say that he has been instrumental in diminishing social evils. Usually his presence has had the opposite effect. Men do not make the world better by leaving it. The rational enjoyment of all that the world offers is a much healthier plan than that of ignoring either its beauties or its possibilities. Above all, the ideal of St. Francis presupposes a world in which extreme poverty and extreme wealth are perpetual and irremovable features. And that is a supposition that no progressive sociologist will readily grant. A good man in the world, sharing its activities and striving to purify them is an inspiring sight. A man shutting himself out from it—no matter how good or sincere he may be—is, at best, a pitiful sight. Naturally, the surrender of £600 a year has impressed Christians greatly. It is an illustration of the Christian's standard of value.

Mr. M. M. Mangasarian, of Chicago, one of the ablest and most popular Freethought advocates in the United States, delivered a lecture for the Twin City Rationalist Society at Minneapolis. The local clergy replied to him on the spot, but not at the same time. They called upon the owners of the hall not to let it to the Rationalists again, and the call met with a favorable response. We congratulate the local clergy on the preservation of the Christian business instinct, which started so well in the proceedings of Cashier Judas and the death-dealing performances of General Peter in the case of Ananias and Sapphira. Their reply to Mr. Mangasarian was simple, easy, and effective. Once more—we congratulate them.

The Weekly Rest Day Bill, recently introduced in the House of Commons, was doomed from the first, and expired amid many peals of laughter. Mr. Harry Lawson's happy description of the Bill was, "It's a Bill a maiden aunt might have drafted after listening to a sermon on the want of Sabbath Observance." Mr. Henry Chaplin declared that "soon the Sabbatarians will want to prevent hens laying on a Sunday."

To cane or not to cane? that is the question which Dean Inge has disinterred, after having had a decent burial long ago by all educationalists. The gloomy Dean laments the abolition of the "wholesome birch." It is appropriate that the official of a reactionary Church should admire the methods of Wackford Squeers and Dotheboys Hall.

Rev. H. Barrow Williams, the well-known Calvinistic minister of Llandudno, is on the rampage, and Welsh heretics in high places had better beware. "I know men," he is reported to have declared, "who are practically heathen—professors in our colleges—(shame)—and we cannot consistently with our deepest convictions entrust the tuition of our boys and girls to educated heathens. These people should realise their position, and I say that if they cannot reverence our sacred institutions, we must prefer their room to their company. (Applause.)" This is a clear warning to the professors against incurring the loss of their bread and butter. But suppose these gentlemen, as is very likely, defy the warning? In that case the Rev. H. Barrow Williams and his clerical colleagues will have to "realise" *their* "position." The note of alarm, indeed, is perceptible in their threats already. They would show less temper if they were not afraid that, after all, their own is the dying cause.

The Catholic Archbishop Whiteside, speaking on "Motherhood" at Liverpool, said that keeping children alive was necessary. "They would live, grow up, marry, rear families, increase the Catholic population, and, finally, the number of citizens of the kingdom of heaven." How transcendental! Presumably, the heavenly "citizens" will wear clogs.

Professor Phillimore, orating at Glasgow, said that "the dirty work the Catholic Church had to do was to make more tolerable or less intolerable the social conditions of the day." How true of all Churches! If the masses did not think of the mansions in the skies, they would not tolerate living in slums on starvation wages.

Despite the rejection by the House of Commons of the Sunday Closing Bill, the Bishop of London is still proceeding with its sister measure in the House of Lords. Notoriously careless about his facts, the Bishop informed the House that "nobody challenged the statement that wherever Sunday closing had been tried it had proved a success." As a matter of fact, the statement is being constantly challenged, and proofs have been brought forward of cases where it has quite failed as a reformative measure. And Lord Salisbury actually challenged the statement on the spot. He pointed out that in Wales the rate of drunkenness on Sunday was ·64 per 1,000 from 1885 to 1895, and ·65 from 1902 to 1912. On the other hand, in England the cases were ·46 and ·45 during corresponding periods. Sunday closing certainly does not lead to a smaller consumption of intoxicating drink, and does not always mean even a decrease of Sunday drinking. Saturday night drunkenness often gets more pronounced. There are, of course, other causes that make for a general decline of drunkenness; but of these, as may be expected, the Bishop of London does not appear to have the slightest conception.

This is the way the Rev. A. E. T. Newton, Vicar of Whittlesey, near Peterborough, speaks of our English "Sunday":—

> "It has neither history nor theology behind it. No primitive or mediæval theologian knew aught of it. Nowhere out of these isles and America is it known. Neither South of Europe of Romanism, nor Northern Europe with its Protestantism, nor Eastern Europe and the Greek Church know anything about it. It is a mushroom in its growth and an evil fungus in its existence."

Mr. Newman goes on to advocate the right of liberty to Sunday games, and to do that which helps a man "most to realise that it is good to be alive." He points out the dangers of a Sunday with nothing to do, and says it would be a good thing if "pious people" would organise a concert and a dance after service hours. Mr. Newman is on the right road, but he errs in thinking that Sabbatarians have at heart the moral and intellectual good of the people. They have not. Their principal purpose is a theological one. Otherwise, they would welcome the opening of picture palaces on Sunday, which, on the testimony of the police everywhere, have done more to keep the streets decent on Sunday evenings than all the sermons that were ever preached.

The Roman Catholic Bishop of Bayonne has been denouncing the Boy Scout movement in France. His objection appears to be that there is no religion mixed up with it. He says they are offered the religion of honor, justice, truth, and conscience, but God is disregarded and ignored. For our part, if we must have a religion, this seems the most admirable one that can be selected. The Bishop says that the boys will not understand such "pretentious jargon." We beg to differ. A boy of nine or ten years of age has a fairly keen perception of truth and honor; and, at all events, if these things are beyond him, it is certain that what are called the "truths of religion" are above his comprehension. The fact of the matter is that the French leaders of the Boy Scout movement appear to have wisely kept God and the clergy out of it, and naturally they do not like it. So "honor, truth, and conscience" become to the Bishop "mere pretentious jargon."

Superstition is a hardy plant. As an inducement to subscribers to a Catholic school, an advertisement in the

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Universe informs us that "Blessed Lourdes rosaries and medals which have touched the spot where Our Lady appeared, will be sent to contributors on application."

A good joke is always welcome, and one occurred in connection with the recent Ipswich by-election. The chairman of the Lloyd George meeting related the following story. A canvasser told an old lady that the Chancellor was likely to make a railway to heaven. "I don't know about that," the old lady replied, "but he has made the waiting-room a good deal more comfortable."

Mr. Lloyd George's theology is generally a bit shaky. In his Ipswich speech, replying to the old objection that the Insurance Acts would ruin English industries, remarked that unemployment had dropped from 8 to 2 per cent. since 1910. "England," he added, "has never had such prosperity as she has had since she began to look after the sick, the broken, and the aged, and every man who believes in providence will know the reason why." We wonder if Mr. George really believes this? That God is on their side is a common idea amongst religious statesmen. Mr. Gladstone carried the Almighty with him every time he changed his mind. Mr. Lloyd George seems equally sure of always having the Deity's company. The oddest thing of all is that Mr. George's opponents express the same assurance of the divine support.

The *Saturday Journal* is publishing a series of articles on "What Happens to Us When We Die?" and the editor promises that they will embrace "all sorts of opinions." We have seen that sort of announcement before, and it often means all sorts of opinions—within limits. Contributors are allowed to differ about religion, but they must not reject it altogether. They must always find room for it somewhere, and express a certain feeling of sorrow for their departure from orthodoxy. The writer of the article in the issue for May 21 is described as a "well-known author," and the concealment of the name is itself symptomatic. Writers are afraid to avow themselves, editors are afraid to print, publishers are afraid to publish. We have not the direct persecution of earlier days, to which a man might yield without a feeling of personal degradation, but we have a religious tyranny exerted which inevitably lowers the character of those who submit to it, and enlists them as agents for ensuring the same demoralisation in others.

We are convinced that this general timidity is largely unwarranted. Because a few parsons shriek out when writers are allowed to speak plainly through the columns of a paper, or because a few bigots write protesting, it is assumed that the whole of the public is up in arms. The fear is, we believe, unwarranted. The bulk of the public really care for a respectful, firm, straightforward speech. There is no real need for editors to be so timid, so fearful of exposing themselves to a popular clamor. This dread of giving offence is really a heritage; it belongs to a time when the Churches actually possessed the power to punish by death or imprisonment those who gave offence. The tradition remains after the power has largely gone, and writers terrify each other into evasion or suppression. The old hand—who has never tried plain speech—cautions the beginner, and he in turn hands on the warning as though it were the product of his experience. The result is that writers and editors are, as a rule, a cowardly lot. They are daring within the limits of safety. The first editor of a widely circulated newspaper who has the strength to lift himself out of the rut, and give the same opportunity for anti-religious as for religious news, will probably discover that he has been all along trembling before a bogey of his own creation.

The *Daily Telegraph* has raised a sum of nearly £40,000 for the benefit of the Young Men's Christian Association. We presume that it is the traditions of the house of Levy that is responsible for this zeal on behalf of a Christian institution.

Plaster Saints is the alluring title of a new play in which a parson runs amok and proves himself a first-class hypocrite. Other plaster saints, varying in size from an inch or so to the ample proportions of Falstaff, may be purchased at Catholic toyshops throughout Europe.

Mr. Israel Zangwill says that the reason for the reaction against Rationalism is that Freethinkers have taken consolations from people, and given them nothing in return. This reminds us of Charles Lamb's jest, "I design to give up smoking, but I have not yet fixed upon an equivalent vice. I must have *quid pro quo*."

A sailor, charged recently at the Guildhall with a minor offence, was found to be a religious picture-gallery, for he was tatooed from head to feet. Round his neck was the snake that tempted Eve; on his back was the Lord's Prayer; and on his chest and legs were portrayed the twelve disciples. Even his arms and bald head had sacred decorations. Despite the optimists, one Christian has "the needle."

"Arley Lane"—the writer of "Pulpit and Pew" in the *Birmingham Weekly Mercury*—devotes a couple of columns to a sketch of a recent lecture by Sir Oliver Lodge. There is a good deal of good-humored sarcasm in the sketch, and Sir Oliver is "chaffed" for his knowledge of the "Creator's" aims and intentions in creating the world as it is. There is nothing easier, for anyone who can talk at all, than to talk in the strain adopted by Sir Oliver Lodge, but he is really no more an authority on the topic than the primitive worshiper of thousands of years ago, or the most ignorant of preachers to-day. Says "Arley Lane," "Delightful as was his discourse, it raised a dozen queries for one it tried to meet. Sir Oliver rambled on, and on, and on, without much connection, without clear final aim, always agreeable, but leading to nowhere." We can quite believe that the lecture roused more doubts than it allayed—to the critical listener. But we do not suppose that many in the audience were that way inclined. The majority probably came to hear familiar expressions uttered, and cared little about anything further.

Sir Oliver repeated the very old observation that it was impossible to imagine all things originating without having been conceived in a mind. This is sheer confusion. One is quite warranted in retorting that it is impossible to imagine a mind *originating* the universe. You may conceive a mind planning or arranging forces or material already in existence, because that is analogous to what we ourselves are constantly doing. But that leaves the question of origin untouched. The truth here is that our only conception of mind is by way of a relation, and it is utterly impossible for anyone to form the slightest conception of a "mind" antedating everything else and creating everything. Sir Oliver Lodge is simply illustrating the vulgar confusion between originating and arranging. When he says we can conceive the universe *originating* in a mind, he really means that we can conceive it *arragend* by a mind. And these are quite distinct propositions. No one can conceive the first, and there is no necessity for his making the attempt. No one can think beyond existence, since thinking implies existence. We are not bound to think of the universe originating in a mind. We simply cannot think of such an originator.

The other half of Sir Oliver's confused statement is no more than an assertion of human impotence badly formulated. We do not *know* how the present cosmic arrangements have come about; we can conceive—granting a mind of adequate calibre—that some mind arranged things as a mechanic arranges his materials. Granting the assumption of the existence of such a mind, this is conceivable; but it is not probable, and it is not necessary. For so long as the beauty and "order" of nature express relations between the various parts of nature—and this must always be the case—there must always remain the possibility, if not the probability, of this beauty and order occurring without the intervention of mind. One might almost say that this must be so, since "order" is not something that is *established*; it is inevitable. Scientifically, there is no such thing as an absence of order; there can only be a variation in the kind of order existing. And the discovery of the way in which any order is maintained is a problem of scientific inquiry. It provides no basis whatever for the spiritualistic moonshine of Sir Oliver Lodge.

Mrs. Annie Besant, who is now President of the Theosophical Society, is lecturing on "Mysticism," including such subjects as "The God-Idea" and "The Christ-Idea." The lady in the mist might try to answer some of her previous arguments to the contrary.

The latest begging dodge in religious circles is an imitation "Special Summons" in behalf of the funds of a certain St. Savior's Church. It is printed on blue paper and conforms to all the characteristics of a legal summons. Copies are delivered at front doors indiscriminately—even if the inmates are Atheists. The cheek of the thing is—quite Christian.

"The Futurist Man's Dress" was the title of a lecture by Signor Marinetti at the Doré Galleries. Let us hope that the costume won't be too much like David's when he danced before the ark.

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To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £146 15s. Received since:—Col. B. L. Reilly, £1 1s.; R. Wood, 10s.; S. E. Nokes, 5s.; Mr. Vickery (Peckham), £1 1s.; Richard Johnson, £5; Arthur Powell, £1; T. W. Love, 2s. 6d.; T. C. Riglin, 2s. 6d.; John Grange, £2 2s.; J. M. Wood (Winnipeg), 4s.

W. CROMACK.—Thanks for cuttings. They are always useful, even though we may be unable to use them at the moment.

H. GEORGE FARMER.—Please send your new address at once to enable to send proofs.

R. WOOD.—The "continuation of improvement" in our health seems fairly certain.

RICHARD JOHNSON.—Glad to have your best wishes for our "good fighting form" in the future. We think you do well not to travel to the Conference unless you feel pretty sure of weather and health. You wear wonderfully well, but it isn't wise to tempt Providence, as the Christians say,—as though he were always looking out for a meal.

JOHN BLUNDELL.—The passage occurs in *King Lear*, Act IV., scene vi.

D. RUSSELL.—Our contributor's pen-name "Abracadabra" is a word that was greatly used by the "Occultists" of the Middle Ages. It is mere gibberish, but as written in the form of a triangle was believed to be powerful as a charm, particularly against disease. Glad to have your appreciation of the quality of this journal.

C. F. BUDGE.—There was certainly a stage at which the followers of the Pagan deities accepted their existence as a fact. At a later stage the tendency was, with the more rationalising and cultured, to represent them as symbols. We see exactly the same process in the case of Christianity. All religions appear to follow much the same road of development—and decay.

BONNAICE.—We are glad to have your tribute to the *Freethinker's* "cheerful and wholesome tone" and abstention from the vulgarities that are patronised (for business reasons) by so many other papers. We quite sympathise with you in your present state of mental unrest, but we beg you not to try to force your mind; trust to time and reflection.

TUNBRIDGE WELLS FREETHINKER.—Yes, it is something for the Christian Evidence lecturer you name to be proud of when he contemplates the maltreatment of two young ladies by a couple of thousand infuriated Tunbridge Wells believers. Undoubtedly the responsibility for this brutality rests with the Christian Evidence lecturer, who has been busy filling their minds with his filthy slanders. Luckily, the police appear to have done what they could, or the consequences might have been really serious. For our part, we should be inclined to let the Tunbridge Wells hooligans severely alone. If the Christians of the place are content with the knowledge that in 1914 Tunbridge Wells is so far behind the times that no two opinions on Christianity are permitted, we are content with it as evidence of the value of Christianity.

J. JACKSON.—We are afraid that our regular contributors would not be able to join in the correspondence you name, unless some special occasion presented itself for their so doing. Glad to know that you have been doing your part.

D. ENGLAND.—It is difficult to advise you without more precise knowledge. You would probably find Mr. Cohen's *Determinism* and Mr. J. M. Robertson's *Pagan Christs* of use to you.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and not to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Delegates to the N. S. S. Conference who arrive in London in time on the Saturday evening will receive an informal welcome at the Bay Malton Hotel, 160 Great Portland-street. The Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, and several members of the Executive, will be in attendance. There is still on hand a supply of small bills advertising the evening meeting, and we hope that London Freethinkers will see that these are well and profitably used. They are to be had on application at this office. It is also probable that an excursion may be arranged for the Monday following the Conference. Details of this will be announced at the morning meeting. The Conference luncheon is to take place at the Café Marguerite, Oxford-street, at 1 o'clock. Tickets 2s. 6d. each.

Mr. John Grange, the veteran Bradford "saint," whose name is so well and so honorably known in that district, sending his annual contribution to the President's Honorarium Fund, compliments Mr. Foote on preserving his mental powers unimpaired in spite of all his bodily troubles. He refers to the Editor's recent criticism of Kipling as "a marvel of incisiveness." "It is the finest thing of its kind," he says, "that I ever read at any time."

Mr. Arthur Powell, a personal friend of Mr. Foote's, whose subscription is acknowledged in this week's *Freethinker*, is a veteran Secularist, and old age is now telling upon him visibly. But in body and mind he was built on one of nature's best models; one of those who (allowing for the religious conventionalism of Robert Burns's energetic language) "derive their patent of nobility direct from Almighty God." Mr. Powell has an old friend, counting more years than he does himself, being eighty-two, and still taking an interest in the progress of advanced movements. Mr. Powell sends his older friend the *Freethinker* in batches of half-a-dozen or so. After reading the last batch the older friend wrote Mr. Powell an interesting letter, from which we are permitted to extract the following passages. Referring to the fact that the *Freethinker* has passed its seventeen-hundredth number, the writer says:—

> "What an immense quantity of editorial and other work these figures represent, besides his other important literary work, much of it now, I suppose, untraceable; the Presidency of the N. S. S.; and last, but not least, his lectures in widely separated parts of the country, involving much tedious travelling, and sudden, cold-catching changes of temperature—from the warm lecture-room to the chilly, draughty railway-carriage. Truly an amazing record of work.....You see I have been taking some interest in the public life of the Editor of the *Freethinker*. On first hearing him address a public meeting, when he was little more than a lad, his able and earnest style so impressed me, that I thought he had a great future. What will it be? I asked myself. Anticipating Mr. Asquith's well-known words, I replied (to myself) Wait and see. We can now see."

Forty-three or forty-four years—perhaps even forty-five—have elapsed since Mr. Powell's old friend took note of the youth who had already devoted his life to Freethought. If the record closed to-morrow it would be a fair stroke of work in the world—and *for* the world. George Meredith—one of the master-geniuses, whose true greatness, both of mind and character, has yet to be fully recognised—was also taking note of that youth, and told him, only a few years after, that he was fighting "for the best of causes" although he knew "how profitless it must be." The Master's fight is over, except through his writings; the Disciple's will last until his hour strikes on "the horologe of time."

The completion of the third edition of the *Golden Bough*, which grew from the original fine book published in two volumes, and is Dr. Frazer's masterpiece, has suggested to some of his admirers that this is a "fitting occasion for offering him some token in recognition of his great services to learning." This is not expressed as it might be, for Dr. Frazer is anything but a pedant, but we quite agree with the object and the occasion. It is proposed that a Frazer Fund be raised, with a view to promoting the study of Anthropology by means of grants to travelling students, of either sex; the Fund to be held in trust by the University of Cambridge. The Secretary and Treasurer is Mr. F. N. Cornford, Trinity College, Cambridge. Contributions to the Fund may be sent to him, or to the "Frazer Fund Account," Messrs. Barclay & Co., Mortlock's Bank, Cambridge. The Committee includes a number of distinguished scholars and writers. We hope the Fund will be liberally supported. No honor can be too great for an investigator and thinker like Dr. Frazer.

Human institutions are inventions. They are devices to aid in the promotion of human welfare. They should be judged by the same standards of utility as agricultural implements and everything else. Whatever can be made over to advantage, they should be made over. And whenever they can be rendered useless by something better to take their place, they should be sent without sighs or lamentations to the junk-pile. Nothing is too sacred to be improved. —*J. H. Moore, "Ethics and Education."*

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Christian Apologetics.

VI.—PALEY'S EVIDENCES (No. 2).

ANOTHER example of Christian Evidence reasoning by our great apologist Paley is that relating to Celsus and Porphyry (Part I., chap. ix., sec. 9). Paley says:—

> "Near the middle of the second century, Celsus, a heathen philosopher, wrote a professed treatise against Christianity. To this treatise Origen.....published an answer, in which he frequently recites his adversary's words and arguments. *The work of Celsus is lost*, but that of Origen remains.....Celsus, or the Jew whom he personates, uses these words: 'I could say many [other] things concerning the affairs of Jesus, and these, too, different from those written by the disciples of Jesus, but I purposely omit them.'.....It is not easy to believe that if Celsus could have contradicted the disciples upon good evidence in any material point, he would have omitted to do so.....This statement of Celsus proves that the Gospels were composed by the disciples of Jesus, strictly so called."

In the foregoing statement of Celsus I have inserted one word—that placed within brackets—which must have been inadvertently omitted by an early copyist. Celsus *has* said "many things concerning the affairs of Jesus," which contradict the accounts in the Gospels, some of which will be noticed presently. Meanwhile, Paley is greatly in error in thinking that the statement of Celsus which he has quoted "proves that the Gospels were composed by the disciples of Jesus, strictly so called." What it does really prove is, that at the date when Celsus wrote (A.D. 178), the Gospels were asserted by Christians to have been written by disciples of Jesus. Celsus simply accepted what was said of the origin of the Gospels in his day.

Speaking of another hostile writer, Paley says:—

> "What Celsus was in the second century, Porphyry became in the third. His work, a large and formal treatise against the Christian religion, *is not extant*. We must be content, therefore, to gather his objections from Christian writers who have noticed, in order to answer them.....Porphyry objects to 'the abomination of desolation'.....to John's application of the term 'Word'; to Christ's change of intention about going to the feast of Tabernacles; to the judgment denounced by St. Peter upon Ananias and Sapphira.....Neither Celsus in the second, Porphyry in the third, nor the emperor Julian in the fourth century, questioned the authenticity of the New Testament books, or even insinuated that Christians were mistaken in the authors to whom they ascribed them."

Here I may say that Paley is again in error as to what this unquestioning attitude proves. It proves only that opponents of Christianity, who lived at a period too late for investigating the origin of that religion or its writings, gave assent to the Christian view because they had no means of disproving it. At the date when Celsus wrote, all the canonical Gospels had been in circulation for some time. According to the historian Glover, "Celsus was above all a man of culture—candid, scholarly, and cool." His book, which was entitled the *True Account*, was "powerful and popular, and it proved a real obstacle to the spread of Christianity among the educated classes. Origen's answer decided the controversy in the Church's favor." Scholars who have endeavored to reconstruct the arguments of Celsus from Origen's reply have found the order disarranged, the objections presented sometimes in the author's own words, sometimes in paraphrases or epitomes, and they are often left to discover what he may have said from details of the rejoinder.

Porphyry was a Platonic philosopher of great learning, who, near the end of the third century, wrote fifteen "books" or chapters against both the Jewish and Christian scriptures. Neither of the works written by Celsus and Porphyry has come down to us. We have therefore no means of knowing exactly what these two cultured Pagans had to say against Christianity. True, Origen replied to some of the matters in the work of Celsus, and some later Christian writers have preserved a few extracts from that of Porphyry; but these fragments give a very inadequate idea of the contents of the books in question. To form a correct estimate of them, we require to see the works as a whole. How is it, then, that neither of them has been preserved to our day? Paley merely tells us that "the work of Celsus is lost" and that of Porphyry "is not extant." But why is this the case? Did not our ingenuous apologist know? Well—yes; Paley *did* know; but he thought it might not redound to the credit of the Christian Church to give the reason.

During the two centuries in which the Christians were merely tolerated by the Roman authorities, any heresy might be taught, and any book hostile to the Christian religion might be placed in circulation, with perfect freedom. But as soon as Christianity was made the religion of the State, all heterodox writings and all attacks upon the orthodox religion were rigorously suppressed. The movers in these matters were the Christian clergy, by whose influence edicts were issued against the possessors of such writings. Thus, in A.D. 325, in the reign of the emperor Constantine, an edict was passed in which it was stated:—

> "As Porphyry, an enemy of godliness, for having composed wicked books against Christianity, hath found a fitting recompense in being infamous, and having all his impious writings destroyed, so now it is my pleasure that Arius and those of his sentiments shall be called Porphyrians.....If anyone shall be found to have concealed any writing of Arius, and shall not immediately bring it and consume it in the fire, death shall be his punishment."

A few years previously, under the same emperor, all the copies that could be found of the works of Celsus and Porphyry were consigned to the flames. The writings of the so-called heretic Arius were now doomed to the same fate. Arius believed all the New Testament scriptures, but differed from many other Christians in his interpretation of the first two verses in the Gospel of John. The majority held that "the Son was of the same substance, essence, or nature as the Father, and was equally eternal with the Father." Arius maintained that "the Son was begotten by the Father before all worlds, but did not exist before he was begotten." It was thus a case of tweedledum and tweedledee. It would appear, however, that all copies of Porphyry's book had not been destroyed; for in A.D. 392 an edict of Theodosius was issued in which it was enacted:—

> "All writings whatsoever which Porphyry *or anyone else* has written against the Christian religion, in the possession of whomsoever they shall be found, shall be committed to the fire"—the penalty for non-compliance being death.

A similar proclamation was issued in A.D. 449, after which we hear no more of these "wicked books." The work of Porphyry was of a more scholarly character than that of Celsus, and was considered far more dangerous to educated persons; hence only the former is specially named. We see now the significance of Paley's disingenuous statement—"the work of Celsus *is lost*"—that of Porphyry "is *not extant*."

We will now see something Celsus has said "concerning the affairs of Jesus" which differed from that recorded in the Gospels. Celsus says, in effect, that the mother of Jesus was a poor Jewish countrywoman whom her husband or betrothed, a carpenter, had divorced for adultery; that her child, Jesus, was the son of a soldier named Panthera; that Jesus was taken to Egypt and lived among Egyptian conjurors, whose arts he there acquired; that upon returning to Palestine Jesus practised these arts, and persuaded the common people that he was a god. Certain obscene details of the story, however, Celsus "purposely omitted," not caring to soil his parchment with them. Paley is discreetly silent respecting the foregoing, and Christian advocates denounce the story as a foul slander—which it may have been—but it was not fabricated by Celsus. That philosopher heard it recounted by opponents of Christianity in his day—probably Jews. The question to

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be determined is: Was the story invented to discredit the accounts in the Gospels? or, Was it known before any of the evangels appeared? This question has never been answered; I will therefore leave it—for the present. Renan's reconstruction of some of the arguments used by Celsus runs as follows:—

> "Perhaps it ought first to be made a subject of examination whether any man really dead has risen with the same body.....Living, your Jesus has been able to do nothing for himself; dead, do you say he rose, and showed the marks of his suffering, the holes in his hands? But who has seen all that? A woman with an evil spirit, as you yourselves confess.....At his tomb there were present, some say one angel, others say two, to announce to the women that he had risen. For the Son of God, as he appeared to be, had not the power alone to open his tomb: he needed someone to come and displace the stone.....If your Jesus really wished to make his divine power to shine, he should have shown himself to his enemies, to the judge who condemned him, to the whole world. For since he was dead, and God besides, as you pretend, he had nothing more to fear from anyone: and, apparently, it was not that he should remain concealed that he had been sent. .....Dead, he only causes himself to be seen in secret. .....His suffering had had innumerable witnesses..... It is the reverse of what should have taken place," etc.

From the foregoing it will be seen that Celsus had read Mark xvi. 9, where Jesus "*appeared first* to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons." Celsus compares the Christians of his day to a number of frogs sitting in the mud, squabbling, and saying: "God exists, and we next to him; and it is for our sake that the whole world was made: and God will come and take us up to heaven, except those who are wicked, whom he will burn with fire." We know from other sources that the early Christians *did* talk in this way.

I will now briefly notice Paley's statements respecting Porphyry.

(1) That apologist says: "Porphyry *objects* to 'the abomination of desolation.'" The word "objects" is far too mild. Porphyry asserted that the book of Daniel was a forgery written in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes (168—164 B.C), and that the "abomination of desolation" mentioned in that book (and named in Matt. xxiv. 15 as referring to the Romans) was fulfilled in the reign of Antiochus—which is true.

(2) Porphyry *objects* "to John's application of the term 'Word.'" The reference is to John i. 1—14, which commences, "In the beginning was the *Word*, and the *Word* was with God, and the *Word* was God." Porphyry, as a Greek scholar, would know that to call Jesus "the Word" was simply ridiculous; for the term *Logos* denoted word, saying, discourse, doctrine, speech, account, reason; but never a person The Gospel writer took the idea from Philo.

(3) Porphyry *objects* "to Christ's change of intention about going to the feast of Tabernacles." This is incorrect. In John vii. 8, Jesus says to his brothers —"Go ye up unto the feast: I go not up *yet* unto this feast." But as soon as his brothers had gone up, Jesus also went up—but secretly. Porphyry did not object to "Christ's change of intention"; he objected to a great moral teacher telling a downright falsehood. In Porphyry's time there was no "yet" in the passage; that word was inserted (in some copies) later. In the Revised Version it is stated: "Many ancient authorities omit *yet*." Amongst the latter is the oldest MS.—the Codex Sinaiticus.

(4) Porphyry *objects* "to the judgment denounced by St. Peter upon Ananias and Sapphira." Just so; and if the narrative in the Book of the Acts (chap. v.) is true, Peter was a cold-blooded murderer. But the account is *not* true. The chief priests and Sanhedrim, it is stated, several times arrested the apostles, and having nothing to charge them with, let them go. But had Peter struck two persons dead, as recorded, the double murder would have been widely known; Peter, and any apostles present at the murder, would have been brought before the authorities, charged with the deed, found guilty, and stoned—as in the case of Stephen. Yet the pious Christian who fabricated the doings of Peter could not perceive this obvious fact—neither does the unthinking church or chapel-goer of the present day.

ABRACADABRA.

The Stormy Petrel of Doubt.

CHRISTIANS who live by the profession of their beliefs have a delightfully picturesque habit of drawing profit from the hell of infidelity. It is a strange habit, in these days, a monstrously strange habit; in many respects it is funny; but, like most things and customs and ideas that owe their existence to Religion, it is fraught with results, with effects, that are unlovely and painful. The ludicrousness is mixed up with the sadness, the fun with the tears, the cruelty with the amusement, the bitterness with the sweetness. Looking upon some of these religious characteristics from a broad viewpoint, we laugh; but, often, when we enter the narrow spheres of the individual, we see nothing but tragedy. Coming to the personal, we notice all the hardness, the coarseness, the hatefulness, of their operations. We see them in naked reality. Their malformations are more ugly than grotesque. They sicken us. We wonder how it is that humanity allows Religion to exist.

You know what happens when the stormy petrel of doubt pays its first of many visits to the young mind. The mind never lives a recluse. Action, in various forms, but particularly in speech, is inevitable. One might say that the activities of intelligence were the fruits of the functioning of the mind, just as mind is the effect of the functioning of the brain. The young mind cannot resist its own power. Doubt cannot be imprisoned. At first the comments are humorously poohpoohed by the elder people. Experience and knowledge are theirs by right of life and living. What satisfies them should surely be accepted unquestionably by their children.

Slowly the doubts develop. With increase of strength comes the trouble. The storm threatens. Ultimately it bursts upon the family circle; and the home peace is disturbed by the rushing winds of mental confliction. In the glaring lights of anger and disappointment, Christian habits crucify themselves; the hard sadness tastes bitter; the comic element is displaced by tragedy, the little tragedy of the common people.

Is it idle sentiment to ask how many homes, even in these presumably enlightened days, are transformed into storm scenes? How many mother-hearts, sailing along on love's silver seas, are suddenly caught in the storm and all but wrecked? How many sorrows, in the shape of broken hopes, tattered disillusionments, torn ideals, crushed memories, litter the waters, when the storm subsides.

Seldom does the raging of the winds penetrate from the family seclusion. We cannot tell of the amount of useless human suffering heralded by the stormy petrel of doubt. All we know is that thousands of homes, at this very moment, are shivering and trembling in the blast of the gale; that in the unseen social heart of humanity there goes on a hateful turmoil and strife blown into being by the winds of religious bigotry. Part of the tragedy is that so little of the destructiveness of the storm ever becomes known.

The mother-heart suffers most. It is a characteristic of mother-hearts, this suffering. But how much of it comes directly from a public opinion engineered by Religion? To what an extent is the influence of our neighbors' opinions responsible, and to what an extent is the influence of belief responsible?

Crude, perhaps somewhat cynical, questions these are; and yet there is the rankle of truth in the suggestion that the hell of infidelity is not so much hell for the infidel as it is for his relations. The public opinion, whose forum is the Church, is, seemingly, a weightier matter in the estimation of our friends than the opinion of God. What our

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neighbors may say is more important than what God may think.

All over the country we see this so-called infidelity masquerading as belief, that business may not suffer, or that social position may not be rendered unpleasant. And in the little lives of the common people we see the same forces in activity. The hell of infidelity opens its mouth for our Christian friends when the neighbors, the acquaintances, begin to notice that so-and-so has ceased attending church. The love our mothers have for Jesus is a detail compared with the worship they yield to churchy public opinion.

Religious ardor is not responsible for the disturbances that arise when the stormy petrel of doubt comes on the wings of knowledge. Religious ardor is dead. But the old lessons linger long in the women minds. They have been taught to recognise the Church as the guarantee of moral respectability; taught to see danger in the drifting from it; taught to expect hell in disbelief; and the teaching returns to be woven into garments to hide weakness. The despicable religious ideas that surround alienation from the Church are used to cover the ugly nudity of the power of a contemptible public opinion, governed by the Church. To endure the commiserations of good church-going acquaintances is hell to the mother-heart.

Where did the mother-minds get those ideas? Where were they taught to see moral death in infidelity? In church. Who were the teachers of this atrociously dismal prison of ideas? Who passed the poison into minds that, otherwise, would have been pure? Who continue to imbue the mother-minds and mother-hearts with this damnable doctrine, this tissue of evil lies? The pastors, priests, ministers of the Gospel; the black-coated gentlemen who walk amongst us with a lovely moral halo around their benevolent heads.

Outside the church our mothers have little time, and less inclination, to read what Jesus said on any subject under the sun of humanity. Inside the church they are told what Jesus said. It needs interpretation, of course. The simplest Saxon requires interpretation. And from this elaboration springs that discolored vision used to enwrap the maleficient influence of a public opinion born in the same gloom.

With the coming of doubt there is the Devil to pay—a double Devil; one disguised as Deity, the other naked custom. It is strange to sit listening to the paying process. Sometimes the maternal words raise an edifice of such imposing structure that a faithful mind could not but worship; but an unfaithful mind is quick to see the rapid change from God to neighbor, quick to feel the slenderness of the religious building, quick to see the foundation-stone shattered by the banality of church opinion. Although the tears drop hot upon a faithless heart full of faith, there is still the clear vision that sees the horror of those hypocritical accusations that emanate first from the pulpit. They are like snakes sneaking over human love. The mother-heart could never imagine them, nor tolerate them, did not some human power assist their entrance. Condemnations of vility, convictions of damnation here and hereafter, are foreign to the mother-mind. Love knows them not. And yet, at those storm-times, we experience this unnatural combination.

While priests have been responsible, in the past, for the building up of the church-opinion that operates as the human influence, they are also responsible for the teaching that gives this human influence its poisonous qualities. The hell of infidelity has been profitable to them; but in the ordinary life of humanity how much unknown sorrow has it caused, how many unseen tears, how many wounded hearts?

When the glories of religion are being counted, and God's bles-ings named one by one; when the ministrations of God's apostles are being recollected and praised; and the goodness of God is being extolled to the skies; when man's debt to priests, to the Church, to the Christian influences are being sung in mellifluous strains, perhaps it is not foolishness to draw aside, for a moment, the curtain of the commonplace, and gaze, for a little, on the innumerable storms with their bitterness, their sorrows, and griefs, and miseries, that have followed the visit of the Stormy Petrel of Doubt to the young mind.

ROBERT MORELAND.

Artists and Freethought.

"The majority of historians would have us believe that Atheists in art were unknown. The principle is nicely applied, when we come to think of it; unless a painter believed in the Trinity, say, he was incapable of anything truly artistic."—WILLIAM REPTON, *Freethinker*.

IN Ford Madox Hueffer's recent book on *Rossetti*, the point of Ruskin's attitude to art is discussed, and Hueffer strongly condemns his "over-emphasised asceticism and his continual falsification of æsthetic standards to give body to his ethical doctrine." This charge against Ruskin is substantially true, but not wholly true, as we shall see presently. Ruskin, at one time (and, indeed, with very sparse modification throughout his life) went to the utmost limits of sheer religious bigotry to maintain his doctrine that all great art was the expression of a religious man. He even went so far as to narrow this down to a Christian religious man.

Yet I have said this is not the whole truth. After Ruskin's death, an Edition de Luxe (in 39 vols.) of his works appeared, with compendious notes from his hitherto unpublished MSS. In this work, *The Thesis*, alluded to above, which Ruskin held for so many years, was cancelled peremptorily in the following lines:—

> "How far has art been strengthened by her employment in religious service? Many careful thinkers on this subject, and *I myself, very strenuously in past years, have contended* that the occupation of artists in the representation of divine histories or persons, has stimulated and purified the powers of the art so employed. It is not, of course, possible for me to-day to enter with you even on the first steps of so vast an inquiry; but it will be part of my subsequent duty to lay before you the grounds of *my now fixed convictions* that few of the greatest men ever painted religious subjects by choice, but only because they were either compelled by ecclesiastical authority, supported by its patronage, or invited by popular applause; that by all three influences their powers were at once wasted and restrained; that their invention was dulled by the monotony of motive and perverted by its incredibility .....I then thought that all the nascent and dawning strength of art had been founded on pious faith; whereas I now with humiliation, but I dare not say with sorrow, recognise that they were founded, indeed, upon the scorn of death, but not on the hope of immortality; founded, indeed, upon the purity of love, but the love of wife and child, and not of angel or deity; and that the sweet skill which gave to such feelings their highest expression came not by precept of religion, but by the secular and scientific training which Christianity was compelled unwittingly to permit, and by the noble instruction received from the remnants of that very heathen art which Christianity had done her utmost to destroy."*

This is a fine passage, but it crumbled to ruins that false sentimental structure which Ruskin had built around it. Alas! how few know of this passage. This Edition de Luxe cannot be purchased under a small fortune, whereas the ordinary editions, bearing the teachings which Ruskin abandoned, are circulated by the thousand.†

Of course, to all thinking people, the early contention of Ruskin's was arrogantly foolish, for as John Stuart Mill has pointed out in *Liberty*, there are a considerable number of the world's "brightest ornaments" to be classed amongst the sceptics in religion. Art alone can claim not a few of these ornaments.

In the early days of European art (the fourteenth to sixteenth century) there were no documented

* Italics mine.

† For years the present writer only knew this Ruskin, and it was Mr. Chapman Cohen who brought the passage in question in the Edition de Luxe to the writer's notice.

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biographies, or *lettres intimes* of artists, from which to learn their philosophy and religion. Indeed, in some cases, only their art-works have come down to us, and when we remember that at this period art was bound hard and fast to religion, these works, in many ways, speak as plainly as any discourse. Religion is always conservative, and so, too, is art. For a religion to allow an innovation in its art would simply conduce to an innovation in its ritual and dogma, and so could not be tolerated. Thus, when we find in these early days of strict priestly domination a deviation from the set art of the Church, one may safely infer an act of spiritual non-conformity, if not scepticism, however small.

When Giotto (1266-1337) deviated from the recognised art form, it was in fact an act of scepticism or non-conformity. Although the great "reformer in the art of painting" is said to have devoted his genius to the Franciscans, he evidently did not hold to their precepts, since he could bring the "bride" of St. Francis into ridicule in his *Canzone*. Indeed, Mather says that Giotto was "by no means a faithful believer." There is a story told of him in Sacchetti's *Novelle* which certainly is not agreeable with a pious reputation. Giotti was asked why Joseph was always depicted so melancholy? and he replied, "Has he not reason, seeing his wife [the Virgin Mary] pregnant, and not knowing by whom." It is a most irreverent remark, and I think there are good grounds for those who doubt the sincerity of his religious life. (See *Quarterly Review*, July, 1904).

In the fifteenth century the real effect of the "infidel" renaissance began to be felt, and painters may in fact, from this period, be divided into two classes: those in whom faith predominated following the Church tradition, and those in whom reason predominated following the Greeks. Among these latter were Massaccio (1401-28), whose work Rio called *naturalisme classique*, Mantigna (1431-1509), "the most pagan of all the pagan artists of his age" (Heaton), Perugino, and Botticelli.

Perugino (1446-1524) is the first artist of whom we have precise evidence that he was a Freethinker. Vasari says "he was an irreligious man, and could never be made to believe in the immortality of the soul." There are several of his paintings in the National Gallery.

Botticelli (1446-1510), a fine, poetic, imaginative artist, and perhaps the earliest painter of mythological and allegorical subjects, was, in spite of the religious atmosphere of most of his work, decidedly a free man in theology. He narrowly escaped the stake for lending his brush to express Palmieri's theory on the nature of angels. Botticelli was one of the first to illustrate a modern work of imagination —which he did in Dante and Boccaccio.

Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), "the divinely endowed," as Vasari calls him, was the harbinger of the dawn in art of what J. A. Symonds termed that "passionate outgoing towards the ancient world—the renaissance." His great work, the *Last Supper* —perhaps the most famous picture in all the world —reveals the significance of his art. What an immeasurable distance separates him from his predecessors who treated this subject! Here no dumb, meaningless physiognomies are grouped around Christ, but real transcripts of humankind. Every face, figure, and attitude bespeaks an individual, as much so as Christ. This same human, individual expression pervades all his works—the *Mona Lisa*, which so "absorbed and fascinated" Michelet, *St. Anne and the Virgin*, *John the Baptist*, etc. Vasari says of Leonardo that "he had taken up such heretical notions that he really belonged to no religion, and, in short, that he laid more store by his quality as a philosopher than as a Christian." Müntz thinks him a Deist, whilst Heaton calls him an Atheist. He was certainly a most pronounced Freethinker, as is evident from his *Enigmas*, which contain some biting sarcasms on priests and religion.

Heine says, in his *Romantic School*, that "the painters of Italy combated priestdom more effectively perhaps than did the Saxon theologians," and that the "vigorous marbles" of Michael Angelo and the "glowing flesh" of Titian were "much more fundamental theses than those which the German monk nailed to the church doors of Wittenburg." Now the art of Michael Angelo (1475-1564) is Pagan. It came, not from Christian Byzantium, but from Pagan Greece. As Walter Pater points out, that even in the *Doni Madonna* Angelo actually brings the Pagan religion, and with it the unveiled human form, the sleepy-looking fauns of a Dionysiac revel, into the presence of the Madonna as simpler painters had introduced other products of the earth, birds or flowers. "Scarcely any other great painter," says Lecky, "so completely eliminated the religious sentiment from art.....By making the *Last Judgment* a study of naked figures, and by introducing into it Charon and his boat, he most effectually destroyed all sense of its reality."

One cannot associate such a work as the *Last Judgment* with the Revelation of St. John. It seems to be more a setting of an Æschylean drama. Heaton says that "although this idea of a day of wrath is pre-eminently a Christian one, Angelo has conceived the scene in a wholly Pagan spirit."

There can be little doubt that Angelo belonged to Rationalism. That ardent Republican who could rush to the defence of Venice against imperial cannon; that rebellious spirit that could defy a Pope; that brooding mind that could philosophise on Death, the mistress of all, as he did in his poems, was not the man to subscribe to a *Credo*. Walter Pater has summed up his religion thus:—

> "In earlier days.....he might have been for spiritualising the papal sovereignty, like Savonarola; or for adjusting the dreams of Plato and Homer with the words of Christ, like Pico of Mirandula. But things had moved onward, and such adjustments were no longer possible. For himself, he had long since fallen back on that divine ideal which, above the wear and tear of creeds, has been forming itself for ages as the possession of nobler souls."

The other painter who helped to free mankind from that "Alp-like burden of Christianity" which Heine speaks of was Titian (?1477-1576), that superb colorist, whose art, as Kugler says, is the "expression of life itself." It is said that where Angelo gave the nude its most scientific expression, Titian gave its most sensuous. His Madonnas and Venuses have equally all that charm of life about them. It was this vivid realistic art that led Ruskin to say that "there is no religion in any work of Titian's; there is not even the smallest evidence of religious temper or sympathies, either in himself or in those for whom he painted. His magnificent *Assumption of the Virgin* is considered his finest work. It was painted for the Church of Santa Maria de Frari, and it is said that the pious brothers of Santa Maria were at first somewhat disturbed by the bold beauty of their altar-piece. Here, in England, the National Gallery possesses, among other of Titian's work, the splendid portrait of Ariosto, and a charming *Bacchus and Ariadne*, both of which—the former especially—display wondrous harmonies of color.

(*To be continued.*) H. G. FARMER.

Correspondence.

PLOTINUS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Through some mischance an Irishism crept into my article of last week, entitled "Concerning Souls." Towards the conclusion there is a riotous attempt at period-fixing. To be explicit, I may say that the year A.D. 203 is taken as being the time of his birth and A.D. 262 that of his death. This would make it about one thousand years between the time of Plotinus and that of Elisha; if it were two thousand years, the contrast of the two lives would be just as vivid. The reader with a love of chronology may reckon how many years *previous* to the times of Calvin, Luther, Knox, and Spurgeon this good and noble man lived. I can imagine the hell-fire doctrine of Spurgeon being flourished in the face of Plotinus. I say I can imagine it, because I have just heard a toy terrier barking at the thunder. CHRISTOPHER GAY.

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THE

Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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All truth is safe, and nothing else is safe; and he who keeps back the truth or withholds it from men, from motives of expediency, is either a coward or a criminal, or both.—F. MAX MULLER.

Man's Greatest Blunder.

MY last week's article dealt with a remark by Professor Hoffding to the effect that the Freethinker, in attacking religion, ignored one of the deepest of human needs. In that article I tried to show that this could only be accepted as true in the sense that it is among the earliest of human beliefs. Every Freethinker will admit its antiquity, but there is abundant evidence against both its veracity and its utility. Many who have despaired of establishing the truth of religion have, nevertheless, pleaded for its usefulness—if not now, at some future time. Amongst these are to be reckoned such men as Professor J. G. Frazer and the late Walter Bagehot. Both supported the thesis that, while false as a theory, religious beliefs had served to strengthen various useful customs by attaching to their infraction supernatural penalties. If this were true, the harmful customs that have been perpetuated, together with the obstruction to reform offered by religious fears, would be more than enough to balance the claim. But even though true, the apology would only apply to human societies in the very earliest stages of culture. Above these, I think it may be demonstrated that the religious idea represents one of the greatest and most disastrous blunders ever made by the human intelligence.

What is the essence of religion? The modern fashion is so to define religion that it becomes inextricably confused with ethics, or with various aspects of social life. It is, we are told in the cant phraseology of the contemporary pulpit, a life. It is what we do, not what we believe, that is important. This is quite wrong. Morality, if not anterior to religion, is certainly independent of it. Of course, what we do is to some extent affected by what we believe, and sometimes powerfully affected; but this is true of religion, not as religion, but only as one of numerous ideas. And essentially religion centres in an idea. There is a religious life only as that idea expresses itself in conduct. If we can conceive man never coming to any definite conclusions about the nature of the phenomena around him, never forming any idea as to their causes, we should be unable to conceive religion coming into existence. He would have developed as a creature of instincts only, gregarious as some of the lower orders of life are gregarious, and with habits that, although unreasoning, would preserve life; but he never would have been religious.

Religion commences when man arrives at certain conclusions concerning the causes of phenomena. If these had been conceived as modern science conceives them, then religion would never have arisen. But in the circumstances of the case this was a sheer impossibility. Early mankind finds itself faced with questions to which some answer must be found, and this answer is given by what is generally known as animism. Not that this philosophy of things is worked out as a modern theory is elaborated. The philosophy that represents primitive man speculating on the nature of things is quite false; the conclusions that face us as religion, are in all probability reached in the semi-conscious way that even modern man registers the results of his daily experience. The attitude of a domesticated animal in the presence of unusual sights or sounds probably gives us a fair picture of the earliest type of mankind confronted with anything that roused his fears or awakened his curiosity. It is the accumulated pressure of experience that generates beliefs; a consciousness of their existence is in the nature of a discovery.

But a conclusion was reached by man. The world was alive, or rather it was made up of a number of living forces, with whom man must come to terms. This conclusion we now know to have been a radically wrong one, but it was one of the most important in the history of the human intellect. It meant that the first step had been taken in the attempt to understand the world, to give a rational account of phenomena. In reality it was the beginning of scientific thinking. Later ages have corrected the error made by primitive man, but in the beginning it had its use. It codified experience, and so paved the way for future corrections and more correct theories. But the great thing was that the world should be conceived as amenable to a plan; whether the plan accepted was right or wrong was really a matter of secondary importance. The religious hypothesis was the most important, the greatest, and yet the most necessary blunder ever made by the human mind.

Had religion—this primitive science of nature—been held as later scientific theories were held, the history of mankind would have been very different. The older hypothesis would have yielded place as later and better ones were framed. We should then be able to treat religion in the same spirit that we treat the early and discarded theories of the scientific investigator. But there were two factors that made this impossible. One was fear, the other was self-interest. All the early religions are based, more or less, on fear, and fear has remained the chief ingredient of all historic religions. Man began to worship the gods because he feared their malevolence. Nor was their anger of a discriminating character. If one person offended, the whole of the tribe might be punished; and to guard against offence became one of the most important of duties. It was in this way that the main road to improvement was blocked. To doubt the gods became a tribal offence. Heresy was the greatest of crimes. Thousands of generations have passed since, but the feelings generated in this manner persist to-day.

Next, there is the feeling of self-interest, sometimes of the individual, but very often that of a class. The thinkers among mankind have ever been the few, and there is no reason for doubting that the earlier priesthoods included the bulk of the most serious thinkers, and that the available knowledge was kept from the many in the interests of a special class. But this policy, from whatever reason adopted, involved a position of aggrandisement, and, once secured, such a position is not easily surrendered. Thus a priesthood growing in power, and clinging with all the tenacity of a vested interest to its privileges and possessions, would act as a constantly

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opposing force to any new idea that threatened its security. In this way the two factors, fear of change, and love of power and possession, have combined to prevent in religion that process of modification, rejection, and addition which has been so gratifying a feature in the history of science.

Whatever utility religious beliefs possess can, therefore, only exist in the very earliest stages of culture. At every subsequent stage they act as a drag upon the mind and an obstruction to progress. This is observable even amongst savages, with whom deviation from the customary rites is the most difficult of operations. In all the early civilisations we can see how senseless customs were perpetuated, and the introduction of new ones prevented, from the same fear of offending the gods. Even freethinking Greece and Rome felt the weight of the same incubus, although the restless intellect of the one, and the practical genius of the other, reduced the obstructive influence to a minimum. A change came when various causes combined to place religion once more as a commanding influence in life, and Christianity became the established religion of the Western world. The primitive blunder was re-established, and how repressive that influence was can only be gauged by those who are sufficiently acquainted with the history of scientific ideas to know how much had been discovered in pre-Christian times. It is simply beyond question that, whatever the precise responsibility of the Christian Church, its undisputed reign coincided with the most ignorant and deplorable period of civilised history.

After Greek and Roman thinkers, Christianity. After light, darkness. After civilisation, barbarism. Starting from next to nothing, the ancient world had built up a huge fabric of actual knowledge and suggestive speculation. With this to hand as a possible foundation for further development, Christianity gave us—the Dark Ages. Against this solid fact all the apologists for the religion of the Dark Ages struggle in vain. On the most favorable view, a Church that could allow freedom of thought to be stifled, civic life and sanitation to decay, learning to die out, and the arts of civilisation to disappear, ought not itself to have survived. With such a condition of things, mere survival is little short of a disgrace; it argues, at least, passive acquiescence with what occurs. But to be in a position of power right through this period of degradation argues more than acquiescence; it is proof of participation.

There is no real escape from the conclusion that the blighting influence that rested on Europe for so many centuries was its religion. Other causes may be found, but this is the dominant one, and it sheltered and strengthened others. Consider that the death of the ancient civilisations meant not only a loss of actual knowledge; it meant also the loss of a mental habit—of the habit of facing the world as something to be studied and conquered, and its replacement by habits of mental servility and credulity. Who would trouble after knowledge when its acquisition might mean imprisonment or the stake? What was the use of considering social improvement when the Church sat enthroned above all, sucking from society its very life-blood? Europe was palsied by its religion; robbed of initiative by its belief. Ranke, a fairly cautious writer, calculates that the reign of the Catholic Church cost Europe over ten millions of lives. All these were not, of course, thinkers, but many were, and their fate offered little encouragement to others. And in the end it was the little of the Greek and Latin writings that survived the storm which enabled it to partly liberate itself from the cramping influence of Christianity.

Religion commenced in a blunder. Of the truth of that there can be no doubt. It was only one of a host of blunders that man was bound to make before he reached truth; but it became the most fatal of all. It hangs over primitive life like a pall. Having created the gods, man finds them everywhere in his path. They demand continuous sacrifice in this world; they threaten him with penalties in the next. Every attempt at improvement meets with the same obstacle. In uncivilised and in civilised times the consequences of the initial blunder persists. It persists not alone in direct suppression, but in the perpetuation of a frame of mind that is all but fatal to orderly progress. The race has been taught to look to religion for guidance, a religion that is permeated with fear; and fear perpetuates ignorance, as ignorance in turn perpetuates fear. In earlier times the gods demanded human sacrifices. We have outgrown that, but we still continue to sacrifice the mental and moral freedom of man to the gods called into existence by the stupid blunder of our savage forefathers.

C. COHEN.

Orthodoxy Self-Condemned.

IT is an incontestable fact that all attempts to establish the truth of Christianity, when brought before the bars of logic, history, and ethics, are demonstrated to be signal failures; and by Christianity we understand the religion expressed in the creeds and conciliar decisions of the Church. From this it follows that Christianity and orthodoxy are interchangeable terms. It is sometimes maintained that the simple religion of Jesus is not exemplified in any existing Church, which may be perfectly true; but it is also true that we have no means of ascertaining what the religion of Jesus was. Even on the assumption that the Four Gospels are historical documents, there is no possible escape from the conclusion that what they contain is an interpretation of what the authors believed, or what they wished their readers to believe, to have been the religion of Jesus. The Epistles offer us two or three further interpretations of the same, and these appealed to different types of believers, thereby becoming subjects of controversy. The controversy lasted for many centuries, giving rise to unspeakable hatred, bitterness, and persecution. In the long run, the Pauline interpretation carried the day and became the organised religion of the Catholic Church. This is what is now officially meant by Christianity, the truth of which we declare to be insusceptible of verification. It is contended that it rests upon certain alleged historical facts, not one of which can be supported by a single shred of evidence. Of course, there was a time when the West bowed its knee either to an infallible Church or to an infallible Book, giving ready assent to whatever the one or the other, or both, presented as the truth. Those were the Ages of Faith, during which criticism was practically unknown. When Modernism arose in the Catholic Church and by its bold employment of the severely critical method imperilled her future, she put her foot down and stamped it out. The Anglican Church is trying hard to treat the claim of Liberalism within her own borders in the same manner; but she will not succeed because she lacks authority. The Bishops may pass what resolutions they please when they meet in Convocation, but they know well enough that they have no power to put them into operation. The clergy of the Church of England are not even required to sign the Thirty-Nine Articles. They are merely asked to make a general and vague declaration of assent to them as containing doctrines "agreeable to the Word of God."

Another peculiarity of the Anglican Church is that she pretends to be in favor of criticism while seeking to suppress it. Bishop Gore, for example, denounces the views of those who no longer regard Jesus as an infallible teacher as contrary to sound doctrine. He refers to *The Eschatology of Jesus* by Dr. Latimer Jackson, and *The Miracle of Christianity* by Dr. Bethune Baker, and says:—

> "I have tried to show why I disagree profoundly with the critics in question—not because I deprecate the application of criticism to the New Testament, but because I do not think that their criticism is sound. It is based, it seems to me, on a mistaken view of natural

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law, and on something much less than a Christian belief in God" (*The Basis of Anglican Fellowship*, p. 9).

In reality the Bishop does object to the application of criticism to the New Testament. He is himself a Higher Critic in relation to the Old Testament. He does not believe the Book of Jonah to be history; he admits that the Historical Books are replete with myth and legend and poetry and allegory, and he does not "wish to define, or ask anyone else to define, where history passes back into legend or myth"; he even allows that criticism has shown us "that a great part of the historical narratives of the Old Testament is not strict history, but gives us what St. Gregory of Nyssa admirably calls "ideas in the form of a narrative"; but he seems to himself "to see quite clearly the broad difference between the Old Testament as prophecy and the New Testament as fulfilment in fact." And yet he is not wholly blind to the fact that even in this holy of holies of Scripture criticism has done some good. "It has, I think, shown us that there is one pseudonymous book in the New Testament, the Second Epistle of St. Peter, and that there are discrepancies and errors of detail in the narratives of the New Testament."

So far so good, but at this point the critic is driven out by the theologian:—

> "When the element of fact becomes of supreme significance, in the region of the Incarnation, there also the historical evidence is adequate and, to my mind, convincing" (*The Basis*, p. 22).

In the name of reason, what "historical evidence" of the Virgin Birth or the Resurrection is there, or can there be? Joseph and Mary were apparently totally ignorant of the former, and there is nothing to show that they believed in the latter. Dr. Sanday looks upon that extract as "one of the indications which raise my doubts as to the real flexibility and freedom from bias of the Bishop's historical criticism." The great scholar adds:—

> "The wholesale and over-emphatic references to the conclusiveness of the evidence are not promising to the eye of a scholar. The wish is too evidently father to the thought. If the Bishop brought the same clear-sightedness to bear upon the study of the New Testament that he has brought to bear on that of the Old, I submit that various expressions would have been considerably chastened" (*Bishop Gore's Challenge to Criticism*, p. 12).

The curious thing about Professor Sanday is that his theology and his criticism are utterly independent of each other. As critic he has made decided progress within the last few years. He has gradually grown into the "conviction that it is impossible to draw any clear line of demarcation between the New Testament and the Old; nay, that the New Testament must be even more liable to the same kind of influences as the Old, because, whereas the Old Testament writers shaped their own methods of writing history for themselves, the New Testament writers followed throughout the model of the Old Testament." Consequently, he rejects the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection, and the Ascension, as well as all other *contra naturum* miracles. But as theologian he has stood quite still all through the years. While denying the Virgin Birth, he thus writes:—

> "In regard to the birth of our Lord, I would say that I believe most emphatically in his supernatural birth. I do not doubt that the birth of our Lord was sanctified in every physical respect in the most perfect manner conceivable. The coming of the Only-begotten into the world could not but be attended by every circumstance of holiness. Whatever the Virgin Birth can spiritually mean for us is guaranteed by the fact that the Holy Babe was divine. Is it not enough to affirm this with all our heart and soul, and be silent as to anything beyond?" (*Ibid.*, pp. 19, 20).

Now, will Canon Sanday be good enough to inform us what he means by a supernatural birth? Can an event be both natural and supernatural? If a birth is not natural, is it not of necessity unnatural; and is not the unnatural, by the same necessity, also *anti*-natural? It seems to us that the erudite gentleman strains out the gnat and swallows the camel. What is the use of denying the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection, and the Ascension, which are intelligible events, however incredible, while affirming a supernatural birth, a spiritual resurrection, and a symbolical ascension, events as unintelligible as they are unbelievable? Fancy this statement being made by a real critic:—

> "That the Risen Lord as Spirit still governed and inspired his Church is proved beyond question, if by nothing else, by the first-hand testimony of St. Paul—not only by his own experience, but by the experience of the Christian Church around him. All this, I repeat, is verifiable history" (*Ibid*, pp. 20, 21).

Surely Dr. Sanday must have forgotten all about historical criticism when he penned that extraordinary sentence. All that is verifiable about the Churches organised by St. Paul is that they were composed of men and women of whom the organiser himself testified that they were contentious, censorious, disorderly, drunken, litigious, incestuous, and who are yet known to have regarded themselves as the elect of heaven, while looking down with contempt upon the Pagan world as a world abandoned by the God of love and governed by evil spirits. All this, we submit, is verifiable history, while the talk about the Risen Lord as a Spirit governing and inspiring his Church is unverifiable though very pious rhetoric.

Yes, Christianity, like every other supernatural religion, is self-condemned, and even such apologists as Dr. Gore and Dr. Sanday only succeed in making this fact more apparent. Bishop Gore says, in effect, to the critics: "We give you full liberty to demonstrate the fact that the Old Testament is made up of myth and legend and fable and poetry and parable, but we warn you that when you enter the New Testament you must be believing and reverent, treating the great miracles that find place in our creeds with humble respect, or we shall anathematise you in the name of the Lord. Our duty is to accept without question all miracles and doctrines that have been handed down to us under the guidance of the Holy Spirit." While the theologians thus prate with oracular self-sufficiency, the science of literary and historical criticism is quietly but certainly knocking away the foundation of the structure they are guarding with such zealous assiduity.

J. T. LLOYD.

Primitive Man.—V.

(Concluded from p. 342.)

"Primitive man, like the child and the animal, is at first only a bundle of wants, tendencies, instincts which, when not simply unconscious, are connected with external or internal tendencies.

"The child, who feels acutely the possession of a toy, or the deprivation of it, is not affected by the beauty of a landscape, by reason of a limited intellectual power. We know that (in spite of common opinion) a savage, even a barbarian, is not moved by the splendors of civilised life, but only by its petty and puerile sides. Its greater aspects inspire him neither with desire, admiration, nor jealousy, because he does not understand them. Bougainville, in the last century, had already remarked this fact, which has frequently been confirmed since. Speaking of the profound indifference of the Pacific Islanders to the skilled construction of his ships and the instruments belonging to them, he says, 'They treat the masterpieces of human industry as laws and phenomena of Nature.'"—Professor T. H. Ribot, *The Psychology of the Emotions* (1897), pp. 189-190.

"It is no easy matter for a man of ordinary education to form a notion of the mental fallowness of a rustic of his own day; it is far more difficult for him to divest his mind of all its acquisitions through study and observation and reduce his ideas to the level of those of the progenitors of his race, whom we will call Arcice."—Baring-Gould, *Origin and Development of Religious Belief*, vol. i., p. 135.

M. Bourien speaks of the wild tribes of Malay, as inconstant, fickle, and erratic; this—

> "together with a mixture of fear, timidity, and indifference, lies at the bottom of their character; they seem always to think that they would be better in any other place than in the one they occupy at the time. Like

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children, their actions seem to be rarely guided by reflection, and they almost always act impulsively."*

Letourneau says, "The very inferior savage, like our own infant children, does not know what to-morrow means."

Major Tremearne also observes, "A wild pagan's idea of even the present time is, to say the least, hazy, and of the past quite valueless." And in exacting tribute,—

> "We must necessarily be extremely lenient in all matters where time is concerned with these pagans, for most of them have absolutely no idea of any divisions of the year other than 'harvest' and 'non-harvest,' nor of the sunny hours of the day than meal-time and not-meal-time; as the *Geisha* has it, 'a month or a week or a day, sir?' are nought to the happy-go-lucky savage. In fact, these names are quite interchangeable in his mind unless connected with anything regarding his own welfare, and even then only if to his own advantage."†

We have said that there has been no tribe yet discovered without a language, but among the most primitive races it is a poor affair, like that of the Yamparicos of North America, who are said to speak "a sort of gibberish like the growling of a dog."‡

Others eke out their language with signs and gestures to such an extent that they cannot carry on a conversation without them. Sir Richard Burton speaks of "those who, like the Arapahos, possess a very scanty vocabulary, pronounced in a quasi-intelligible way, can hardly converse with one another in the dark."§ Nor is this confined to the savages of America, for Miss Kingsley says of the languages of Africa:—

> "Some of them are very dependent on gesture. When I was with the Fans, they frequently said, 'We will go to the fire so that we can see what they say,' when any question had to be decided after dark. And the inhabitants of Fernando Po, the Bubis, are quite unable to converse with each other unless they have sufficient light to see the accompanying gestures of the conversation."‖

The same writer says that "at least one-third of an African language consists of gesture."¶

In the light of our knowledge of the irresponsibility, selfishness, childishness, and limitations of thought of primitive man, we are in a better position to judge the claim of the late Mr. Andrew Lang, that the lowest savages have a belief in High Gods—in an immortal, powerful, moral, and kindly creative Being. Fancy creatures who cannot count the fingers of one hand, so deficient in language that they cannot make themselves understood in the dark, to whom the past and the future are a blank, as gluttonous as pigs, who love no one but themselves, whose daintiest dish is a repast of human flesh, and whose greatest pleasure is shedding human blood—fancy such beings worshiping, or having the idea of, an almighty, moral, and benevolent God! The mere statement of such a proposition refutes itself.

Pious people, who gladly follow Mr. Lang in this grotesque theory, forget that if such savages have such a belief, what becomes of their argument—if it can be called such—that without the idea of a God who rewards goodness and punishes evil, people would sink into immorality? If these utterly immoral savages believe in such a God, how is it that the belief does not restrain them from immorality?

And again, if they already believe in such a Being, why spend such enormous sums in sending missionaries out to teach the natives something they already believe?

As for the much-vaunted civilising work of the missionaries—upon which two million pounds a year is spent by this country alone—the truth is, they do a great deal more harm than good. Nobody would think of employing a missionary-educated boy in Africa. All the missionaries do is to make hypocrites. Instead of discarding his own superstition, the native merely adds the white man's superstition to his own. Civilisation, to be permanent, is a very long and painful process; you cannot suddenly turn a savage into a civilised being by teaching him a new religion, any more than a pumpkin and a couple of mice can be changed into a carriage and pair by a wave of a wand. As Buckle, the historian, remarked, "We may as well expect that the seed should quicken in the barren rock as that a mild and philosophic religion should be established among ignorant and ferocious savages."* It is quite true, as he further remarks, "They receive the externals, but there they stop.....The rites and forms of a religion lie on the surface; they are at once seen, they are quickly learned, easily copied by those who are unable to penetrate to that which lies beneath." He further points out, "The religion of mankind is the effect of their improvement, not the cause of it" (p. 146). The truth of these remarks can be proved over and over again. Mr. Stanley Portal Hyatt, who knows the South African natives well, and has protested vigorously—in his books and in the press—against the manner in which they are treated by the authorities, also protests against the attempts to Europeanise them. He declares:—

> "As a rule, the so-called education given to the natives is not only useless, but positively harmful. You cannot turn the barbarian into a civilised man in one generation, possibly not in ten generations. You may catch your Kaffir young, send him home, cut him off completely from all his old associations, send him to an English public school and then to the Varsity, ordain him a priest, even consecrate him as a bishop. But if he goes back to his village when there is some festival in progress, if he smells the blood of the sacrificial bull, hears the rattles and the drums, the lewd chorus of the dancers, it is practically certain, that before many minutes have passed, he will have stripped himself of his European garments and will have joined the yelling crowd. It is a curious and significant fact that the clothed native always wears his loin cloth underneath his other garments; it is a wholly unconscious tribute to the savage side of his nature."†

The same writer says that as "the sense of being clothed seemed to bring out all the immoral instincts in the native girls—and most missionaries insist on clothing," so the only use the educated native made of his learning was to forge the "liquor-passes," which every native is required to show from his employer before a trader will supply him with a bottle of spirits. Mr. Hyatt says:—

> "The forging of passes soon became a profitable industry amongst the educated natives, practically the only industry in which they cared to engage, in which they could engage, perhaps, for it was extremely hard to find employment. No white man would risk having one in his house; they were generally regarded as a gang of thieves and forgers, and were kept at arm's length by the whole white community. Possibly, the prejudice against them was carried a little too far, but I do not think so. There were plenty of good, raw savages to be obtained, and it was absurd to run unnecessary risks by employing educated ones" (p. 27).

Mr. Lionel Decle is of the same opinion. He observes:—

> "It is to be feared, again, that the results produced by missionaries, in the way of native converts, are not any high testimonial to the value of their work. Sir Harry Johnston in his book on Kilima Njaro, has given his opinion that the native Christians of the Mombasa district are liars, cowards, thieves, and drunkards. From my own experience, I should say that almost every boy brought up in a mission is the same."

He says:—

> "You have only to go about Khama's capital and see a native as you approach pull out his Bible and begin to read it upside-down to understand the hollow character which is inseparable from ninety-nine hundredths of native Christianity."‡

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* Lubbock, *Origin of Civilisation*, p. 522.
† Tremearne, *The Tailed Head-Hunters of Nigeria*, pp. 98-117.
‡ Wake, *Chapters on Man*, p. 143.
§ Burton, *The City of the Saints*, p. 151.
‖ Miss Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa*, p. 357.
¶ Miss Kingsley, *West African Studies*, p. 237.

* Buckle, *History of Civilisation* (1904), p. 145.
† S. P. Hyatt, *Off the Main Track* (1911), p. 25.
‡ Lionel Decle, *Three Years in Savage Africa*, pp. 518-519.

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And, as he further remarks,—

> "It is very easy to teach savages to sing hymns or to repeat their catechism; some of them will learn to read and write with wonderful ease. But this is mere imitativeness, like that of the monkey or the parrot. It means nothing at all. To the native the Bible is simply a series of stories of what recently took place in the white man's country; so that, instead of assisting civilisation, the teaching of the Bible, by giving wholly false ideas, actually hinders it. The idea of the redemption of the world by Christ is utterly incomprehensible to the native, for no native has the faintest idea of self-sacrifice."*

We have said that the converted native merely adds the white man's superstition to those of native manufacture, and upon this point we can cite the testimony of Miss Kingsley, who, speaking of the mission converts, says:—

> "Yet how many of these earnest people could one guarantee to have completely cast out all their belief in Ju-Juism? If I were put upon my oath to answer truthfully, according to my individual belief, I am afraid my answer would be *not one*."†

Directly the eye of the white man is off him, says Miss Kingsley, he sinks back to his old level again; and "The travellers of a remote future will find him, I think, still with his tom-tom and his dug-out canoe—just as willing to sell as 'big curios' the *débris* of our importations to his ancestors at a high price." And she adds, "I do not believe that the white race will ever drag the black up to their own particular summit in the mountain range of civilisation."‡

Least of all by means of the missionary, for Miss Kingsley emphatically declared that "The missionary-made man is the curse of the coast," and "it is not the missionaries' intent to turn out skilful forgers and unmitigated liars, although they practically do so" (pp. 490-1).

We will next consider whether there are any primitive tribes, or races, without religion. A question over which much ink has been spilt.

W. MANN.

An Angel's Visit.

SOMEONE has suggested that the emotional excitement associated with religious "conversion," and the state of feeling commonly known as "falling in love," may possibly, as psychological phenomena, be reduced to a common denominator, and find their explanation in the same fundamental psychic law. In the same way, perhaps, such ideas as are expressed by the terms "angels' visits," "inspiration," and what we call "new thought," may be but different forms of stating a mental suggestion, the hidden springs of which are not always discernible, and which sometimes appear mysterious and inexplicable. The incident I am about to relate is one of those flashes of inspiration which often startle one by their suddenness, and which come as the solution of some perplexity without any conscious mental effort. But in order to show the force and relevancy of this heaven-sent message, it will be necessary to give some little details of my previous life and religious evolution.

Until I was well into my teens, my literary knowledge was bounded by the Bible, the Shorter Catechism, and the monthly Missionary Record. The dismal Calvinistic creed of Presbyterianism is perhaps the worst phase of Christianity upon which a child can be nurtured. The fear of the Lord, in its Presbyterian interpretation, strikes a more solemn note than in any of the other sects. The ministerial gown, the sombre visage of the elders, the solemnity of the Communion, all tend to impress the childish mind with the seriousness and infallible truth of religion.

A gentleman who recently read some of my articles in the *Freethinker*, for the first time, told me he thought I must have been trained for the Presbyterian ministry. All the education the Fates allowed me, however, was a few short years at a colliery school, which ended at the age of twelve. But if my secular knowledge was of the poverty-stricken order, I must have been a promising student of spiritual matters, as I succeeded one year in gaining the first prize of the Sunday-school for Biblical knowledge. This prize took the form of a book, with the significant title *How to Get On*. I say significant, because it represents the real ideal of Christendom. For however much the Christian may profess to set his affection upon things above, his main desire seems to be to "get on" down below.

The variance between the Christianity of Church life and what I conceived to be the teaching of the New Testament soon appeared to me so obvious that I was anxious to have some explanation of the Church's apostasy. I must have been little more than a boy when I sought an interview with the minister to ask him to reconcile the two. But if this man of God had been a wax model or a wooden dolly, I could not have got less satisfaction in respect to my difficulties. If I was to be religious at all, I could not be satisfied unless there was conformity between practice and belief. A popular preacher at that time among the Congregationalists drew me for a time into the fold of that nondescript body. But the desire to find some definite basis for my religious life tended to keep my convictions unsettled. Some time later I joined the small body known as the "Churches of Christ," which professes to find the sanction for all its beliefs and observances in the New Testament alone. In accord with their plea for a return to primitive Christianity, they repudiate the office of the priesthood, the work of exhortation and preaching devolving upon those who are moved by the Spirit, or otherwise qualified for the work. Possessing a little gift in that direction, I took my share of the platform duties; but, unfortunately, the Spirit must have moved me in the wrong direction, as the socialistic tenor of my addresses soon brought upon me the censure of the "elders." I was quietly given to understand that no interpretations of Christianity were admissible that were not in agreement with their particular Church traditions. And so I was cast out into the void, to make my way a lonely pilgrim to the gates of heaven as best I could.

I belonged about this time to a local Christian Evidence Society, which was composed of all sorts and conditions of believers, and which, needless to say, went to wreck in the seething waters of jealousy and sectarian bigotry. I set to work to study the so-called "evidences." I remember going to the Reference Department of the Public Library in the town, and, not being quite sure of the books I wanted, interviewing the old librarian. With a confidence born of blissful ignorance, I said, "I want you to put me in the way of some book or books that will definitely prove the Bible to be the Word of God." I will never forget the strange look with which he regarded me. "I'm afraid you'll have a difficulty," he said, in a slow but deliberate way which surprised me not a little. A difficulty in proving the Bible to be the Word of God! Why, was not the fact proclaimed every Sunday from ten thousand pulpits in the land? And then a horrible suspicion arose in my mind. Could it be that the old fellow was an Atheist, who by some means had got into this responsible position, and dared to suggest doubts about the Bible. But, after I had spent some six months of my leisure time in studying the subject of Inspiration, and came to realise that it rested on nothing better than theological assumption, my feeling toward the old librarian underwent a marked change.

While attending the Christian Evidence meetings, the *Freethinker* naturally came in for its share of abuse, and I have a dim recollection of buying a copy at that remote period, only to be disgusted with its contents. After the wreck of this Society, and

* Decle, *Three Years in Savage Africa*, pp. 516-517.
† Miss Kingsley, *West African Studies*, p. 482.
‡ Miss Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa*, pp. 513-514.

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the Church had turned me adrift, I was left without any of the means of grace. In looking back over the years that followed, it is somewhat difficult to remember all the milestones of the journey, and locate their exact position. They were years of practical isolation so far as any social fellowship was concerned. I read everything I came across for and against religion, clinging to every raft or floating straw that I thought would save me from being drowned in the sea of scepticism. One of the books I read about this time was *Supernatural Religion*, and although I could clearly perceive the weakness of all the arguments used in support of Christianity, the influence of my early mental environment prevented me, I think, from fully realising the extent of my intellectual convictions. In a case of religious evolution such as I am describing, the reason often travels apace, regardless of the feebleness of our powers of adjustment. The conclusions of the intellect have for a time to contend against the forces of a previous mental atmosphere, and all the subtle ties that bind us to the past. But, with sufficient moral courage, the sympathies ultimately come into harmony with the findings of the intellect.

My progress towards emancipation was very slow; but I was not blessed with any friendly help in my lonely transition. I was living in a kind of wilderness, with the refuge of Egypt lying behind, and the promised land of settled habitation not yet reached. Every vestige of religious belief at last disappeared, but still I had not come into contact with anyone connected with the Freethought movement. Often and often I pondered upon the change in my beliefs, and wondered at my own audacity in daring to question the truth of such a hoary institution as Christianity. Years passed—years of patient study and reflection and widening thought; until one day a curious thing happened. I was walking along the street, and, as usual, meditating upon my changed condition, when I began to wonder just exactly where I then stood. Surely, I thought, there must be some paper or periodical devoted to the advocacy of the views I had come to hold as alone consistent with reason. And immediately I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Why its the *Freethinker*."

. . . . .

If any sceptical reader should imagine that I am merely romancing or telling a fairy tale, I can assure him that this voice was just as audible, and just as distinct as any voice that ever spoke from heaven. I have called it an "Angel's Visit" because of its mysteriousness. For, with the exception of the single instance I have previously mentioned, I am not aware that the *Freethinker* had ever crossed my thoughts during the ten years or so that followed. I could not even have told the name of its editor. And to this day, although I have often thought of the matter, I have been unable to trace any of the underlying causes which might possibly account for such an inspiration. It may be that the heavenly voices are not confined to the Joan of Arcs and the Christian mystics.

Such, then, are the somewhat strange circumstances under which I first made the acquaintance of the *Freethinker*, and which accounts for my connection with the paper. For, although I have contributed some fifty or sixty articles to its pages I have not even had speech with its editor; but they may be taken as evidence that I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision.

JOSEPH BRYCE.

A Boon for Bairns.

Stories from the Children's Realm. By George Bedborough. (London: Vegetarian Union, Memorial Hall, Farringdon-street, E.C.; 1914. 6d. net.)

THERE is no literary task more difficult than the art of cultivating the interest of children in the ethical problems that surround their little lives. The child's psychology is a realm unknown, except from the distant glimpses and happy intuitions of an elect few. In that number Mr. George Bedborough deserves distinguished place of honor. Nothing more charming in the way of story-telling for children has been done for a long time than in the thirty-two beautiful stories which Mr. Bedborough has compressed into the hundred delightful pages of this little volume. His stories are good without being "goody"; they are moral without being mawkish; and they cover a very wide field of practical ethics in a freshly original manner. And if the moral elevation is high—high till it converges upon the realm of the ideal—the literary flavor is maintained at an equally lofty standard of excellence. Unlike so many tales with a purpose, these stories neither obtrude religion upon the child's mind nor extrude it from his mental purview. And, very properly, Mr. Bedborough refrains altogether from offering to the children the bribes and enticements of eternal glory, or heavenly lollipops, as the reward for making themselves happy by the agreeable process of widening the area of happiness available for the men and animals who cross their path in life. His chosen method of influence is not the method of arid proselytism; it is a method of sympathy and sweet reasonableness applied to the numerous practical problems of character-forming which intimately affect the child at his different and varied points of contact with the social life of his fellows in the home, at the school, in the nursery, or in the playground, or which affect him in his relations with the humbler but no less sensitive types of animal life.

I should like to know that these delightful stories—which, by the way, are woven with a literary artistry that can equally appeal to the thinking adult as well as to the wonder-child (for all children, until we spoil them, are wonder-children)—could find their way into thousands of homes and be read by myriads of children. I confess without any qualm of shame that I read the whole collection with eager delight at one sitting, and was fascinated by the charm and ease and naturalness of the varied groups of stories which compose this welcome volume.

The collection contains "some Dreams" (five in all), in which Mr. Bedborough shows that dreaming does not prevent the seer from keeping a wakeful open eye fixed upon the realities of the workaday world. One of these dreams, entitled "To-day: A Dream of New Year's Eve," is quite a literary gem set with poetry and sentiment and imagination. Another dream—"A Pilgrim's Progress"—is almost equally beautiful; the dream is an admirable summary in the pictorial form of allegory of some of the cruelties and absurdities that mar the life of so-called civilised man. One of these "dreams" is perhaps too obviously a tale with a purpose (though, like the rest, it is very well told): I refer to that entitled "The Isle of Vegetariana." Here, perhaps, the dietetic doctrines of Vegetarianism are too obviously pushed to the fore. On the principle that children should not be proselytised, but be left to learn their ethical truths by the logical force of the indirect appeal, it seems to me that Mr. Bedborough had better omit this story from the next edition of his book.

I have refrained from making any quotations from this book because quotation would fail to give any indication of the freshness, the *vim*, and directness of the appeal which Mr. Bedborough's volume makes alike to the child's ingenuous fancy as well as to the "grown-up's" ethical and literary taste. The stories are thoroughly secular in tone and tendency, and the terminology is commendably free from that slimy touch of theology with which no teacher of the young has the right to soil the nascent mind. Secularists and Rationalists will do well to let their children revel in these stories. My two grandchildren (there is one other who as yet reads naught else but his mother's eyes) have already devoured them with gusto and profit.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

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Acid Drops

If the English police, in some of their proceedings, do not become the laughing-stock of the civilised world, it will not be due to any fault of theirs. And some of our magistrates, who never ought to have been appointed to anything more important than a mothers' meeting, seem to be doing their best to help the police. At Scarborough, on May 27, a man was fined for exhibiting for sale two "profane" picture postcards. The cards were called "The Bachelor's Prayer" and "The Old Maid's Prayer," and each "depicted a person kneeling in prayer." Chief Constable Windsor submitted that "to make a comic postcard of people kneeling in prayer was profanity." He also said that he was "annoyed" by seeing the cards. They were "most improper." We have every sympathy with the delicacy of mind evidenced by Chief Constable Windsor, and we would suggest that such a chaste and sensitive person is quite out of place in the force. Necessarily the occupation of a policeman must bring him into contact with many "improper" sights and sounds, and the wonder is that, having been so many years in the force, this police officer should retain such a virginal simplicity and sensitiveness. In his interests we hope that he is near the pension age. The magistrate fined the seller of the postcards 10s. 6d. and costs. England will soon be a most delightful place—to get away from.

We wonder what would have happened to Walter Bagehot—economist and man of letters—under the rule of the Eugenists. We fancy there would never have been a Walter Bagehot, and so nothing could have happened to him. Of the value of his writings there is no question, and his keenest appreciators are found among some of the keenest thinkers of his time. Yet his mother was a widow of thirty-eight when Bagehot's father married her. By her first marriage she had three children—one died of some illness while young, another died from the effects of an accident, the third grew up insane. The mother herself was subject to occasional fits of insanity. We are afraid that Eugenists would have labelled her as an undesirable case, and forbidden marriage. Yet the offspring of that marriage became one of the sanest and most suggestive writers of his time. Anyone who has read only his *Physics and Politics* will concede this. His sister-in-law—who is his biographer—says that his standpoint in religion was really Unitarian. We should be inclined to describe it as more nearly Atheist.

Taken from a recent *Guardian* list of wills: Rev. H. Allott, £20,701; Rev. E. Brumell, Norfolk, £11,717; Rev. J. H. A. Gibson, Brighton, £38,959; Rev. G. Granville, Wasperton, Warwick, £25,199. Rev. C. E. Hammond, £3,497; Rev. F. Lear, Canon of Salisbury, £12,273; Rev. T. R. Shand, Chichester, £10,240; Rev. H. Shepherd, Hove, £76,636.

It is now understood, says the *Academy*, that "Science and religion are working on different planes to the same end—viz., the discovery of truth." We welcome the information, and should be still more pleased if the *Academy* could tell us what are the truths that religion has discovered. Up to the present, not only has religion failed to establish any truth, but it has been compelled to relinquish a great many teachings which it said were true. Of course, the clergy would like to be regarded as fellow-workers with the scientist, but it is a partnership to which only one side contributes. The other simply draws a part of the profits.

Dean Inge is not very hopeful concerning the future of church-going. In a recent volume of essays he says that:—

> "The outlook from the point of view of clerical professionalism is not very hopeful. The practice of church-going is likely to decline still further, especially in Protestant Churches.....The Roman Catholics are likely to be more successful in keeping their congregations together, and this will give them a statistical advantage. But from this Church, more than some others, the irresistible march of modern culture and education is certain to detach an ever-increasing number of adherents."

The concluding sentence really hits the nail on the head. Church attendance is declining, and must continue to decline, because of the "irresistible march of modern culture and education." And, obviously, no church can fight against that. As we have often pointed out, it is not this or that individual or organisation that religion has to fight. It is modern culture and the better and more enduring aspects of modern civilisation that it will have to defeat if it is to live.

The Turkish Government has adopted a friendly attitude towards the sect of Devil-worshipers. Under Abdul Hamid efforts were made to convert or suppress them. The present Government is more tolerant, and has decided to recognise their existence as a distinct religious sect. For our own part, it seems to us that worshiping the Devil is as rational as any other religious worship, and it is certainly more politic. If there be a God and a Devil, then it seems a safe game to keep on good terms with the latter. God ought to be good enough to look after his creatures whether they worship him or not. It is the Devil who ought to be placated. As it is, however, worshipers spend all their time in placating Deity, and leaving the Devil alone. Which is more complimentary to the latter than to the former.

What Secularists these Christians are! Even priests are not exempt. In a recent issue of the *Universe*, the Catholic newspaper, the following quaint advertisement appears: "Young priest dying for motor-cycle; set his heart on Douglas model V., £48; sees no chance of getting one himself for years; writes in desperation." The poor young man must be desperate, for he has forgotten the clerical cant of the value of prayer.

Biblical criticism now centres around the personality of Christ, and a fierce encounter has taken place between Mr. J. M. Robertson, M.P., and Dr. F. C. Conybeare, the latter's book on *The Historical Christ* being the subject of severe criticism at the hands of Mr. Robertson, who asks his readers to contemplate "the hysterical Conybeare" before studying the "historical Christ."

A mummy case in the British Museum was smashed with an axe by a Suffragette. This courteous action of hitting a four-thousand-years'-old corpse on the nose in order to help her cause should entitle the lady to be elected an honorary member of the Christian Evidence Society.

The Cost of Wings is the title of a new book. We suppose it depends upon the church or chapel one attends, and whether a copper or a threepenny-bit is expected in the plate.

Music in the Church forms the subject of an interesting book by the Rev. G. W. Stewart. Ordinary folk are more interested in music outside the church, such as concerts on the kerb by the Salvation Army band, and a collection by the bandmaster, with the pathetic appeal, "We'll stop here till the hat's full."

The Rev. Luke Wiseman says that every supposed miracle of the Acts of the Apostles has been repeated in our own day, except the opening of prison doors and the raising of corpses. Dear! Dear! Only the quick and the dead.

A popular writer in an advanced journal remarked that Charles Darwin was "one of the greatest Englishman ever born." Are there any Englishmen who were *not* born? What "Hosea Biglow" called "combinin' morrul truth with phrases sich as strike" has its dangers.

The clever "Asterisks" writer in the *Star* quotes a Sunday paper as saying of Satan that "There have been many who have dismissed him as a sort of Mrs. Harris—a mythological pigment." Whereupon the *Star* man remarks that "There are many, on the other hand, who say he is not so black as he is pigmented." But the mythological pigment probably means mythological figment. So Satan has the top of the joking, after all.

The Middles x County Council has at length decided to institute legal proceedings in cases where "the provisions of the statutes of the regulations relating to the granting of music, dancing, stage play, cinematograph, and horse-racing licenses are infringed." The legal proceedings are to be in the nature of test actions against the proprietors of cinematograph shows, and if these remain true to their original intention of fighting the Council, some important developments may be anticipated. Some of the local Councils desire these places to be open on Sunday, and an amendment in favor of taking proceedings only in such cases where the local bodies concurred was vigorously opposed by the Sabbatarians, and lost. These men are quite ready to favor local option when it suits their purpose, but in this case they discovered that it would mean "throwing the apple of discord among local authorities." Mr. H. Nield, M.P., in supporting the Committee's resolution, said that "Sunday ought to be kept as it had been hitherto"—which is precisely the way in which it ought not to be kept. Picture palaces have at least made plain the fact that, given

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opportunities for harmless or rational enjoyment on Sunday, harmful and irrational occupations decrease. But one can hardly expect considerations of this kind to weigh with bigots.

But picture palace owners must be on their guard. The Bishop of Chichester solemnly informed a Conference of Churchwomen that he was going to London, and intended visiting a picture palace. Bravo Bishop! This is what we call genuine moral courage. Imagine this Conference of Churchwomen solemnly considering who will beard the Devil in his den in order to find out if he really is as black as he is painted, and their relief and admiration when their own Bishop offers to run the risk! It is truly Christian. Does not the good Christian in Paris sacrifice most of his holiday-time in searching into the shady side of life in the "gay city," in order to report the evils to his friends at home? We wonder whether the Bishop will go in gaiters and shovel hat, or whether he will adopt the disguise of a layman, and plank down his "tanner" at the pay-box with an assumed air of dissipation? We would advise the latter course. Otherwise the proprietors might be artful enough to alter the program for his benefit.

The Conference in question was not called to consider the character of picture palaces. The matter arose out of a discussion about servants. The subject under consideration was how to promote the moral and spiritual welfare of servants. There was no suggestion of shorter hours or larger wages, but opportunities were to be provided for attending "Divine service." It was suggested that servants should be let out only in couples; that they should be allowed out only during the daylight; and that, when out, they should be induced to spend their time at a girls' club. Then someone wanted to know if picture palaces were fit places for servants. Hence the Bishop's resolve to inspect and report. We are afraid that his report may be adverse. We have ourselves seen films on which were displayed servants kissing each other, and even kissing their masters. And one can easily conceive how demoralising this must be to the ordinary "domestic." We are inclined to favor the idea of servants being let out in couples during daylight, marched to a girls' club or a mission service, and solemnly escorted home—not later than 6.30—by one of the curates. We had almost forgotten to say that servants were not invited to the Conference.

Rev. Dr. Robinson delivered the annual address to the Christian Evidence Society, and we fancy that its lecturers must have wished that someone else had been selected. He told his hearers that evidential books were full of smart debating points, but they did not leave the impression that here was a man really anxious to get at the facts. "Too often the Christian apologist traded upon the ignorance of his audience." Dr. Robinson also dwelt upon the ineffectiveness of the work. He said they were too much occupied in knocking down their opponents instead of declaring the truth. We would suggest to Dr. Robinson that he spends a few Sundays in visiting some of the Christian Evidence meetings if he wishes to properly appreciate the character of both the lecturers and the lectures. Nothing more hopelessly vulgar, stupid, and untruthful than the present generation of Christian Evidence speakers has ever existed. They are the Rudyard Kiplings of religion—minus his ability and education.

A testimonial to the good done by a South American Missionary Society, written by the manager of an American company, is published in one of the religious weeklies. The manager writes in praise of the Society's work in Paraguay, and thinks his company fortunate in securing land under the influence of the Mission, where it can obtain Indian labor, which is "a very valuable asset to us." If only the introduction of alcohol can be prevented, the manager dwells upon the possibilities before them "owing to the extreme cheapness of labor." We can quite believe in the manager's gratitude. If the Mission can "tame" the natives, and keep the American company supplied with an abundance of cheap labor, it does well to feel grateful. Only we fail to see in this a clear proof of the value of the Mission—to the Indian. It is all right for the preacher and for the trader. The latter makes the money, and hands over a percentage of the profit to the preacher. But does the native benefit? May it not be better for him to go cheerfully to hell after his own fashion than to reach heaven after being sweated to death in the joint interests of English missions and American shareholders?

There is an old proverb about the futility of giving a pail of milk and then kicking it over. We are often reminded of this saying by Mr. R. J. Campbell's sermons. In a recent sermon he pointed out the fallacy of assuming design from an examination of the cosmic order. That, he rightly said, "does not prove anything as to an intelligent directing purpose at the back of it." And he went on to point out:—

> "As far as one can see, in the very nature of things an order of some kind always results from the interplay of forces, physical or psychical.....Forces which cannot destroy each other must get along together somehow: they will check and modify each other, and then settle down into a system of relations which will continue until some new factor disturbs the balance. This would happen of necessity without anyone arranging it.....Every natural phenomenon within our range of acquaintance can be thus accounted for."

This is well said, although it is possible that Mr. Campbell does not see its full implications.

Of course, Mr. Campbell has to find room for God somewhere—that is his business; and having given his pail of milk, he proceeds to kick it over the roadway. Purpose is to be found, not in the universe, but in ourselves. "We should have no notion of purpose if we were not conscious of it in ourselves." Therefore, "Can we do otherwise than attribute the same kind of spiritual faculty, though immeasurably greater, to the mysterious power of which we are ourselves the outcome, and whose works we behold in the myriad worlds around us?" Now, this is really the ground on which purpose in the universe is inferred, but there is no evidence whatever offered that would lead one to assume the inference to be correct. Man assumes purpose in the universe because he himself plans. But to make the analogy complete, or even to establish an analogy at all, one would have to show that the universe resembles man as one man resembles another. I may assume that another person acts from the same motives as myself because he resembles me in all other points. But does the universe resemble me? Clearly, it does not, and consequently the whole analogy breaks down. The uncivilised mind infers purpose in the universe because it places a personal intelligence at the back of phenomena. Design in nature is not something we discover, it is something we create for ourselves. Mr. Campbell really gives the cause of a fallacy, and imagines he is establishing a scientific analogy.

It is rather a curious thing, but since the appearance of the article "The Savage in Our Midst" in our issue for May 24, we have received about half-a-dozen articles from various papers on the subject of Mascots and the use of charms generally. We hardly like to suggest that the articles in question were inspired by those who find the *Freethinker* very good to steal from, but we may take it as a proof that the *Freethinker* is more widely and more closely read than most people imagine.

The thirtieth annual report of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children states that the Society had in hand last year 54,772 cases. These were accounted for as starvation and neglect, 47,960; ill-treatment and assault, 3,991; exposure and begging, 903; and other minor offences. The Society has a deficit of £6,550. Here is a ghastly illustration of what Christianity does *not* do.

Dr. Drummond, of Edinburgh, says that the best thing that can be done for children is to see that they have "decent Christian homes." Let them have decent homes, by all means. We need not bother about their being *Christian*. Decency and Christianity are not by any means synonymous.

The General Assembly of the United Free Church (Scotland) discussed the other day the question of housing in Dundee. It appears that there are 15,000 people living in homes of one room, and 85,000 in homes of two rooms. Eventually, the Assembly decided it could do nothing. Then it proceeded to discuss the question of a stained glass window, containing a figure of Christ, in one of the Arran churches, and ordered its removal.

The Bishop of Colchester has been lamenting the want of cash in the English Church. Many, said the Bishop, who have been preferred to "livings" find themselves in possession of "starvings." We have heard this familiar tune before, but expressed in better language. Many working people would find themselves passing rich on the stipends of "clerical poverty."

The Pope has created thirteen new cardinals, including the English Benedictine, Abbot Aidan Gasquet, and Mgr. Begin, the Archbishop of Quebec. Presumably, the remainder are Italian gentlemen, as usual.

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To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £158 3s. Received since:—D. Wright, 5s.; "Ernest," 5s.; Mr. and Mrs. Harden, £2 2s.

MR. AND MRS. HARDEN.—Your letter has reached us. Thanks for your very good wishes as well as for the enclosure.

T. CLINTON.—Sorry there has been a delay in your newsagent delivering your paper. The mistake is not, of course, due to us, as the *Freethinker* is published on the same day and, as near as possible, at the same hour each week. Our shop manager will, however, look into the matter and write you.

H. THOMSON.—We regret to hear of the death of Mr. Drummond. He lived and died as a brave man should. Mr. Foote is not back "in the editorial chair" yet, in the full sense of the expression, but we hope to see him there very shortly. He will appreciate your good wishes for his return to complete health.

NON COM.—David Watt is an old correspondent of ours. We much regret to hear that he is lying so weak from such a painful illness. Pray let us hear when you can report his recovery.

E. HALL (Melbourne).—We are afraid there is no likelihood of Mr. Foote visiting Australia on a lecturing tour. We can quite believe that there is room in Melbourne, Sydney, and Perth for "a live and really educated lecturer"; but Mr. Foote's hands are sufficiently full of work in this country, and there would be small wisdom in neglecting work at home to undertake other work at the Antipodes. We hope that some native Australian may be found able and willing for the work. Thanks for cuttings. We shall be happy to comply with the request in your letter.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

The full report of the proceedings at the National Secular Society's Conference on Sunday last is held over until our next issue. Mr. Foote was, of course, re-elected President, and all those present were delighted to see him back again after his rather severe illness. Several figures familiar at these gatherings were absent, mostly on account of ill-health or age. On the other hand, we were glad to observe a number of younger men who seem to take a keen interest in the promotion of Freethought ideas. And it is, after all, to the younger ones of a party to whom one must look for the carrying on of the fight. And the number of young men and young women who are at present avowing themselves as Freethinkers is one of the most pleasing and inspiring features of the situation.

The evening public meeting at Queen's (Minor) Hall was a pronounced success. The Hall was well filled, and, judging from the applause, the speeches were greatly enjoyed. As we publish in another part of this paper a full report of the evening meeting, our readers will be able to judge the quality of the speeches for themselves. We need only say that the listeners seemed as fresh and as interested at the end as they were at the beginning; and that, at the expiration of two hours' speaking, is no small tribute to the speakers themselves. We are also glad to record that a quite satisfactory "offertory" was taken up towards the expense of the evening.

Considerable interest was taken in the statement of the President concerning the reorganisation of Secularism, and the party may expect to hear more on this subject in the near future. Conditions are not what they were when the National Secular Society was established, and the time appears to have arrived for a careful consideration of the whole position in the light of existing circumstances. It should be quite possible to conserve all that is really valuable in the present constitution of the N. S. S., including its record as the foremost militant Freethought Society in Great Britain, and at the same time make it a still more effective weapon in the war against superstition. When the scheme of reorganisation is complete, it will be placed before the party, and members will then be in a position to express their opinions on the matter.

There was no excursion arranged for Whit-Monday for Conference delegates and visitors. London is such a huge place, and with so many attractions, that it was thought wisest to leave those who attended the Conference to indulge their own inclinations. In the evening, however, a number of delegates and other friends foregathered at the Bay Malton Hotel, and an enjoyable time was spent in listening to songs, recitations, and music. This was kept up until such time as some delegates had to leave in order to catch their trains.

There is one point for congratulation in the tragic story of the sinking of the *Empress of Ireland*. Less religious humbug has been imported into the newspaper narratives. A band was on board the liner, but it didn't play "Nearer my God to thee." The Salvation Army musicians seem to have been as busy in saving themselves as any of the other passengers. On the other hand, it is not pretended that "Providence" paid them any special attention. There is the usual account of some selfish idiot, who was going to travel by the fated boat but changed his mind at the last minute, and imagines himself therefore to have been "divinely preserved." But it is also confessed that Mr. Laurence Irving, the famous actor, changed his mind the other way; travelling with his wife by the *Empress of Ireland* and leaving the bulk of his company to come on from New York; and nobody suggests that he was "divinely lost." On the whole it seems that the prayers of some survivors for their own safety—which is what it comes to—are looked upon as rather a human weakness. What a change from what we should have read in the newspapers twenty years ago!

FLASHES FROM EMERSON.

As men's prayers are a disease of the will, so are their creeds a disease of the intellect.

A foolish consistency is the hob-goblin of little minds adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines.

Whenever a true theory appears, it will be its own evidence. Its test is, that it will explain all phenomena.

We say the old forms of religion decay, and that a scepticism devastates the community. I do not think it can be cured or stayed by any modifications of theologic creeds, much less by theologic discipline. The cure for false theology is mother-wit.

There is no virtue which is final; all are initial. The virtues of society are the vices of a saint. The terror of reform is the discovery that we must cast away our virtues, or what we have always esteemed such, into the same pit that has consumed our grosser vices.

Blame is safer than praise. I hate to be defended in a newspaper. As long as all that is said, is said against me, I feel a certain assurance of success. But as soon as honeyed words of praise are spoken for me, I feel as one that lies unprotected before his enemies.

There is always room for a man of force, and he makes room for many. Society is a troop of thinkers, and the best heads among them take the best places. A feeble man can see the farms that are fenced and tilled, the houses that are built. The strong man sees the possible houses and farms. His eye makes estates as fast as the sun breeds clouds.

This view of the world, the real idea of Christianity, spread with great rapidity over the whole Roman realm like an infectious disease, and the whole Middle Age endured its agonies, sometimes in the delirium of fever, and anon in death-like exhaustion, and we moderns still feel its cramps and debilities in our limbs. Even if one of us be in health he cannot escape the general lazar-house atmosphere, and he feels miserable as the only sound man among utter invalids. When it shall come to pass that mankind shall regain their perfect health, when peace shall be restored between body and soul, and they blend again in their original harmony, then we shall hardly understand the artificial, unnatural strife which Christianity caused between them.—*Heine, "Germany."*

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National Secular Society's Annual Conference.

EXECUTIVE'S REPORT.—BY THE PRESIDENT.

THE past year has been a very uneventful one for the National Secular Society, as well as for other advanced organisations. Preoccupation of the public mind with political questions, rivalries, and disputes, always causes a dimunition of interest in other questions which are only indirectly of material importance. The thought of to-day determines the action of to-morrow, but that is only seen when to-morrow itself belongs to the past.

Unfortunately, too, the N. S. S. has received very slender financial assistance from the Secular Society, Ltd., which is unable at present to act with its customary generosity. The N. S. S. Balance Sheet should be read in the light of these facts.

One great fact in the credit side of the account is apt to be forgotten. The President of the N. S. S. is the Editor of the *Freethinker*. It is difficult to separate the two functions even in fancy. And the *Freethinker*, which is the only Freethought weekly journal in England, still maintains its circulation, and occasionally adds to it in favorable circumstances.

One new Branch has been formed at St. Helens, and arrangements have been made by the Executive, in the absence of local Branches, for carrying on outdoor propaganda in Regent's Park and Finsbury Park. Two half-yearly special meetings of the London members have been held, according to Conference resolutions, and reports of same have appeared in the *Freethinker*. The Annual Dinner—this year at Frascati's Restaurant, was the usual success; a special feature being a humorous Freethought speech by Sir Hiram Maxim.

Your Executive was unable to carry out the resolution of the last Conference,—that the N. S. S. should be represented at the Lisbon International Congress by at least three delegates. It was found that each delegate would cost £20 at the lowest, and that each would have to devote three weeks at the lowest to the delegation. It was impossible to find even one who could give so much time to travelling and attendance at the Congress. Of necessity, therefore, the project fell through. It is to be hoped the Society may be luckier on the next occasion. Not much practical good results from these International Congresses, but they serve to show that Reason as well as Faith is of a universal character.

One unpleasant incident in the past year's history might well be forgotten, if it were not necessary to be referred to, for the sake of future peace and quiet, as a warning to those who, having little respect for themselves, pay (if possible) as little or less to others. Mr. J. W. Gott, in spite of official prohibition, insisted on using the name of the N. S. S. to cover propagandist work under his own personal control, for which he was soliciting funds from the Freethought party. Refusing to desist from this abuse of the Society's name, he had to be declared as out of connection with the N. S. S. Responsibility for any of his proceedings was repudiated, and it was resolved that his membership would not be renewed on the expiration of the current year.

Some persons who object to all discipline, who imagine that individuals acting "on their own" are the only ones who have any rights at all, and that even a voluntary Society ought not to protect itself against insult and defiance, called this an act of tyranny on the part of the N. S. S. Executive. Mr. Gott himself posed as a painfully persecuted martyr. He was left to maintain that position as he could,—with what success is seen.

A prosecution for the sale of Freethought literature without police permission resulted in a fine of five shillings at Bolton. A similar prosecution at Leeds, more recently, resulted in the case being dismissed. The views of policemen and magistrates as to their right of interference in matters where the "interests of religion" are supposed to be involved are of a most chaotic character. It is to be hoped that the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws will put an end to all future possibility of such a state of things.

Mr. W. T. Stewart has been prosecuted again for "blasphemy"—to say nothing of other "offences" with which the N. S. S. has no special concern. He is not a careful speaker, but none of the language quoted against him would have been considered indictable if employed in political or social discussion. It was really, therefore, talking too freely on *religion* for which he was sentenced to three months' imprisonment. A great opportunity presented itself for another clear and authoritative statement on the Common Law of Blasphemy. Your President, on behalf of the Society, immediately offered to carry the case to the Court of Appeal—which did not exist in criminal cases in 1883. Unfortunately Mr. Stewart left his interests in hands as incapable as his own—and the great opportunity was lost.

What was done by others afterwards, in the way of petition for the prisoner's release or better treatment, was good in its way. But it could not possibly lead to any fresh step in the direction of the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws; although, of course, it served as a public advertisement of their origin and character. The same may be said of the deputation to Mr. Asquith, satisfactory as his own declaration was from a personal point of view. All the really effective fighting against the Blasphemy Laws—apart from the courageous agitation against them, in which the N. S. S. has always more than taken its share—has been done in the Law Courts. It was there that Lord Chief Justice Coleridge's epoch-marking judgment was elicited in 1883. It is there that a fresh, and perhaps final, judgment may be elicited, to crown and complete Lord Coleridge's work; unless a Repeal Act be carried through Parliament in the immediate future, which is possible but hardly probable.

The effective fighting, it may be repeated, has been waged in the Law Courts. That is why the N. S. S. deserves commendation for taking up the Boulter case in 1908. The Boulter case was a turning point. The argument at issue was legal. The bulk of critics did not agree with your President that Lord Coleridge's judgment in 1883 stood practically unchallenged and unchallengeable as *the* Common Law of Blasphemy in England. The policy pursued by the N. S. S., at great expense, in the Boulter case, compelled the judges (Phillimore and Darling) to endorse Lord Coleridge's statement of the law. That endorsement has been repeated by other judges since. Nobody now thinks of suggesting otherwise. What remains to be argued is something historical and critical. Has not other legislation virtually repealed everything substantive in the Blasphemy Laws? Do the "decencies of controversy" in debates on *religion* differ in any respect from the "decencies of controversy" on any other subject? If they do not—if the criterion in the one case is deduced from the common principles in the other cases — then the definition of "Blasphemy" sinks down to the simple formula of "annoying Christians," which would reduce the law to a disgusting and disgraceful farce, incapable of being presented again in the light of day.

A curious case of religious bigotry, no doubt expressing the same spirit as the Blasphemy Laws, but even more insolent in outward form, occurred at Morpeth. A witness called Snowball, who claimed to affirm instead of swearing, which he had a perfect right to do, was browbeaten by a Captain Mitford, one of the magistrates, who actually refused to take the witness's evidence, on the ground that nobody could believe the word of a man who did not believe in God. Fortunately, the newspapers read this bigot a lesson, both in law and in good manners; and the culprit seems to have got out of the trouble with a minimum of publicity. The N. S. S. communicated with the solicitor conducting the case in question, and offered to contribute towards the cost of a "mandamus" to compel the offending magistrate to act legally; but his own prompt surrender made such action unnecessary.

It is gratifying to record that the London County Council arrived at a satisfactory settlement of the question of collections at public meetings in parks and other open spaces under the Council's control. The deputation—consisting of representatives of the N. S. S., the London Trades Council, and other Labor organisations—that waited upon a general meeting of the Council, was able to show that the new order prohibiting collections without a special permit was both unwise and unjust. There appears to have been some misunderstanding on the part of certain members of the Council, under the influence of a handful of bigots. The deputation was treated in a very friendly way, not an unpleasant word occurred in the speeches or the discussion, and the Council seemed to feel that their visitors represented men who wanted nothing of a revolutionary character, but just the time-honored rights of citizenship. Eventually it was decided that at all meetings of *bonâ-fide* societies, holding "permits" as such, collections should be made for such societies' general funds, but not outside the limits of such meetings. Thus the matter ends with a substantial victory for the principles of freedom and fair-play.

The part played by the N. S. S. in this matter is one of which it may well be proud. It bore the brunt of the actual fighting. It defended Miss Vance before the Marylebone Police-court, paid all the legal expenses that were incurred in relation to a large number of other summonses that were "hung up," and undertook the arrangements for testing the law by moving for a *mandamus* against the London County Council in the High Court of Justice, if a settlement could not be reached in any other way. Your President, as editor of the *Freethinker*, raised the sum of £77 18s. 3d. by a preliminary appeal. That sum was eventually handed over by him, without any deduction for expenses, to the N. S. S. treasury; so that the Society gained (even financially) instead of losing over the transaction. Speaking from a

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higher point of view, the raising of that subscription must have convinced the hostile portion of the County Council that there was reality in the intention of appealing to the law of England against the arbitrary action of a single municipal authority.

The Education Question is likely to come to the front before long, as the Nonconformists are beginning to cry more lustily for their pound of flesh. It seems hardly possible, however, that a new Bill can be more successful than its unhappy predecessors. Church and Chapel want the same joint, and are too hungry to be persuaded that they both have it. Their mutual hostility is, indeed, the Secular Educationists' strongest guarantee of his own ultimate victory. Fortunately there exists an instrument which represents the Secular Educationists of all schools in the Secular Education League. Mr. Foote and Mr. Cohen are members of the League's executive committee, and this should satisfy Secularists that they may safely join the League and give it their best support. All sections of the executive committee work together in perfect harmony. They are united in promoting one, and only one, object; namely that the education of children in elementary State-supported or State-subventioned schools shall be confined to subjects which the Education Code calls "secular." The League's office is at 19 Buckingham-street, Strand, London, W.C., and the secretary, Mr. Harry Snell, will be glad to send prospectuses and other printed matter to all applicants, and to answer all questions that may be asked of him regarding the League's affairs.

A veteran Freethinker, associated with the Secular movement in the Bradlaugh days at the Hall of Science, who suffered imprisonment for "blasphemy" in connection with the *Freethinker* case in 1883, having fallen on evil days through age and a painful malady, a few of his friends (political as well as theological) have formed a committee to raise a fund that may make his last days somewhat easier. The N. S. S. is not acting officially in this matter, Mr. W. J. Ramsey not being one of its members; but the first list of subscriptions, to be published after the Whitsun holidays, will show that a good many members of the N. S. S. have already contributed. No doubt others will follow suit in the near future. The General Treasurer is Mr. B. T. Hall, Club and Institute Buildings, Clerkenwell-road, London, E.C., whose lists of acknowledgments will be printed in the *Freethinker*.

This Annual Report may close with the usual glance abroad. There is much unorganised Freethought activity in America. Mr. M. M. Mangasarian still carries on his eloquent and fruitful propaganda in Chicago. Mr. Percy Ward appears to have settled down in the same city, lecturing with great acceptance to good audiences. At New York we find Mr. George Macdonald still conducting with the old verve the weekly *Truthseeker;* and it is to be hoped with more than the old success. It is regrettable that Mr. W. W. Collins—one of the N. S. S. vice-presidents at Christchurch, New Zealand—has broken down in health, at least temporarily. His friends hope for his speedy recovery, and are meantime glad that his journal, the *Examiner*, is being carried on by his colleagues. There are many Freethinkers in South Africa, but very little organisation—as might indeed be expected. To describe the progress of Freethought in Europe would require volumes. Suffice it to say that the general prospect was never brighter, and that France still leads the great procession of Reason and Humanity.

EVENING PUBLIC MEETING.

A GOODLY audience assembled at the Queen's (Minor) Hall, London, W., to hear Mr. G. W. Foote, the leader of English Freethought, and his colleagues, at the public meeting in connection with the Annual Conference of the National Secular Society on Whit-Sunday.

It was Mr. Foote's first public appearance since his recent illness, and when he took the chair he had a most flattering and enthusiastic reception.

Mr. Foote's was the first speech, quite in his best vein, and full of wit and wisdom. It was punctuated throughout with laughter and applause, and he had a perfect ovation at the finish. He said that intellectual honesty was the scarcest honesty on this planet. Few men would stand to the colors of unpopular ideas, and face a world which hated them because they were dangerous to every sinister interest. The only irreconcilable was the Freethinker. When political canvassers call on such a man, they say "He thinks for himself; we'll go next door." Voting was only of value when it was done by men who thought freely. So many persons go through life thinking as their parents and teachers did before them. Ignorance was very prevalent. When a little daughter of his was withdrawn from religious instruction at school, she was asked if her father was a Jew. She said he was a gentleman. Other children regarded the situation as uncanny. Yet if all people who were inclined to Freethought put aside fear, and spoke out the actual truth concerning their opinions, it would frighten the Churches more than the sinking of any number of Atlantic liners.

Freethinkers were feared. Even Socialists were regarded as clever fellows; but let a Freethinker stand up and avow his principles, and he will be certain to be at the bottom of the poll. As intellectuals, they were content to be at the bottom of such a poll. They would rather be true to the highest and most durable interests of mankind than take part in mere party triumphs.

No one who espoused Freethought must expect public applause. Opponents say that Freethinkers set themselves up as being better than other men. They do not; but if they did, it would not be a tremendous effort of vanity. One half of the world lived by deluding the other half. The clergy know that the Bible is not the Word of God, yet they allow it to be placed in the schools, and martyrise the children who are withdrawn from its influence. There are purple passages which no clergyman would dare to read to a congregation, unless he wanted to have all the bonnets leave the church, and all who did not wear bonnets wait for him at the door.

Look at the clergy! £200 a year is considered bad pay. Jesus Christ had not where to lay his head, and modern bishops have scores of bedrooms in their palaces. Why doesn't the Rev. R. J. Campbell, when he gets a new motor-car, offer the old one to me. Christianity is the falsest religion in the world. It has made its way by lies and impostures, filled the world with blood and tears, and made artificial barriers between men who had no other quarrel. Its influence is felt in the political world, for all the present trouble is caused by the hatred between Catholics and Protestants. Let Christianity give place to Humanity, and let faith give way to reason. What happened when the great liner sank? Who saved those who were saved? Science, in the shape of wireless telegraphy, brought help and saved hundreds, whilst God did—nothing.

Miss Kough followed with a bright speech full of charm. The air, she said, was full of talk about the revolt against reason, but there was nothing to be terrified at. A speaker at a recent Church Congress said that once scientists used to believe in the operation of natural law, but since the discovery of radium, which was so erratic, one might believe in the miracle of the Gadarene swine. Reason could never have been established in that person. A highly cultivated lady told a story of two friends, fishing by night, who had caught a member of a house-party who had turned into a pike. Opponents often magnify Freethought efforts to suit their own ends. One had stated that there were seven Atheistic Societies, all publishing their own papers, and sending out their own lecturers. There was, however, a real and growing danger in the growth of the Roman Catholic Church among certain sections of the population.

Mr. C. Cohen, who was in excellent form and warmly welcomed by the whole audience, pointed out that the world had been terrified throughout its history by a religious goblin, but it was a goblin whose head was empty. He had a contempt for the whole thing, and had never thought it worth hating. If Christianity improved, he might hate it. Christian scholars discussed whether the Virgin Birth was a fact. Such a subject was unworthy of discussion by a civilised people. People who were in such a state of mental confusion were only savages, even if they wore hobble skirts or frock-coats, and were as uncivilised as the denizens of Central Africa. A change was coming over the scene. People no longer questioned as to whether the Bible was the Word of God, but how did people get to believe in the idea of Deity? At a recent debate on Miracles, which was conducted by popular dramatists and apparently cultured men, none of the speakers got mentally within 150 years of the twentieth century. Children grow out of their beliefs in fairies and goblins, but grown-up people are afraid to grow out of their beliefs. At the last French census 7,000,000 declared themselves as Atheists, and there were enough English Freethinkers to form seventy societies, but for the lack of moral courage. This want of courage was the bad heritage of the Church, which had bred from the worst material for centuries. The reason why the average Jew was sharper than the average Christian was that the Church made it impossible for any Jew to live unless he was sharp. The Church killed all the brave men and preserved the cowards. For 200 years Mohammedan Spain led the world in arts and sciences; but Christian Spain for 200 years killed thousands of the best men every year, and no nation could stand such treatment with impunity. It was astonishing that religion had not bred universal idiocy. The objection that Freethinkers had nothing to put in the place of religion was absurd, for religion was not worth having. The clergy pretend to be afraid of immorality, and run fearful

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risks to be conversant with the subject. Recently the Bishop of Chichester, speaking of safeguarding the interests of servant girls, said he intended to visit a picture palace. Imagine the reckless daring of a disguised Bishop planking down his sixpence to see the awful screen, and then—imagine his disappointment! Clean-living men were not always thinking of immorality.

Men cowered before witches and goblins until knowledge wiped them out of existence. We want religion out of the way and the nightmare of the gods removed, so that man can face the world with conquest in his eyes, and leave it without a lie in his mouth or a mask on his face.

A rousing reception was given to Mr. J. T. Lloyd, who was the next speaker; who spoke of the unscrupulousness of the Christian opposition to Freethought. Sometimes the Freethought movement was described as being rich, issuing many newspapers, paying large numbers of lecturers, and organising a powerful campaign throughout the country against religion. At other times, and for other purposes, the same Freethought movement was called poor, moribund, and its leaders representatives of a dead cause. At one time the Freethought speakers were characterised as clever and eloquent, and at others as obscene and blasphemous. No abuse was neglected by the defenders of universal love. We ought not to underestimate the strength of the enemy, for, although Christianity was dying, it was yet capable of inflicting terrific blows. Christian apologists propped up their position by absolute misstatements, but, fortunately, the Church was not impregnable, for critics within the Church and Freethinkers without would hasten the day when the yoke of superstition will be broken. Christian critics were helping the Freethinkers to tear the Bible to tatters, and to unsettle the faith of the people.

The veteran Mr. Arthur B. Moss wound up the evening with an eloquent appeal to Freethought tradition. He said the great work accomplished by the pioneers of Freethought had practically destroyed Christianity. Forty years of Freethought advocacy had taught him what a persecuting religion Christianity was. When he was young a Freethinker could not get employment, and Freethinkers were not invited to Christians' houses. The work done by Holyoake, Bradlaugh, and Foote, who fought with all their great powers against intolerance, had changed the position, and to-day it was the orthodox religion that was in the melting-pot; but the change was entirely due to the fighting of the Freethinkers. If we wanted to rout the enemy, the fight must go on. Lukewarm Rationalists ask, Why continue to fight? for science and ordered knowledge will achieve the object. But science and knowledge are helpless, unaided, against an organised superstition with millions of money behind it. Fighting alone trampled out the fires of hell, and will in time get rid of the fantastic heaven which a Christian dean says many Christians regard as a fairy tale. Freethinkers said the same thing long years before. Superstition and credulity never assisted mankind in the past, and men in over-increasing numbers were turning to Secularism as a philosophy which is of vital importance. Freethinkers will not be content till they have wrested from Nature all her secrets and used them for the benefit of mankind, and made this world a nobler one than ever our fathers knew.

So ended a memorable meeting, the outstanding feature of which was the high level of oratory displayed. Organised Freethought has always had the best speakers since the days of Holyoake and Southwell, down through the stormy Bradlaugh era to the present day, and the present speakers easily maintain the proud reputation of their honored predecessors. It is one of the chief of the fighting weapons of a great party, which has done more for intellectual emancipation than any other organisation in the English-speaking world, and it is one that will ultimately lead to the emancipation of the nation from the "lie at the lips of the priest." It is a noble dream, and the National Secular Society has brought it within the grasp of the realities of the future.

C. E. S.

Gradually there came gasping towards them a pale Jew, dripping with blood, a crown of thorns on his head, bearing a great cross of wood on his shoulder, and he cast the cross on the high table of the gods, so that the golden goblets trembled and fell, and the gods grew dumb and pale, and even paler, till they melted in utter mist. Then there were dreary days, and the world became grey and gloomy. There were no more happy immortals, and Olympus became a hospital, where flayed, roasted, and spitted gods went wearily, wandering round, binding their wounds, and singing sorrowful songs. Religion no longer offered joy, but consolation; it was a woeful, bleeding religion of transgressors.—*Heine*, "*Pictures of Travel.*"

Artists and Freethought.—II.

(Continued from p. 349.)

TINTORET (1518-94) is one of Ruskin's "five supreme painters." His bold realism is patent in all his works. Sacred and profane subjects were all the same to him in this respect. Hence we find the former condemned for their "coarse realism," and being "entirely opposed to the feeling and dignity of religious art." Vasari says that, notwithstanding the power displayed in his *Last Judgment*, "it had all the appearance of being painted in jest." Heaton says of the *Last Supper* that the artist "degraded" it into "a scene of a vulgar carousal."

In Paola Veronese (1528-58) we have the very opposite extreme of an artist in relation to sacred subjects. Where Tintoret brought "realism" to bear against the accepted devotional treatment of sacred art, Veronese sought the utmost "romanticism." All his Madonnas and Saints are clothed in the finest Venetian raiment. In his *Marriage at Cana* he has introduced Christ, in company with the Sultan of Turkey, "Bloody Mary" of England, the King of France, and artist friends, at a sumptuous Venetian banquet. In his *Supper at Emmaus*, in the Louvre, he brings himself and his family into the solemn episode, his two little children playing with a dog at the very feet of Christ, in innocent indifference to the presence of the Son of God. This "romanticism" seems even more irreverent than the "realism" of Tintoret, and I can quite understand one commentator saying that "there is no hint in any of his works of a belief in any higher life than that of the beautiful city in which he dwelt."

We now come to two undoubted heretics and rebels, Caravaggio and Salvador Rosa, practically the last two great names in Italian art. Caravaggio (1569-1604) was the leader of the so-called *naturalisti*. His works are marked by a very forcible "realism," and especially his religious subjects, notably the *Supper at Emmaus*, in the National Gallery, in which the meal (a fowl) seems to be the essential feature. One of his altar-pieces, the *Calling of St. Matthew*, was rejected "as too vulgar for a religious edifice."

Salvador Rosa (1615-73), the greatest painter of the Neapolitan school, was clearly a Freethinker and anti-clerical.* He not only consorted with the Freethinkers of his day, and wrote his thoughts as freely as they did, but he painted his heresy in such works as *L'Umanana Fragilita* and *La Fortuna*, and had to fly from the Inquisition in consequence. Rosa, with Falcone and other artists, joined in the Naples revolution under Masaniello. He was the first in Italy to write in the cause of Freedom. His landscapes in the National Gallery, and at Edinburgh and Glasgow, reveal his highly wrought spirit.

Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528) was nominally a Roman Catholic; but how much of his mind, if any, the Church owned is doubtful. We know that the artist was in full sympathy with the Protestant Reformation, and Kugler claims his *Four Apostles* as "the first complete work of art produced by Protestantism." But, as Heaton points out, "it is not Protestantism or Catholicism that they express, but the artist's own individual thought on the subject, unbound by any creed, and free from the dogmas of any Church." This remark may fittingly cover the whole art work of Dürer; for, indeed, those weird fantasies, *The Apocalypse*, *The Knight, Death and the Devil*, and *Melancholia*, seem altogether incompatible with orthodoxy. At any rate, I fail to see much "faith" in any man who could depict the Blessed Virgin sitting very unbecomingly on the floor, whilst Joseph, dead drunk, is seated at the table with the guilty tankard as a support.

With Rubens (1577-1640) came to Flemish art the light of the renaissance. The religious spirit which had dominated the national art fell with Rubens to

* In an article in the *Freethinker*, September 21, 1913, I have dealt at length with Rosa's art and religion.

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rise no more. Rubens' art is thoroughly pagan, and the works we have in England, such as the *Judgment of Paris*, at the National Gallery, and *Nature Adorned by the Graces*, at Glasgow, certainly reveal how "gloriously pagan" (as Wedmore puts it) it really is. In dealing with religious subjects, as Coleridge has pointed out, there is nothing of the "spiritual" in Rubens. His mind, says Heaton, "was never troubled by the mystery of life," and "he had no sympathy with the spiritual aspirations of humanity." Ruskin, too, found Rubens "a healthy animal, without any dearly perceptible traces of a soul." Let anyone look at the *Descent from the Cross* and the *Crucifixion* and this is immediately evident. These works simply depict the execution of a malefactor—no more and no less. There was no room for "spirituality" in such a realist as Rubens.

Teniers the Younger (1610-90), unlike his predecessors, was much affected by *genre* subjects. The merry-makings of the people—at the tavern, the fair, or the market were his special delight. His "religious" pictures, which gave great offence to the pious folk, are conceived in his ordinary *genre* style. *Christ Buffeted* and *Christ Crowned with Thorns*, have been described as "vulgar and almost repulsive scenes of low life," the artist being "totally wanting in that elevation of feeling that marks all the great Italian masters." We know little of the private life of Teniers, but it certainly seems that he had no "elevation of feeling" for sacred themes. His best known work, the *Temptation of St. Anthony*, leads us to this view. This subject, which had always been treated with the utmost propriety, if not reverence, by earlier masters, is to Teniers a huge joke. The original is in the Louvre, but there are several good copies, one being at Glasgow.

Jan Steen (1626-79) has been called "the one original Dutch *genre* painter." He, like, Teniers, introduced the fun and frolic of the people into his art. Busken Huet considered him an anti-clerical, and he certainly has every reason for it in regard to his art, for as Heine says, after you have seen his pictures you "know the whole life of the man." His *Marriage at Cana* shows Christ blessing a Dutch wedding party. But he is a "nobody" in the scene. The essential features are in the foreground—a fiddler and a boy being handed drink, and an apparently tipsy woman. Again, in the *Disciples at Emmaus*, Christ is not *the* personality. As a matter of fact, he is right at the back. His disciples and a maid are in the front, and they are gazing very disconsolately at the repast; for although the table is broad, there is a solitary lemon upon it. The *Expelling of Hagar* gives the merry Jan a chance for fun despite the "Blessed Book." Sarah is seen sitting "examining" little Isaac's head. There are a couple of spaniels in the picture, and seemingly are taking a tip from their mistress, since they also are engaged in what Mark Twain calls a "hunting expedition."

Hogarth (1697-1764), the founder of English painting, was most certainly a Freethinker, for no Christian could have handled brush and graver for such blasphemies as his. The parsons were a fund of amusement to him in their absurdities, and in their follies he caught them in biting satire. Sala calls Hogarth "a decorous man in theology." Fancy a "decorous man" treating the Bible (whose cover is used to sole boots) as he does in the first scene of the *Rake's Progress*. The *Sleeping Congregation* is scarcely a "decorous" work, and neither is the marriage scene in the *Rake's Progress*. But for downright blasphemy that powerful print, entitled *Credulity, Superstition, and Fanaticism*, stands an "easy first." Churchmen pretend that the satire was directed against Wesley and Whitefield, the revivalists, but it is clear that Hogarth was dispensing it against the entire superstition of Christianity.*

Henry Fuseli (1741-1825), a painter little heard of nowadays, was, despite all adverse criticism, an artist of genius. It was no ordinary man that undertook such a theme as the *Bridging of Chaos* from Milton. His *Titania and Bottom*, in the National Gallery, and *Œdipus and His Daughters*, at Liverpool, ought to be a sufficient answer to the host of his detractors. Fuseli mixed with all the prominent Freethinkers and political rebels of his day, and appears to have been at one with them in their opinions.

One of the closest of Fuseli's artistic *confrères* was William Blake (1757-1827). He, too, consorted with rebels, and was hailed before the "authorities" for treason! Blake was certainly much in sympathy with the French Revolution, and both his art and poetry reveal its influence. None but the closest students of his life and work can arrive at a clear grasp of the psychology of Blake. Swinburne calls him a "heretic and mystic." He had a most wonderful sense of phantasy and symbolism, and this, under the promptings of a deep spiritual nature, led him to the creation of those remarkable religious visions in his art. He ought, perhaps, to be classed as a Pantheist; yet, withal, he was an enemy of religion, the Church, and the priests—a Freethinker to the core.

J. M. W. Turner (1775-1851) was one of the greatest of English landscapists. "None before Turner," wrote Ruskin, "had lifted the veil from the face of Nature." Never before, indeed, had Nature been clothed in such glorious harmonies. His tones of coloring strike the senses like beautiful chords. The *Fighting Téméraire*, *Dido Building Carthage*, the *Bridge of Sighs*, etc., are among our great national treasures. Ruskin sought to associate Turner's art with a certain ethical and religious feeling, a thing from which (as Benn points out in his *Modern England*) Turner stood aloof. As a matter of fact, Turner was, according to Hamerton, the art critic, a complete sceptic in religion.

H. GEORGE FARMER.

(To be concluded.)

* In the *Freethinker*, June 11, 1911, I have dealt fully with Hogarth's heresy.

The Ramsey Testimonial.

Subscriptions acknowledged to May 26 by Mr. B. T. Hall (General Treasurer), Club Union Buildings, Clerkenwell-road, London, E.C.:—Victor Jackson, 10s. 6d.; C. Smallman, 5s.; E. Garrity, £1 1s.; B. T. Hall, £1 1s.; J. J. Dent, £1; H. Burrows, £1; J. Sumner, 10s. 6d.; C. Banks, 2s. 6d.; I. Jackson, £1; Dr. Nichols, 10s.; J. Barry, 10s.; F. Wood, 5s.; H. Reeve, £1; R. Jacobs, 10s. 6d.; Kingsland Branch Members N. S. S. (per W. Davey), £2; W. Allen (or Adams), 2s.; J. Ansell, 5s.; M. B. Sax, 2s.; W. H. Hicks, £1 1s.; H. L. Breaksat, 10s.; J. G. Dunville, 2s. 6d.; J. Clifford, 1s.; V. H. Abbott, 1s.; J. Sumner, £1 1s.; J. Argyle, £1; W. G. Stroud, 10s. 6d.; M. Weatherburn, 2s. 6d.; N. Camberwell Radical Club, £2 2s.; G. W. Foote, £1 11s. 6d.

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Obituary.

At Paisley, in the Royal Alexandria Infirmary, on May 24, Andrew Drummond, aged 35 years. Mr. Drummond was well known in Paisley and Renfrew as a militant Freethought propagandist. His was the moving spirit which brought into being the Renfrew Secular Society. He had not the natural equipment of a public speaker; still, his wide reading and his zeal for the cause made him a ready and trenchant penman. When he realised the serious nature of his illness, he expressed the wish to be buried without religious ceremony. His Christian relations respected that wish, and Mr. Robertson, of the Renfrew Secular Society, made arrangements for a Secular funeral, which took place on May 27 at Hawkhead Cemetery.—H. THOMSON.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

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OUTDOOR.

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KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, "Beelzebub," "Astronomy, Biblical and Scientific."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill): 3.30, Mr. Schaller a Lecture. Finsbury Park: 11.30, Miss Kough, a Lecture. Regent's Park (near the Fountain): 3.30, Mr. Hope, a Lecture.

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THE
Freethinker
Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXXIV.—NO. 24 SUNDAY, JUNE 14, 1914 PRICE TWOPENCE

Genuine simplicity of heart is a healing and cementing principle.—EDMUND BURKE.

The Boothite Booming.

GENERAL BOOTH THE FIRST left some of his advertising genius with the Salvation Army. He was the best self-advertiser in England,—Mr. Bernard Shaw being the second-best; and the old man's mantle, though a good deal worn, has descended upon "Bramwell's" shoulders. There is indeed a certain sly look about General Booth the Second's face, which, shed, as it were, over those rotund and soft features, rather suggests the Heathen Chinee of the late Mr. Bret Harte, playing at the game he did not understand. Bramwell's native gifts, combined with what he learnt from the old man, render him an excellent successor to the wily founder of a body that has made more noise and less of anything else than any other body in the Christian world.

Believers in Providence, especially in the ranks of the Salvation Army, might have little difficulty in concluding that the *Empress of Ireland* was rammed and sunk under divine guidance. The conclusion startles reason, of course, and staggers humanity; but we know from the poet that God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform. There were a lot of Salvationists—Salvation officers, we understand—on board the fated ship. Without making the miracle *too* crude it was impossible to save them and drown all the other passengers, so they were left to take their luck with the rest when the drowning began, and the proportion of saved and lost amongst them was pretty much the same as it was amongst their fellow-voyagers. It was a good and sufficient ground for a world-wide advertisement of the great Salvation Army gathering that was being organised to take place in London, and to which the Canadian contingent was travelling, with other contingents from "the ends of the earth."

Bramwell Booth certainly made the most of this fine opportunity. A memorial service was organised in the Albert Hall—and *well* organised, for the "Army" is always good at spectacles. The first name we ever applied to the late William Booth in the *Freethinker* was "The Grand Old Showman," and the reigning member of the family maintains the tradition. Meetings at the Albert Hall, however, are not so rare nowadays, and a fresh feature had to be introduced. What it was will be seen by the following extract from a morning newspaper:—

> "Mute witness to the great tragedy of the disaster which overwhelmed the *Empress of Ireland*, there were 148 vacant places in the wide space of the Albert Hall on Friday night. It was a memorial service for the members of the Salvation Army who had died in the calamity. Everywhere the hall was crowded save in one small space—the centre of the arena where the 148 empty seats were ranged. Each place, draped in white, was testimony to the loss which the Salvation Army suffered in the cold fog of the Canadian St. Lawrence. The service was wonderfully impressive. General Booth paid an eloquent tribute to the devotion of the Salvationists, who showed such rare bravery in the hour of peril."

General Booth's tribute to his own army is not exactly above suspicion. He had far better have left the task to a disinterested outsider. But the "Army" never failed in the direction of modesty. Puffing itself has been one of its most assiduous practices. When the Anti-Suicide Bureau was established, it saved more people from suicide in a week than had committed suicide in the whole of London during the previous year. Thus the Salvationists who went down with the great liner off the Canadian coast showed "rare bravery" apparently because they did not cry and howl and hold themselves up to derision and contempt. Executed criminals generally die "game": why should men who reckon themselves the salt of the earth, and are confident of heaven, die like cowards?

The sources of human goodness do not lie in religion but in human nature itself. The "rare bravery" of the Boothites was nothing beside the bravery of Captain Kendall and Dr. Grant, who being rescued themselves after long immersion in icy water, and nearly done for, addressed themselves at once to saving and succoring others. Practical bravery that! Not a story for the Albert Hall. And what of the dead mother, with her right arm curved rigidly round her dead baby, so that they had to be buried together?

The reservation at a funeral party of chairs for the dead is a big step backwards to primitive superstition. The difference between this performance and "waking the dead," with a drop of something "short" for the corpse, is only a matter of degree.

The Salvation show at the Albert Hall included the following item:—

> "One of the most interesting of the colored folks represented was a 'devil-worshiper' from India. He is a little man with a ragged moustache, and now he has become rather ashamed of the numerous cuts on his body which were self-inflicted by a sword before he was made a convert by the Salvation Army.
>
> "Until four years ago this man regarded it as the height of religious fervor to make frenzied attacks upon his own limbs with a knife, inflicting severe wounds, and at the same time to perform weird contortions.
>
> "His arms bore traces of his former ordeals. The flesh is scarred with a number of whitish lines showing where it had been laid bare with his knife and had healed in long ridges.
>
> "It was a tribute to the work of the Salvationists to see this same man yesterday. There was no trace of his former frenzy, but he was singing the Salvation Army hymns with obvious sincerity and understanding."

General Booth brings that exhibit all the way from India. He brings it to London, the greatest centre of civilised population in the world, to show the transcendent reforming power of the branch of Christianity known as Salvationism—or, as old General Booth used plainly to call it, the Gospel of Blood and Fire.

General Booth completes this grand new advertisement by gaining an interview with King George. The General expresses his admiration for the King—the King expresses his admiration for the General. But what, after all, does King George know about the Salvation Army? We venture to say no more than its friends and parasites tell him. If we might advise so august a person as a King, we would advise his Majesty to study the Hadleigh Colony. He will then know whether the Salvation Army is likeliest to save or ruin the world.

G. W. FOOTE.

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Intolerance.

INTOLERANCE is one of the most general of mental vices. It is so general that few people seem to look upon it even as a fault. When it assumes an extreme form it is apt to meet with condemnation, but generally its nature, and effects, are disguised under a show of earnestness and sincere conviction. Indeed, we need not question either the sincerity or earnestness of the bigot; that may be granted with the qualification that sincerity is no guarantee of accuracy, and earnestness naturally goes with a conviction strongly held, whether the conviction be sound or unsound. The essential question is not whether a man holds an opinion strongly, but whether he has taken enough trouble to say that he has a *right* to that opinion. Has he taken the pains to study the subject on which the opinion is expressed? Above all, has he made due allowance for possible error, and for the possibility of others seeing the question in a truer light than himself?

It was pointed out at the conclusion of my article last week, that chief amongst the evils resulting from the psychological blunder that led to religion, was the establishment of a frame of mind all but fatal to orderly progress. Of this frame of mind the most persistent expression is that of intolerance. Let us look at the facts. To begin with, intolerance is common to all religions, past and present, savage and civilised. There is not, and there never has been, a single religion in the whole history of the world that has freely admitted the right of inquiry and the right of difference of opinion. Still less has there been one that has regarded variation in opinion as a good thing. Universally, to question the truth of religion has been declared at all times undesirable, and generally it has been denounced as a crime. Some of the greatest amongst Christian theologians have denounced unbelief as the greatest of offences, and the once popular Charles Haddon Spurgeon said that if you were to add all other crimes together they would not equal the sin of unbelief. In our times there are a number of "advanced" theologians who concede the right to differ, but it is evident that this is a concession forced from them by the spirit of the time, and does not spring from their religious conviction. Generally, now as ever, intolerance remains a characteristic feature of all religious belief.

Of course, it may be said that people are intolerant in directions other than that of religion. This is admitted, although, as we shall see, religion cannot escape some of the responsibility for this. But in other directions people do not make a virtue of their intolerance. Moreover, the intolerant person in other directions is the exception; in religion, it has been—until recently in some areas—the rule. And generally, when people differ on questions of politics, science, or art, they have no rooted objection to meet each other and discuss their differences. In religion, mere discussion has been held—quite properly—to indicate doubt, or at least the probability of error, and that no really religious person will admit.

Or it is said that intolerance is not a special feature of religion, as such; it is rather a fault of human nature. But it is exactly the same human nature, whether we are dealing with religion or with any other subject. How comes it that intolerance should be so much more pronounced in religion than in other matters? Why cannot people discuss religious differences as they discuss a difference of governmental policy or a difference of opinion in literature? To say that they feel religion to be a more important question than any other is no answer at all. At any rate, it only raises the question of whether there is any justification for such a conviction, and that raises the original issue in another form. Why is it, then, that religion has not done for human life what political and social intercourse invariably does—teach a healthy toleration of difference and a certain readiness to look at a subject from more than one point of view?

The reply to this question is two-fold. First, there is the nature of primitive religious beliefs. With a great many of the things that man does, whether in savage or civilised society, he must very plainly bear their consequences, and there the matter ends. His friends may advise him, or caution him, but there are a large number of his actions with which no one but himself is directly concerned. But with religion, from the very outset, the case is different. What he believes about religion is never his sole concern; it is also the concern of the tribe or society to which he belongs. The Biblical story of the throwing overboard of Jonah is a case in point. God was not angry with the rest of the ship's inhabitants; it was Jonah alone who had given offence. But to punish Jonah a storm arose, and the sailors were in danger of shipwreck. In their own defence the sailors threw Jonah overboard. Jonah's disobedience to God was not, therefore, his own concern. All those with him were involved, and God was ready to punish the lot for the offence of one.

For the ship, take a primitive tribe; for Jonah, take a primitive heretic, and we have an exact picture of what actually transpires. Everybody is interested in suppressing heresy, because the heretic is really a public danger. This is not only true of primitive savage societies, it is true of all deeply religious communities. Even in our own time we have plenty of people who are ready to connect a national disaster with the desecration of the Sabbath or the prevalence of unbelief. And this, unquestionably, was the attitude of the Christian Church for many centuries. God could not be expected to bless a society in which heresy was tolerated. The heretic must be suppressed as a duty to God and as a measure of self-protection. From the dawn of human history this view has been more or less prevalent, and it is that which has, in the main, made intolerance a religious virtue. It became a duty to the gods, and a duty that had behind it the sharp spur of self-interest.

In the next place, there was nothing connected with religion, even as a mere opinion, to check intolerance. In other directions, an opinion is avowedly based upon facts, and has no value apart from the facts it connotes. And the facts are common property, open to all, and may be examined by all. The consequence of this is that there is not only a greater readiness to submit an opinion to the test of its agreement with the facts, but it is also realised that the more prolonged the discussion concerning their meaning, the greater becomes the settled body of generally accepted truth to which all may appeal for guidance. But in religion "facts" of a common verifiable kind are almost entirely wanting. The "facts" of the religious life are mainly of an esoteric character—visions, mere feelings, "intuitions," etc.—few of which may be made the subject of experiment or verification. And while on the one side discussion is justified by the agreement that results from it, on the other, and the religious, side the value of discussion is discounted by the fact that it never does lead to agreement. The more people discuss religion, the more seriously they differ in their conclusions. A religious conference only agrees on a matter of doctrine by excluding a portion of its members. It is unification by exclusion, never by inclusion.

Further, it is quite a mistake to suppose that the feeling of intolerance gains support from the secular side of life. The tendency is in quite the opposite direction. In primitive societies there is not the least disinclination to discuss secular affairs and to listen to opposing opinions. If it is a matter of war, or a hunting expedition, or of arranging the purely secular affairs of life, there is usually a "powwow" of some sort, and the opinions of various members taken. And this persists right through human society. Under even the most autocratic government, differing opinions are invited and considered, because it is recognised that widely differing

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judgments may contribute towards a more correct and more profitable view of the matter at issue. Whether a government is carried on by discussion or not, discussion does form part of every government and of every combination of human beings. And the mere putting up of a subject for discussion implies the possibility of error; it invokes toleration, and familiarises all men with the give and take of intellectual life. Moreover, there is a very vital fact connected with the secular life of man that further emphasises the value of toleration. Religion, as I have already said, proceeds on a principle of exclusion. It collects believers in a common deity or doctrine, and holds them in the bond of a common belief. But every society exists on a basis of inclusion. It does not select its members; they are born into it. And it must of necessity make allowances for all the differences of mental habit and disposition that occur.

There are thus two tendencies in human society. On the one side there is the religious tendency, intolerant from the outset, and treating the doubter as something to be eliminated because of the danger to which he exposes the whole of his fellows. It is of necessity intolerant, because to merely question the truth of religion involves danger. And this original feeling becomes the safeguard of the vested interests that grow up around religion. On the other hand, there is the more tolerant tendency connected with the secular side of life. There is nothing here to breed intolerance, but, on the contrary, everything to encourage it. And as a mere matter of historic fact, when we study the influence of these two powers, the secular and the religious, we find that over and over again the impulse to intolerance and persecution has come from the religious side, the impulse to toleration from the secular side. Eliminate religion from human history, and there is no reason for doubting that toleration would by now have been the general rule, and intolerance the rare exception. But with religion in a position of commanding influence for so many generations, it is not difficult to realise how the intolerance that is part and parcel of religion necessarily influenced the whole. Intolerance in one direction breeds intolerance in others, and not the least of the evils inflicted by religion on the race is that of the cultivation and perpetuation of habits of mind that have been responsible for some of the darkest and most deplorable pages of human history.

C. COHEN.

Christianity and the World.

PROFESSOR RUDOLF EUCKEN, of Jena, whom Dr Horton pronounces the greatest thinker of the age, is about to visit China and Japan for the purpose of delivering a series of lectures on "The Great Problems of Human Life and their Relation to Christianity." It is to be borne in mind that in the sense which Dr. Horton attaches to the term, Professor Eucken is not even a Christian. Like his English disciple and interpreter, Dr. Tudor Jones, he is a sort of vague, undefined Unitarian, and can be called a Christian only by courtesy. And yet he is going to the East as an advocate of what he calls the *substance* of Christianity. In this religion, he informs us, there are permanent and transient elements between which he differentiates in a fundamental manner. It is the permanent element that constitutes the substance of the Christian religion, while the transient element represents the various attempts of the intellect to give itself some satisfaction concerning the meaning of that substance. Theology is, therefore, an ever-changing commodity. As Dr. Jones puts it, "any and every change in the intellectual form of the physical substance may be adopted without any kind of alarm if the spiritual substance of the Christian religion is preserved intact as an experience of the deepest soul." By "the physical substance" is evidently meant the intellectual forms and ideas of Christianity which, we are confidently assured, will never save mankind. Now, stripped of its intellectual forms and ideas, what vital elements can Christianity boast of? What is its spiritual substance? On this point Dr. Eucken is hopelessly beclouded and confused. To say that "the deepest and most permanent satisfaction for the soul is to be found in the *substance* of the Christian religion" is to explain nothing. What *is* this substance of the Christian religion which Professor Eucken hopes to import to the East? He cannot tell us in any intelligible terms. The Chinese and the Japs are to be offered some invaluable and imperishable treasure which is devoid of all intellectual forms and ideas, but which, in some inexplicable fashion, belongs to the soul and its needs, and is therefore eternal in its nature. Now, this indefinable something, this *spiritual* substance which cannot be expressed in words, this transcendental union of the Divine and the human experimentally realised in and by the Gospel Jesus—this is what we are to understand by spiritual and universal Christianity, the Christianity which this modern apostle intends very shortly to present to the East.

This mystical Christian substance, which alone possesses saving power, is what the Christian Church in all its branches has lost, and it is this loss that accounts for her lamentable lack of power at the present time. Consequently, it is a radical mistake to declare that Christianity has failed, the failure so patent and so often deplored being applicable only to its intellectual forms and ideas. It is not Christianity, but the Church, that has failed, and the latter has failed simply because she has abandoned the spirit while retaining merely the outward form of former. "The Churches," says Dr. Eucken, "must undergo great transformations before they will regain so many men and women who are now outside them." Then he significantly adds:—

> "It is my conviction that such transformations can be undertaken and accomplished without either injuring or discarding the Christian religion. There is so much to-day that needs doing in order to give Christianity free play, and to give scope for it to show its mighty power over the world. But before this becomes possible much remains to be done within the Church herself."

This is only another way of saying that no conception of Christianity has any chance whatever of conquering this wicked world except that so warmly cherished and recommended by Professor Eucken. Once the Church has adopted this conception of the substance of Christianity, there will come such a mighty revival of religion as the world has never yet witnessed. Unfortunately, before the Churches of Christendom have come round to the Euckenian way of looking at things, the famous Professor has resolved to shake the dust of the West from off his feet and go to try his powers of persuasion upon the Pagan East.

Well, we shall soon see whether the East will be more appreciative of the Professor's peculiar Idealism than the West, or whether Christ is likely to supplant Confucius and the Buddha. Meanwhile, we are profoundly convinced that Dr. Eucken entertains an extremely exaggerated and erroneous idea as to the position of his brand of Idealism in the West. In answer to the question, "Do you think, then, that the systems of Materialism and Intellectualism have spent their force?" he says:—

> "Of course I do. Naturalism and Materialism have been banished even from science as one-sided, insufficient assumptions. They belong to the past, and are not likely to occur again. And even intellectualism has been shown to be a life-system which leaves the deepest part of man's nature out of account. Its day is quickly passing away. That ought to be the conviction of all teachers of religion in the present and their hope for the future."

Most assuredly the wish is in that extract father to the thought. Naturalism and Materialism are, of course, interchangeable terms, denoting the antithesis of Idealism, and nothing is more certain than that they have not been banished from science. The only outstanding Idealists of to-day are Professors

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Eucken and Bergson, who are extremely clever men; they are woefully mistaken if they imagine that they have set up a reaction against reason in the scientific world. All science is of necessity an investigation of matter and its functions. This is true even of psychology, the province of which is described as co-extensive with the province of physiology. The facts of consciousness are regarded by the Idealists as spiritual realities, but to the psychologist they are as yet inexplicable by-products of the brain. It is entirely unscientific to define psychology as the science of the soul, as the Idealists do. It is more accurate to define it as the science of behavior or conduct, but it is behavior or conduct of the human organism, which is purely material. On what ground, then, can it be affirmed that Materialism has been banished even from science, or that intellectualism is quickly passing away? It is no concern of ours what ought to be the conviction of Christian teachers in the present or their hope for the future, all we know being that science, in all its departments, is as naturalistic to-day as it ever was, and that in the nature of things it cannot be otherwise. Whether there be a Supernature or not, science is incontrovertibly the study of Nature, and takes no cognisance whatever of anything else.

Professor Eucken's Christianity is a pure nonentity, while his Idealism is shared by many Christians and non-Christians alike. It is easy enough to assert that Christianity, as defined by our philosopher, "dare not remain merely as one religion by the side of other religions"; but he forgets that it has dared so to remain for nigh two thousand years, and that it is less likely to-day than ever to become the universal religion of mankind. The East is at last finding out what a dismal disappointment it is in the West, and in consequence shows a growing disinclination to give it a welcome harborage. It is well known that Francis Xavier preached it in Japan about the middle of the sixteenth century, and that early in the seventeenth century there was every probability of its being made the State religion; but persecution arose and eventually drove it completely out of the land. It had nearly a hundred years' trial, but the final verdict of the Japanese was wholly against it. A similar experience befell it in Siam and China a little later. The East would have none of it. Another desperate attempt is being made to Christianise the East. For upwards of a hundred years millions of pounds have been wasted in pursuit of a hopeless propaganda. At the present moment the East, speaking generally, is as Pagan as it was five hundred years ago. From every point of view the Christian converts are a negligible quantity, while the missionary motive of a hundred years ago is no longer operative in the West. Not many Christians now believe that non-Christians go to hell when they die; and it is becoming a growing conviction among thoughtful people that such countries as India, China, Burma, and Japan are morally fully equal, if not in some respects superior, to the best Christian lands. No, Christianity is not the universal religion, but one among many religions all of which, with the exception of primitive Buddhism, are gradually dying. China and Japan will doubtless grant Professor Eucken a respectful hearing; but we do not think he will make many, if any, converts. The educated classes, in the centres he intends to visit, understand Christianity as well as he does himself, whilst many of them have seen it at work on the continent of Europe and in Great Britain. They have studied our slum-areas, our courts of justice, our economic conditions, and our morals, and they are not likely to accept for the East a religion so utterly discredited by existing conditions in the West. But Christianity claims to be the only true religion, and condemns all other religions as either positively false or essentially inadequate; but that claim has been belied by the facts for nineteen hundred years, and facts are such stubborn things that in the end they always carry the day.

J. T. LLOYD.

Christian Apologetics.

VII.—PALEY'S EVIDENCES (No. 3).

ANOTHER sample of Christian Evidence reasoning is that relating to the Gospel miracles. The astute apologist, Paley, says (Prop. II., chap. i., sec. 7):—

> "The miracles recorded in the Gospels were wrought in the midst of enemies, under a government, a priesthood, and a magistracy, decidedly and vehemently adverse to them, and to the pretensions which they supported. They were Protestant miracles in a Popish country; they were Popish miracles in the midst of Protestants. They produced a change; they established a society upon the spot, adhering to the belief in them; they made converts.....Jesus had not one follower when he set up his claim. His miracles gave birth to his sect."

Here we have a big bouncing assumption which, without the smallest scrap of evidence, implies that the miracles ascribed to Jesus in the Gospels were wrought exactly as therein described. All those in authority in Palestine—Herod Antipas in Galilee, Pilate in Samaria and Judæa, the chief priests and scribes, and the Jewish Sanhedrim—are declared to have been "decidedly and vehemently adverse" to Jesus Christ going about the country orating and working miracles, accompanied by twelve disciples, and followed by multitudes of the lower classes. These authorities, it is asserted, had a "vehement" desire to stop this unauthorised preaching; but they had no power to do so. If Jesus, or any other self-styled prophet, chose to go from city to city, and from village to village, declaiming to the populace and promulgating a new religion, the authorities could only look on: they were powerless to take action. This is what Paley—and what all present-day apologists—would have us believe.

Now, as a matter of history, during the period when Samaria and Judæa were under Roman procurators (A.D. 6—66) the authorities of Palestine never in a single instance allowed men who had set themselves up as prophets, miracle-workers, preachers, mob orators, or public agitators, to roam the country at large, and preach, orate, or declaim to crowds of the common people. No such open-air propagandism was permitted for a single day. Every self-constituted prophet, miracle-worker, or orator, that appeared in Palestine during the period named had his career cut short, before well begun, by Roman "horsemen and footmen," sent against him by the procurator then in authority, amongst the latter being Pilate, Fadus, Tiberius Alexander, Felix, and Festus. The lower orders among the Jews, during this period, were too ignorant and gullible, and of too excitable a nature, to be safely allowed to listen to street preachers or mob orators. The mischief wrought by the agitator "Judas of Galilee" (A.D. 6), when authority was for a short time withdrawn, stood as a warning. Hence, all individuals of the orator class that found their way into Palestine were hunted down and ruthlessly suppressed, as a precautionary measure against sedition. The procurator had a legion of Roman soldiers, quartered in Jerusalem, for this or any other purpose in the maintenance of order. It is quite certain, then, that Jesus never went about the country, preaching and working miracles, as recorded in the Gospels.

Next, the Jewish authorities in Palestine were not so powerless as represented in the Gospels. Though they left to the Romans the maintenance of order in the two provinces, they kept in their own hands all matters connected with their sacred law. Had Jesus really appeared in public as the promulgator of a new religion, calling himself the divine "son" of the deity they worshiped, and trying to persuade orthodox Jews to give up the Mosaic ritual as related in the Gospels, his public ministry would have been brought to a close the first day. In the case of Stephen, we are told, the Jews "rushed upon him with one accord, and they cast him out of the city, and stoned him" (Acts vii. 57). Whether true or false, this incident correctly describes both the

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action of the Jews and the fate of Jesus, had that personage attempted to subvert the orthodox Jewish religion. And in doing so, the Jews would only be following the command given in Deut. xiii. 1—5.

But, apart from the foregoing considerations, we know that for the actual working of the Gospel miracles we have no evidence whatever. The editors of the canonical Gospels found the accounts already written—the originators being unknown. The Gospel records are therefore mere stories, without corroboration of any kind: we may safely say, then, that they are unhistorical. Hence, the alleged miracles of Jesus, never having been wrought, established no society. "Jesus the Nazarene," as the name implies, belonged to "the sect of the Nazarenes," and "set up" no claim for himself, save, perhaps, as an exorcist in that sect. The Nazarenes, as a society, existed before the time of Jesus; some members of the sect, at a later day, came to regard the latter personage as a prophet—but not as a divine being—and fabricated stories of his alleged sayings and doings. The Nazarenes were a branch of the Essenes, and did not go about preaching, to gain converts, as represented in the Acts of the Apostles. They were all Jews, and they all conformed to the Mosaic ritual, except upon one point, sacrifice; and for this innovation they had some authority from the Jewish scriptures (*e.g.*, Hos. vi. 6).

A luminous sample of Paley's reasoning on the genuineness of the Gospel miracles is given three pages further on, and reads as follows:—

> "If a person born blind be restored to sight, a notorious cripple to the use of his limbs, or a dead man to life, here is a permanent effect produced by supernatural means. The change, indeed, was instantaneous, but *the proof continues*. The subject of the miracle remains. The man cured or restored *is there:* his former condition *was known*, and his present condition *may be examined*.....When Lazarus was raised from the dead, he did not merely move, and speak, and die again; or come out of the grave and vanish away. He returned to his home and family, and there continued; for *we find him*, some time afterwards, in the same town, sitting at table with Jesus and his sisters; visited by great multitudes of the Jews, as a subject of curiosity.....*No delusion can account for this*.....The blind man, whose restoration to sight at Jerusalem is recorded in the ninth chapter of St. John's Gospel, did not quit the place or conceal himself from inquiry. On the contrary, *he was forthcoming* to answer the call, *to satisfy the scrutiny*, and to sustain the browbeatings of Christ's angry and powerful enemies.....Here, though the miracle was sudden, *the proof was permanent*."

This is real jam. As an argument it is entirely dependent on the word "if"—"*If* a person born blind be restored to sight.....or a dead man to life." *If* either of such miracles happened "the change was instantaneous." Why, certainly; the miracle is so represented in the Gospel story. And, not only was this the case, but "the subject of the miracle remains." Why, certainly; that is to say, the person healed "remains" in the Gospel story, and can be found in every printed copy. "The man cured or restored *is there*." Yes, undoubtedly he "is there"—that is to say, in the story. "His former condition *was known*"—that is, it is described in the story. "And his present condition *may be examined*"—that is to say, it is so implied in the Gospel story.

Coming to a particular case, "*When* Lazarus was raised from the dead, he did not.....die again.....or vanish away." Certainly not; had he done so, it would have marred the story, as the author, when concocting it, knew perfectly well. "He returned to his home and family.....for *we find him*, some time afterwards," etc. Just so; the author brings him again upon the scene, and "we find him" in the next chapter (John xii. 2) "sitting at table with Jesus" in the house of Martha and Mary, whom the writer calls his "sisters." At the same meal in Luke's Gospel (x. 38—42) there is no brother Lazarus; neither does Matthew, Mark, nor Luke appear to have ever heard of this brother, or of his being raised from the dead.

Next, the man born blind, after receiving his sight (John ix. 6, 7) "did not.....conceal himself from inquiry.....he *was forthcoming* to answer the call, to satisfy the scrutiny" of the sceptical. This is perfectly correct; he remained and answered the questioning of his neighbors, as well as that of the Pharisees (John ix. 9, 15)—that is to say, he is represented as so doing in the Gospel story, in order to bring more credit upon the Christian Savior. We thus arrive at the inevitable conclusion of this grand argument—and all must admit that Paley has fully proved it—that *if* the Gospel story be true, the miracle in each case was perfectly genuine; consequently there could be no deception or delusion in the matter. And this point being settled, all we require now is evidence of the truth of the Gospel story. When this is adduced we are ready to consider and weigh it impartially. But where is this evidence? As a simple matter of fact, Paley has not advanced any—not the smallest scrap. He tacitly asks us to accept all the Gospel narratives as true in every particular—without anything in the nature of evidence. It does not appear to have dawned upon him that, for those inclined to be sceptical, evidence of some kind might be necessary. For, it is almost needless to say, we have not the testimony of a single person who witnessed the alleged raising of Lazarus from the dead, or the miraculous cure of the man born blind, neither of which miracles was among those recorded in the primitive Gospel from which the first three evangelists drew the main portion of their narratives. Neither do they appear to have been amongst the stories which are called apocryphal. It is, therefore, more than probable that the writer of the Fourth Gospel piously fabricated them himself.

ABRACADABRA.

Artists and Freethought.—III.

(*Concluded from p. 365.*)

ONE of the few modern artists who believed in a didactic art, an art with a social and moral purpose, was G. F. Watts (1817-1904). In his *Mammon* and the *Minotaur* he preached his social gospel that wealth was the abomination of cruelty. In the *Shuddering Angel* we see him pleading for dumb animals. In the *Dweller in the Innermost* his moralising is made plain. In his *Messenger* and *Love Triumphant*, and other subjects on Death, we read his philosophy. And so in his *Faith*, *Hope*, and the *Spirit of Christianity*, we see his religious faith. Watts was an Agnostic. Creeds, dogmas, Churches, had no place with one who placed Humanity before everything.

A great and original English painter was Ford Madox Brown (1821-93). He was the first of the English Romanticists. His two gorgeous canvases—*Work*, at Manchester, and the *Last of England*, at Birmingham, are landmarks in the history of our national art. This artist, as his biographer (Hueffer) tells us, was an "an absolute Agnostic, with a great dislike for anything of the nature of priestcraft."

Sir E. Burne-Jones (1833-98), a greater contemporary (in public estimation) than the foregoing, was originally intended for the Church, but doubts took possession of him, and he abandoned her service for that of Art. Among his finest art creations are: *King Cophetia*, the *Star of Bethlehem*, *Pygmalion*, the last two at Birmingham, and *Danäe*, at Glasgow. He, too, was a Freethinker.

A life-long friend of Burne-Jones, and one who influenced him to a considerable extent, was that noble artist, poet, and rebel, William Morris (1828-96). This fine "craftsman," as he called himself, by his work and teaching, did more for decorative art and taste in this country than all the schools put together. His interest in the Socialist and Secularist movement is well-known. Although most of his biographers have ignored the fact, Morris was an Atheist.

Two of the famous Pre-Raphaelites, Rossetti and Millais, were also Freethinkers. Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-82) found subjects for his canvases in

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the Bible; yet for all that, his biographer, A. C. Benson, tells us he was "a Freethinker and held an Agnostic position." His *Annunciation*, in the National Gallery, is an example of his sacred themes; but when we compare it with such an ideal conception as his picture called *Found*, we see the value of Carlyle's warning to a certain artist "not to confuse his mind with mysteries, but to use it for something he could see about him."

Sir John Millais (1829-96), the painter of *Lorenzo and Isabella*, at Liverpool, the *Blind Girl*, at Birmingham, the *Forerunner*, at Glasgow, and two fine portraits in the National Gallery; but perhaps better known for the *North-West Passage*. The fine, sturdy mariner in this was "sat for" by Byron's friend, Trelawny. What a scene was caused when he found he had been pictured with a glass of grog in his hand; for Trelawny was a life-long teetotaler! Millais, as I have said was a Freethinker.

Among those artists whom the French term *dessinateurs*, are not a few sceptics in religion. One of the greatest artists of English wood engraving was W. J. Linton (1812). He was a good Freethinker and Democrat, and not only helped with his purse the Freethought cause, but contributed to such journals as the *Oracle of Reason* and the *Reasoner*. Two of the most sublime mockers in "black and white"—who helped to make *Punch* famous—Charles Keene (1828-91) and Du Maurier (1834-96), were both Freethinkers. In the latter's charming novel, *Trilby*, there was an occasional fine sword-thrust at Christianity. William Simpson (1820-99), the war and travel artist, whose fine gallery of water-colors are among the treasures of Kelvingrove, Glasgow, was a Freethinker who took much interest in popular propaganda. Lastly, I may mention the name of a "household goddess," Kate Greenaway (1846-1901), the creator of those lovely children in art. She, too, belongs to Freethought. Once she said, "Death is the one thing I can't reconcile with God. After such a wonderful life it seems such a miserable ending." Her life by Spielmann and Layard contains much of her heterodox opinions.

Vasili Verestchagin (1842-1904), the first really great Russian painter, was a confirmed Freethinker. His "Thoughts Upon Religion," in his *Autobiographical Sketches*, certainly place him outside the "goodly fellowship of the apostles." Unlike his contemporaries, there is no sloppy sentiment in Verestchagin's treatment of religious themes. He was a realist, and painted the "whole truth, and nothing but the truth." The Blessed Virgin in *A Syrian Home* is the most vulgar slut imaginable, and the boy Christ is just a *gamin*, and no more. The figures are placed in a dirty backyard, and the picture truly gives us just the sort of surroundings one would expect to find with a humble carpenter's family in the East. The figures in *Christ and John the Baptist* appear like two Arab mendicants. The *Resurrection* depicts Christ leaving the tomb, not in "all his glory," but crawling very ungraciously out of the bottom of the sepulchre. This picture was severely censured by the clericals, and by the order of the Archbishop was withdrawn from the Vienna Exhibition in 1885.

To the French Revolution art owes much. It struck the first blow for the freedom of the artist—his liberation from the Church, court, convention, and the schools. The great representative artist of the Revolution was J. Louis David (1748-1825), a good rebel and "a thorough Freethinker," says J. M. Wheeler. As a friend of Robespierre he went to prison and narrowly escaped the guillotine. In his early years David became enamored of ancient art, and when the classical political ideals became the law and custom of the Revolution his early love found full scope, not only in his designs for the Republican *fêtes*, but in his most admired canvases: *The Oath of the Horatii* (painted before the Revolution) *L. Junius Brutus*, and the *Sabine Women*. David died in banishment.

The real artistic influence of the Revolution, however, is not found in David nor in France, but in Francisco Goya (1746-1828), one of the greatest names in Spanish art. Although a Court painter and a decorator of churches, Goya was at heart an Anarchist and Atheist. His famous work in the St. Anthony Church is the most daring religious picture ever painted. It depicts St. Anthony blessing the cripples; but look behind this mere subject and you will see a crowd of beggars, mendicants, courtesans, and dandies behind a balustrade. The ladies bestow most enticing glances, and here and there a leg protrudes through the rail, or a skirt is lifted to display some petticoat finery, whilst others are actually engaged in a dance. But it is in his engravings that Goya reveals his Freethought. In one of these a corpse is rising from a grave, and with a finger writes the word "nothingness." And then Goya himself writes, "There is no such a thing as immortality of which the priests speak to us; no such a thing as those heavenly joys on which we set our hopes, which bowed us to the earth, which helped us to bear without a murmur want and misery, while these kings and priests were growing fat at our expense."

When the Romanticists founded their *Nouvelle Société* in opposition to the Salon, in the days of '48, there were many rebels in both religion and politics among them. At any rate, their leaders, Delacroix (1798-1863) and Daumier (1808-79), were both Freethinkers. Daumier, the father of modern French caricature, was a solid fighter for the cause of liberty, and in his early days had gone to prison for a disrespectful lithograph of Louis Philippe.

Gustave Courbet (1819-77), the great protagonist of "realism," was an Atheist and Anarchist.* He was a friend and disciple of Proudhon, and took a prominent part in the Paris Commune of 1871, for which he suffered imprisonment, fine, banishment, and a heap of indignities, which even to-day are put upon his name. Courbet "hated" the priests, and the picture of them in the *Return from the Conference*, which represents several drunken *curés*, was conceived from a view of caricature. It was refused by the Salon as "an outrage on religion."

Jules Dalou (1838), the famous sculptor of *La République*, at the Paris Hotel de Ville, was also implicated in the Commune of 1871, and had to fly the country in consequence. Dalou was as free in religion as he was in politics or art. Meunier, considered second only to the great Rodin, was an avowed rebel and heretic.

Among artists of the last half-century, Freethinkers are more the rule than the exception, especially on the Continent. Rodin, perhaps the greatest sculptor of modern times, is clearly a Freethinker, although no definite attitude can be assigned to him. As to Jean Baffier, the sculptor of the statue of *Michael Servetus*, he is an open political rebel and sceptic. The greatest living painter in Russia—Elias Ryepin—is an avowed anti-clerical. In conservative England—the land which so annoyed Schopenhauer for its make-believe in religion—we can boast of many heretics, from the highly successful Hon. John Collier to the brilliant, but unappreciated, Walter Sickert—not forgetting, of course, the master illustrator, Walter Crane.

With France, it would be difficult to point to a modern artist who was not a Freethinker of some shade or other. The great Manet—apostle of "Impressionism"—and all his unconventional associates who gathered under the roof of the free-thinking Père Tanguy—Cezanne, Pissaro, Vincent van Gogh, Renoir, Monet, and Paul Gauguin—were Freethinkers. Jules Hereau, Cazin, Eugène Carriere, Feyen-Perrin, Hippolyte Moulin, Jean Paul Laurens, as well as most of "Neo-Impressionists"—Luce, Seurat, Paul Signac, and Pissaro *fils*, must also be counted with their irreligious brothers. As for the *dessinateurs*, like Gavarni and André Gill, the moderns to a man are sceptics—and to name a few—Léandre, Steinlen, Hermann-Paul, and Willette.

H. GEORGE FARMER.

* In the *Freethinker*, November 16, 1913, I have spoken of Courbet's art and scepticism in full.

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Acid Drops.

The *Observer* winds up a notice of the sinking of the *Empress of Ireland* by saying:—

> "We have spoken often of Fate. Do not let it be inferred therefrom that we write as a 'hopeless, blind idolator of Chance.' These things do not happen save by the will of Him without whose knowledge not a sparrow falls to the ground. The why we cannot ever guess. One thing only we can do; bow the head in submission and try to realise our own dependence upon the Eternal. These things do not happen in vain if those who are afflicted by them rise from the blow stronger because more humble, truer because more purged of the pride of life, closer to realities because the spiritual and the material have taken more closely their proper value in their eyes. They who perished were not adjudged more guilty than those on whom the tower of Siloam fell. They had reached their appointed time."

We suppose this is intended for fine and impressive writing. Seriously, it would be next to impossible to string together greater essential drivel. The wreck occurred by the will of God; those who died "had reached their appointed time." Then it was *all* arranged beforehand. The bookings were supernaturally prompted. The fog was part of the plan, so was the arrival of the *Storstad*. Everything was part of the scheme, because the people were not drowned for their deserts, but because they had reached their "appointed time." What, then, does the *Observer* mean by saying that "stern inquiry will have to be held into the navigation of the *Storstad*"? No inquiry is necessary if the whole thing was "appointed"—that is, unless the court of inquiry has the courage to pass a vote of censure on the one who arranged the scheme.

And observe the moral of the disaster. These things will not have happened in vain if those who are not drowned "read aright the lessons of the *Empress of Ireland*." What is there to learn? If it all happens by the "will of Him without whose knowledge not a sparrow falls to the ground," if the time of our dying is "appointed," what lessons are we to read from the disaster? One lesson is implied. We are in the hands of God, who does with us as he wills, and we can only whine out our submission, or play a man's part, if only for a brief moment, and "Curse God and die." One other lesson is also stated by the *Observer*. *We* are to rise stronger from the disaster. God drowns over a thousand people in order to give *other* people a desired lesson. The drowned, we have it on the *Observer's* authority, were not more guilty than others. But they were punished nevertheless. They can get no benefit from the lesson of the disaster. The benefit accrues to others. God selects a thousand people and drowns *them* in order to teach other people a lesson in navigation. What incurable hostility there is between religion and common sense!

We do not quite know exactly what is meant by a "hopeless, blind, idolator of Chance," but we feel that anything is preferable to believing we are the mere sport of an intelligence too powerful for us to coerce, and absolved from all the ethical considerations that regulate human actions. Nothing could be more depressing, more truly horrible than that. Theist and Atheist are in the same world, and have to face the same facts; and while it remains true, on any hypothesis, that the rain falls on the just and unjust alike, and in any disaster the innocent and the guilty suffer equally, the Atheist is not burdened with the depressing conviction that this obliviousness to moral considerations is deliberate. To the Atheist the fight is one of human intelligence *versus* non-conscious forces. To the Theist it is between human endeavor and an invisible personality too powerful to be subdued, and not sufficiently human to be swayed by the moral deserts of those whom he punishes or rewards.

The restraining value of religion is not often shown so clearly as in the case of George Marriott, who was charged at Southend Petty Sessions with stealing tools from workmen, and sentenced to four months' hard labor. When accused, the prisoner produced a card containing the Ten Commandments, saying that it was given him by his mother when he left home.

An American "Evangelist," only fourteen years of age, named Forbes, is engaged with his father, the Rev. Charles Forbes, in conducting a soul-saving "mission" at Stratford. He is said to be very successful. No doubt his youth is the attraction. But these boy preachers seldom come to anything in riper years. Jesus Christ was one of the exceptions. He started at twelve. But his mother's hand or his father's slipper subdued him for a long while after that first attempt. He was thirty years old before he took to the road in real earnest.

Gravesend isn't far from Stratford. The boy evangelist should try his hand on his thirsty countryman. But it is probably a great deal easier to save sham sinners at a public meeting than real sinners at a public-house.

Why on earth did the Rev. Henry Coulan, of Boston, Mass., come all the way to Gravesend to get fined 7s. 6d. for being drunk and disorderly? Couldn't he have managed it at home?

The *Times* Literary Supplement is not a theological publication, but on occasion it can "out-Herod Herod." Recently it stated that "The Rationalist argues that the contradictions in Holy Writ and dogmas prove them to be not of Divine origin, whereas the Mystic contends that within the domain of spiritual revelation it is precisely these contradictions that prove the Divine origin of Holy Writ and dogmas." Does the *Times* scribe mean that his faith would be stronger if he read that Jonah swallowed the whale instead of the other way about?

"Tradition is a thing of the past; it spells stupidity," declared the Rev. Nigel Cross at the Unitarians' annual meeting. So long as tradition has 50,000 salaried defenders in this country alone, it may spell lunacy, but it will not be a thing of the past.

Sir Oliver Lodge advises people not to attempt to prove the existence of God. He says this cannot be done, and so far we agree with him. We also congratulate him, for it looks as though he is seeing how useless some of his own "proofs" are. But, he adds, "Let them ask if they thought man was the highest intelligence in the whole of the universe. If the questioner once admitted there was a higher being than man they had got him. They could not stop after that." Sir Oliver must try again. That kind of argument would hardly impose on a child. No one need admit that there is any higher intelligence than man in the universe. Human intelligence is the highest we know, and the most that anyone in their senses would admit is that there may be higher. But it is left for those who assert it to prove it. Besides, a merely higher intelligence is not "God." There may, for instance, be inhabitants of Mars with intelligence as much above ours as ours is above the anthropoid ape. But that would no more make the "higher intelligence" God than our superiority to the ape converts us into deities. What a pity it is that a man of Sir Oliver's eminence in science goes out of his way to repeat the illogical twaddle of a Christian Evidence platform.

Addressing the annual gathering of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, Dean Inge, of St. Paul's Cathedral, said some very nasty things about the Materialists, which appeared to please his heterodox audience. Yet, if there is any truth in the Christian creeds, Unitarians will go to the same tropical regions after death as the Intellectuals.

Dr. A. C. Dixon, the American evangelist, spoke at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, London, on behalf of the work of the British and Foreign Sailors' Society. Presumably, he spoke on behalf of the foreigners.

Christian and liar have, historically, been almost convertible terms. This truth was put in more parliamentary language by Herder, when he wrote that "Christian veracity" deserved to rank with "Punic faith." Here is a fair sample of up-to-date Christian mendacity. Colonel John Adamson Ferguson, Hon. Sec. Church Laymen's Missionary Movement, in a letter to the *Westminster Gazette* the other evening (Friday, June 5) made the following pretty statement: "The times are critical in many parts of the world, notably in China, Japan, India, and Africa. The first two are hesitating between Christianity and unbelief." We should be surprised if the editor who inserted Colonel Ferguson's letter,—for good business reasons, just as he would refuse to insert one from a known Atheist on the same subject—does not know perfectly well that the missionary puff is a great absurdity. China and Japan are not "hesitating" at all about Christianity or any other religion. If they give up their own faiths—as most educated Chinese and Japs have already done—they will accept no others in the place of those they abandon. Ever since we can remember they have been *going* to accept Christianity. "Some day, some day"—as the song says; but they are not a bit nearer doing it up to the present, and it is fairly safe to say they never will. But why, it may be asked, do missionary officials tell such falsehoods? The answer is plain. Partly from religious zeal—partly from a desire to obtain

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money for the missionary business. It is easy enough to understand.

It is not easy to see the sublime courage of setting fire to churches and running away from the consequences. Freethinkers, in former days, did not wage war in that fashion. They attacked churches, not as buildings, but as institutions; they attacked dogmas, and pretensions; and they suffered for it, but they won. They did not sacrifice others—they sacrificed themselves. There was some honesty and decency in that.

The Bishop of London appointed June 12 as a "day of intercession" for the Church in Wales. Bishop Ingram should make up his mind whether he intends trusting to votes or to God in the matter, although now that the Bill is practically law we fail to see what God can do. The Bishop says that man's extremity is God's opportunity—which is very, very true. It is only when man is helpless or ignorant that God is called in. "God help us" is only another way of saying that we do not see how we can help ourselves, just as "God only knows" is a universal formula for complete ignorance.

The Carnegie Peace Endowment Commission on the Balkan War has issued its report. The report says that the war, which our readers will remember was called by the Christians a "crusade" on behalf of the Cross, belongs "to the age when constant fighting, with its inevitable cruelties, was followed by abominable excesses which civilised people have excluded from the province of war for centuries—systematic massacres, ill-treatment of prisoners, pillage and incendiarism, and innumerable cases of injury to women and girls." The Commission declares that "there is no clause in international law relative to war on land and the treatment of the wounded that has not been violated in greater or lesser degree by all the belligerents." Wounded men were put to death on the battlefield, and both the Greek and Bulgarian armies are charged with using explosive bullets.

Mrs. Besant's irreligion drove her out of her husband's home, and threw her upon "the world" which, in the form of the Freethought party, treated her extremely well. But there was no fortune hanging to that. People paid as little as threepence to hear her then. They pay as much as five shillings to hear her now. She has "verted" to religion again—not the old one, but a new one, which is in many respects a good deal worse—and is once more "respectable." And one result is that she has just signed a £100,000 contract with the London Building Industries Federation to construct the Theosophical Society's new headquarters in Tavistock-square.

The Dean of Belfast reminds us of the brigand in the Italian story who prayed for God's assistance when he set out on an expedition to murder a rich man and violate his wife. The reverend gentleman assures the people of his city (not the Catholics, of course, but the Protestants) that "Ulster's prayers" induced God to take command of the "gun-running" through the *Fanny*. The Deity sailed the ship and ran the weather. "God's hand guided her," the Dean says, "God's fogs shielded her." We rather fancy the speaker himself is in one of "God's fogs."

A Roman Catholic procession at Preston, in spite of the warnings of the police, insisted on carrying the Madonna, alias the Virgin Mary, alias the Mother of God, in the "fighting line." Extra police were drafted into the town, which was full of religionists and disorder. How they did love each other! It took the men of law and order all their time to keep Catholics and Protestants from murdering each other. Yet both belong to Christianity—the religion of love.

The *Church Family Newspaper* announces that fifteen bishops are to meet fifteen Nonconformist leaders in order to "discuss a basis on which civic and social enterprises can be undertaken by all sections of believers." From such a combination—to use the words of the Litany—"Good Lord deliver us!" The only basis on which Nonconformists and Conformists can combine is a religious one. "All sections of believers" are clearly not united on any social question. They do not agree on the land question, the housing question, the military question, or any other question of a social character. They exhibit, and must be expected to exhibit, all kinds of divergences. It is both inevitable and desirable that this should be so. They can only agree on one point, and that is the direction of social affairs in a manner that will promote the interests of religious organisations. If an agreement is reached it means the regulation of social life by organised religious bodies. And that, as all experience shows, is the most disastrous thing that can happen in the life of a nation.

The emergence of the priest in politics is, indeed, one of the most sinister features of our time. Once upon a time, religion openly claimed to regulate social life. The claim was put forward by Catholics and Protestants alike, and so far it was straightforward and intelligible. Then came the rapid development of science and social theory, and religious leaders felt themselves in danger of being crowded out altogether. The counter move was the development of a "social Christianity." This was an illogical monstrosity and consisted in discovering in the New Testament, if not a theory of sociology, at least principles and ideals that might profitably inspire social action. And so the clergy, who were in danger of being driven out of sociology and politics, saw their way to make a last stand in defence of their old claim. It is no longer the right of religion to direct social life—at least, not in so many words—but the power of religion to inspire social action. Yet it meant the same thing. The Roman Church openly claims to control social life. The Protestant Churches desire to do so, and aim at doing so, but with their customary hypocrisy, refrain from putting their claim in plain language. It is the same claim in both cases; and the direction of social life by religious sects means both tyranny and retrogression. *That* is one of the plainest and surest of historic truths.

Revivalists are continually asserting that Atheism leads to suicide. It was not the cause in the case of the late Mr. Herbert Slade, an Oxford undergraduate, who suffered from "religious depression," and cut his throat.

The King has contributed £1,000, and the Prince of Wales £1 000 towards the cost of a church at Kennington Cross. The Throne and the Church have always been mutual back-scratchers.

At the Paris Academy of Medicine, Professor Tuffier introduced a bearded woman to his colleagues. At the age of forty, the unfortunate woman began to assume a masculine aspect and to develop her muscles like a boxer. Defenders of the Design Argument will kindly note the latest of Providence's playful pranks.

"Shot by a Dead Man" is the attractive headline in a recent issue of the *Daily News*. The paragraph told the story of the finding of a suicide's body in Switzerland. The corpse's hand still clutched a revolver, and the finder was shot whilst attempting to move the body. The Holy Bible is the only authentic repository of stories of really lively "corpses."

At the Salvation Army International Congress grace is to be said in a dozen languages at the dinners. Salvationism is not like Holyoake said Secularism was—a religion that gives God no trouble. Twelve graces for one dinner! It is enough to make Omnipotence shudder.

Bad language is not confined to His Majesty's Theatre. A little girl had upset her parents by using the word "devil." "Dear," said mother, "that is a nasty word, and do not use it." All went well, and a few weeks later the mother inquired what the Scripture lesson had been about. "Why, mamma," was the answer, "it was about the temptation by the gentleman who keeps hell."

God counts the hairs of the heads of Christians, and has a partiality for sparrows. Are we to assume that the 17,000 accidents caused by motors during 1913 all occurred to non-Christian persons?

In Mr. Thomas Joyce's new book on *Mexican Archæology*, there is much material for the students of comparative religions. In ancient Mexico, for example, infant baptism was a well recognised practice. Christians imagine that the rite is one peculiar to their own superstition.

Stands Jerusalem where it did? Here is Mr. Israel Zangwill, referring to his play, *Plaster Saints*, and saying that it has been commended by "some of my most eminent Christian contemporaries," and that it contains "nothing whatever to wound Christian feeling." If the distinguished dramatist is not very careful he will be asked to subscribe to the Young Men's Christian Association.

A bundle of asparagus recently sold for £15. The price seems high enough to have purchased the apple that caused all the trouble in Eden.

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To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £160 15s. Received since:—H. Wyllie, Esq., £1 1s.; J. Barry, £1; S. H., £1; R. Daniell, 2s.; C. E. Hearson, £1 1s.; Per F. Rose (Bloemfontein):—L. N., 10s. 6d.; H. E. Irving, 10s. 6d.; F. Rose, 10s. 6d.

A. H.—We have seen George Bernard Shaw's attack on Secular Education, and also what he has to say about religious instruction, and there is only one word that properly describes it—it is silly. Far more serious attacks on Secular Education, and much less ridiculous defences of religious instruction, have been made by avowed Christian writers; but they had an obvious advantage over G. B. S. They knew something of child psychology, and they were conversant with present-day school life and methods. We are glad to hear from a recent subscriber to what you describe as our "powerfully written weekly."

M. ROBINSON.—The period of Mohammedan supremacy in Spain covered, roughly, seven centuries. Its influence on the life of Spain, and also on the rest of Europe, together with the demoralisation that followed the Christian reconquest, will be found in H. C. Lea's *The Moriscoes of Spain*, Stanley Lane-Poole's *Moors in Spain*, Buckle's *History of Civilisation*, and Draper's *Intellectual Development of Europe*. We agree with you as to the "brigandage" of some of the European States in relation to Turkey.

S. H.—Thanks for your good wishes. The cutting shall have attention next week.

H. LION.—Received, but regret we cannot make use of your contribution.

J. W. KELL.—Certainly, the *Golden Bough* is worth possessing, if you can afford to get it. The complete work is published in 12 vols. at 10s. net per vol. But the volumes may be purchased separately.

J. D. JOHNSON (Michigan).—The matter mentioned in your letter is receiving attention. We received a copy of the circular you enclose, and we quite appreciate the very excellent work done by Mr. Reichwald as Secretary of the Secular Union, but considerations of space prevented our reprinting the whole of the circular at the time. Judge Black's letter was printed as a sample of the license Christian officials permit themselves when dealing with Freethinkers.

J. KNOX.—The good wishes of earnest men are always welcome, and the gratitude and respect of one who has been a reader of the *Freethinker* for 25 years repays one for much of the vexation that Freethought work brings. We are glad you have derived so much personal benefit from the reading of the paper.

J. YOUNG.—Is there any virtue in troubling about the senseless scandal of irresponsible speakers? People who live in the gutter—mentally—naturally become so familiar with filth that they see nothing else. We have never allowed such things to trouble us, and we advise you to follow the same policy.

T. F. PALMER.—Article to hand. Will appear next week. Crowded out of present issue.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. W. Bailey, of Manchester, who was added at the recent Conference to the list of N. S. S. vice-presidents, should have been added long ago. Curious delays happen in human affairs, and this is one of them. "What everybody sees nobody sees." We coin this epigram for the occasion. Most people will endorse it on the spot.

Dr. Nichols, a N. S. S. vice-president for many years, and a member of the Board of Directors of the Secular Society, Ltd., is a familiar figure at these Annual Conferences, and as welcome as he is familiar. Unfortunately he was unable to attend this year in consequence of severe neuralgia in different parts of the head, which has been plaguing him for some time. We are very glad to hear that the bracing air of Deal is powerfully assisting his recovery.

Mr. W. Heaford, who was announced to speak at the evening public meeting in connection with the N. S. S. Conference, finding himself tired out with overwork, was obliged to go away for a little rest and change. We hope he has profited by the brief relaxation.

The members of the Edmonton Branch have arranged an excursion to Epping Forest on Sunday, June 21. One party starts from "The Two Brewers," South-street, Ponder's End, and will meet another contingent at "The Robin Hood," High Beech, at 12 o'clock. Tea will be provided at "The Gardener's Arms," Loughton, at 5 o'clock. Tickets 1s. 3d. each. These may be had of Mr. R. H. Grant, 30 Kenwood-road, Lower Edmonton, or of the Branch Secretaries. London N. S. S. members will receive a cordial welcome.

Professor Metchnikoff, Freethinker and man of science, is to receive a "Golden Book" on the attainment of his seventieth birthday. The book will form a record of the latest scientific researches, and will be signed by the leading scientists of to-day. Professor Metchnikoff is one of the greatest of living micro-biologists, and has made no secret of his heretical opinions. His work, *The Nature of Man*, left little room for religion, and clearly reduced the supposed longing for a future to a purely physiological basis. We die before we are physiologically exhausted. We desire to live longer because we have not really worn out our bodily vitality. Given a complete life here, and that the Professor thinks is quite within the power of science to secure, this desire would be exhausted, and we should meet death as calmnly and as contentedly as we sink to sleep.

A memorial tablet to the novelist, "Mark Rutherford" (William Hale White), was unveiled at Hastings on Thursday, June 4, by Sir William Robertson Nicoll, who had been a friend of his for many years. Hale's works were praised highly, but not *too* highly. He came of Nonconformist stock; yet he was only technically a Nonconformist himself, and would probably have called himself an Agnostic if he had been bound to choose a label. We have a high admiration ourselves for "Mark Rutherford's" writings.

"The New Spirit in Portugal," by Lady Muir Mackenzie, is probably the article that will have most interest for Freethinkers in the June number of the *English Review*. The writer flatly challenges the statements made about the Lisbon prisons by the clerical party in England, who have been so industrious in misrepresenting the Republican Government in Portugal. She describes the great Penitenciaria as almost ideal. And listen to this:—

> "Before the coming of the Republic a great chapel stood in the centre of the building. From this point radiated six sections filled with seats in tiers one above another. Each prisoner's seat was enclosed in a box open only to the chapel; no prisoner ever saw another, for every man on leaving his cell had to draw a grey linen hood over his head and shoulders. To-day hoods are abolished, prisoners work together in company, the chapel is no more, and it has been replaced by a school."

We congratulate Lady Muir Mackenzie and the editor of the *English Review* on vindicating the Portuguese Republic against its partisan traducers. "English people," the lady writer says, "hold a high place in the esteem of the Portuguese, and a word of sympathy from them is truly appreciated." Another foreign article is Sydney Brooks' on "President Wilson." While admiring the man, the writer is pessimistic as to the President. Editor Harrison deals with "Mr. Asquith's Duty." We cannot follow him in these columns. We are quite certain, however, that, whether right or wrong, Mr. Asquith will do his duty as he sees it. And that is something.

The religion of Christ and him crucified is nowadays advertised like a patent medicine. Recent titles of sermons include "The Straight Tip," and "Up a Gum Tree." We like the last title, for it represents the position of the belated believers in the Christian superstition.

Clear Thinking; or, *An Englishman's Creed* is a publisher's announcement of a new book. The two things are not usually identical.

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N. S. S. Conference.

IMPORTANT FORWARD MOVEMENT.

THE forty-seventh Annual Conference of the National Secular Society was held at the Queen's Hall, London, W., on Whit-Sunday, and was well attended by delegates and individual members from all parts of the kingdom.

As was to be expected, Mr. G. W. Foote was re-elected President unanimously, and he thus entered upon his twenty-fifth successive year as the acknowledged leader of British Freethought; he having received the President's hammer from the honored hands of Charles Bradlaugh, the first President, in February, 1890. Indeed, the election showed the depth of respect with which the President is held, for the tone of all the speakers was that of personal affection, and Mr. C. Cohen, who occupied the chair during the election, voiced the feeling of all present when he said that "he hoped for many years to come Mr. Foote would be able and willing to lead the Freethought movement, and to keep it in the best position."

In a dignified speech, thanking the delegates, Mr. Foote said when old friends meet and have to do business as well as to look friendship, they have to put on a formal appearance. They had known one another long, and he did not mind telling them that serving Freethought was not profitable. When he accepted the Presidency on Charles Bradlaugh's nomination, he knew that Freethinkers were ostracised and tabooed men. After George Meredith's death, why was he selected by the editor of a great review to write about him? Because he wrote what he thought, and he wrote under no other condition. He would rather write an article in the *Freethinker* for nothing than under the restrictions of other papers for payment. Editing a propagandist organ such as the *Freethinker* was not a joke. He could afford to dispense with public applause now, for he had done without it all his life; but he always had the recognition of the worthiest and the best. Early in his career, George Meredith wrote saying that he was "fighting for the best of causes, profitless as he knew it to be," and these words had been an inspiration ever since. Such a cause must be profitless. Meredith's remark was true, and he hoped it would be true whilst he had strength to fight.

Great interest was aroused in the President's statement concerning the reorganisation of Freethought, and an animated discussion ensued. It was resolved by an overwhelming majority that the President be requested to draw up a plan and to call a special meeting hereafter.

Mr. Foote's statement was followed with keen interest. He pointed out that at the beginning of organised Freethought the Society set up was inevitable in the circumstances; but unless necessary changes were made, progress would not be rapid. When the National Secular Society was established, many people took part, but Charles Bradlaugh did most of the work. There were contributory causes to Bradlaugh's popularity, for he was a known and trusted friend of the people. He was also the first great popular orator who went about the country advocating Freethought. Sundays at that time were dolorous; there was no alternative to the churches except the public-houses. To-day the conditions were entirely different, for the very spread of Freethought has made serious rivals to the lecturers. Even Sunday Society meetings attract small audiences with lecturers of importance. The Freethought party raised more money now than in Bradlaugh's days, but it was becoming more profitable to spend money on books, pamphlets, and tracts than on lectures.

The interpretation of the Blasphemy Laws, arising from the trial of 1883, had altered everything. Had he known of this vast change years ago, he would have registered the National Secular Society. The Secular Society, Ltd., was formed to safeguard the interests of Freethought, and it had answered the purpose. A way should be found of simplifying the organisation of those interests, and the President explained that he had a plan in his head.

Mr. Victor Roger objected to such a sweeping step merely at the discretion of the President, but Mr. Cohen pointed out that the Conference was only asked to sanction the drawing up of a scheme to be drawn up and submitted to a joint committee to accept or reject.

After the adjournment, Mr. Chapman (South Shields) made a breezy speech, saying that a Freethought organisation could not expect millions of members. Lectures did not attract so much as formerly, and even sermons enjoyed the same fate, and churches were fast becoming places of entertainment.

Mr. Wood asked whether the Secularists could not co-operate with other Freethought societies, but Mr. Foote said that it was not possible to have one boat for voyagers of different temperaments. Since the inauguration of the Secular Society, Ltd., the robbery of the movement had been stopped, and thousands had accrued to it. It had been the financial salvation of Freethought. It was not the same Society as the N. S. S., but it was formed in the interests of the N. S. S., and that fact had always been kept well to the front. At the end the Conference passed a resolution declaring that it had heard Mr. Foote's statement with pleasure, and that it trusted he would prepare detailed plans as soon as possible, with the aid of any committee he might summon to his assistance, and call a special meeting of all the parties concerned in the matter.

The ever-green subject of Secular Education was introduced by the veteran, Mr. A. B. Moss, in an able speech on a subject with which he is familiar. He proposed the following resolution, which was carried:—

> "That, in view of the repeated failures of the Government to settle the Education Question on sectarian lines; in view also of the marked growth of public opinion in favor of a non-sectarian solution of a problem that owes its existence to the rivalries of Church and Chapel, this Conference calls upon the Government to put an end to a dispute that has for more than a generation obstructed the progress of education by restricting all instruction in State-supported schools to purely secular subjects."

Mr. Moss said Lord Haldane had spoken of the introduction of an education scheme, which should unite all democratic parties, and which promised to go further along secular lines than any of its predecessors. He did not think that the present Government would introduce it, but if so, he hoped that Freethinkers would insist that it was purely secular. Not only Bible teaching, but prayers and hymns must be abolished. Religious instruction was colored by the bias of the teacher, who might be a Baptist, Congregationalist, Unitarian, Churchman, or of any religious opinion. The only chance for the children lay in freedom from the priest, and Secularism not only gave the children liberty, but also gave it to the teachers.

The resolution was seconded by Mr. Cowell, and speeches were made by Messrs. Thurlow, Bellamy, Chapman, Cunningham, Davidson, and Hecht. An amusing interlude was afforded by Miss Vance, who, remarking on the fact that many Freethinkers' relations were religious, said that perhaps a society should be formed for the conversion of Freethinkers' wives. She objected to a man trying to convert people when he had not converted his own wife.

A resolution that officials be appointed to obtain fuller particulars from Branches concerning the work done, proposed by Mr. Cowell, and seconded by Mr. Bellamy, was lost.

Another resolution, proposed by Mr. Hecht, to appoint a small committee to work with the Secretary in organising demonstrations and extra meetings on new ground, was carried; as was also a resolution that a committee be appointed to consider the feasability of forming a National Federation.

Mr. J. T. Lloyd was in excellent form in proposing—

> "This Conference congratulates the Government on the practically assured success of its Welsh Disestablishment Bill, and hopes it will carry the same principle forward in a Bill for the Disestablishment of the Church and other forms of religious privilege in England."

In a short and effective speech, he emphasised that the passing of the Welsh Disestablishment Bill was another step in the secularisation of the State in the British Empire.

This was seconded by Mr. A. B. Moss and carried.

Mr. Cohen was in his element in introducing a strong protest against Militarism:—

> "This Conference deeply deplores the continued growth of the spirit of Militarism, both at home and abroad, and regards the growing expenditure of the European nations on war and preparations for war as unimpeachable evidence of the failure of the Christian Church as a civilising force; it therefore looks to the growth of Freethought principles and humanitarian ideas as the only agencies that promise a release from the moral and financial burden of Militarism."

Speaking in his happiest vein, Mr. Cohen said that among Freethinkers there could be no two opinions on Militarism. Civilisation was skin deep, and a very thin skin at that. Militarism on the Continent meant commercial enterprise, and he felt certain that business interests were at work in the British Empire. Whole peoples do not go to war for the sake of gain, and the promotion of Freethought and friendship between nations was the best safeguard, for Freethought was international and humanitarian.

Mr. Heeht, who seconded, said Militarism was fostered by the Boy Scout movement, and by so-called Imperialism at schools. Religion and Militarism were twin brothers.

The resolution was carried.

The following vice-presidents were re-elected:—Messrs. J. Barry, W. H. Baker, J. G. Bartram, E. Bowman, R. Chapman, Victor Charbonnel, E. A. Charlton, C. Cohen, W. W. Collins, H. Cowell, W. Davey, F. A. Davies, J. G. Dobson, W. Dodd, T. H. Elstob, R. G. Fathers, T. Gorniot, John Grange, J. Hammond, W. Heaford, Eugene Hins, S. L.

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Hurd, R. Johnson, Miss Kathleen B. Keogh, W. Leat, J. T. Lloyd, A. B. Moss, James McGlashen, G. R. H. McCluskey, J. Neate, R. T. Nichols, J. Partridge, S. M. Peacock, C. Pegg, Mrs. M. E. Pegg, W. T. Pitt, C. G. Quinton, J. T. Ross, Miss Mary Ross, G. Roleffs, Mrs. Roleffs, Thomas Robertson, Victor Roger, S. Samuels, T. Shore, H. Silverstein, W. H. Spivey, Miss Alma Stanley, W. B Thompson, T. J. Thurlow, John H. Turnbull, Miss E. M. Vance, F. E. Willis, C. J. Whitwell, Frederick Wood, G. White. Mr. W. Bailey, Manchester, unfortunately absent through indisposition, was added to the list of vice-presidents.

The Conference was a notable one, for it marked another step in the forward movement inaugurated by Mr. Foote about a quarter of a century ago. Great changes have taken place during his able administration, the outstanding features of which are the safeguarding of bequests to Freethought, by which thousands have been saved to the movement, and the ever-increasing number of ladies associated with its propaganda. In the days of Charles Bradlaugh the audiences were almost entirely composed of men, whereas now it is entirely different. Mr. Foote has also broadened the literary appeal, and he has made the *Freethinker* the first definitively Freethought paper in the world. It circulates throughout all English-speaking countries, and is read by all classes. To his enterprise, too, we owe the earliest of the "sixpenny reprints," so noticeable a feature of modern publishing. Under his leadership the National Secular Society has ever been in the vanguard of progress, sheltering behind it all the weaker heterodox people, who otherwise had been crushed by the weight of orthodoxy. Behind militant Freethought all forms of advanced thought have advanced to some measure of Freedom. As the little *Revenge* earned an undying name by hurling itself against the great battleships of the Spanish Armada, so the Secularists have displayed extraordinary courage in attacking the heart of the Armada of Superstition. The greater the perils, the greater the victory; and in the ripe years to come recognition must be given to the superb courage which, disregarding any reward, was satisfied with the proud knowledge that their action would diffuse the blessings of Liberty to countless thousands of their countrymen. For in that happy time the stormy note of contention will be changed to the unfaltering trumpet-call of victory.

C. E. S.

Design and Evolution.—III.

FROM what has been said it must not be supposed that Natural Selection is the sole cause of organic changes in the structure either of animals or of plants; but only that, by the means of what is called Natural Selection, the variations that occur and are beneficial to the individual are preserved. Nor must it be understood that the term Natural Selection implies that nature is conscious of selecting or choosing one being or set of beings in preference to another. It merely means that the totality of natural phenomena produces certain results and that the term Natural Selection is the most convenient with which to describe one factor by which these results are brought about.

First, as to climate. Nobody will dispute the fact that the climate of various countries has undergone many changes within the past few centuries; nor that with the change of climate the people inhabiting these parts undergo a no less distinct change. With changed conditions many beings would necessarily succumb. A severely cold climate would quickly kill off thousands of human beings before the majority had so adjusted themselves to their changed conditions as to enable them to live without extraordinary effort. Man having been diffused more widely over the face of the earth than any animal, as a consequence becomes subject to greater variability; and having developed to a large extent his intellectual faculties, aided by his social instinct and power of speech, was enabled to make much greater progress than any other organised being. But, taking a barbaric creature, and tracing his advancement on the road to civilisation through its various stages, it will be found that it has taken place solely through the incessant action of the law of nature by which the fittest alone are enabled to survive, while the unfit are unceremoniously and mercilessly eliminated. Suppose there are a thousand persons living in a country who have been only fairly equipped for life's battle, and suppose there should from among them arise a dozen or so in a slight degree an improvement upon them, the chances of life for the latter would be much greater than for the former, and they would rapidly increase in numbers; so that in a short time, from the dozen, there would be hundreds above the common level to augment the severity of the struggle. Among these, the best—that is, those most fitted—would come to the front, and, by a constant repetition of this process, it is easy to recognise the manner in which the character of a people might be changed.

To understand aright man's progress as compared with other beings, the importance of the advantage of his bodily structure must not be underestimated. Man has not always gone erect, but has used his hands in locomotion and in climbing trees; and there can be no question that the first set of beings that went erect had an immense advantage over all others. Then the structure of his hands, when he had learned to walk erect, would be very advantageous in helping him to perform work for which other animals were, by their very formation, entirely unfitted to undertake. The free use of the arms and legs of man would assuredly be conducive to other modifications; and when man had learned to make articulate sounds, he could then easily outdistance all other organised beings.

All this, however, would take an immense period of time to accomplish, and would result only from the slow and everlasting process of Natural Selection. Sexual selection, or the selection of the fittest males to the fittest females, would add considerably to the advance of man; and under social influences even greater advantages would follow. While man would thus improve himself by contact with his fellows, he would also improve many of the lower animals by domesticating them, and many plants by artificially selecting and preserving those that best suited his tastes or possessed some real utility.

How, it will be asked, does the evidence of the gradual evolution of man from lower organic forms affect the argument drawn from Design? In this way. Take the eye. The Darwinian hypothesis presupposes a time when what is now called an eye was a most imperfect organ in all animals; that only those animals that used these organs developed them to any extraordinary extent; and that to-day the eye in man seems to have reached its highest point of development, and refuses to do all the work which the brain requires it to perform.

It may safely be affirmed that, in regard to organised beings, functions precede organs; for it has been discovered that there are some animals in existence that have no organs of vision, and yet, in a sense, it may be said that they perceive, though indistinctly, objects about them. For example, the jelly-fish sees, though it has no eyes. Other animals—such, for instance, as the mole, and some species of rat—have eyes, but, passing their lives entirely in subterranean passages, have lost the power of vision.

Now, if the best eyes are only the result of development, how can it be said that eyes were originally designed by an omnipotent, all-wise, all-good Deity? On the other hand, if it be said that God designed the world and man, and let nature do the rest, it is only saying, in other words, that Deity, in his infinite wisdom, designed imperfect eyes, and allowed them to become more perfect by a slow and painful process—that is, that God is good, but not all-good; that he is wise, but not all-wise; and that, being all-powerful, he did not exert either his wisdom or goodness in the creation of the universe. Rudimentary organs would be extremely difficult to understand on the principle of Design. In the human ear there are several muscles in a rudimentary condition which are absolutely useless. For what purpose was the mammæ of all male quadrupeds designed? They are in a rudimentary condition, and serve no useful purpose. Or of what use are the incisor teeth in ruminants that never cut through the gums? There are in man, also, various muscles

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which are of no use to him, but which are highly developed in some of the lower animals. A horse or cow, for instance, twitch their skin when annoyed by flies; and though man possesses remnants of the muscles by which this movement is effected (the panniculus carnosus), it is, for the most part, useless to him. Some men, it is true, can contract the muscles of their scalps, move their ears, or perform other extraordinary movements; but in the large majority of human beings these muscles are in an altogether rudimentary condition.

The Design Argument, therefore, is an ingenious attempt to make use of certain facts of nature, such as the adaptations of certain organs to perform certain functions, with a view of proving that they were designed for such a purpose; while the whole of human experience goes to show that only those whose organs were so adapted could possibly have survived; and that those whose organs were ill adapted for the purposes of life's struggle were pressed out in the general scramble for existence. To reason accurately, the theologian should begin to reason at the other end. He should take man in his primitive condition, and try and demonstrate admirable design in a God-made savage. Or, tracing the horse back to the bear, as Professor Huxley has done, he should endeavor to show the infinite wisdom of the arrangement by which a wild beast was transformed, by a slow and painful, though a purely natural process, into a tame, handsome, and useful animal. No; in the face of the facts of evolution, the Design Argument is no longer tenable. It has been slain alike by reason, by science, and common sense, and in a few years will be consigned to that oblivion in which older and more pernicious errors have found a well-deserved and final resting-place.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

Is Religious Belief Universal?

"It was in the lap of ignorance, in the season of alarm, in the bosom of calamity, that mankind ever formed his first notions of the Divinity. From hence it is obvious that his ideas on this subject are to be suspected, that his notions are in a great measure false, that they are always afflicting."

"In many places man trembles, at this day, because his progenitors have trembled for thousands of years past. The thought of his gods always awakened in man the most conflicting ideas."—D'HOLBACH, *Mirabaud's System of Nature*, pp. 249-50.

"I had expressed the belief that the lowest races were without any belief which could be so called. No one would attribute religion to any of the Quadrumana. Hence to the believers in evolution there must have been a time when it gradually came into existence.

"The weight of the evidence which I have brought forward in the *Origin of Civilisation* and in *Prehistoric Times* seems to me to be overwhelming. Sailors, traders, philosophers, Roman Catholic priests, and Protestant missionaries, in ancient and in modern times, in every part of the globe, have concurred in stating that there are races of men altogether devoid of religion. The case is the stronger because in several instances the fact has greatly surprised those who record it, and has been entirely in opposition to all their preconceived views."—LORD AVEBURY (Sir John Lubbock), *Marriage, Totemism, and Religion* (1911), pp. 138-140.

EVER since the publication, nearly fifty years ago, by Sir John Lubbock, of his *Prehistoric Times* (published in 1865) and his *Origin of Civilisation* (1870), the question as to whether there are tribes existing without religious ideas has been hotly contested. Sir John Lubbock cited the testimony of many travellers, missionaries, priests, and others, to the fact that there were such people. Letourneau, the French sociologist, took the same view. He says:—

"In spite of the vulgar prejudice, it is certain that belief in imaginary beings worthy of the name of 'gods' is far from universal. There are two principal causes which keep certain tribes or races outside or above these errors: either a brain so ill-developed that it is incapable of any speculation, or else our own clear practical sense, or an innate common sense too strongly born."*

Dr. Paul Topinard, the anthropologist, held the same opinion, for, after remarking that "many, even among the most civilised, have neither this belief nor this impulse," he adds:—

"There are nations and tribes without religion and without any mode of worship, and who believe only in wizards or fetish. It is true they make every form of superstition to subserve their religiousness. But some African or Melanesian tribes have not even superstitions."†

Broca, another great anthropologist, also declared: "I cannot entertain the slightest doubt in my mind that there are among the lower races people without worship, without dogmas, without metaphysical conceptions, without general creeds, and consequently without religion."‡

The great authority of Herbert Spencer may be cited on the same side. He observes:—

"From various parts of the world, witnesses of different nations and divergent beliefs bring evidence that there exist men who are either wholly without ideas of supernatural beings, or whose ideas of them are extremely vague."‡

Carl Vogt, replying to Quatrefages, who held that man was differentiated from the animal world by his religious faculty, observes:—"I know of no sufficient reason for endowing the human race with religiousness as an exclusive quality."§

Professor Frazer also sides with Lubbock, as we shall presently see. On the other hand, Professors Tylor and Waitz, the great German anthropologist, hold that no race has yet been discovered without religious ideas. M. Roskoff, of Vienna, has devoted a large part of his work, on the religious ideas of primitive people, to a criticism of Lubbock's view of the matter. Mr. Andrew Lang, as we have seen in our previous articles, attempted to prove that the lowest savages held ideas of God higher than those of most of the lower classes of the most civilised nations—a view effusively welcomed by theologians and apologists of religion, but not countenanced by any scientist of repute. It is a view that accords well with Mr. Lang's dalliance with Spiritualism and the supernatural, and is very different to the views of Tylor and Waitz, who are evolutionists, and who have shown how religion has arisen by a natural process of evolution from the myths and dreams of the primitive savage; and who, although they hold that there is no race *at present* existing without religious ideas, yet hold that there must have been a time in the past when man was devoid of them.

"But," it will be asked, "how is it that two such great authorities as Tylor and Waitz are in opposition to such equally great authorities as Frazer, Lubbock, and Spencer?"

The trouble arises in this way. Both parties are agreed that the beliefs of the lowest races of mankind consist of witchcraft, magic, luck, etc., without any belief in a Creator or Supreme Moral Being. But Lubbock, Frazer, and Spencer refuse the name of religion to these practices, while Tylor and Waitz include them all under the name of religion. It is simply a matter of definition; and although religious apologists side with and flaunt the testimony of Tylor and Waitz as to the universality of religious belief, a further examination will show that this testimony is of a very dubious character; for they do not make any distinction between religion and superstition.

For, as the biologist believes that the organic evolved from the inorganic, and as the plant world merges imperceptibly into the animal world, so that there is no dividing line separating the animal from the vegetable kingdom—some low species possessing at different times the essential characteristics of both species—so the evolutionist cannot recognise any dividing line between superstition and religion. To him the belief in a Creator and Heavenly Father is just as much a superstition as the belief in witch-

* Letourneau, *Sociology* (1881), p. 276.

* Topinard, *Anthropology*, p. 152.
† Cited by Buchner, *Force and Matter*, p. 282.
‡ Spencer, *Principles of Sociology*, vol. i., p. 280.
§ Carl Vogt, *Lectures on Man* (1864), p. 229.

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craft and magic. It is almost needless to say that neither Tylor nor Waitz put the case so strongly as we have done—plain-spokenness on matters of religion is not encouraged by the society among which we live—but a quotation from Professor Theodor Waitz' work will prove our statement of the case beyond refutation. Professor Waitz says:—

> "It has been asserted that there are people among whom there is not a vestige of religion; and, on the other hand, that all known peoples have their gods. A strict investigation has established that the first assertion is false, and the second not true. All depends on what is meant by religion and religious worship, otherwise the contest is merely a play upon words. Though it may be admitted, as indeed it is the truth, that there are some savages among whom hitherto religious ideas —taken in a restricted sense, a belief in divine beings —have not been found, it must be noticed that they are generally those peoples of whom our knowledge is very scanty, and that on becoming better acquainted with them, religious sentiments have been detected, as is sufficiently indicated by certain superstitious ceremonies."*

Thus, according to Professor Waitz, if these savages are devoid of all belief in "divine beings," but have "certain superstitious ceremonies," it is wrong to say that they have no religion. He gives a few cases in point. For instance, he says it has been asserted that the Aru Islanders neither believed in God nor a future life, "yet they possess carved images of men and beasts, who protect their habitations from evil spirits." Of the Dajaks of North-east Borneo, who have neither priests, nor temples, nor images, "still they have omens and augurs." And again, "Neither images nor any religious worship have been met with in New Caledonia; still, the natives have their tabus, magic, and magicians." Anderson could find nothing approaching religious worship among the Ovambos, but they "have some idea, though a very crude one, of an invisible power" (p. 278).

So that we see that if savages only possess carved images, or believe in "omens and augurs," or "tabus, magic, and magicians," or a crude idea "of an invisible power," they have religion. It is apparent from this that he regards superstition and religion as equivalent terms.

Professor Waitz further observes:—

> "It is certain that all people do not believe in a God who directs everything in the world; but if by religious belief be understood the conviction of the existence of invisible mysterious powers which, in various modes, influence the phenomena of nature, so that man and his fate is dependent on their favor, we may safely assert, that every people possesses a kind of religion. No doubt, in peoples standing in the lowest scale of civilisation, this religion is merely a belief in spectres, still the religious element is there."†

And as he further points out, moral ideas are not allied with these low religious conceptions, "and flow from an essentially different source than religion."

Sir John Lubbock declined to accept this definition of religion, and, replying to his critics in the last book he wrote, he says:—

> "The question as to the general existence of religion among men is, indeed, to some extent a matter of definition. If the mere sensation of fear, and the recognition that there are probably other beings more powerful than himself, are sufficient alone to constitute a religion, then we must, I think, admit that religion is general to to the human race. But when a child dreads the darkness, and shrinks from a lightless room, we never regard that as an evidence of religion. Moreover, if this definition be adopted, we can no longer regard religion as peculiar to man. We must admit that the feeling of a horse towards its master is of the same character; and the baying of a dog to the moon is as much an act of worship as some ceremonies which have been so described by travellers."‡

He also observes that much of the evidence of his critics merely proves the existence of a belief in magic, and he claims to have proved that "magic is not only not religion, but the very opposite of religion," a suggestion since adopted "by such high authorities as Sir Alfred Lyall, Mr. Jevons, and Dr. Frazer. In any case, evidence of belief in witchcraft is no answer to me." He illustrates this point well, as follows:—

> "The lives of Australian savages, for instance, are made up to an extraordinary extent of tedious and almost interminable ceremonies, involving severe, gruesome, and in some cases terrible suffering, but in no way of a religious character. They contain no prayers or confessions, no offerings or sacrifices, no appeal for help or forgiveness to any superior power. They are gone through as immemorial customs, and when any meaning is attached to them it is as a form of magic, an attempt to control nature and secure material advantages—mainly rain or food" (pp. 142-3).

If these are religious customs, then the actions of a cabman in spitting on his fare before pocketing it, or the nailing of a horseshoe on the barn-door, must also be pronounced religious.

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

* Theodor Waitz, *Introduction to Anthropology*, pp. 277-8.
† Waitz, *Introduction to Anthropology*, p. 279.
‡ Lord Avebury (Sir John Lubbock), *Marriage, Totemism, and Religion*, p. 141.

"You can have too much of life," said Mr. John Barker, a veteran of ninety-two years of age, speaking to a newspaper reporter. What pessimists those Old Testament heroes Adam, Methuselah, and Noah, who counted their age by centuries, must have been. Another sacred hero, Melchizedeck, had neither beginning nor ending of days. Perhaps he was the original of the Wandering Jew.

The fossilised remains of an extinct sea monster has been found at Saltersford, near Grantham. This animal had a long neck and lizard-like head, and when alive was about twenty feet long. Some clerical humorist is sure to claim that the "whale" that swallowed "Jonah" has been discovered. Poor old Jo!

According to a paragraph quoted in a daily paper, the *War Cry*, the organ of the "blood and fire" brand of the Christian superstition, has a circulation of about 600,000 copies, including twenty-four foreign editions. Won't the pious editors of the opposition religious papers be filled with hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness?

The popular idea that the naval distress call, "S. O. S.," is a telegraphic abbreviation for "Save Our Souls," has no foundation in fact. The letters were simply adopted for telegraphic convenience. Maybe, the idea originated with some lugubrious longshoreman who enlivens the dullness of the Christian Sunday with a harmonium and three lady friends at street corners.

A woman aged 102 died at Bolton Workhouse recently, and the journalists are writing paragraphs concerning the event. The old Bible patriarchs were trundling hoops at that age.

A volume has been published with the title of *The English Soul*. It should prove an interesting psychological discovery. Was it caught with a butterfly net or a small-tooth comb?

"The Demand for Soft Jobs" is the alluring title of an article in the *Daily Mail*. Curiously, it does not mention such positions as those of archbishops and bishops. Maybe there are no vacancies.

Obituary.

I regret a misunderstanding has delayed this notification that a veteran Freethought warrior, Mr. R. Rosetti, died on Tuesday, May 26, after a short illness. More than forty years of his life were spent in an uncompromising struggle against supernaturalism and priestcraft. He often recalled his visits to, and chats with, the late Charles Bradlaugh, and the early days of active service when meek and lowly Christians more than once smashed his platform. He was the chief mover in forming the Bethnal Green Branch of the N. S. S., and was its first president. A large number of friends attended the burial in Woodgrange Park Cemetery, where Mr. J. T. Lloyd read a beautiful address.—R. H. ROSETTI.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

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OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Miss Kough, a Lecture; 6.15, Mr. Rowney, a Lecture.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 6, a Lecture.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.30, Miss Kough, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, E. Burke, "The Melting-Pot"; 7.30, R. Miller, "History of Freethought."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Finsbury Park): 11.30, Mr. Hope, a Lecture. Parliament Hill: 3.30, Mr. Davidson, a Lecture. Regent's Park (near the Fountain): 3.30, Mr. Minton, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, Mr. Hecht, "What is Death?"

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

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President: G. W. FOOTE.

Secretary: Miss E M. Vance, 2 Newcastle-st. London, E.C.

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Secularism teaches that conduct should be based on reason and knowledge. It knows nothing of divine guidance or interference; it excludes supernatural hopes and fears; it regards happiness as man's proper aim, and utility as his moral guide.

Secularism affirms that Progress is only possible through Liberty, which is at once a right and a duty; and therefore seeks to remove every barrier to the fullest equal freedom of thought, action, and speech.

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There is always room for a man of force, and he makes room for many.—EMERSON.

Faith Healing.

IN 1910 a conference of clergymen and medical men was held to consider the question of "Faith" healing. That conference appointed a committe of twenty-one persons — eleven doctors and ten clergymen — to collect evidence and report. After about three years labor the committee has just issued its report, and it is quite what one might have expected. The outsider will find himself very little "forrader," and the points on which the committee agree are practically those on which, among people of intelligence—whether they were Freethinkers or Pietists—there was little or no dispute. The mountain has labored and brought forth a mouse. The committee proposes to continue its sittings, and, in due course, may be expected to issue another report, which we hope will be more definite than the present one.

By a great many the report has been taken—as one might have expected—as an endorsement of "Spiritual Healing." Writing in the *Evening News*, the Rev. Percy Dearmer says "It is of great importance that the committee have blessed spiritual healing." This, in a sense, may be true, but it is not borne out by the evidence offered. The committee was essentially a pious one, and it naturally couched its conclusions in pietistic terminology. Thus, in its "Conclusions," the report says that the committee:

> "Would say at the outset that they can conceive no limitation to the exercise of the power of God.....in inspiring courage and hope to resist morbid conditions of the body. They fully recognise that the operation of the Divine Power can be limited only by the Divine Will, and desire to express their belief in the efficacy of prayer."

Clearly that is not the language of a committee of men collecting, examining, and sifting evidence in a scientific spirit. It is an expression of religious belief that would have been suitable to any religious meeting. We do not want to know, and do not care, whether the committee believes in the power of prayer, or whether they can conceive limits to the "Divine Power"—although one might say that the "Divine Power" was evidently not equal to the task of making the committee do its business in a sensible and scientific manner.

Although two of the questions submitted to witnesses were "What do you understand by 'Spiritual' healing?" and "Do you make any distinction between 'Spiritual' healing and 'Mental' healing?" the committee made no very serious attempt to discriminate between the two. There is a remark to the effect that "the physical results of what is called 'Faith' or 'Spiritual' healing do not prove, on investigation, to be different from those of 'Mental' healing, or healing by 'Suggestion'"; but the committee do not appear to have grasped the significance of the admission. The witnesses were not very helpful in this direction. The Rev. F. Boyd said he would "define 'Spiritual' healing as the healing of the body by spiritual means"—a perfectly circuitous answer. Rev. W. F. Cobb said that he "considered religious faith to be nine-tenths of the battle." He also added that he was connected with several "prayer groups" in which persons were prayed for *without their knowledge*, but he could furnish no proofs of any case of cure. Of course not. Prayer is only helpful when the person prayed for is aware of it, and believes in its efficacy. And that is suggestion pure and simple.

Rev. Percy Dearmer, in his *Evening News* article, writes jubilantly that "At last we have a declaration of eminent scientific medical men which acknowledges the new light that has burst into the realms of scientific Materialism." This is pure verbiage, and Mr. Dearmer would do well to make himself acquainted with what it is that "Scientific Materialists" believe, and what is the attitude of medical men on the question. Personally, I do not know of a medical man who has ever denied the beneficial effects of a cheerful mind, or of the desire to get better. What is meant by the doctor's invariable advice to keep a patient cheerful? Or by his keeping saddening aspects of the case from the patient? No one—least of all a medical man—has ever denied that by giving any sort of a mental stimulus, a patient's recovery is helped. And this is all that the evidence collected really amounts to. Dr. Milne Bramwell, author of a work on *Hypnotism and Healing by Suggestion*, quite rightly said there was much loose talk, and more precise definitions were required. He said he could not differentiate between "spiritual healing and suggestion," and was of opinion that:—

> "Mental healing might exclude the religious element.....He himself did not introduce any religious element into his treatment by suggestion. He was unaware of any power of suggestion which might be possessed by a clergyman which could not also be possessed by a medical man. He deemed the treatment by a clergyman as unnecessary."

These strike one as the most sensible comments in the whole of the report. The subject is really not a religious one at all, although religious quacks have tried to make it their own. It is a question of psychology. The problem is really one of how to set up a nervous stimulus that will react favorably on the condition of the patient. This may be done through prayer—if the patient believes in prayer; it may be done equally well by wearing the salted hair of a black cat; or it may be done by other means. But religion has really nothing to do with it, except so far as it operates as a belief. As a matter of fact, I know several medical men who rely very much on the power of suggestion in dealing with certain cases, and who are avowed Atheists. The essential thing is a stimulus in the right direction, and the possibility of this is one of the commonest of everyday experiences. Any purely functional derangement may be corrected in this way. This is a truth that Materialists have never failed to recognise; and all the talk about the irruption of new light into Materialism is sheer nonsense. The light has been there all along; the only new feature is the attempt of a number of religious cranks to create a science of "Spiritual" healing in the interests of a set of unscientific theologians.

In spite of its faith in the power of God and of prayer, the committee was "forced" to the conclusion that "Spiritual" healing is only effective in functional disorders. "No satisfactorily certified case was adduced of any organic disease, competently

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diagnosed as such, which had been cured by these means alone." The alleged exceptions are so disputable that they cannot be taken into account." Mr. McComb, founder of the American "Emmanuel Movement," confessed that he had found no evidence "that a truly organic disease can be cured by mental influence alone." Quite a number of cases were offered to the committee, including cirrhosis of liver, pneumonia, blindness, hip disease, Raymond's disease, etc. On these the committee say that—

> "No medical evidence was obtainable. The only confirmation available as to the nature of the disease and the result of the treatment was offered by the 'Healers' or their friends.....But in no instance was medical evidence forthcoming to confirm any cure by 'Spiritual' or mental healing of such disease. For example, in the case of cancer, Raymond's disease, and disseminated sclerosis.....it did not appear that the course of the actual disease was in any way retarded."

In the light of the above, one may judge the value of the Rev. Dearmer's statement that "the committee have blessed spiritual healing."

Mr. Dearmer says there is always "a great danger lest the faith-healer will give a wrong diagnosis, through lack of medical training," and the Rev. W. F. Cobb said "a wise person praying for a sick person would consult a doctor to know what to pray for." Both the warning and the advice strike one as curious. Correct diagnosis is everything in medical practice, because the doctor is treating a definite complaint with definite remedies. But what is the need of diagnosis to a "Spiritual" healer? All diseases are on the same level, and subject to the same remedy. It is not diagnosis but faith that is important. And why find out what the disease is before praying to God to cure it? Would not a general request to the Deity to cure a certain person be enough? Of course, the name and address might be included in the petition; but that is all that seems necessary. When we call in a doctor, we do not tell him what is the matter—we simply ask him to call at such an address and set to work. Why is not that enough? Or, if it is necessary to tell God *what* he has to cure, then, it seems to me, we ought to go further. We should include in our prayers the latest discoveries concerning the nature of the disease, and include the report of the doctor whose opinion has been invited. If we must instruct God, let us do it thoroughly.

The committee have added nothing whatever to what intelligent people already knew about the subject—and intelligent people never expected they would. "Spiritual" healers write and talk as though the easement or cure of functional complaints by mental action was a startlingly new discovery with profound religious implications. As a matter of fact, for generations text-books have never failed to recognise it. What of hysteria?—which, contrary to popular opinion, is about as common with men as with women. Hysterical patients are constantly professing complaints and exhibiting their symptoms—so far as they know them. And, in the main, the treatment here is mental or suggestive. Everyone knows, also, the beneficial effects of a cheerful disposition, of cultivating habits of mental serenity, just as all doctors are aware that for a patient to have faith in his medical adviser is half the battle. There is nothing new in all this; there is nothing religious. It is a question of psychology.

Naturally, as Dean Inge sarcastically said, the "priests are overjoyed at the unexpected boom in their earliest line of business." The situation has in it just enough truth to weigh with those who crave for a religious teaching that shall not be in obvious and avowed conflict with science, and enough falsehood to allow for any amount of imposture and quackery. It is the kind of situation that delights the soul of a priesthood, and they may be expected to make the most of it. Hopes and fears concerning a future life are not now very powerful, but hopes and fears concerning our own health and the health of those near to us are still active, and are likely to remain so. And where, as in the case of disease, there is so much that is obscure, religion sees its opportunity, and will not let it pass unutilised. The committee profess to have great faith in the power of God, and I must confess to a lively, if sorrowful, faith in the credulity of man. And where the one is, the other is certain to flourish.

C. COHEN.

Reason versus Authority.

ANOTHER notable work on apologetics has just appeared from the pen of the Rev. George Freeman, Chaplain of the prison at Shepton Mallet. It is entitled *Authority* (published by Messrs. H. R. Allenson, Ltd., at the price of 2s. 6d. net), and deals with the subject from five points of view, namely, Individualism, the Church, the Scriptures, Tradition, and Pragmatism. It is an exceedingly able book, well-written, fair to opponents, and characterised by obvious sincerity. There are several points on which we are gladly in full agreement with the author. In the last analysis authority in religion naturally signifies the voice of God. The Pope is believed to be infallible simply because he is regarded as the mouthpiece of the Deity. The Bible Leaguers point to the Bible as the only perfect rule of faith and practice merely because they declare it to be the Word of the Lord. On these points there is no room for the slightest divergence of opinion. By Tradition is meant the body of Christian doctrine, handed down from one generation of faithful believers to another, and looked upon by the Church as belonging to the inerrant deposit of faith, even though it may not be found in the Bible; and in tradition, as thus understood, many claim to recognise the unmistakable voice of God. According to Pragmatism, religious ideas are true and authoritative only when they can be "assimilated, validated, corroborated, and verified" in practice. It is to be borne in mind, however, that the late William James, the chief exponent of this system, confessed, in a letter to a friend (quoted in the *Hibbert Journal* for October, 1911, pp. 233-4), that he had "no living sense of commerce with God," and that he had grown completely out of Christianity. He did admit that deep down in his nature there was "a mystical germ," because of which he could withstand "all purely Atheistical criticism." Then, in the same letter, he added: "Dogmatic Atheism or Naturalism is a consistent position. Without any mystical germ at all in us, I believe that is where we would probably all be to-day." Thus, we see that for James, at any rate, Pragmatism was not one of the sources of Christian authority.

For Mr. Freeman, Tradition and Pragmatism possess very little value. Of the former he says that, "in some respects, it may be nothing more than gossip that has outlived its time," or "shaky history," while he charges the latter with leading to Materialism. "Pragmatism," he says (p. 164) "is virtuous, but yet it is entirely unredemptive. Perhaps some may ask, 'Then is morality antagonistic to Christianity?' There need be no questioning on this point. Morality is included in Christianity." Then, on the same page, he proceeds thus:—

> "Christianity embraces morality. But morality is not equivalent to Christianity, any more than the part is equal to the whole. Our Lord's teaching upon the distinction between the two is recorded for us in the pages of the Gospel narrative. The young ruler who came to Christ was a moralist; he had kept all the commandments of the law from his youth up, and was an admirable specimen of a moral man."

We endorse the statement that "morality is not equivalent to Christianity," but maintain that Christianity is conspicuous in the Four Gospels merely by its absence. What we find there, as Professor Bacon so aptly observes, is the religion *of* Jesus, and not the religion *about* Jesus. Certainly the young ruler was found fault with, not because he was "an admirable specimen of a moral man," and nothing more, but because he was not. It was his morality,

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not his piety, that was defective. What he lacked was the real sense of human brotherhood, the genuine moral touch. There is nothing higher and nobler than morality, but it must involve a deep sense of the solidarity of all mankind. To say that a man cannot be truly moral unless he is something more and better is to go in the teeth of well-established facts. Let us examine the narrative concerning the rich young ruler for a moment. The young man's question was significant: "Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" Now mark the Master's answer:—

> "If thou wouldest enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? And Jesus said, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honor thy father and thy mother; and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. The young man saith unto him, All these things have I observed: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wouldest be perfect, go, sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven" (Matt. xix. 16-21).

Here is eternal life freely offered in return for the discharge of certain purely social duties. The name of God is not mentioned, nor any duty towards him. For being simply a good neighbor, cheerfully sharing his good things with those around him, the young man is promised treasure in heaven. If Mr. Freeman will look again at the narrative, we are convinced that he will pronounce this exegesis perfectly correct. On further examination he will also find that the Pharisees were rebuked, not for being merely "the sternest of moralists," but for not being such. Let him carefully read and consider the words attributed to the Gospel Jesus:—

> "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat: all things therefore whatsoever they bid you, these do and observe: but do not ye after their works; for they say and do not. Yea, they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with their finger" (Matt. xxiii. 2-5).

Not once did the Gospel Jesus draw a line of demarcation between religion and morality. All he did was to urge his hearers to perform their duties to their neighbor *in imitation of their Father in heaven.*

Now, the only authority or sanction of the morality taught by Confucius and the Buddha, as well as by later moral leaders, lies in human nature itself, or in the requirements of social life. No voice of God is needed to assure us that murder, adultery, theft, false witness, disrespect to parents, and unneighborliness are anti-social evils, to be severely avoided by all members of society. When Mr. Freeman says that "the only man who can work with and for the people, to the people's lasting good, is the man who is inspired by the Christian message, the man who finds his driving force in the Christian redemption" (p. 161), he only betrays gross ignorance of the moral elevation of the leading nations of the Pagan East. Has he never read Chester Holcombe's *Real Chinese Question*, Eugene Simon's *China: Its Social, Political, and Religious Life*, Robertson Scott's *People of China*, Professor H. A. Giles' *Chinese Sketches*, *Religion of Ancient China*, or Fielding Hall's *Soul of a People*, and *A People at School*? These are only a few of scores of works written by men specially qualified by long residence among, and intimate first-hand knowledge of, the people concerned to speak with absolute authority about them, all of which give the lie direct to the assertion so confidently made by our author. Surely nothing more need be said on the subject.

We admit that Christianity, as conceived by the orthodox Church, is to be radically distinguished from morality, and treats of a world and its interests whereof the reason is totally ignorant. God, Christ, Virgin Birth, Resurrection, Redemption, Eternal Life, all these are terms utterly unintelligible to the intellect, and for which there is no authority save the word of mere men. It is a human voice that ever utters itself, and when it calls transcendental fancies spiritual realities, the only authority it can fall back upon is that of its own ignorance, and consequent credulity. Our author tells us that Rationalists are guilty of "refusing to recognise a power superior to the human reason," but he ignores the fact that their refusal is based upon a complete lack of evidence. Mr. Freeman is so generous as to allow that both Roman Catholics and Nonconformists have authority for their distinctive positions, but at the same time claims that in the Church of England "alone can be found complete, comprehensive, and inerrant authority." Take the following extract:—

> "The average Nonconformist thinks his Bible or his minister is invested with all the authority he needs; and so they both are for certain things. The Roman Catholic belongs to a Church which says to him, 'I am Authority'; and so it is indeed for certain things. But without ostentation or pretension, the Anglican is the only one who hears, accepts, and obeys the Voice of God as expressed in its completeness and finality" (pp. 15, 16).

Far be it from us to impugn the sincerity of the writer of that extract; but we must candidly confess that we have never before come across such an absolutely absurd claim. It goes infinitely beyond any assertion made by even Bishop Gore or his Lordship of London. What ideally perfect and miserable people Anglicans must be if they are the "only ones who hear, accept, and obey the Voice of God, as expressed in its completeness and finality." As a matter of fact, they are neither perfect nor miserable, neither better nor worse than other Christians, as all Christians are neither better nor happier than non-Christians. Perhaps, on the whole, the best and happiest people on the planet are the Burmese, who are tormented by neither God nor the Devil, but who thoroughly enjoy communion with one another as brothers and sisters in the same human family. To the dictates of reason, warmed by the heart, alone they bow, and by the rule of reason alone they live, Nature being their all in all.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Fauna and Flora of the British Isles.

PLANT and animal life in our islands presents many interesting problems to the student of science. At the first glance, many of the apparently anomalous phenomena which our flora and fauna display make them as enigmatical as the famous fly in amber. We wonder how the dickens they got there. But the patient industry of a couple of generations of careful and thoughtful inquirers has thrown a flood of light on these intensely interesting problems.

The study of Geographical Distribution is of recent and rapid development. When once it was realised that living forms were not specially created for the habitat in which they flourish, but were the outcome of a natural process of evolution, it became a matter of surpassing importance to inquire into the reasons of past and present organic distribution. Men asked themselves why tapirs were restricted to the Malayan region and South America, why camels were confined to Asiatic deserts and the Andes, and why marsupials were special to the Australian area and America. Why should the birds and mammals of North America show closer kinship with those of Europe than those of South America?

Mountains and rivers present serious obstacles to the migrations of plants and animals. Climate is also an important barrier to such wanderings; but the greatest obstacle of all is to be found in a wide expanse of water. It is perfectly true that, since the European peoples invaded America, the entire northern continent has been overrun by our native weeds, and that, wherever the European sailor has travelled, the European black and brown rats have been his companions, and have frequently settled in the new lands his ship has visited. But in the days with which we are about to deal no ships existed, and few, if any, men who were capable of crossing anything larger than a lake or stream.

One of the pioneers in the study of organic distribution was the celebrated Edward Forbes, who wrote

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an essay on the living fauna of the British Isles, in which he argued that the majority of our plants and animals had spread from the Continent before our islands were severed from the land-mass of Europe by the sea. Forbes contended that the vegetation of Britain was made up of five distinctly marked floras, "four of which are restricted to definite provinces, whilst the fifth, besides exclusively claiming a great part of the area, tends to overspread and commingle with the others." These facts had not escaped the notice of at least one earlier observer, but Forbes appears to have been the first naturalist to point out that the animal groups to some extent correspond with those of the plants in each area. For example, in what he termed the Germanic group, Forbes included the polecat, the English hare, the mole, and the dormouse, which are all restricted to Southern Britain, and become rarer as we travel towards the north.

As a result of his inquiries, Forbes reached the conclusion that the flora and fauna of our islands established themselves at different periods, and that their entrance was from a continuous land surface, prior to, during, and after the Glacial Epoch. He also espoused the view that the Germanic organisms are of post-Glacial date, but that the organisms of Scandinavian origin arrived during Glacial times; whereas the groups he termed Kentish and Devon were with us before the Ice King began his gloomy reign. And he was likewise of opinion that, as the Miocene Period neared its close, the Lusitanian group wandered to the south-west of Ireland from Northern Spain, along a bridge of land which at that time connected the two countries.

For several years the matter remained where Forbes had left it, but his example ultimately stimulated various other observers along the same fruitful path. To Dr. Buchanan White, Dr. A. R. Wallace, Professor James Geikie, to mention three only out of a crowd of brilliant investigators, we are indebted for the wealth of knowledge now possessed by science.

More recently the problems under review have been very ably considered by Dr. R. F. Scharff, in his fascinating work on *European Animals*, and in this volume we possess the findings of one of Forbes' most faithful and discriminating disciples. As Scharff points out, in Lough Neagh, the largest sheet of fresh water in these isles, there dwells a fish called the pollan, which is also to be found in other Irish lakes and in the upper reaches of the River Shannon. Now, in the English Lake District two closely allied fish are met with, the vendace and gwyniad.

> "Both species also inhabit the south-west of Scotland, while the gwyniad has also been taken in a small mountain lake in Wales. All the British lakes in which these fish of the genus Coregonus occur communicate with the Irish Sea, and it is probable that the Irish lakes alluded to did so in former times."

Under the present distribution of land and water, the habitat of these fishes fails to find any reasonable explanation. But the land surface of North-Western Europe has only to be raised a few hundred feet to cause the larger part of the Irish Sea to rise above sea level, leaving a deep channel in its centre into which the leading rivers of North-Western England and Eastern Ireland would empty themselves, thus creating a great lake. Such conditions would furnish all that is necessary to explain the present distribution of the pollan and its kinsmen. There is nothing unreasonable in the theory that if the common ancestor of the three species resided in this prehistoric lake, and that as the sea invaded the land the fish would naturally wander along the rivers and find a home in their adjoining lakes, and as time rolled on would become transformed into the three nearly related species as we now know them.

It has long been a matter for remark that, near as Ireland is to Britain, many of our most characteristic organisms are unknown in Erin. The mole, whose mounds are so familiar in English pastures, is not found in Ireland. Twenty-one British species of animals are there unrepresented. Ireland has no voles, no blind worms, no snakes, and stranger still, various of our fishes and songsters are absent. Many of our commonest insects and molluscs are likewise not present there. "A naturalist who visits Ireland for the first time," writes Dr. Scharff,

> "and extends his travels beyond the east coast into the south-western or western parts, cannot help being astonished at the assemblage there of a set of plants some of which are cultivated in England as garden species, and which there grow wild. And if he investigates the lower animals, he will meet with many strange forms which he never expected to find across the Irish Channel."

Patriotic Irishmen are justified in denying the oft-repeated assertion that the fauna and flora of Erin form but a feeble copy of the wealth of life in the larger island of Britain proper. Although numerous English species are not indigenous to Ireland, that country contains numerous northern and southern organisms which our own land cannot claim. The evergreen strawberry, which abounds in southern Europe, finds its only wild resting-place in Cork and Kerry throughout the entire British Islands. London pride (Saxifraga umbrosa) flourishes in a state of untended nature in Ireland and the Iberian Peninsula alone. There are two kinds of heather—the Mediterranean heath and St. Dabeoc's heath—which grow luxuriantly in Connemara, and these must be elsewhere sought for in Spain and Southern France.

In addition to these, other Irish plants have a similar geographical range, and there are animals whose distribution is of a like character. Among the lichens of Cork and Kerry lives a spotted slug nowhere else to be found in Britain, but it reappears in Spain and Portugal in company with other related species. A millipede occurs in Ireland which is unknown with us, but it dwells in Southern Europe and in the Azores. A County Waterford woodlouse has no relatives nearer than those of Southern Europe, and the same seems to be true of a large spider of the South of Ireland. A large beetle common on the east coast of Erin, but so far undiscovered in Britain, is found in the Auvergne and also in the Pyrenees. Again, a dragon-fly not known in England and Scotland is constantly encountered in Southern France and throughout the Iberian Peninsula.

These are, however, but a few of many instances of a similar character which all point to a period when Ireland and Western Europe were joined together. All these members of the Lusitanian group found in Ireland appear to be of Southern origin, and date from a time when the climate was more genial than at present. As we have seen, their distribution is discontinuous; the land bridge which enabled them to reach Ireland has long since disappeared beneath the waves. And it is also to be observed that where these ancient organisms survive in Ireland, they are favored by a very open climate and a comparative freedom from the keener struggle for existence.

There is another series of organisms which presents distinct evidences of discontinuous distribution, but, unlike those previously dealt with, these have reached Ireland from more boreal lands. These northern migrants appear to have settled in Ireland at two separate periods. Certain sponges, elsewhere unknown save on the eastern shores of North America, dwell in some of the coast lakes of Western Ireland. These, and other survivals from the past are the lingering representatives of the early period when Ireland formed part of a continent which stretched over the Northern Atlantic and linked up boreal Europe with Northern America. The distribution of the European fresh-water pearl mussel strengthens the evidence. This mussel is absent from Eastern Europe and Western Asia, but it is widely dispersed through Western Europe from Scandinavia to Spain. Its European habitat is very striking in the light of its circumscribed area, and it survives as a relic from a long past. Several species of the New World flora are in Ireland indigenous. Two of these, as Dr. Scharff em-

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phasises, are of outstanding interest, as they confirm the theory of the origin of the fresh-water organisms just mentioned. One of these plants is a water weed—the slender naiad — which lives in three Irish lakes near the west coast. It also grows in Perthshire and on the Scottish Isle of Skye. The other is the pipe wort, a bog-loving plant, and this like most of the other species mentioned is more or less restricted to the West coast of Ireland. It is, however, met with in the Isles of Coll and Skye. Again, a pretty orchid, the "Irish lady's tresses" has been plucked on the Western coast as well as in the Ulster counties of Londonderry and Armagh.

The great auk, a recently extinct bird, may be added to the foregoing examples. Although one might suppose that the distribution of bird-life has little bearing on the subject under discussion, Wallace, a great authority on the question, was of opinion that the distribution of mammals (which is of supreme importance in arranging zoogeographical areas) corresponds to that of birds to a quite startling extent. Now the powers of flight possessed by the auk family are very meagre, and its area is limited. The great auk was living in Ireland and Scotland less than a century ago. Its remains have been unearthed in the refuse heaps of our barbarian ancestors in Durham, Ireland, Scotland, and Denmark, and doubtless it formed part of their food. Great flocks of these birds congregated in Iceland, Greenland, in Maine, and Massachusetts, and on Funk Island near the Newfoundland coast, thus forming a further link between the fauna of North America and north-western Europe. Another series of organisms, seemingly of Arctic origin, and of later date than the foregoing American forms remains for notice. The Irish hare (Lepus timidus) is merely a variety of the Arctic hare and is the only species found in Ireland. The English hare is known in Scotland mainly in the lowlands, while the Arctic hare prefers the hilly districts. The distribution of this northern rodent, which is very extensive, ranging as it does through the Caucasus, the Pyrenees, the Alps, and even in the mountains of Japan, is instructive. From the fact that its fossils are unknown beyond the southern boundaries of its present habitat, it is to be inferred that its primeval home was within the Arctic area. It appears highly probable that during the Glacial Period the Arctic hare wandered to more genial southern climes, and that as the ice retreated again to the north the animal was left in its present upland solitudes. The English hare, on the other hand, came from the south, and its absence from Ireland is explained by the circumstance that the green island was severed from the European continent before its advent in Britain. Herein seems to be the solution of the problem set up by the presence of the Arctic hare in Ireland, both in mountain and plain. It was not incommoded by the appearance of the southern rodent, and was consequently left in sole possession of the feeding grounds upon which the newcomer, had it ever arrived, would have been bound to encroach.

There are various plants and insects of contemporary Ireland which are either restricted to that country or are elsewhere very rare in our wave-girt isles. And the secrets yielded by the Irish caves also support the views already advanced. The tools and implements of prehistoric savages are amongst these relics. But what is more germane to the present argument is the evidence they afford that thousands of years ago, the fauna of Ireland was composed of animals of a character which indicates their separate northern and southern origin. The remains of the reindeer, arctic fox, and lemming are intermingled with those of the African wild cat, hyæna, brown bear, wild boar, and Irish elk. Surviving organisms, such as the red deer, badger, common fox, and others have also been discovered among the remains of animals long since extinct in Ireland.

To sum up this first part of the case. There are now living in Ireland numerous very ancient forms of plants and animals that are almost entirely confined to the west and south-west of the island. These came into the country along a land bridge from south-western Europe. At about the same period there occurred a migration of organisms from the north. Ireland was subsequently isolated from the near mainland masses, and therein lies the solution of the problems presented by a flora and fauna which were previously so puzzling to the student of geographical distribution.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be concluded.)

Is Religious Belief Universal?—II.

(Continued from p. 381.)

"Whether he [primitive man] were the ferocious wild beast described by some, or a puny, feeble, naked being, chipping his first weapons among the rolled flints of a river-bed, keeping up with difficulty his famished life from day to day, and finding a precarious shelter from incessant dangers in the hollows of the rocks, it is in any case certain that he made originally but a poor figure on the surface of the globe. How has he progressed from primitive cannibalism to his present moral and social culture? from the bestial sexual act to chivalrous love? from coarse fetishism to religious metaphysics or mysticism? from the rude drawings of the Neolithic age to the refinements of the æsthetic sentiment? from a narrow and limited curiosity to a disinterested enthusiasm for science?.....The principal, essential, fundamental cause is intellectual development."—RIBOT, *The Psychology of the Emotions*, p. 189.

"Religion and religious ideas are among the most remarkable products of the human spirit. With all their reason-defying assertions and astounding incongruities, they seem at first sight inexplicable. Time out of mind, therefore, men have found it difficult to conceive them as having arisen otherwise than through a supernatural or divine revelation, which, it would follow, must originally have been imparted to all men alike. But gradually, as people became acquainted with the more or less rudimentary religions of the various races, which often differ greatly on the most essential matters, they began to doubt the accuracy of this assumption, and came more and more to consider whether religious ideas must not be reckoned as a natural product of the human mind itself, under the influence of its surroundings."—FRIDTJOF NANSEN, *Eskimo Life* (1894), p. 209.

PROFESSOR TYLOR, who, like Waitz, includes a belief in witchcraft, magic, ghosts, fear of the dead, etc., under the name of religion, also reproves several travellers for saying that certain tribes had no religion when all the while they held these beliefs, the fact being that the travellers in question did not recognise these beliefs as religion, but superstition. Professor Tylor observes:—

> "Even with much time and care and knowledge of language, it is not always easy to elicit from savages the details of their theology. They try to hide from the prying and contemptuous foreigner their worship of gods who seem to shrink, like their worshipers, before the white man and his mightier Deity."*

And he cites the case of Sproat, who lived among the Ahts for two years before discovering their religious ideas; of Moffat, who declared that the Bechuanas had no belief in man's immortality, and yet in the previous sentence had remarked that their word for the shades of the dead is "lirili." But it by no means follows that because a tribe believe in shades or spirits of the dead that they also believe in "man's immortality." Many of them, as we have seen, believe that the spirit does not survive the destruction of the body. Even the civilised Egyptians held this belief; hence their practice of embalming and burying in pyramids. Then, of Dr. Mouat's assertion that the Andaman Islanders had "not the rudest elements of a religious faith," Tylor remarks that the natives "did not even display to the foreigners the rude music which they actually possessed"; but he does not produce any evidence to rebut Dr. Mouat's statement. He is especially severe with Sir Samuel Baker for stating that the northern tribes of the White Nile were "without a belief in a Supreme Being, neither have they any form of worship or

* *Primitive Culture*, vol. i., p. 421.

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idolatry; nor is the darkness of their minds enlightened by even a ray of superstition"; and remarks that the details of the religion of the White Nile tribes had been recorded "years before Sir S. Baker's rash denial that they had any religion at all" (vol. i., p. 424).

Sir Samuel Baker was mistaken, but Professor Tylor does not tell us how he came to make the mistake; but we can find the cause for ourselves in Sir Samuel Baker's book on *The Albert N'Yanza* (1867; vol. i., p. 235), where Sir Samuel retails a conversation he had with an African chief named Comoro, to whom he attempted to prove the existence and immortality of the soul. After several unsuccessful analogies, Sir Samuel tried the effect of St. Paul's argument. Taking a grain of corn, and making a hole in the ground, Sir Samuel placed the grain within it:—

> "'That,' I said, 'represents you when you die.' Covering it with earth, I continued, 'That grain will decay, but from it will rise again the plant that will produce a reappearance of the original form.' 'Exactly so,' replied Comoro, 'that I understand. But the original grain does not rise again; it rots like the dead man, and is ended; the fruit produced is not the same grain that we buried, but the production of that grain: so it is with man—I die and decay, and am ended, but my children grow up like the fruit of the grain. Some men have no children, and some grains perish without fruit; then all is ended.' I was obliged to change the subject of conversation. In this wild savage there was not even a superstition upon which to found a religious feeling; there was a belief in matter; and to his understanding everything was material. It was extraordinary to find so much clearness of perception combined with such complete obtuseness to anything ideal."

Sir Samuel Baker evidently made the error of attributing to the natives of the country as a whole the independent and advanced views of this exceptional chief.

Professor Tylor has pointed out the danger of a too hasty conclusion as to the lack of religious ideas among savage tribes. On the other hand, there is the danger, equally great, of attributing religious ideas to these people when they do not exist.

Bonwick says:—

> "All persons who have lived among barbarians are aware of their readiness to acquiesce in a statement, from inability to comprehend the remark; from idleness arresting thought, or from a disposition to be agreeable, especially if there be any chance of 'white money.' Hence, as the Rev. John West said of the Tasmanians, 'Persons of sanguine minds are apt to attribute to them religious ideas, which they never possessed in their original state.'
>
> "I know a gentleman who, by dint of questioning, astonished himself and his friends by ascertaining that the Blacks were well acquainted with the doctrines of the Trinity, justification, sanctification, and the millennium! The good-natured fellow whom he had interrogated had nodded his head with a very grave face to every inquiry of the worthy Christian, and ended with a solemn protestation of 'Me b'lieve every ting.' The ardent Millennarian, though delighted with the native recognition of his favorite dogma, was rather scandalised when the believer asked him for some grog."*

Wake quotes Thunberg to the same effect, who says quaintly:—

> "'It is, however, not always easy to get the truth out of the Hottentots. One must never attack them with questions to the point, when one wishes to know the truth of anything; but it must be fished out of them by degrees.' The same complaint is made by travellers with reference to the Australians, who are so polite that they never contradict, and always agree with a question."†

The Rev. Duff Macdonald, the African missionary, observes:—

> "As we tried to reduce native beliefs to an intelligible form, we were often discouraged by finding that one man would make a statement that his nearest neighbor would contradict. But as years passed on, I discovered that this accident was not so much the fault of the African, or of his belief, as of the European that questioned him.
>
> "One cause of error is that we mix up what the African tells us with our own ideas, which are European. As a consequence of this, we put questions to him that he cannot understand. Many of our questions strike the African exactly as a question like the following would strike a European. 'If seventy miles of the sea were burned, who would be the losers, the Insurance Companies? or the Harbor Commissioners? or — ?' If an African put this question to a European, the European would laugh at him; but if the European put it to an African, the latter would be more polite, and would think the European was very ingenious in finding out a supposition that would never have occurred to himself; and although the African knows that the difficulty could never arise in his own country, yet he feels bound to believe that the poor European is perplexed by it, and states what he thinks *would happen* in Africa on such an extraordinary occurrence: thus *he gives an answer*, which the ingenious European carefully lays past."‡

The same writer also observes:—

> "Bishop Steere says—'In Africa they never say no, they always say *yes*, certainly; but possibly you are no nearer your object.' One must be careful never to *suggest* an answer to a native; if the native and his questioner are strangers to each other, the former will make it a point of etiquette to find out what answer the stranger would like, and may by-and-by take occasion to compliment him on his cleverness and the accuracy of his knowledge! Statements made in answer to direct questions are not to be relied on unless the questioner has had years of experience in conversation with natives, and knows the subject he converses about" (p. 5).

Then, again, these primitive people have not the clear and definite ideas which are the result of education and science among Europeans. As Herbert Spencer remarks:—

> "Just as the child, ignorant of the course of things, gives credence to an impossible fiction as readily as to a familiar fact; so the savage, similarly without classified and systematised knowledge, feels no incongruity between any absurd falsehood propounded to him and some general truth which we class as established: there being for him no established truth. Hence his credulity."†

Nansen says of the faith of the Greenland Eskimos:—

> "It is so primitive that I doubt whether it deserves the name of a religion. There are many legends and much superstition, but it all lacks clear and definite form; conceptions of the supernatural vary from individual to individual, and they produce, as a whole, the impression of a religion in process of formation, a mass of incoherent and fantastic notions which have not yet crystallised into a definite view of the world."‡

Thus, it will be seen that it is by no means a simple matter to ascertain the beliefs of savages; and only especially gifted men, scientifically trained, who have lived with, and gained the confidence of, these primitive folk, and understand their language, can be relied upon to describe what they believe and disbelieve.

(To be concluded) W. MANN.

Men are like sheep. They do things and think things, not because the things are useful and true, but because they have been done and thought by those who have gone before. They imitate their ancestors. They are chained to tradition. Look at the sheep-like procession of the generations of men. Each generation jumps over the same hurdles that preceding generations have jumped over, although in most cases the usefulness of the activities, if they ever had any in the first place, has long ago passed away. We eat like our ancestors, reverence the same creeds, and cling to the same customs, institutions, and idiocies. Why should we have kings, and queens, and poets laureate, and wars, and etiquette, and beliefs in creation, and quail-on-toast, and millionaires, and the study of Latin and Greek, and the dread of "13," and "styles," and gods, and criers calling from court windows "Oyez, Oyez, Oyez?" It is the call of the past—the oldest and most hopeless of human slaveries.—*J. H. Moore, "Ethics and Education."*

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* Bonwick, *Daily Life of the Tasmanians*, p. 173.
† Wake, *Chapters on Man* (1868), p. 194.

* Rev. Duff Macdonald, *Africana, or the Heart of Heathen Africa*, vol. ii., pp. 2-4.
† Spencer, *Principles of Sociology*, vol. i., p. 85.
‡ Nansen, *Eskimo Life*, p. 224.

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Acid Drops.

"Mrs. Annie Besant: an Appreciation. By L. Haden Guest," is the heading of an article in *T. P.'s Weekly*. It is a mass of eulogy without an atom of discrimination. Nobody could gain from it the least idea of Mrs. Besant's mental and moral idiosyncracies, except that she is very energetic and a big "draw" as a public speaker. But energy is a physical quality, and really has a great deal to do with drawing a big audience from a public platform. Nobody disputes Mrs. Besant's "eloquence" in the common sense of the word. "Eloquence" belongs to every fluent speaker who is able to voice the ideas, whatever they are, of a considerable body of people. But what a vulgar test of greatness is the ability to fill Queen's Hall. According to that test Billy Sunday, the American pugilist-turned-evangelist, is a far greater thinker and apostle than even Mrs. Besant.

This article on Mrs. Besant says that she was wrong, and admits it, with regard to the publication of the Knowlton pamphlet, and nearly everything else she did in the old Bradlaugh days—and even with regard to what she did in her early Socialist days. Quite so. And she was just as cocksure she was right then as she is now—and just as modest now as she was then.

Mrs. Besant understands advertising—or those who "run" her do. Every time she lectures the Oriental get-up in which she indulges is worth half her audience.

The long and short of the eulogy is this: "Mrs. Besant is a Prophetess of the Order of the Star in the East which proclaims the near coming of the World Teacher, He whom the western world calls Christ." What a mouthful of moonshine!

English parsons are always pretending that Freethought is dead. Presumably the Pope knows his business as well as any simple-minded Anglican curate. At a recent consistory, His Holiness lamented the irreligion of the day and the persistent spread of Modernist ideas within the Church.

In October, 1,400 churches in the United States are to be fitted with a cinematograph apparatus, in order to give a weekly performance. The project has the "unofficial" sanction of the Presbyterian Church. We do not doubt that if they only have the parson preaching on the screen, it will, in many cases, be preferable to hearing him.

One of life's little ironies occurred at an alfresco concert at a seaside place near London. The vocalist was warbling pianissimo, and the program boy shouting fortissimo. To the audience, therefore, the words of the singer sounded: "Good night, love, good night! God keep thee in his—*Program!*"

"A breach of promise case is like prehistoric times, starting with terrific heat and ending in glacial coldness," said the counsel in a law case a few days since. The same thing is true of religious revivals and special missions.

Fashionable women now wear their hair drawn back from their foreheads, with side-whisker curls. Maybe the famous sausage-curls, as worn by the Ever-Blessed Wielder of the Jack Plane, will become popular before long.

The Suffragette who hacked the £2,000 picture by Romney in the Birmingham Art Gallery told the police that she acted under "divine guidance." That was the excuse of the Old Testament lady who hammered a tenpenny nail through Sisera's head.

"The London Miracle Girl," Miss Dorothy Kerim, would be a "godsend" to a class of medical students. She is almost an encyclopædia of diseases in herself, and the student who walked round her for a week or two, instead of "walking" the hospitals, would be ready for his certificate. The other day, according to the *Yorkshire Evening Post*, this young lady told a Sunderland audience that about five years ago, when dying, she was restored to health by a vision. Since then she has had a fractured skull, appendicitis, and gastric ulcer—all cured by faith. Still bent on piling up a record, she enjoyed a further experience last summer. She was knocked senseless, her skull fractured, and lay "between life and death." Then the usual thing happened. "The Lord appeared" to her, the fever left her suddenly, her temperature dropped from 105 to 98, and she "was instantly and suddenly well." She got up at once and walked two miles. Another time, when seriously ill, she had a vision of the Lord, and she at once rose and ate a big meal of cold beef, pickled walnuts, and cold apple tart—"an enormous meal such as you would give a navvy." Next morning she had increased in weight, and could run upstairs. Bravo Miss Kerim! And we don't suppose she is done yet. There are still a number of diseases Miss Kerim hasn't had. But she'll get them sooner or later.

Theosophists are not the only ones that are to have a £100 000 building devoted to an Eastern religion. Mohammedans are forming plans for a London mosque of equal value. A Moslem campaign for the conversion of England was inaugurated at the Albert Hall the other day, and a young Englishwoman was publicly converted to Islam. Last year Lord Headley joined them, and the Mohammedan missionaries are looking forward to many converts. We shouldn't be surprised if they get them.

The *Christian World* asks whether those who are resorting to prayer as a political power "realise the harm they are doing to belief in prayer as a spiritual force?" We confess that we do not see why prayer, if of use at all, should not be used in politics as well as elsewhere. Prayers are offered in the House of Commons, and there doesn't seem any valid objection, from the religious side, against people praying to God for either positive or negative political ends. We expect the *Christian World* realises that this kind of prayer is likely to give the game away. Usually, when people pray, it is left an open question whether they get an answer or not. But if people pray for a political end, we can all see within a reasonable time whether the prayer is answered or not. And that is clearly dangerous. It is bringing religious faith to the test of fact—always an unwise procedure.

In a recent issue of the expansive but inexpensive *Daily Mail* a reference was made in a leading article to "*Browning's*" "Abou-Ben-Adhem." Browning never wrote it, but Leigh Hunt did; and, as the poem is in almost all anthologies and school reading-books, we may assume that the writer, the printer, proof-reader, and editor are not "literary gents."

So huge is the glut of cherries at Covent Garden that it has been found necessary to have auction sales every day to dispose of the stock, and fruit-growers are destroying the fruit rather than further cheapen the market. Evidently the Lord thinks more of "apples" than he does of cherries.

Defenders of the exploded Design Argument will kindly note that flies, which are frequent carriers of disease, have become an absolute pest in many districts. A "Kill that Fly" agitation has been started, in order to do what Providence has neglected.

Three men were killed by lightning during the violent thunderstorms of last week. As they were not Freethinkers, it is not considered a judgment of "God."

"What are the wild waves saying?" asked little Paul Dombey. At this season of the year, with so many "blood and fire" evangelists on the sands of seaside resorts, the word is Hades—in the vernacular.

Amongst the mottoes displayed at the Salvation Army Congress was "Live for Others." Very likely the Boothites thought this was taken from the Bible. It was really taken from Auguste Comte:—"Vivre pour Autrui."

General Booth did not tell the Congress much about "Blood and Fire," but he told them that the Army holds firmly by its belief in "the old and simple things" of Christianity—including "a real Bible that tells the truth," and "a real Devil." But what about "a real Deity"? It is not so difficult to find the Devil in this world as to find God.

Mr. Asquith's message to the Salvation Army Congress was highly applauded. He had a right to send his own "warm congratulations," but how about those of "His Majesty's Government"? What right had Mr. Asquith to use the name of the Government in delivering religious messages to individual religious denominations? The State in England is secular—or should be. Not even the price of a piece of paper should be spent by the Prime Minister on letters to religious denominations.

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One of the exhibits at the Salvation Army Congress was "a platform of six tiny girls, children of a criminal tribe in India. Their parents were Thugs, and the children had been rescued from their evil surroundings, and had come to the great West to bear testimony, in their own childish way, to the wonderful work of the Salvation Army." This is quoted from the *Daily Chronicle* of Saturday, June 13. And it is of a piece with Salvation Army reports of every description. Mr. Mason's book abounds with instances of their positive hatred of the truth. They appear to avoid it on principle.

Tiny girls! The children of Thugs! And who are (or were) the Thugs? We take the following answer from the great *Standard Dictionary*:—

> "Thug.—One of an organisation of religious assassins in India, bound by vows to secret murder in the service of Devi (Kali, Durga), the Hindu goddess of destruction: a phansigar or strangler. They often disguised themselves as pilgrims or travellers, and killed by strangling. They arose in the 13th century, and were finally exterminated by Lord Bentinck in 1828-35, when 1,562 of them were hanged, transported, or imprisoned for life."

The Thugs were not a *race*; they were a voluntarily associated body, bound together by religious vows. They were deliberately broken up by the Government of India some eighty years ago. Yet six little girl "Thugs" are produced by General Booth after all that lapse of time. "Their parents were Thugs!" No wonder General Booth is fond of the Bible.

The "Thugs" were very wicked people, of course. But there was no need to go all the way to India to find them. All the Christians who murdered their fellow men on religious grounds, and robbed them of their property to boot, in order to make their destruction complete, by delivering over their wives and families to destitution — were Thugs. Torquemada was a Thug. Alva was a Thug. Laud was a Thug. There are many Christians now who would kill Freethinkers if they could. They are all Thugs.

Pastor A. S. O. Birch, of Sheffield, writes to the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* that he is greatly perplexed over the loss of 140 Salvationists in the *Empress of Ireland*. It does not seem that Pastor Birch is at all troubled about the drowning of the other people, but he cannot understand what the Lord was about to drown so many of his uniformed servants. This has "greatly perplexed and staggered" Mr. Birch, and he would like to know whether before sailing there was any meeting of members of the Army "definitely committing them to the care of God." Of course, if there was not, the Lord may, we presume, be held guiltless. But if such a meeting was held, then it looks as though Pastor Birch is ready to rise up in the streets of Sheffield and charge God with gross carelessness. He concludes that many people are anxious to discover what "such a staggering blow really means." "Has the Almighty forgotten his people, or is there a flaw somewhere?" We fancy the proper person for Pastor Birch to consult would be a specialist in brain disorders.

It seems that wrecking ships is a favorite plan of God's when he is displeased with anything that is done on earth. Rev. J. K. Jacques, of Carlton-on-Trent, writes to the *Guardian* pointing out that the *Delhi* sank just after Delhi was made the capital of India, and the *Empress of Ireland* the same week that the Home Rule Bill was passed. We wonder if there are any passenger ships called the *Prince of Wales!* If so, we advise everybody to give them the go-by. For the Lord is certain to mark his opinion of the Welsh Disestablishment Bill in the same way. The best plan would be to drop giving ships names, and stick to numbers. Then the Lord would have to find some other manner of expressing his displeasure. Seriously, it seems a sheer impertinence for men like Mr. Jacques to call themselves civilised.

How easily in print defenders of the Faith ward off the attacks of naughty infidels. In Mr. A. G. Gardiner's book, *Prophets, Priests, and Kings*, he tells us that the Bishop of London "has gone out into Victoria Park to meet the Atheists face to face, answer their pet posers with ready wit, and win their hearts by his genial comradeship." Mr. Gardiner is an idealist.

A new work on the Gods of India is announced as being illustrated from "photographs specially taken." By kind permission of the originals, we assume.

Three hundred and seventy invalid pilgrims, accompanied by ten nurses, left Victoria Station, London, in two special trains for Lourdes. Yet English people smile at the idea of Mohammedan pilgrims journeying to Mecca.

A small Russian bear belonging to the 11th Hussars Regiment has collected over £50 for charity. The animal will help to wipe out the bad reputation earned by the bears who ate the children in the Old Testament.

"To experiment is to ask God a question," says Mr. J. Stephen. When the experiment is a failure, presumably the result is a divine snubbing.

Pope Taylor has banned three books of Philosopher Bergson's—*Matter and Memory, Creative Evolution*, and the *Immediate Effect of Consciousness*. Philosopher Bergson may now expect a larger sale. We wonder that "G. B. S." hasn't tried for this advertisement. Perhaps it will be a case of "My turn next!"

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York have issued a joint manifesto on the question of Disestablishment in Wales, protesting against the measure being put into force. In the course of the manifesto they say that they have no desire to have the Church of England placed in an unfair position, and in any reconstructed Second Chamber they would have no objection to the presence of other representatives of the religious life of the nation. We daresay not; although we don't feel convinced that they are anxious for the presence of Nonconformists. And we are quite willing to believe that this would quite suit many of the Nonconformist leaders. As we have often pointed out, what they desire is not the disestablishment of religion, but the equal establishment of all religions. That is the utmost that they mean by religious equality—all Christian sects receiving equal support and patronage from the State, and all non-Christians forced to put up with it and pay the piper.

It is the sheer impudence of this bargaining that strikes us most forcibly. Both Nonconformists and Episcopalians write and speak as though they alone are to be considered. No one else matters. If they agree, all must be content. What we should like to know is, What rational justification is there for religious leaders of any kind having a place in a legislative chamber? Why should the religious life of the nation be represented in the House of Lords more than any other aspect of national existence? Art, literature, science, commerce are all unrepresented, as such, in the House of Lords; why should religion be the sole exception? The truth is that the two Archbishops—with many other religious leaders—are living away back in the Middle Ages. They belong, mentally, to a time when the medicine-man was looked upon as possessing a power that ordinary men lacked. But we no longer believe this to be the case. The priest is only a man, of no greater value to the community than any other, and often, because he is a priest, of less value. No one to-day believes that a parson is better informed than other people, or possesses any more genuine authority. It is really time that these medicine-men were made to realise that we are living in the twentieth century not in the tenth.

What is British Nonconformity coming to? With imported Yankee preachers as numerous as soda-fountains; the formation of a feminist church in the North of England; and clerics of the Government religion coquetting with Unitarians, it looks as if the Free Churches were in the melting-pot.

Some humanitarians are up in arms concerning the treatment of lobsters by plunging them into boiling water. Millions of Christians, for many centuries, regarded the idea of the eternal "frying" of the bulk of the human race with touching equanimity. The Roman Catholic Church and some of the "fancy religions" still teach the same inhuman dogmas.

A particularly interesting exhibit at the Leipzig Exhibition is a number of copies of translations of Shakespeare's plays into the various dialects of the Indian Empire. Unlike the subsidised versions of the Bible, Shakespeare's works make their way by the sheer force of his splendid genius.

Two items from the *Times* Summary of June 15: "The Cambridge May Races ended on Saturday, Jesus retaining the head of the river." "A dog at Mannheim named 'Rolf' is credited with answering theological questions." Evidently religion has gone to the dogs at last.

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To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £106 10s. 6d. Received since:—S. Burns, £1; Mr. and Mrs. King, 10s.; C. Costa, 10s.; Dr. F. de Lisle (New Zealand), £2 2s.

F. W. HALL.—We endorse what you say; but, after all, isn't the reverend gentleman quite right according to orthodox Christianity? If the very hairs of our head are numbered, and the fall of every sparrow is noted, it is a logical inference that every ocean liner is carefully watched.

B. N. KOZAKE.—We cannot deal with the historicity of Jesus Christ in a sentence or a paragraph, or even an ordinary article.

A. CAIFER.—Sorry we do not know of any institution such as you require. There are one or two schools managed on secular principles, but that is all.

J. CALLAGHAN.—Sorry your newsagent has delayed getting your paper. The fault is none of ours, and while we regret the annoyance, we hope you will press until you get what you require.

J. D. REID.—Thanks for good wishes.

R. KENNEDY.—We cannot afford an Index to the *Freethinker*.

W. J. RAMSEY.—We have declined all outside advertisements for a good while. You are welcome to the editorial paragraph.

E. BUTLER.—We are almost tired of answering questions concerning the highly imaginative statements of Musgrave Reade. His chief asset is evidently that of the "converted infidel." His being "a great friend of the late Charles Bradlaugh" is too ridiculous for comment.

H. SHAW.—See "Sugar Plums."

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Cohen's article on "Christianity and Politics" is reprinted from our issue of May 10 in *Town Topics*, Edmonton, Alberta. A friend of the movement on the spot paid for its insertion at full advertising rates as a means of introducing a little Freethought among the people. This is a very good, although rather expensive, form of propaganda, and we hope the results will justify the effort. The article is accompanied by full acknowledgment of the source from which it is taken, and an advertisement of the *Freethinker* rates of subscription.

We are reminded by the above that letters continue to reach us concerning the difficulties subscribers have in procuring their copies of the *Freethinker*. Newsagents report it as out of print, or even dead; and, in the case of those unacquainted with the paper, the lie probably does its work. Of course, the *Freethinker* is not dead; it is not even ailing. Its health—and health with a paper, as with a human being, is largely a matter of circulation—is as lusty as ever. Seriously, however, we would ask our readers to be on their guard, and to do what they can to check these attempts to prevent the *Freethinker* reaching the public. There is no difficulty whatever in procuring the paper. It is offered to the trade on the most advantageous terms, and Freethinkers should insist on their newsagents getting the copies required. If they can induce them to display the paper, so much the better. Wherever this is done, the sale increases. We are not fond of boycotting, but the newsagent who declines to procure the *Freethinker* when requested should not be permitted to supply other papers. This would soon bring the more bigoted to their senses.

We regret to learn that Father Cavenor still continues his boorish behavior at Edmonton. This gentleman's policy is to hang round the platform, interjecting more or less impolite remarks during the whole of the meeting, and then moving off to the Christian Evidence platform to offer what he is pleased to call a "reply." Last Sunday Miss Kough was subjected to this treatment during the whole of her address. We hope that Freethinkers with an hour to spare will do what they can to favor Edmonton with a visit.

The Bradlaugh Fellowship has arranged for its (seventh) annual visit to the grave of Charles Bradlaugh on Sunday, July 5. The train leaves Waterloo (No. 5 Platform) at 11.15. The Brookwood Club will be open for the accommodation of the party, and dinner and tea at moderate prices will be provided at Marshall's Dining Rooms, close to the Station.

Miss Durham is a lady who went out to the near East during the Balkan War, and did much excellent work among the wounded. She has just issued a volume detailing her experiences of Montenegro and the Montenegrins, and endorses all that has been said by adverse critics of the "Crusaders." She describes the behavior of both officers and privates in the Montenegrin Army as a compound of "booze and boast," who subjected the conquered to horrible atrocities. She gives an account of hospitals in which Turks had their noses cut off by their captors, and sums up as follows:—

> "There are people, I believe, who still imagine that war brings forth fine qualities. To me it had appeared only as a sort of X-ray, which showed up pitilessly all that is most base, most foul, and most bestial in human nature.....In the sacred names of Liberty, Civilisation, and Christianity, the Montenegrin people, blood-drunk, lust-drunk, loot-drunk, had reverted to primitive savagery—and in so doing had lost the very small idea of discipline they had acquired. Judging by their talk, they proposed to live in future as a marauding army. Never fond of work, they declared that they had conquered enough people to do the work for them, and looked forward to a life of something like slave-driving."

Most wars are brutalising, but this Christian Crusade bids fair to establish a record in savagery.

Those of our readers who happen to be Esperantists may be interested to learn that the Esperantist Freethought Society will be holding meetings in connection with the Esperanto Congress to be held in Paris in the August of this year. The Society has published—in Esperanto, of course—works by the Polish Freethinker, Niemojewski, and the Plea for Ferrer delivered before the military tribunal. The name and address of the secretary of the Society is R. Deshays, Sens, France.

Notes and Views.

BY a report in the *Daily Chronicle* I see that Mrs. Besant has had "a splendid reception at Brighton," where she lectured "before a crowded audience" on "Reincarnation and Social Problems." I learn that the lady "made an impressive figure," and I can well believe it. She was dressed in oriental fashion in white silk robes, and the living portrait was framed in "choice pink and white flowers." Sooner or later the people who deal in mystery find out the value of tickling the bump of wonder through the eyesight. There was nothing very "impressive" about Mrs. Besant's figure on the platform in her old Atheistic days. A plain little woman—though with expressive eyes—dressed very quietly, and with no histrionic appeal whatever, occupied an ordinary chair, on the right of which there was a table and another chair occupied by a plain gentleman (probably a workman in Sunday clothes) who technically presided over the meeting and regulated any discussion that took place,—for Mrs. Besant was not an oracle then but an advocate of reason, willing to answer questions and reply to criticism. At that time she sought the aid of nothing adventitious. The spoken word was her sole passport to her audience. She has different ideas now—and different practices. What she says has to be eked out with oracular attitudes and sacrosanct costumes. To question such a figure is an affront, to think of discussing with it is insolence. Mrs. Besant is no longer an Atheist: she is a Theosophist,—that is one of the huge army of "spiritual" practitioners who are spread over the whole globe, and whether "savage" or "civilised," are all engaged in imposing

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on the weakness of their fellow human beings by the pretentious and hypnotic arts of what—in African witch doctor, in Church of England clergyman, or in Theosophic mahatma—is nothing but priestcraft.

* * *

Mrs. Besant's lecture began with a compliment to Christ, which she herself would be one of the first to smile at in the days when she "dealt" less in "futures"; and it ended with the common gabble of religious circles to-day about "the gospel of despair" which is taught by the advocates of irreligion. Irreligious people don't *look* despairing, but they *are*, for the religious people say so. They suffer from an interior malady; and they are not aware of its presence until they are ripe for an operation or ready for a funeral. They appear to be happy enough, but they are full of *despair*, if they only knew it; and they will never be sound and happy again until they undergo a drastic clearance by one or other of the many pious pills that are offered for sale in the religious medicine market.

* * *

Between the opening and the close of Mrs. Besant's lecture there was some sensible teaching which was familiar to her audiences when she preached Atheism. One need not become a Theosophist to understand the need of prison reform, the folly and wickedness of beating children, and the uselessness of punishment in the formation of character. I should have learnt all that from Godwin, and Shelley, and Mary Wollstonecraft, and Robert Owen, and John Stuart Mill, and other "infidel" teachers—if Nature and my own reflections had not taught me without them—even if Madame Blavatsky and Mrs. Besant had never been born and Theosophy had never existed. No child of mine, for instance, was ever beaten or subjected to any form of violence; and I was an Atheist before I was a father. I have learnt by experience that Freethinkers are much more in danger of spoiling than of ill-using their offspring. It is a fact which deserves pondering that only in Christian countries is there the slightest need of a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Nor should I go to a Theosophist for the loveliest words about the loveliest things on earth, without which the world were a desert, whose babble is the divinest of languages. I should turn to the atheist Ingersoll.

* * *

I am far from being a Catholic, but when I think of all the mental and moral energy which went to the building up of the Catholic Church (wrong as it is) and then reflect on the mental and moral sloppiness of Theosophy in comparison, I feel that if ever my brain wearied of thinking for itself, and yearned for a soft and satisfactory pillow, I should despise the latter and unhesitatingly accept the former—in spite of all its crimes against reason and humanity. When all is said and done it is the real thing. It is the logical development of Faith, founded, as faith must be, on the principle of authority. Who is going to bow before such a coarse creature as Madame Blavatsky was, with her ascetic professions and gross appetites and her pretentious parade of stolen learning? Who is going to take his beliefs from such an unoriginal and unstable person as Mrs. Besant, whose intellectual life has been a long round of helpless discipleship? There is no use in talking of her many fine qualities. They are not to be disputed, but they are not the facts which are to the purpose in this discussion. Her "eloquence" may be admitted, but eloquence proves nothing, you cannot rest anything on eloquence; it may be ever so precious in its way, but it is only an intellectual luxury, after all. And some of us are fastidious in our taste for eloquence. Listen to the Scripture which the Church of England takes for the opening of its Burial Service: "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." It isn't true, but what a magnificent challenge! Merely as eloquence, is there in all Theosophic writings extant, including Mrs. Besant's, any sentence to put in comparison with it? Any sentence to be placed within a million miles of it? Many glorious sentences are marked in my set of Newman—many in my copy of Shelley, at the other extreme. Both had Nature's great gift of genius, though one was a Catholic and the other an Atheist. Yes, an Atheist; for Shelley was not in any sense a "spiritualist." I admit he was an *idealist*. But that does not depend upon religion in any sense of the word whatever. It depends upon sympathy and imagination, which are natural human faculties, whose rudiments are clearly perceptible in several of the lower animals.

* * *

Outside the Catholic religion what is the real religion of England to-day? What is the "Religion of Protestants," as Chillingworth called it? For the most part it is Monarchy. The classes and Churches are working that superstition for all it is worth. Even with the Blasphemy Laws unrepealed, you may talk about God with far greater freedom than you may talk about King George. From the King downwards, the royal family is worked for all it is worth in laying foundation-stones, opening bazaars and institutions, and fulfilling social functions of all kinds. Recently the Prince of Wales was put up to deliver his first public speech—it was written *for* him, of course, and read *by* him—at the laying of the foundation-stone of the new Church of St. Anselm at Kennington. The *Daily Chronicle* rather unkindly printed a snap-shot of this performance. A bowed clerical on the right of the photograph seemed to be worshiping the Prince in the middle. The Prince himself looked like a poor little schoolboy. On the other side was the Archbishop of Canterbury, with a ferociously envious expression. One felt amazed at such a scene. The poor lad was being initiated into a wretched business, and the nonsense given him to utter was worthy of the occasion. He was glad that his "first public duty should be on behalf of the Church," and he said in conclusion:—

> "I pray that it may please God to pour his blessings on all who shall worship in this place and to prosper the work of those who now or hereafter may be called upon to minister in this parish."

Why "this" parish more than any other parish? One sees the priest's hand behind the Prince's pen. And the working people of England wink at it as a perfectly honorable game. At the same time they complain (how foolishly!) of the slow progress of improvement in their own condition. How comic it would be if it were not so tragic.

* * *

I desire to say a word, before it is too late, about the death of Mr. Watts-Dunton. I think he was ridiculously overrated, but I do not wish to discuss that subject now. I want to recall the fact that he buried Swinburne like a Christian. It was an outrage and a betrayal. George Meredith in writing to me could only "suppose" that he "was ill and feeble at the time of the funeral." But the real explanation seems to be given in Sir Robertson Nicoll's account of a dinner party at the Pines, where he took "Mark Rutherford" to meet Swinburne. "At one point our kind host asked 'Mark Rutherford' if he had read Kipling. 'No,' was the reply. 'I am getting to be an old man now, and I read my Bible.' 'Oh,' said Mr. Watts-Dunton, 'that's what I do.'" I understand now.

G. W. FOOTE.

"Orthodox" Atrocities in the Balkans.

ABOUT this time last year, the feelings of the civilised world were shocked by the atrocities committed in the course of the two recent wars in the Balkans, and especially by the abominations which stamped with special, if not unexampled, inhumanity the second Balkan War which was waged between the Bulgarians on the one hand and the Greeks and

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Servians on the other. Impartial observers of the dreadful spectacle of carnage in the Balkans did not fail to distinguish between the first war, which, in any case, was an inevitable outburst of national revolt, a war of liberation planned and concerted by the long-time oppressed Montenegrins, Servians, Bulgarians, and Greeks who had grown strong and won astounding victory by mutual alliance, and the second war, a war of fratricidal fury between vultures gorged with carrion on the field of battle.

The first war was practically a religious crusade of Christian against Moslem, but the second was a war of senseless and selfish conquest and mutual spoliation which, in effect, compromised the fruits of victory in the earlier contest, brought the Turks back to effect the recovery of Andrinople, tempted Rumania to enter burglariously upon the scene in order to dismember Bulgaria, and finally delivered Bulgaria over to her former allies for her territory to be plundered and the men and women of Bulgaria to be massacred and outraged.

During that second war the Christian nations of the nearer east showed to the world at large what a thin veneer of civilisation covers the brute beast in man lurking amongst the deeply religious and half-moralised races whose attachment to a boasted religion of love was centuries old before some of the non-Balkan races had emerged into the twilight of Christianity. During the worse than mediævalised atrocities of the second Balkan War we saw the torch of destruction carried from village to village and from district to district not only by the fanaticised armies of the holy allies and their irregular Comitadjis, or bands of freebooters, but by the different populations themselves, by the hostile and hopelessly intermingled populations who for ages had been rendered antagonistic to each other by furious rivalries and conflicts of race, religion, language, culture, and national traditions of a mixed medley of Turks, Slavs, Albanians, Jews, Gypsies, Servians, Bulgarians, Rumanians, and Montenegrins. Europe—Christian Europe—looked down on the scene of horror with the impassive serenity of God himself; there were no goldfields to grab, no oilwells to be exploited, in the Balkan towns where, for many months, murder held high carnival and young girls were raped before the eyes of their agonised parents.

The Committee of Inquiry, appointed by the Carnegie Endowment for the Promotion of International Peace, will soon be issuing its report, giving the results of its investigations into these Balkan atrocities. The report, which will simultaneously appear in several languages, will be published in Paris, Washington, New York, and, I believe, in London, and there is abundant reason that it will shed a flood of light upon one of the darkest episodes in the history of civilisation. An admirable summary of the findings of the Report has just been published by Professor Th. Ruyssen.* In his article, which was written with the impatiently awaited Report before him, the Professor tells us that the Balkan War (the second to a greater degree than the first) takes us very far back from the twentieth century; it not merely transports us to the darkest periods of the Middle Ages, but to "the times of Assyrian conquests," to the deeds of primitive ages when regular hand-to-hand fighting was followed by abominable excesses which civilised races have for ages past banished—"or nearly so"—from the established curriculum of war, viz., the systematic murder of the population on their native soil, the infliction of torture upon prisoners of war, the slaughter of non-belligerents, or the pillage and arson of their property, and, more frequently, we are told, in the Balkans than anything else in the way of horror, innumerable acts of violence upon women, not to mention, as an additional feature of horror, the violation of wounded or dying young girls. The documentary testimony in proof of these "Evidences of Christianity" in the Balkans will be published in the Appendices to the volume in which these accusing crimes are detailed. When the book reaches my hands it will be my painful duty to place some of these appalling facts before the readers of this journal in order that they may taste and see how lordly is the man of war when he is let loose upon a defenceless population.

Professor Ruyssen points out that these savage outbursts of bestiality cannot be explained merely as the awakening of the base passions as yet unstilled in the heart of man. The war in the Balkans was something more than a duel between nations which measured their strength in mortal conflict. The Carnegie Committee appears to have taken into account the psychological reason for this bubbling over of the cauldron of horrors during the war, at any rate, during the first war, when it explains that the results of the conflict reversed the secular relationship of master and slave between the dominant Turk and the subject races. In principle, the Balkan atrocities were acts of reprisal—savage and senseless, and therefore unjust—after a long and painful period of racial oppression.

The Report declares that—

> "in nearly every case the conquerors were followed by local bodies of armed men, by volunteers on the margin of the regular army, and that these licensed ruffians, sure in advance of impunity, took revenge upon their adversaries for unexpiated personal or national injuries. The Committee declares that 'in North Macedonia it was the victorious population that organised the systematic suppression of the Mussulmans.'"

Moreover, the Report states that—

> "the populations themselves killed and rooted out each other with all the greater ferocity because of the fact that they knew each other well and nourished in their hearts old quarrels and hatreds of many years' standing."

On the vexed question of the responsibility of the different Governments in regard to these horrors, it has been difficult in every case for the Committee to arrive at a definite conclusion, as quite naturally the orders given would in most cases be shrouded in mystery—at any rate, to the probing vision of the present generation—but Professor Ruyssen is able to state that the Committee has in several cases been able to fix the responsibility of the authorities. The instances given include the responsibility of the Bulgarians for the massacre of the Turks at Serrès; that of Turkey for the acts of violence committed on the victorious return of the Ottoman troops in Thrace and at Andrinople; that of Servia in respect of the forced conversions of the Bulgarians in Eastern Macedonia, and the responsibility of the Greeks for the massacre of Bulgarians and other outrages during the second war. Apparently, on a general survey, the Committee's Report finds that the case of Servia was not so black as that of the other co-partners in these atrocities; but, on the other hand, the Report takes an extremely severe view of the culpability of Greece, and is able to support its view upon an imposing mass of facts of incontestable weight and authority. One of the most important and reassuring facts brought to light is that the Bulgarians are certainly disculpated from a portion of the sensational crimes which the Greeks laid to their charge during the second war. Professor Ruyssen, however, thinks that public opinion will scarcely relieve the Bulgarians from responsibility for the atrocities which they are alleged to have committed at Serrès, Doxato, and elsewhere.

The cases last cited by Professor Ruyssen leave me more than sceptical as to the justice of these reflections upon the criminality of Bulgaria. I have before me at the present moment the terrible* volume of Bulgarian recriminations against the Greeks which Professor L. Miletitch (of the University of Sofia) has recently issued. It would be difficult to estimate or even imagine the amount of human misery, of moral turpitude on the one hand and physical misery on the other, contained in this

* In *La Paix par le Droit*. Paris: May 14, 1914; pp. 273-285.

* *Atrocités Grecques en Macédoine*, par Prof. Dr. L. Miletitch. (Sofia; 1913; pp. 180, and 53 photo reproductions.)

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eloquent and touching book. We must remember that the Greeks had every incentive, on the grounds of national aggrandisement and racial animosity, to vilify the reputation of the Bulgarian people, and that, during the combined onslaught of the Allies upon Bulgaria, Sofia was cut off from intercourse with Europe and the European press deluged with anti-Bulgarian stories furnished or fabricated by the Greek press agencies. The perusal of Professor Miletitch's book, which is categorical and crushingly convincing in its detailed proofs of the atrocities wrought in Macedonia by the Greeks upon the defeated or captured Bulgarian troops and the despised civilians of Bulgarian race, read in conjunction with the very moderately worded "Answer"* which Dr. Stephen Kyroff writes as Rector for and on behalf of his colleagues, the professors of the University of Sofia, will, I think, put quite a different complexion upon the weirdly harrowing story of these Macedonian atrocities, and must be read side by side with the Carnegie Report if a sound judgment is to be arrived at. There can be no doubt that last year the public opinion of Europe was largely ricked and deceived by Greekophile sources, and that something strongly resembling to myth was created in the minds of many well-meaning people as to the degree of Bulgaria's culpability in these crimes. It is to the credit of Bulgaria that she courted inquiry, and to the discredit of Greece and Servia that they shunned, and endeavored to thwart, the investigation undertaken by the Carnegie Committee into these atrocities.

No one will pretend that Bulgarian victory was not sullied by excesses, and even by horrifying and exceptional excesses—it was in the psychology of the Balkan peoples that this should be so, at least in the course of the first war. But history, when it gathers the documents together, and especially when it reads, as I have done during the last few days, the *Fac-similes*† of the Greek letters seized before transmission through the post at Rozlog last year, will moderate, if not revise, some of the one-sided and over-prejudiced views which have recently prevailed concerning the nature of Bulgaria's responsibilities in the recent horrors and her degree of complicity in the sensational horrors which the Greeks have laid to her charge. In the meantime we can wonder how two Christian nations can afford to love each other so well.

In a future article I propose to examine a few out of the multitude of horrors which the foregoing volumes accumulate to the charge of the Greeks. In the meantime, it will suffice to state here and now that the documents adduced by Dr. Miletitch show, with terrifying detail of horror and inhumanity, that women of all ages, from children of 12 years to old dames of 80 and 85, were violated by the Greek soldiers; that mutilation and even crucifixion were inflicted upon certain victims; that the daughter of a Bulgarian priest, Theodor Staeff, was carried off, and himself colported about the village for two days after his eyes were gouged out, and then killed, together with other inhabitants. The participation of the Greek Archbishop of Serrès in Greek atrocities at that place seems fully established; and it is no less fully established that all the Greek bishops in the district, without exception, were the accomplices, if not the actual instigators, of the outrages at Drama and Cavalla. When I resume this subject I shall have some fuller details to give concerning these and similar horrifying facts, and especially in reference to the Greek fabrications which have been wrought for the discrediting of the sister Christian State and some damning facts of appalling inhumanity which Christian and Orthodox hands of Greek patriots were willing to perpetrate against the hated and maligned Bulgarian race.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

* *Reponse à la Brochure des Professeurs des Universités d'Athènes.* (Sofia; 1913; pp. 129.)

† (i.) *Fac-similés de certaines lettres.* (Sofia; 1913; pp. 48.) (ii.) *Nouvelle serie de lettres*, etc. (Sofia; 1913; pp. 42.)

The Pitman's Prayer.

IT was a hot Sunday afternoon, one of those days when the spirit of langor steals sweetly over the senses and you listen to a tale of reminiscences as in a dream. I was returning from a short walk, and was nearing the town, when I lighted upon a friend of my boyhood sitting all alone upon a seat by the wayside. We had been boys at school together, but I had seen little of him during the long intervening years. In those far-off days we had both lived in the same colliery row of houses, and daily trudged the long distance between our homes and the school at West Moor.

We sat and chatted leisurely of the days of our boyhood, and recalled many an incident in our youthful escapades. He was generally a ringleader in any mischief that was astir, the indulgent leniency of his uncle and aunt, with whom he lived, being accountable, perhaps, for his waywardness. His guardians, having no family of their own, were better circumstanced than most of their neighbors, whose proverbial quivers were all well filled. We were Presbyterians, they were Methodists, and attended the chapel in the distant village where the day school was situated. His uncle had a good voice, and was one of the principal singers in the meeting. They were people, too, who enjoyed the good things of life, as pitmen usually do, and they were in a position to indulge their hospitable bent. The Methodist pastors were fairly frequent visitors at their house; for you can always trust a parson of any denomination to discover the houses of his flock that keep a good table.

About half-way between where we lived and the village in which the Methodist chapel was situated was a public-house known as the "Clousden Hill," where the pitmen used to congregate at the week-ends to spend their spare cash, and some also that could ill be spared, in exchange for the doubtful pleasures of inebriation, and sometimes the certain one of a broken head in a drunken melee. This public-house was in bad repute among the religious folk. My friend's uncle probably had as little sympathy with such carousals as he had with teetotalers and their fad.

"I always had a high opinion of my uncle," he said, when we came to talk of our separate homes. "Although he was a religious man, there was not the least trace of any bigotry in his composition. He believed everyone had a right to their own opinion, and he was not ashamed of his own, even if they happened to be unpopular among his particular friends. I remember one evening there was a preacher waiting to accompany him to the week-night prayer-meeting. After he had washed and changed his clothes, they set out on the road. I suppose there must have been a quantity of coal-dust about my uncle's throat which the evening's tea had not successfully washed away. When they came to the 'Clousden Hill,' he somewhat astonished the minister by asking him if he was 'gannin in to hev a drink?' In very solemn and reproving tones the reverend gentleman replied: 'Mr. McPhail! considering the solemn function to which I am proceeding, it would scarcely be seemly of me to enter a public-house.'

"'Well, thoo can please thisel', of course,' said my uncle, 'if that's the way thoo looks at it; but A've a duty t' mi throat t' discharge, and if thoo dis'nt care t' wait, thoo can gan on t' the meeting, and Aw'll follow.'

"My uncle arrived at the meeting all in good time, and although he could put up a good prayer at any time, that night he seemed to surpass all his previous performances. The religious emotion of the meeting was so exalted that many declared their belief that they were on the eve of a great revival. Even the minister himself wondered at the marvellous spell of his outpourings.

"'What a grand man McPhail is,' said Mrs. Brown, as the meeting dispersed; 'and to-night he

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seemed to be filled with the Spirit.' 'Yes,' said her husband, 'I felt lifted nearer to God while he was praying than I ever remember since my conversion. Surely the power of the Lord was present with us to-night.'

"But, as you know," added my friend, "little boys often come to some very matter-of-fact conclusions, and I think I could have made a good guess as to the source of my uncle's inspiration."

As my friend pulled out his tobacco-pouch to refill his pipe, he found it was empty. "I am going to call at the tobacconist's a little further on," I said, "and I hope you will let me have the pleasure of refilling it." I thought the story was worth it.

JOSEPH BRYCE.

The Growing Fame of Paine.

As fast as open-minded persons become acquainted with the record and merits of Thomas Paine they begin to praise him. On invitation of Treasurer Harvey of the Thomas Paine National Historical Association, Mrs. Ella Wheeler Wilcox became a member of that organisation, and having read the literature of the Society, wrote the following article, which has been published in the Hearst papers throughout the country. It is one brilliant writer's tribute to another:—

Thomas Paine (1737-1809): "The world is my country; to do good is my religion."

The man who named our country.

The man first to advocate independence for our country.

The man who did more to achieve this independence than any other man, giving his pen, tongue, sword, and pocket-book to the cause.

The man who in the darkest hour of the revolution wrote the *Crisis*, commencing with the words, "These are the times that try men's souls." (General Washington ordered this mighty work to be read to the Army once a week.)

The man who was joint author of the Declaration of Independence with Jefferson.

The man who borrowed ten million dollars from Louis XVI. to feed and clothe the American Army.

The man who established the Bank of North America in order to supply the Army.

Napoleon said in toasting him at a banquet: "Every city in the world should erect a gold statue to you."

The author of the *Rights of Man*, acknowledged to be the greatest work ever written for political freedom. This masterpiece gave free speech and a free press to England and America.

The man known as the "The Great Commoner of Mankind," the "Founder of the Republic of the World."

The man first to urge the making of our Constitution.

The man first to suggest the Federal Union of the States and to bring it about.

The man first to propose the Louisiana Purchase.

The man first to demand justice for women.

The man first to plead for dumb animals.

The man first to advocate international arbitration.

The man first to propose old age pensions.

The man first to propose "The land for the people" (single tax).

The man first to propose the care for the children of the poor at public expense.

The man who invented and built the first iron bridge.

For a century the world has forgotten its debt to Thomas Paine.

Indeed, that name has been branded by bigots and fanatics with all imaginable obloquy.

He was called an Atheist, a Freethinker, a blasphemer, simply because he could not believe in some old traditions which to-day are known to be allegorical, and which few intelligent minds regards seriously.

Thomas Paine was one of the founders of our great United States of America. We would undoubtedly be under British rule to-day but for the wise and wonderful efforts of Thomas Paine.

In January, 1776, he wrote and published a plea for American independence. Previous to this he had made a strong argument urging separation from the Mother Country.

No one had been daring enough to think of such a move before.

All the Colonists had rebelled against the unjust taxes and impositions, but Paine was the bold rebel who dared say Liberty.

After his pamphlet, *Common Sense*, was published the people were electrified. No pamphlet ever written sold in such vast numbers, nor did any ever before or since produce such marvellous results. Paine donated all the financial proceeds of the pamphlet to the cause of liberty (as he did with all of his other works). Washington, now converted, wrote to his friends in praise of *Common Sense*, asserting that Paine's words were "sound doctrine and unanswerable reasoning."

Jefferson, John Adams, Franklin, Madison—all the great statesmen of the time, wrote praisefully of Paine's "flaming arguments."

In July, six months after *Common Sense* had awakened the people, the Declaration of Independence, embracing the chief arguments of Paine's great pamphlet and much of its actual wording, was signed by the committee of patriots in Philadelphia.

The great revolution commenced at home. The oppressed Colonists took up arms at a great disadvantage, by reason of the lack of food, clothes, money, and munitions of war; but, inspired by the forceful message of *Common Sense*, they fought bravely and well.

When winter set in, however, the ill-clad, poorly nourished little Army had been greatly reduced in numbers by desertions from its ranks. Many of the soldiers were shoeless and left bloody footprints on the snow-covered line of march. All were but half-hearted at this time, and many utterly discouraged. Washington wrote most apprehensively concerning the situation to the Congress.

Paine, in the meantime (himself a soldier with General Greene's army on the retreat from Fort Lee, N.J., to Newark), realising the necessity of at once instilling renewed hope and courage in the soldiers if the cause of liberty were to be saved, wrote by campfire at night the first number of his soul-stirring *Crisis*, commencing with the words:—

> "These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country, but he who stands it *now* deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap we esteem too lightly; it is dearness only that gives everything its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as *freedom* should not be highly rated."

Washington ordered the *Crisis* to be read aloud to every regiment of the Army. The effect was magical. Hope was renewed in every breast. Deserters returned to the ranks; men who had half-heartedly withheld from joining the Patriot Army took courage from Paine's thrilling words and shouldered muskets with the rest. The great cause, tottering on the brink of dissolution, was saved. Paine's *Crisis* did it.

Following the first number of the *Crisis* came others—thirteen in all—the last commencing with the words: "The times that tried men's souls are over."

Paine was not only a great author and statesman, but he was distinctively a pioneer, an originator, an inventor and creator. To him we are indebted for many of the world's greatest ideas and reforms.

It was Paine who first proposed the abolition of negro slavery; Paine was the first to suggest arbitration and international peace. Paine originally proposed old age pensions. These are a few of the other great ideas he fostered. He first suggested international copyright; first proposed the education of the children of the poor at public expense; first suggested a great republic of all the nations of the world; first proposed "the land for the people"; first suggested "the religion of humanity"; first proposed and first wrote the words "United States of America"; first suggested protection for dumb animals; first suggested justice to women; first proposed the purchase of the Louisiania territory; first suggested the Federal Union of States.

It is time the world awakened to his merits. With that end in view the Thomas Paine National Historical Association was organised in New York some years ago. Through the efforts of this Association, Thomas Paine is at last coming into his own. The Association intends that Thomas Paine shall occupy that niche in the world's Temple of Fame where it properly belongs, and to that end it bends its every endeavor. The Association has established its home at New Rochelle, N. Y., in the house that Paine built.

—*Truthseeker* (New York). ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.

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When we marry, the choice is voluntary, but the duties are not matter of choice. They are dictated by the nature of the situation.—EDMUND BURKE.

The Word of God.

An Open Letter to the
MINISTERS OF ALL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.

GENTLEMEN,—

I am going to address you on a very important subject, and I shall do it in very plain language. It is my desire to be understood, both by yourselves and by others who may read what I write. At the same time I have no intention to be rude or personal. The *truth* of what I utter may hurt your feelings, but *in that case* you have only yourselves to blame.

You are, all of you, as Christian ministers, the expounders of a book called the Bible, which you all allege to be the Word of God. Many of you, being Catholic priests, do not treat this book with exactly the same veneration as others who are Protestants; you put the Church first, and the Scriptures second, and make the truth and authenticity of the one rest upon the living authority of the other. Yet it is evident that *all of you*, Protestants and Catholics alike, would be *lost* without the Bible. Say what you will about tradition, and inspiration, and infallibility, it is after all the BOOK on which you depend. Were the Bible lost for ever, and all recollection of it obliterated from men's minds, the Christian religion would certainly disappear. The "fathers" and "divines" would be some assistance for a while; but unless you had the BOOK to quote from, to select texts from your sermons, and to put into the hands of children, nothing could save your faith from speedy, absolute, and irrecoverable destruction.

Now it is upon this Book—the Book of God, as you call it—that I wish to address you; and my *right* to address you is involved in my being an English citizen. In this country the Bible is only allowed to be printed by certain printers; it is "appointed" by the King, that is, by the Government, to be "read in all the churches" of the Established Religion; it is put into the hands of the children in our public schools, supported out of the rates and taxes, and they are *forced* to read it as a sacred volume; and, further, it is protected by law against such criticism as may be applied to other books, so that men are still liable to terms of imprisonment like common thieves for bringing it "into disbelief and contempt." This being the case, and your BOOK being set up *by law* as something *holy*, I have a right to ask you some questions about it. Every book that is published, in a certain sense challenges criticism; but a book like yours, which claims, and enjoys, such an exalted position, should have its reputation established beyond any reasonable doubt. Every man, I think, must agree that a book, which we may be imprisoned for bringing into "disbelief and contempt," *ought* to be God's Word, whether it is or not. For my part, however, I do not believe it is; and, before I have done, you will know *why*.

The Book of God which you use in this country is printed in English; in other countries it is printed in French, German, Italian, Spanish, and so forth. It is not alleged, however, that God wrote himself, or inspired men to write, in these languages. The Bibles in use in the various Christian countries are *translations*. Now I know something of translating, and I know it is *simply impossible* to translate from one language into another with perfect *accuracy*, and sometimes difficult to translate with any *approach* to accuracy. I am sure, therefore, even without an examination, that the English Bible *cannot* be the *real* Book of God. Besides, there is more than *one* translation into English. The Authorised Version, done in the reign of James I., in 1611, was very largely a *collation* of previous translations. The Revised Version was done by an "appointed" Committee of *Christian* scholars in the last generation; and it was done, I suppose, because the old version was unfaithful. This new version is found fault with in turn, and many disputes have arisen over special passages. In the face of these facts, I say that you have no right to pass off your Bible as *the* Word of God. You may declare it is pretty nearly the same, or as nearly as you can make it; but the *very same* it is not, and in learned books, not meant for the people's eyes, you admit its deficiency.

Have you then, I ask, the hardihood to stand up and tell me that *this* is all I am entitled to expect from my "Maker"? If a father has any communication to make to his children, should he not make it in their own language? Do you believe that God is not as able to speak in English as in Greek or Hebrew? Ought not his "Revelation" to be expressed clearly, definitely, unmistakably? Ought it not, therefore, to be expressed, not through questionable translations, but at first-hand, in all the several tongues on this planet? It would cost God no effort to do this, for he is omnipotent; and no trouble, for he is omniscient. Can you assign any legitimate reason for his not addressing us all in the only way in which we should be sure to understand him?

I will now go back to your *real* Book of God, if such exist, and ask you a few questions about *that*. Is not the Old Testament written in Hebrew? Is not Hebrew a language very hard to understand? Was it not written right on, from side to side of the parchment, without a break between the words? Was it not written without *vowels*? Would it not be difficult for one man to be quite sure of the meaning of another who wrote in this way? Would not the writer himself, after a lapse of time, be occasionally puzzled to know what he meant himself? Is it not a fact that the meaning of a vast number of passages in the Hebrew Bible is still disputed? Have not candid authorities, like Sir William Drummond, confessed that they hardly knew of any two Hebrew scholars who translated six consecutive verses in the same way? Is not all this now admitted by Christian scholars, such as the late Canon Driver and the late Professor Bruce? Does not the latter plainly declare that the Masoretic Hebrew text—that is, the text now in use, with vowel points—is only "a translation by Hebrew scholars of the vowelless original"? Does he not decisively assert that the "errorless autograph" is a "theological figment"?

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

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A Critic in a Fog.

SOME years ago the Rev. F. C. Spurr left these shores for Australia. One of his objects in going there was to stem the flood of unbelief at the Antipodes. He went, he preached, he returned; and Australian unbelief does not appear to have been greatly affected by his presence or his preaching. He is said to have had a successful church, which is quite probable. But a well-filled church does not always mean a real gain to Christianity as a whole. It may only mean —it usually does mean—that one church is filled by depleting a dozen others, and the popular preacher is surrounded by a number of clerical failures. And meanwhile the number of those who reject Christianity altogether steadily increases.

This year Mr. Spurr returned to England. And one of his earliest discoveries is offered to the world in a recent issue of the *Baptist Times*, in the form of an article on "The Bankruptcy of Rationalism." Rationalism, he says, "has been brought to bay. Men are finding it out. Some of its chief exponents are being subjected to deadly criticism, from which they cannot emerge with honor. Rationalism is already bankrupt." There it is! Rev. F. C. Spurr has said it. And if further proof be needed, it is supplied. While Freethought societies are crying out for funds, the *Daily Telegraph* raised £10,000 for the Y.M.C.A.! Here is proof beyond question—to a clergyman. If £40,000 can be raised for a Christian institution, there must be something in it. It commands respect—Christian respect. It carries conviction—to a Christian. What a pity Jesus did not make his appearance with a good fat banking account in his hand.

Rationalism means with Mr. Spurr two things. At one time it means the control of human affairs by reason; at another time it means a system of thought that is in opposition to religion. And he skips from one to the other, with obviously no clear perception of the distinction between the two. Part of the time he is attempting to prove that reason cannot be trusted, and so saws off the branch of the tree on which he is sitting. For if reason is not to be trusted, what are we to say of Mr. Spurr's reasoning? It must be admitted that he gives a fair proof of his own contention, but he is certainly not aware of it. On the contrary, he goes along quite cheerfully reasoning against the use of reason, and never realises that, blundering as are his own efforts, they yet serve the purpose of demonstrating the foolishness of his own position.

Of course, reason is not an infallible guide in human affairs, but it is the best we have. Very often we cannot be certain we are right when we have used what reason we possess; but we are still less certain if we ignore reason, and act in opposition to its dictates. And, in any case, reason—human reason—as a force in human affairs is here, and its function is to analyse, discriminate, and to pass judgment. We all do this; Mr. Spurr does it. Talking glibly about "intuition" and "instinct" does not alter the fact, but only obscures it, because people have such very hazy ideas as to what is intuition and what is instinct. For the justification of instinct or "intuition" is reached ultimately by reason. We cannot avoid reason passing judgment upon the value of the qualities of human nature whether they are of a ratiocinative character or otherwise. The "Rationalist" does not ignore the non-ratiocinative nature of many of the factors of life; he merely asserts that, so far as they become or can become the objects of conscious judgment, the only sound rule is to test them by reason. Indeed, we cannot avoid doing this. For denial of the rule is really an admission of the rule. To reason against reason is still to reason, even though it be reasoning of an absurd and self-contradictory character.

After protesting that reason cannot be a guide in human affairs, Mr. Spurr discovers that things are ruled by Reason—with a capital letter—after all. "There *is* a Supreme Reason in the universe, but it is not human reason." Well, if it is not human reason, then it is probably not reason at all. The only ground on which I can say that other men have reason, or on which I may assume that animals have reason, is that their actions conform to mine. Human or animal reason is the only reason that anyone knows. And if we recognise reason anywhere else it must be because it manifests its presence in substantially the same way. The reason of man is only a fragment of the "complete Reason." But whether human reason is a fragment or the whole, it cannot alter its quality. If the whole is like the parts, the parts must be like the whole. A "fragment" of anything must be like the whole thing, otherwise it is not a fragment at all. So that, in the same sentence, after protesting that the reason in the universe is not human reason, Mr. Spurr ends by affirming that it is the same as human reason—only there is more of it. Oh, the childishness of this man!

These would-be philosophers, how simple they are! They seem to imagine that words acquire a special value if they are only printed with capital letters. "We believe," says Mr. Spurr, "that since the part is personal, the Whole cannot be less than personal." Mr. Spurr does not really mean "less than personal," he means that the whole *is* personal. For that *is* the essence of his Theism. The Atheist is not concerned whether the "whole" is less or more than personal. His point is that it is *not* personal. And whether it is less or more, if it is one or the other, it is different. What Mr. Spurr really wants to prove is that there is a personality controlling the universe other than human personality. What he says is that it is *more* than human personality. Well, in that case, it may not be personality at all. For the moment you destroy the characteristics of what we mean by personality, you have no right to give it that name. If a cat hasn't legs or a spinal column, if it breathes through gills instead of lungs, and lives in the water instead of on land, what kind of a cat is it? Of course, you may call this a cat if you please. So may Mr. Spurr call his production philosophy; but the character of a thing is not derived from the name, it is the name that should describe the thing.

Mr. Spurr asks Rationalists to face Sir Oliver Lodge's question and say frankly whether they believe that the human species represent the highest form of life in the universe. I do not see that there is anything to face. At present, the human species is the highest we know. It is the highest that Sir Oliver Lodge knows. And until some evidence is forthcoming it is stupid either to believe or disbelieve. What Sir Oliver Lodge really meant—but did not say—was whether it was possible that higher forms of life existed. Well, it is possible —all things are possible that do not involve a contradiction. But suppose this to be so, and suppose there exists evidence enough to warrant a belief on the subject, we are no nearer a *God* than we were before. All we have is a species of superman—but not a deity. It might make room for some of Sir Oliver's "spooks," although, judging from the communications said to have been received from them, their superiority is not very obvious. And the joke of the whole situation is, that although Mr. Spurr blunders into the same confusion as Sir Oliver Lodge, he does not accept the grounds on which Sir Oliver really bases his beliefs.

How does Mr. Spurr establish the bankruptcy of Rationalism? First, the "New Science" is proving itself the foe of Rationalism. "The Materialists have gone; the Vitalists have arrived." Biology, chemistry, and evolution are aids to faith. The new philosophy, in the person of Bergson, is "a thorn in the sides of Rationalists." "The science of comparative religion has become *our* weapon." "Human nature is turning on Rationalism." There does not seem any adequate reason why Mr. Spurr should not extend this list. It is so easy to talk, and mere assertions give so much comfort to a great many people. And to meet Mr. Spurr on his own ground

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one need only make assertions in the opposite direction. Whatever the "New Science" may mean, science is more rationalistic and more materialistic than ever. Even Sir Oliver Lodge disclaims being a Vitalist, and says that Vitalism is useless as an explanation of anything. Bergson is a mere fashion with a class, and in any case does not find a God essential to his system. At any rate, he ignores him. Mr. Watson may return to his "Father's House," but others are taking apartments elsewhere. And comparative mythology has demonstrated the common origin of all religious beliefs in the fear-haunted mind of the primitive savage. As assertions these are quite as good as those of Mr. Spurr, and they have the additional merit of being provable in detail.

We have had, says Mr. Spurr, a century and a quarter of Rationalism. It has had the help of "such important Rationalists as John Stuart Mill, Professor Huxley, Ernest Renan, Herbert Spencer, Ernst Haeckel, Friedrich Nietzsche, Goethe, Schopenhauer, and others." Mr. Spurr is convinced that had one quarter of what they said been true, the Church must have inevitably perished. And yet, see what has happened! Professor Gilbert Murray is compelled to admit that a reaction has set in against Rationalism. The Church is alive, there is a new stirring of religious life. Above all, there is the £10,000 raised by the *Daily Telegraph*.

Let me—although it is not easy—treat Mr. Spurr seriously for a moment. In what has the Freethought attack failed? What has become of the Bible that Paine attacked? Of course, so far as the mere paper and type is concerned, it is still here. But so far as belief is concerned, it is Paine's Bible that is believed in by the majority of educated Christians. What has become of the doctrine of eternal damnation? Why, Christian papers were only recently denouncing Roman Catholics for continuing to issue a little book teaching what all of them once preached. What has become of miracles? of a particular Providence? and a dozen other doctrines? They are either dead or dying. What has become of the power of the Church? As Churches, that is, so far as they represent supernaturalistic doctrines, they are afraid to interfere openly in social affairs. They can only do so in the name of *social* betterment or moral improvement. There never was a more brilliant triumph in human affairs than that marked by the last hundred years of Freethought. And it has been very largely brought about by men without money, without position, fighting one of the strongest, wealthiest, and most powerful superstitions in all human history. Of course, there is the possibility of reaction. That is always possible in human affairs. Wise men are fully aware of the fact; but only fools or knaves count it a gain.

C. COHEN.

"The Difference Christ is Making."

A SERIES of leading articles, bearing the above title, and written presumably by the editor, Sir Robertson Nicoll, is now appearing in the *British Weekly*, the claims so dogmatically set forth in which are at once of so surprising and groundless a character as to call for a most critical examination. The central and often-repeated contention is that whatever improvement is effected in the moral and social conditions of the people is due solely to the influence of Christ. No attempt whatever is made to substantiate such an assertion. It is taken for granted that the excellence of the Christian religion is demonstrable from history, and that the supreme argument for its truth is derivable from the numerous benefits which mankind have received from the Galilean. Now, we maintain that no divine has a moral right to make such an assertion without proving its truth. It is stated that "to the great and simple intellect of Walter Scott, and many others, the effects of Christianity on slavery and polygamy were sufficient proofs of its divine origin"; but a vague statement of that kind is evidentially valueless. Harriet Beecher Stowe knew much more about slavery than Walter Scott, and surely no one could read *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, published in 1853, and conscientiously say that the effects of Christianity on slavery were sufficient proofs of its divine origin. It may be objected that the famous book just mentioned is only a work of fiction; but unfortunately for the objectors, the distinguished authoress issued *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which contained the original facts and documents upon which her heart-breaking story was founded. What effect has Christ ever had upon polygamy? The Gospel Jesus never uttered a word in condemnation of it, while in the Epistles only bishops are exhorted to have but one wife. It is well known that neither in Greece nor in Rome, nor among the Germans, was polygamy practised, while among the barbarian kings of Gaul, under Christianity, it prevailed unchecked for several centuries. To the Mormons it still forms an integral part of religion.

The writer of the articles under consideration is flagrantly heedless of the facts of life. Take the following extract as a sample:—

> "It seems idle in the present day for any man to separate himself from Christianity and say, 'Though I am not a Christian, I think so-and-so.' In fact, he is a Christian in many respects, and he cannot cease to be one, however much he may wish it. He might just as well try to cease to be a Briton. The Spirit of Christ is to be found in strange places, and cannot be restricted to areas defined by strict lines of creed."

This is sheer nonsense, and the writer ought to be ashamed of himself for having put it on paper. There are thousands of people in this country at the present moment who do separate themselves from Christianity, repudiating it root and branch. In no respect whatever are they Christians, no matter what Sir Robertson Nicoll may say to the contrary. Though they will never dream of trying to cease to be Britons, they have succeeded in completely ceasing to be Christians. The object of that absurd extract is to break the force of "the objection that so much of what has been won is due to the efforts of those who are not Christians." To show that such a plea does not fully apply to this country, at least, he declares that in many respects we are all Christians. He might just as well call noble-minded and good-hearted Chinese Christians. As an illustration of the difference Christ has made, Sir William supplies the following quotation from a paper on the slums of Scotland which appeared in the *Glasgow Evening News* only a few weeks ago:—

> "After careful study and personal examination, I do not hesitate to say that the condition of housing in Scotland is a standing disgrace to the nation. I find, not only in the big towns, but in the smaller towns, a great scarcity of houses and a lamentable state of congestion, misery, and wretchedness. Nothing short of a revolution will put Scotland in the position it ought to occupy."

We were extremely surprised to see that dismal report in an article on the difference Christ has made, and could not understand what purpose it was intended to serve. Here is another puzzling utterance:—

> "Nevertheless, it must be owned that after two thousand years the Christian Church is very far from the comprehension and the faithful following of her Master."

It is a most curious fact that the improvements cited as due to Christ are all of a very recent origin, which proves, if Sir William is right, that the Spirit of Christ is coming into vigorous life when the Church of Christ is dying. It is incontrovertible that the overwhelming majority of Britishers are no longer churchgoers; but if the words of the Gospel Jesus are to be taken as they stand, his Spirit was to dwell in the Church and make her co-extensive with the human race. From his throne in her midst he would convict and convert the whole world. That prophecy was made two thousand years ago, and yet

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to-day the Church, so far from winning the world, is rapidly losing the bit of it she once gained. However, we are assured that "the Spirit of Christ is to be found in strange places," having evidently abandoned the Church into which he was originally sent. In other words, history has signally falsified Christ's prophecy, and his spirit, in consequence, keeps strange company. The truth is, that what Sir William regards as the Spirit of Christ is, in reality, that rational Humanism which has slowly been coming into its kingdom ever since the revival of learning, and the consequent gradual decline of supernaturalism. The reverend gentleman contends that the twentieth century is a vast improvement upon the eighteenth, and so it doubtless is; but the explanation of the difference lies in the diffusion of natural knowledge and the decay of supernatural beliefs.

Some Christian sayings become wonderfully illuminating when the hand of criticism is laid upon them. One of them is, "Trust in God and keep your powder dry." If you neglect to keep your powder dry, your trust in God will be of no avail to you; but, on the other hand, if you do keep your powder dry, it makes no difference whether you trust in God or not. Russia was defeated in the war with Japan, in spite of her trust in God, because she had an inefficient Army; and Japan won, despite her Atheism, because she was wide awake and up-to-date in her military equipments. As Napoleon so aptly said, "The good God is always on the side of great battalions," or as Julius Civiles put it, "God sides with the strongest." Another equally significant saying is, "God helps those that help themselves." Of course, he is the help, not of the helpless, as the hymn has it, but of the helpful. Those who really need help never get it from above, while those who help themselves have no means of ascertaining whether God helps them or not. That is to say, the Almighty never gives any direct evidence that he deserves to be so called. The same principle fully applies to the Spirit of Christ which, Sir William informs us, "is to be found in strange places." We will take one or two of his own illustrations of the difference Christ has made. He describes the eighteenth century as a period when people took their lot easily, declining to trouble themselves with great schemes, accepting things as they were, living friendly, social, and easy lives, seeing, as a rule, only what they wanted to see, and then adds:—

> "And yet every real student of the period knows that the condition of the poor was appalling. The want of work, the scarcity of provisions, the horrors of workhouses, the swarms of vagrants were notorious and undeniable."

He avers that though pity and kindness were to be found here and there, the prevailing mood was stern. The early Methodists were hated because of their sympathy with the poorest classes. For that reason, the Duchess of Buckingham denounced the impertinence of Methodism and its outrage on good breeding in reducing all ranks to the common level of sinners, saying to the Countess of Huntingdon: "It is monstrous to be told that you have a heart as sinful as the common wretches that crawl on the earth." Sir Robertson Nicoll is of opinion that the condition of the poor is incalculably better in the twentieth century. Certainly an improvement has occurred, but it is so very slight that to treat it as the work of an omnipotent Christ would be to insult him. The bare idea of its being due to a God of infinite love is unutterably ludicrous. The existence of rich and poor, of class divisions and antagonism, of prisons and lunatic asylums, of workhouses and reformatories, cannot possibly be reconciled with the existence of an infinitely powerful, wise, and loving Heavenly Father. A perfect Creator and an imperfect creation are inconceivable anomalies. A Gospel described as the power of God unto salvation in a world still steeped in degradation and woe is the most fantastic stupidity with which the world has ever been tormented and mocked.

And yet, after all, Christ *has* made a difference. Belief in him has resulted in all sorts of evils under which Christendom is still groaning. The elevation of an imaginary world, with its equally imaginary interests, to a position of supreme importance necessarily led to a shameful neglect of the real interests of the only real world known to us. To exhort people to think continually of death and fear it, to set their affection on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth, and to devote their whole time to the task of preparing to meet God beyond the tomb, is to degrade them in their own eyes, and to discourage the cultivation of the noblest qualities of manhood. The passion of love for Christ has never failed to express itself in hatred and cruelty towards all heretical Christians and non-Christians. Happily, the imaginary Being who has made such wicked differences is at last passing; and like his coming, his passing is both slow and sure. More happily still, his passing implies, and is in fact caused by, the Coming of Man to make the world anew.

J. T. LLOYD.

"Meredith" for the Million.

Selected Poems by George Meredith. (Constable & Co. Ltd.) 1s. net.; 1914.

THE publication of this volume arouses mixed feelings. Had it been issued years ago at the modest price of a shilling, it would have helped to widen the reputation of a very great writer and thinker during his lifetime. As it is, it will but increase the wreaths upon his tomb. The selection is by the Master himself, and when that is said, all is said. For, by virtue of his splendid gifts, Meredith's best work remains among the brightest gems of English literature, so rich in glorious genius and transcendent talent. Tennyson has told us that, when Byron died, it was as though the firmament had lost a mighty star, in whose vanishing the world was left to chaos and night. Meredith was more to us than Byron, for he had been a living glory of our State for over half a century, and the star of his genius had wheeled so long and with such majesty that we had grown inured to his presence, and looked upon him as essential to the aspect of our heaven. So continuous was his influence, that the intellectual life of our time runs in a channel largely of his making, and to ends that but for him had been shaped far other than they were.

A striking instance of the provincialism of the average English reader was the comparative unpopularity of George Meredith. Popularity, of course, may mean nothing or everything. It may be that of "You Made Me Love You" or of "The Messiah," of "The Rosary" or of "Don Quixote." It may be absolutely damning, or the one incontestable proof of supreme merit. The tests are universality and endurance, for only noble work shall win and keep a lasting position. The best appeals in the long run to all, like "Hamlet," though not in equal degree. With no advertisement, no clique, no furious opposition, but by sheer merit, George Meredith won his place in art.

Like Shakespeare, Meredith unlocks his heart in his verse. His magnificent novels remain among the finest works in our language; but in the poems we have Meredith's own passion; his great heart beating at the sight of love and of heroism. The poems are so personal that one is tempted to imagine that, instead of having worked on the book, the author had worked straight on us. He defies, like Whitman, our æsthetics, and proves that the greatest thoughts are those which are quickest dismembered and absorbed by the reader, and turned into part of himself.

Genius refuses to be labelled. Study these poems separately, and you think you can classify the author. In one poem he seems to be optimistic, in another he appears pessimistic; and then, perhaps, "Juggling Jerry" or "The Old Chartist" comes to

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upset the pleasant little theory. At the bedrock of his work lies the Horatian liking for the golden mean.

To dip into this book is, of course, to re-read the old favorites, and to bring home more forcibly how large is the proportion wherein we hear "the voice of great Nature." Her praise is hymned in "The Woods of Westermain" and in many other glorious lines, such as "The Thrush in February" and "Love in the Valley," where the golden cadences linger in the ear like the notes of an ascending skylark.

Those who think that poets are always extremists will do well to ponder Meredith's lines, "Lucifer in Starlight," one of the sanest and noblest utterances in the language:—

"On a starred night, Prince Lucifer uprose,
Tired of his dark dominions swung the fiend,
Above the rolling ball in cloud part screened,
Where sinners hugged their spectre of repose,
Poor prey to his hot fit of pride were those.
And now upon his western wing he leaned,
Now his huge bulk o'er Afric's sands careened,
Now the black planet shadowed Arctic snows.
Soaring through wider zones that pricked his scars
With memory of the old revolt from Awe,
He reached a middle height, and at the stars,
Which are the brain of heaven, he looked, and sank.
Around the ancient track marched rank on rank,
The army of unalterable law."

The same perfect sanity appears in the lines from "Modern Love":—

"Ah, what a dusty answer gets the soul
When hot for certainties in this our life!—
In tragic hints here seek what evermore
Moves dark as yonder midnight ocean's force,
Thundering like ramping hosts of warrior horse,
To throw that faint thin line upon the shore."

A more ironic note is sounded in the dramatic "Juggling Jerry," where the dying showman says, with a fine touch of stoicism:—

"It's past parsons to console us;
No, nor no doctor fetch for me.
I can die without my bolus;
Two of a trade, lass, never agree!
Parson and doctor!—don't they love rarely,
Fighting the devil in other men's fields!
Stand up yourself and match him fairly:
Then see how the rascal yields."

Read Meredith's magnificent tribute to Shakespeare:—

"O lived the Master now to paint us Man,
That little twist of brain would ring a chime
Of whence it came and what it caused, to start
Thunders of laughter, clearing air and heart."

In another sonnet he describes the Master's laugh:—

"broad as ten thousand beeves
At pasture!"

It is a resplendent distinction that, apart from the play-going public, who agree to crown Shakespeare as the King, his most resolute partisans are those of his own household, poets and novelists, men with the blood of genius flowing in their veins. And in Valhalla assuredly the artist of "The Ordeal of Richard Feverel," shall not sit far below the artist who gave us "Hamlet." For Meredith through a long life lifted his voice in praise of high and noble things:—

"Are not his footsteps followed by the eyes
Of all the good and wise?
Though the warm day is over, yet they seek
Upon the lofty peak
Of his pure mind the roseate light that glows
O'er deaths perennial snows."

MIMNERMUS.

The Greater Bacon.

OXFORD has been busy celebrating the seventh centenary of the birth of Roger Bacon. A statue in the University has been unveiled, addresses delivered, and it is proposed to translate and publish the whole of his writings. The interest in Bacon is, of course, mainly historical; but from this point of view he is worthy of more attention than any thinker that Christendom produced till the end of the sixteenth century. Sir Archibald Geikie well described him as "one of the most remarkable men that ever studied within the walls of the University of Oxford." He mastered practically all the knowledge of his time, and was the real founder of the experimental philosophy of Europe. In many respects he was a greater and clearer thinker than his famous namesake, Francis Bacon. At all events, the latter had the advantage of coming several centuries later, and pursuing his work in a freer atmosphere and under much more favorable conditions than the thirteenth century monk.

* * *

Bacon was a Somersetshire man, born at Ilchester in 1214. Like most men of his age who longed for genuine knowledge, his principal teachers were Mohammedan and Jewish scientists. After working for years, and spending all he possessed on manuscripts, the manufacturing of instruments, and the cost of experiments, he seems to have experienced a season of depression, during which he joined the Franciscans. His new masters forbade him to write anything under pain of imprisonment, and for some time the order was observed. Then the man's natural craving asserted itself, and "some few chapters, written at the entreaty of friends," called down the anger of his superiors, and Bacon was sent to Paris to await the pleasure of the General of the Order. His pleasure was soon expressed, and Bacon went into an imprisonment that lasted ten years. Here he remained, deprived of books, writing materials, and instruments. The *Catholic Times* calls him "that illustrious Franciscan," and says that the Order is proud of its son. Its appreciation of him while alive was ten years imprisonment.

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The malice of his enemies overreached itself. It was reported to the Pope, Urban IV., that Bacon had written works of an heretical nature. One of his chaplains—who afterwards became Clement IV.—was commissioned to inquire into the matter, and he, on his election to the papal chair, ordered Bacon to supply him with a copy of his writings. The cost of materials alone was great and Bacon was penniless. The Pope sent nothing, and the Franciscans would give nothing. "How often," writes Bacon, "was I repulsed and looked upon as a shameless beggar. Distressed above all that can be imagined, I compelled my friends, even those who were in necessitous circumstances, to contribute what they had, to raise money at interest, to sell their property, to pawn the rest." The money, however, was found; and in about eighteen months Bacon wrote the *Opus Majus*, *Opus Minus*, and *Opus Tertium*, three works that place him in the front rank of the world's thinkers.

* * *

A few of his sayings will well illustrate the bent of Bacon's mind: "Physicists ought to know that their science is powerless unless they apply to it the power of mathematics, without which, observation languishes and is incapable of certitude." "He who knows not mathematics cannot know any other science; and what is more, he cannot discover his own ignorance, or find its proper remedies." "The shortness of life requires that we should choose for our study the most useful objects, and exhibit knowledge with all clearness and certitude." "Authority is valueless unless its warranty is shown; it does not explain, it only forces us to believe. And so far as reason is concerned, we cannot distinguish between sophism and proof unless we verify the conclusions by experience and practice." Experiment and verification; these were the keynotes of Bacon's teaching and which entitle him to be called the first of the moderns.

* * *

How much he actually discovered, or how much he received from his Mohammedan teachers is uncertain. But it is certain that he was acquainted with the manufacture of gunpowder, that he made phosphorous, laid down rules for the construction of a telescope, suggested reaching the Indies by sailing to the west, and a reform of the calendar that was not carried out until 1582. There are hints in his writings that he was not unacquainted with the power and uses of steam, speculated on a machine that appears to have been a diving bell, and in astronomy, botany, optics, and chemistry, was as universal a genius as Da Vinci; but one working under such difficulties that, after forty years labor, there was wrung from him the despairing cry, "I repent that I have given myself so much trouble for the good of mankind." He died in 1294.

* * *

In the history of Christianity there is nothing more disgraceful than the Church's treatment of Roger Bacon. Altogether, nearly a fourth of his life was spent in prison, prohibited from writing under penalty of "many days' fasting on bread and water." For centuries after his death his writings were only studied surreptitiously by the few. Not for 450 years after his death was his *Opus Majus* translated into English. The Oxford orators glibly attribute Bacon's persecutions to the faults of his age. So they were; but the dominant factor of the age was the Christian Church. It was that which made the life of the student of

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science so unbearable. It was that which caused Bacon to be handed down in popular legends as a mere mediæval wonder-worker. It was the Church which embittered his life, as it embittered the lives of thousands of others. It was the Church that caused Bacon to complain from his cell that he was "unheard, forgotten, buried." The first of the moderns, Roger Bacon paid the price that so many have paid who faced Christian superstition in the interests of a liberated humanity.

C. COHEN.

Acid Drops

There was a National Liberal Club dinner the other evening to celebrate the completion of a hundred years of peace between Great Britain and America. Andrew Carnegie, the multi-millionaire, and Lord Shaw, both of Dunfermline, were amongst the speakers, and were well reported in the *Daily News*. So was the Rev. Dr. Horton, who, we suppose, represented Jesus Christ,—who gets on better with rich society now than he used to in the early days of his career. Finally came the statement that "Mr. J. M. Robertson, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade, presided over this gathering." Just as if he were the mere toast-master of a public festival, instead of being in all probability the brainiest man in the assembly. Mr. Robertson presumably made a speech from the chair, but not a single sentence of it is reported. His name is included like "the stars also" in the Bible story of Creation, simply because it could hardly be omitted. Such a vulgar insult must be owing to Mr. Robertson's being a well-known Freethinker. The *Daily News* represents the Nonconformist Conscience—the most wonderful Conscience on earth.

The "assembly of converts" on the "Strand Citadel" platform at one meeting of the Salvation Army's International Congress contained, according to "Colonel" Kitching,—

> "442 ex-drunkards
> 47 ex-burglars
> 58 ex-gamblers and 'bookies'
> 12 ex-pugilists."

Still the London police have plenty to do. Isn't there some mistake with the figures or the descriptions?

A negro choir from the Southern States sang a "coon hymn." This was sung to a kind of cake-walk. The first verse was as follows:—

> "When trouble came in Noah's time,
> My, didn't it rain!
> Forty days and forty nights,
> My, didn't it rain!"

This is the stuff that is going to save the world—if we are to credit King George and Queen Mary, and above all Ex-Queen Alexandra. What faith some people do possess!

"An Hour in Hell" was one of the most "blasphemous" of Mr. Foote's early lecture-titles. Thirty years ago it positively frightened people. A good many Christians came to hear the lecture in fear and trembling, half expecting to see a divine judgment on the wicked editor of the worst paper in the world. It was openly suggested by well-known good Christians that the local authorities should prevent such awful lectures from being delivered. Owners and lessees of halls were told that they ought to be ashamed to let their premises for such purposes. Even some old-fashioned Freethinkers expostulated with Mr. Foote for "outraging" Christian feelings in that way. In vain did he reply that he only proposed to take people into Hell for an hour, and bring them out again, instead of leaving them there for ever and ever. His jocosity only made the matter worse. In some provincial places feeling ran so high that there was talk of arresting him. But nothing happened except to Hell itself, which suffered a good deal in the course of the campaign. Since then Hell has suffered on all sides. Its fires have failed; it has cooled down in an astonishing manner; it is in many parts a safe receptacle for frozen meat. And that "blasphemous" title of Mr. Foote's which caused such a commotion is so meek and mild nowadays that like the "Hades" that takes the place of "Hell" in the Revised Version of the New Testament it would hardly frighten a cat off a garden wall.

What a change has taken place during those thirty odd years! Here is an illustration. One of the features of the recent Salvation Army Congress in London was "A Day With God." The words suggested a picnic with the Almighty, at so much a head, with the "Blood and Fire" Army taking the commission on the sale of tickets. It would be hard to imagine anything more "blasphemous," unless it was unprintable. Yet a London morning newspaper, of unimpeachable piety, mildly calls it "an expressive phrase" if a little strong for some of the more sensitive believers. "Expressive!" That's good! We shall get back in time to the innocent simplicity of the miracle-plays. Some future General Booth—perhaps the present one—will be advertising a cinema scene between "Old Nick and Jahveh," or the "Bethlehem Boy and the Championship"—or something else of that sort. Oh, yes; the world *does* move—and even Christians move with it.

General Booth was loud in his praises of the way in which the press has treated the Army meetings. And there is no doubt that the praise has been earned. Journalists have discovered that the Army is good "copy," and in addition the Army has a very good press service of its own. Reports of its own meetings are sent out broadcast, it prepares all sorts of statistics and picturesque accounts of its own work, and these go into various papers without readers being in the least aware that they are reading the Army's own accounts of its doings. It would be well if editors of papers, when they publish these accounts, print with them a notice, "Supplied by the Salvation Army." Readers would then be in a better position for estimating their value. As it is, the Army gives the reporter a statement, the statement is published in a newspaper, and then the Army quotes, or reprints, its own statement as independent testimony. Perfect candor from a newspaper office would be a new Book of Revelations.

General Booth says that the Salvation Army still believes in a real God, a real Devil, a real heaven, and a real hell. We may add that it also believes in real cash.

"Providence" has been leaving the "militant" Suffragettes in the lurch lately. What are a few burnings and explosions in churches and other empty places to killing children by lightning, swamping London, digging fatal chasms in Paris, wrecking big liners, smashing trains, and other "Acts of God"? Man—and even woman—is nowhere in the destructive line when that same "Providence" starts business.

"The Act of God," by the way, is not an infidel joke. It is a legal finding in the courts of England. The coroner's jury returned it the other day in the case of the children who were struck dead by lightning near London. That ended the matter. There was no suggestion of proceedings against the responsible party. Maybe it was thought impossible to serve the summons.

Mr. Bottomley does well to denounce the "God" that Christian clergymen preach about as the author of these "judgments." But, after all, this *is* the God of the Bible, this *is* the God of Christianity.

There are no limits to the ways in which priests everywhere seek to saddle their maintenance upon the whole of the population. In Pennsylvania the clergy are trying to get either free passes or reduced rates in travelling about the country. The legal authorities have, however, ruled that such a concession would be contrary to the Public Company Law. The argument of the clergy is that they are paid such poor salaries that they cannot afford the expenses of travelling. The reply to this seems clear. Let their congregations pay them more, or let them stay at home. If the congregations desire their ministers to travel—and we can well believe that in many cases they do—they should pay their expenses. There is no reason whatever why these congregations should expect the community at large to pay for the relief they get from the minister travelling from home.

"Here in England," says the *Catholic Times*, "the Christian religion is decaying with a rapidity none the less swift that it is so silent. Men are not opposing Christianity loudly. They are denying it that compliment. They are dropping it quietly. Year by year England becomes more indifferent to religion, more materialistic, more secular." We do not believe that things are vitally different in England to what they are elsewhere. The truth is that the movement away from Christianity is co-extensive with civilisation. It is proceeding more rapidly in some countries than in others, but that is the only difference. All the "revivals" and all the efforts of the clergy can do no more than produce a semblance of vitality in an organism that is stricken with death.

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Of course, the *Catholic Times* makes this alarmist pronouncement for a purpose. Its text is the necessity of closer union amongst Catholics for political action. We Catholics, it says, "will have influence with the overwhelming majority of our fellow countrymen in proportion to our unity among ourselves, and the weight that such unity will enable us to bring to bear upon the electorate, the candidates, and the party in power." Quite so; and that does foreshadow a real danger. A party strongly knit together may, although a minority, yet wield a great power in the State. And when the ground of this union is not a purely social one, we have all the worst evils of religious bigotry and tyranny before us. It means that the Roman Church is prepared to sacrifice all other considerations to its own aggrandisement. What this means, affairs in France, Spain, and Italy have shown. Fortunately, the Roman Church itself is not secure from the operation of those forces that are causing the decay of religious belief among other sects, and every advance of Freethought minimises the danger indicated by the *Catholic Times*. There is only one sure way of checking the anti-social tendencies of Christianity, and that is by multiplying the number of Freethinkers.

"The River of Doubt" is a newspaper headline referring to ex-President Roosevelt's alleged discovery of a 1,000 miles long river in Central Brazil. We hope that there is more truth in the discovery of the river than in Teddy's description of Thomas Paine as a "filthy little Atheist," which is a world's record of three lies in three words.

Mr. Israel Zangwill says, "The New Testament was entirely written by laymen of my race." It would have been more to boast of had the work been written by honest men of any race. And how about the Old Testament?

According to Mr. Alan Dale, the well-known dramatic critic of the *New York American*, the Roman Catholics have a censorship of the stage, and they have a white list of plays that their people may see. What an independent, manly citizen the Roman Catholic is, to be sure! The priest tells him what to read; makes out a list of his amusements; at election times dictates who he is to vote for; and keeps one eye on his salary all the time.

In that religious paper, the *Referee*, Mr. George R. Sims, writing in "Mustard and Cress," says: "Hallo, Up Above! This is June, not December." The pious readers will be apprehensive of "Dagonet's" future.

Writing in *Lloyd's Weekly News*, Monsignor Hugh Benson tells a tale of a mediæval Yorkshire village, where a caravan of a bull-fight arrived on a Sunday. Of the population fifty went to church, and about 450 to the bull-fight, and the church-roof fell in and killed the faithful fifty. The editor says that Monsignor Benson will answer the difficulty next week. By that time his readers will have recovered from the shock.

Commenting on the Weekly Rest-Day Bill, an artful measure introduced by the Sabbatarians, *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* reminds the promoters that twenty millions of persons read the Sunday papers, and that the restriction of Sunday labor would interfere only with the production of the Monday morning papers. A palpable hit!

The *Christian World* thinks but little of the Day of Intercession for the Church in Wales, apparently because the churches only drew small audiences. At Norwich Cathedral only twenty-five persons were present. We should have thought that number quite enough. All that seems necessary is to call the Lord's attention to the matter. But the *Christian World* evidently thinks numbers the important thing, and that the Lord, looking down on Norwich, will say: "What's this? Intercession for the Church in Wales! Wants me to upset the Government Bill, and only twenty-five present! Not good enough. Next business." We are afraid the *Christian World* does not discriminate between the Deity and Mr. Asquith.

From a note in the *Christian World* we see that Rev. Dr. Griffith Jones is astonished at the public listening so eagerly to Sir Oliver Lodge and others when they deliver themselves on religious problems. So are we; but we can easily understand it. Ordinary men know that the clergy are not better informed than themselves, and they apparently hope that men of science, who are informed on other subjects, will have some information to dispense on this one. What people have to realise is that, on such questions as the existence of God or the soul, Sir Oliver Lodge is no greater authority than the most ignorant of Salvation Army preachers. Both of them can do no more than profess belief. Neither can show the slightest evidence to warrant that belief.

Dr. Griffith Jones is laboring under the delusion that a clergyman is an expert in religion, and therefore ought to be listened to with attention. He is nothing of the kind. He may be an expert so far as a knowledge of religious teachings is concerned, but that is all. He may be able to say authoritatively how one ought to stand when saying prayers, what kind of dress a parson should wear, or what doctrine is orthodox; but as regards the real meaning of what are called "religious" frames of mind, or concerning the origin of religious beliefs, the ordinary clergyman exhibits a most deplorable ignorance. That is really the condition of his being a clergyman, and his education is designed to perpetuate it. He is not trained to understand the significance of numerous states of mind—both normal and morbid—masquerading as religion. He is not trained to observe the significance of the same feelings that in one case manifest themselves as religious convictions and in another case express themselves in relation to purely social activities. He is like a man discoursing on the steam-engine in the absence of a knowledge of physics and mechanics. And, as a matter of fact, the world's reliable knowledge about religion has not been derived from theologians, but from those who have taken religious phenomena as part of phenomena in general, to be explained on the same lines that science has found so helpful elsewhere.

Pastor Russell, the American evangelist, has hired a London theatre in which he is giving a cinematograph illustration of the Bible story. Pastor Russell is a "whole-hogger" in religion, and accepts the Bible in the most literal manner. His performance is called *Creation*, and we can see great possibilities in it. Eve's adjustment of the fig-leaf—once an actual part of the old miracle play—would have to be omitted, but the separation of light from darkness, the creation of woman from a rib of Adam, with other items, should make interesting pictures. One of the religious papers says that Pastor Russell's comments on the pictures may be treated as "comic relief." The absurdity seems to lie in the preacher taking the Bible story to mean what it says.

The new *Chinese Review*, published in London, but edited by two Chinamen, contains a comment by one of its editors that is well worth attention. In 1912, he says, "the honorable and high-minded" promoters of the Anglo-Japanese Exhibition decided to add to it a touch of Chinese color. So it was proposed to install an opium den, and attempts were made to hire Chinese sailors to play the part of opium smokers. Now, says this editor, suppose the tables were turned, and the promoters of a Chinese exhibition proposed representing Great Britain by a low-class public-house, with English sailors to play the part of drunkards. "Great Britain would probably have sent a fleet of warships to demand reparation for the national insult." Contrasting English virtues with foreign vices is a favorite pursuit with the average Englishman, and in time he naturally ignores other people's virtues altogether.

Here is another passage that contains an important truth:—

> "One looks in vain in Western newspapers for reports of progress and of incidents illustrating the higher and better traits of Chinese character; but the ravages of a White Wolf or the details of a political murder are immediately hound with an energy worthy of a better cause. And the dismal pessimist, ignoring all the wonderful progress made in China during the last fifty years, in the face of untold difficulties, chants his funereal lay with a gusto and a vehemence which tempts us to conclude that he must be paid to do it."

That, it must be confessed, is the way in which our glorious British press usually instructs its readers. After the expulsion of the Monarchy from Portugal, not the least notice was taken of the constructive work that the new Government attempted and performed. But anything in the shape of an "outrage" on either side, or a collision between the Government troops and a few Royalists received instant and lavish notice. It was the same with Turkey after the dethronement of Abdul Hamid. And the misfortune is that the average reader doesn't seem to possess enough intelligence to realise that, in the very nature of the case, these "lurid" and exciting incidents can only be mere incidents in the general life of a nation.

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1,374 starving dogs were saved by the London police last year. Christians were too busy saving their own souls.

Mr. W. Hill Murray, who introduced the Braille system for the blind into China, estimated that one person in every 600 is sightless in that country. Our Heavenly Father is rather careless of his children.

Are the angels on strike? We ask this question with due solemnity, for we notice that "God's houses" have to be protected by paid watchmen against Suffragette attacks.

The peerless patterers of the Christian Evidence Society are almost the sole defenders of the Design Argument. Even the dear *Daily News and Leader* recently referred jestingly to the "old argument from design, Paley's watch and the watchmaker. Nowadays, watch and watchmaker have somehow failed to keep time."

"Hall of Science ideas still linger round the rostrums in the parks," says a writer in the *Referee*. Other correspondents suggest that Freethought is dead. It needs a referee to decide between the disputants.

It was one of life's little ironies that in a daily paper the two headlines, "Salvationists in Congress," "Barbaric Revivals," should have been in adjoining columns.

A Nonconformist preacher, wishing to be topical, preached a sermon on "A Mixed Grill." Did it include a description of the horrors meted out to the heterodox in the next world?

Mr. Brandon Thomas made a big fortune out of the play called *Charley's Aunt*, which has been translated and played in eighteen languages. Would the Bible have been translated into so many without artificial pushing?

M. George Brandes, the eminent Danish critic, landing at New York, was asked by an interviewer what he thought of their great statue of Liberty. "Is that all the Liberty you have?" he said. They tried another subject.

A number of pious ladies and gentlemen have been writing in the *Saturday Journal* on "What Happens to Us When We Die?" We will listen to them, if they can make us hear, when they are dead. Not before.

"They have broken my heart and my spirit between them, and I no longer care to live." These words occurred in a letter found on the body of Sister Anastasia, the head mistress of Shilton Roman Catholic Schools, who was found drowned in the river at Normanton. The jury returned a "temporary insanity" verdict, but added a rider stating their opinion that the deceased had been unkindly treated at the convent.

Mr. Burch, a wealthy manufacturer, collapsed at the Harvard-Yale baseball match, where he was a spectator. The doctors called in pronounced him dead. But his wife, who is a Christian Scientist, had the body brought to New York, and a well-known "healer" with a lot of other people prayed over it for hours. It wouldn't budge, however, and they had to get on with the funeral. But we daresay the Christian Science lady will go on believing in the nonsense all the same.

Christian professionals don't seem to see that the harder they try to get people to come to church the more surely is Christianity decaying. They are going to carry on a "Come to Church" campaign, to secure the attendance at church of every man, woman, and child in England and Wales on a Sunday in next January. *Every* man, woman, and child! We know a few who won't go,—in spite of all the impudent "invitations" left at their houses.

The Rector of Walberton, Sussex, advertises for "fifteen God-fearing Englishmen" to superintend the farming of 640 acres of land in Canada. We do not know what is the connection between "God-fearing" and agriculture, unless the Rector hopes to get his men at a reduced rate.

Three poor Christites in one day's "wills." Rev. Reginald Alfred Gatty, of Hooton Roberts, Rotherham, left £2,079; Rev. Edward Clowes, of Bexhill, £10,640; Rev. Alfred Cooper, Brighton, £15,524. Average about £9,000. How Judas's mouth would have watered at the figure!

Puritanism is a fearful and a wonderful thing. There is not a nude statue in any public place in the whole of the United States, but Coney Island has a seething mob of trippers every Sunday during the summer, and "Tammany" is a by-word throughout the civilised world. It was well said that it would have been better if Plymouth Rock had landed on the Pilgrim Fathers instead of the other way about.

Throughout Sunday collections were made in the London churches and chapels for the hospitals. Why do Christians have to collect money in the same way as ordinary touts? Have they no use for prayer?

A writer in a parish magazine, describing a bazaar, says, "crystal-gazing, palmistry, and fortune-telling are also available for more adventurous visitors." Adventurous! It would not require the courage of a tame rabbit to face such nonsense.

"We in England have a hard, direct, swift speech, if we will only use it, instead of ranting, like Shelley and Milton and people like that," said a Mr. Richard Aldington. Something similar to the flowers of speech used by the Ever-Blessed Carpenter of Nazareth might do.

The Rev. J. Williams discussed the question of church members' contributions at a Calvanistic Conference at Llanrwst, and said some people would only contribute half-a-crown if the world caught fire. Why should they? They only pay that sum now to insure themselves against fire in the next world.

The following report appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* of Wednesday, June 17:—

"RIGHT OF FREE SPEECH.

'VAIN NONENTITIES.'

At Lambeth Police-court yesterday Thomas William Stewart, 31, a lecturer, of Derby, was charged before Mr. H. C. Biron with behaving in a disorderly manner.

Police-constable Gibson, 901 W, stated that on Monday night he found a large crowd assembled in Brixton-road. The speaker was speaking on Atheism and the crowd were throwing missiles at him.

Prisoner: Do you think the opposition was organised?—Constable: I don't think it was.

Mr. Biron: The point is that you have no right to hold a meeting in a public street.

Prisoner: Technically, there is no legal right to hold a meeting: but, as your worship is perfectly well aware, as a fact all magistrates allow the right of free speech.

Mr. Biron: The right of free speech in the proper place. Nowadays everybody seems to think that he has a right to say what he pleases in the public street. It is getting an abominable nuisance.

Prisoner, who had previously mentioned that he was in a bad state of health, explained that this was the last of a series of meetings. Probably, he added, it was the last meeting he would address.

Mr. Biron: I am delighted to think it is the last. Now go, and take your farewell, and don't trouble us any more.

Prisoner was then discharged.

As Stewart was leaving the court his worship remarked, sotto voce: 'At the present time there is a perfect plague of vain nonentities who will obstruct the streets by talking rubbish.'"

Some will blame us for inserting this. Others would blame us for not inserting it. We believe the best plan is to insert it, and let it tell its own tale.

The defenders of the Christian superstition are using the cinema to bolster their religion. A film has been prepared, entitled "Creation, from Nebula to Perfection," under the auspices of the Bible Students' Association. We wonder if it includes the creation of Eve from Adam's rib and the other absurdities of "Genesis." If so, the *Freethinker* staff will have to book seats.

The recent heavy storm in London was on a Sunday. That is how "Providence" remembers the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

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To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £170 12s. 6d. Received since:—Mr. and Mrs. James Neate, £1; Captain G. B. Taylor, £1; R. J. Binns (Auckland, N.Z.), 12s.; F. O. Richards, £1.

B. T.—Your remittance has arrived safely, but you do not give your name, and we cannot very well send the paper without it—unless you want "B. T." put before your address on the wrapper. Glad to hear that, although you have had the *Freethinker* only for "some time" through the kindness of a friend, you regard its editor as "your best friend" and "feel that you have known him personally all your life." With regard to your query, it would be the lady who would be liable to any legal proceedings—not the man. Barbaric law cannot be dodged in the way you suggest. We are sorry we cannot give your friend any practical advice.

G. B. TAYLOR.—We should not mind being with you on board your good ship in the Bay of Biscay—whence you write your pleasant letter. Your subscription to the Ramsey Testimonial is passed over to the Treasurer.

E. B.—Many thanks. Shall have attention.

H. DAWSON.—(1) The *Freethinker* is never "published late this week," and could not be so except by some unforeseeable accident. If the fault is not your local newsagent's it is the fault of his wholesale agent's. Pressure should be put upon the latter. (2) The report shows you gave a good lecture, but what is there in it which has not been said by N. S. S. lecturers and writers for the last fifty years? We judge by the progress of our propaganda, not by the mere increase of useless numbers. The Salvation Army is a big affair, reckoned that way, but is there one Christian the more in any "Christian country" because of its existence? Has it converted one single Freethinker? We have converted a crowd of Christians. (3) We never saw any gain in the multiplication of Freethought societies. We have seen lots of them come and go. But the old N. S. S. remains, and the *Freethinker* is still the only weekly Freethought journal in England, commanding (and not with cash) most of the best brains in the party. We wish success to all sincere workers for Freethought, but we cannot act on their judgment instead of our own.

W. R.—Mr. Foote will write you himself shortly.

A. L. (Beccles).—A violation of the directions printed every week in this column is sure to cause delay, besides wasting the editor's time and energy.

JAMES NEATE, a London veteran, subscribing to the President's Honorarium Fund, trusts we "may live many more years yet for the 'best of causes.'"

DR. F. DE LISLE (New Zealand).—Your subscription to the President's Honorarium Fund was acknowledged last week. There was no time to reply to your letter, which reached us *viâ* Dr. Nichols. Pleased to hear you say you "wish it was ten times as much." Also that you are "glad to see that the subscriptions are rolling in this year more rapidly and in larger amounts than formerly" and that you "hope the pace is not too fast to last."

C. JELLEE.—Glad you find so much help from the *Freethinker*. The whole subject of organisation is under consideration, and the district you name may then receive attention.

W. P. BALL.—Much obliged for cuttings.

J. PARTRIDGE.—We wish you good weather and a good gathering.

E. JOICE.—Your order is passed over to our shop manager.

A. WYCHERLEY.—Macmillan's half-crown edition of Omar Khayyam is the best. It contains all four editions. The fourth edition is still copyright, and it is much the best. Thanks for cuttings.

A. J. YOUNG.—We regret to hear of Mr. Thomas Thorp's death at Sand, and of their giving him a Christian burial at All Saints' Church when they knew he was an Atheist. We note what you say at the end of your letter. Mr. Foote's health has greatly improved.

J. T. L.—Miss Vance had already sent in an obituary notice, which was in type.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Editorial.

I AM sorry to say that Mr. Cohen has not been looking very well lately. The wintry June we have have had in "God's Own Country," as the clergy call it, has rather worsened the cold he was suffering from at the Conference on Whit-Sunday. He really ought to take a holiday. He went to Southsea last week-end, and I hope he will stay there or go to some other place equally eligible. I am therefore sitting in the editorial chair again, and I think I had better remain there. I will not thank Mr. Cohen at the fag-end of a hurried paragraph. I will do it next week. And I shall have to tell the "saints" of some of the grave difficulties that have to be confronted in the near future.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

The June number of the *Secular Education Chronicle* (quarterly), issued by the Secular Education League, is priced at one penny, but we do not know of any shop where it is sold. Readers of ours who would like to see it—and we hope many will—should apply to the Secretary, Mr. H. Snell, 19 Buckingham-street, Strand, London, W.C. Amongst other items is a report of the Seventh Annual Meeting held at Caxton Hall on March 24. Mr. Foote was ill then and confined to his bedroom. His absence from the meeting was sympathetically referred to by Sir Henry Cotton, who took the chair for the President, Mr. George Greenwood, who was unable to be present. "Sir Henry," the report says, "took the opportunity to express his great regret at Mr. Foote's illness, which prevented him from being present. He was indefatigable in the cause, and his sound judgment was greatly valued." The report adds that at the public meeting later on, "Sir Henry also referred again with sympathy to the ill-health of Mr. Foote."

We are pleased to see from the official report that Mr. George Greenwood continues his Presidency of the Secular Education League. It was feared that a bad accident had incapacitated him for life, but he is recovering the use of his lower limbs, which is an excellent piece of good fortune after a twice-broken kneecap's necessitating two operations. All who know Mr. Greenwood's services to the cause of progress will be heartily glad to hear this good news.

The report of Mr. Halley Stewart's speech at the League meeting shows that he is back from his trip in search of health with a fair supply of that desideratum. We judge by the vigor and trenchancy of his address.

Mr. Cohen's article on "The Consolations of Religion" is reprinted from our issue of April 26 in the New York *Truthseeker*. The source of the article is duly acknowledged

The Birmingham Branch is having its ANNUAL Picnic on Sunday, July 5, to Stourport, and the members would like to meet Freethought friends of the district. Full information may be obtained from the Secretary, Mr. Jas. Partridge, 245 Shenstone-road, Birmingham.

We have received (on Tuesday afternoon, much too late for the *Freethinker*) a further list of subscriptions from the Treasurer of the Ramsey Testimonial Fund—Mr. B. T. Hall, Club Union Buildings, Clerkenwell-road, London, E.C. A glance at it shows there is a mistake somewhere. Names are included which were acknowledged in former lists. We have returned the list to Mr. Hall for correction.

The Salvation Army is played out in the worst sense of the words. It is no longer taken seriously by the bulk of the people. When it was first established it was taken as a really earnest—if vulgar and absurd—agency for saving souls. The crowds who watch its parades no longer regard it in that light. "Blood and Fire" makes no impression now. Familiarity, if nothing else, has bred contempt. "The Army" has taken its place as one of the regular shows of the day. This is quite legible on the faces of the spectators. We have watched them very carefully during the recent Salvation Congress performances.

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Is Religious Belief Universal?—III.

(Concluded from p. 390.)

"Lacking ability to think, and the accompanying desire to know, the savage is without tendency to speculate. Even when there is raised such a question as that often put by Park to the Negroes—'What became of the sun during the night, and whether we should see the same sun, or a different one, in the morning,' no reply is forthcoming. 'I found that they considered the question as very childish..... They had never indulged a conjecture, nor formed any hypothesis about the matter.' The general fact thus exemplified is one quite at variance with current ideas respecting the thoughts of primitive man. He is commonly pictured as theorising about surrounding appearances; whereas, in fact, the need for explanation of them does not occur to him.

"We see in the young of our own race a similar inability to concentrate their attention on anything complex or abstract. The mind of the child, as well as that of the savage, soon wanders from sheer exhaustion when generalities and involved propositions have to be dealt with."—HERBERT SPENCER, *Principles of Sociology*, pp. 87-89.

"Non-religious tribes may not exist in our day, but the fact bears no more decisively on the development of religion, than the impossibility of finding a modern English village without scissors or books or lucifer matches bears on the fact that there was a time when no such things existed in the lane."—PROFESSOR E. B. TYLOR, *Primitive Culture*, vol. i., p. 425.

Of the Veddahs of Ceylon, Sir J. Emerson Tennant says, "They have no religion of any kind—no knowledge of a God or of a future state; no temples, idols, altars, prayers, or charms" (*Ceylon*, vol. ii., p. 441). Mr. Bailey, long a resident among them, confirms this judgment, "They have no knowledge of a Supreme Being! 'Is he on a rock? on a white ant-hill? on a tree? I never saw a God' was the only reply I received to repeated questions. They have no idols, offer no sacrifices and pour no libations."*

Of the Andaman Islanders, Dr. Monat says, "They have no conception of a Supreme Being. They have never risen from the effects they see around them to the most imperfect notion of a Cause. They have never ascended in thought from the works to a Creator, or even to many creators—that is to say, Polytheism" (*Adventures and Researches Among the Andaman Islanders* (1863), p. 303).

Lieutenant Low, of H.M. Indian Navy, similarly remarks of them, "They do not believe in the existence of a Supreme Being, and perform no religious ceremony of any sort" (*The Land of the Sun* (1870), p. 168).†

M. Bik says of the Arafuras of Vorkay (one of the Southern Aru):—

> "To convince myself more fully respecting their want of knowledge of a Supreme Being, I demanded of them on whom they called for help in their need, when their vessels were overtaken by violent tempests. The eldest among them, after having consulted the others, answered that they knew not on whom they could call for assistance, but begged me, if I knew, to be so good as to inform them."‡

Wallace, the naturalist, says of the wild tribes of the Moluccas and New Guinea that when he endeavored to ascertain their ideas respecting the Creator of the universe, he could only get from them a confession of total ignorance on the subject. "The intellectual capacities of those tribes were so feeble that he doubted whether they could be made to appreciate or understand what was meant by a God."§

Similarly, the naturalist Bates says of the Indians of the Upper Amazons:—

> "Their want of curiosity is extreme. One day we had an unusually sharp thunder-shower. The crew were lying about the deck; and after each explosion all set up a loud laugh, the wag of the party exclaiming, 'There's my old uncle hunting again,' an expression showing the utter emptiness of mind of the spokesman. I asked Vicente what he thought was the cause of lightning and thunder? He said, 'Timaã ichoquã.'—I don't know. He had never given the subject a moment's thought! It was the same with other things. I asked him who made the sun, the stars, the trees? He didn't know, and had never heard the subject mentioned amongst his tribe. The Tupí language, at least as taught by the old Jesuits, has a word—Tupáon—signifying God. Vicente sometimes used this word, but he showed by his expressions that he did not attach the idea of a Creator to it. He seemed to think it meant some deity or visible image which the whites worshiped in the churches he had seen in the villages. None of the Indian tribes of the Upper Amazons have an idea of a Supreme Being, and consequently have no word to express it in their own languages. Vicente thought the river on which we were travelling encircled the whole earth, and that the land was an island like those seen in the stream, but larger. Here a gleam of curiosity and imagination in the Indian mind is revealed: the necessity of a theory of the earth and water has been felt, and a theory has been suggested. In all other matters not concerning the common wants of life the mind of Vicente was a blank, and such I always found to be the case with the Indian in his natural state."‖

As to the "High Gods"—Baiame, Deiramalam, and Bungil—which the late Mr. Andrew Lang, in his book, *The Making of Religion*, tells us the Australian aborigines believed in, Lord Avebury points out that Bungil, according to native belief,—

> was an old man who once lived on earth and possessed great multitudes of cattle, an idea which cannot evidently have arisen before the advent of white men, as there were no cattle in Australia. He had a dispute with the Jay, who let out the winds and blew him away. He is now the star Homalhaut. Bungil, moreover, is a common title of respect. Mr. Howitt himself was often called Bungil."†

Professor Tylor, dealing with the idea that the Australian belief in a "Great Spirit" was derived from missionary teaching, declared "this view will not bear examination."‡ After further study of the subject, however, he changed his opinion. He observes: "Let us now, however, inquire whether Baiame, near 1840 so prominent a divine figure among the Australians, was known to them at all a few years earlier"; and points out that Backhouse, a minister of the Society of Friends, who spent a long time in Australia between 1832 and 1840; William Buckley, the "wild white man," who lived thirty years among the natives of the district, till he had forgotten English; and the Rev. L. E. Threlkeld, the first grammarian and lexicographer of New South Wales, are all agreed that the natives had no idea of a Supreme Being.§

Mr. Thomas, in his *Natives of Australia* (p. 216) objects that Henderson gives a long account of Baiame, of which he learnt particulars from a native in 1829, three years before the missionaries came to those parts. But Lord Avebury observes that—

> "Mr. Thomas does not give the exact reference or quote the passage on which he relies. Henderson speaks very doubtfully. His informant, he says, 'endeavored to explain to us their rude system of mythology. We experienced, however, great difficulty in comprehending the import of what he intended to communicate.' I do not find that Henderson anywhere speaks of Baiame as a Creator or attributes to him any divine powers, but says that he was 'the father of the race, and formerly sojourned amongst them.'"‖

But, even before the missionaries arrived, the natives had opportunities of picking up European ideas, for there was a British settlement at Port Jackson as early as 1788. The truth seems to be that Baiame was a chief who once lived among them. Mr. Hartland says that, since 1840,—

> "his Biblical characteristics, as reported by missionaries, constantly expanded down to the publication of Mr. Brough Smythe's work in 1878, and that in the most recent accounts—those of Mr. Matthews, who is

* Rev. F. W. Farrar, "On the Universality of Belief in God and in a Future State," *Anthropological Journal* (1864), ccxviii.
† Cited in Lindsay's *Mind in Animals*, p. 206.
‡ Lubbock, *Origin of Civilisation* (1889), pp. 214-5.
§ Rev. F. W. Farrar, *Anthropological Journal* (1864).

* H. W. Bates, *The Naturalist on the Amazons* (1864), p. 294.
† Lord Avebury, *Marriage, Totemism, and Religion*, pp. 165-6.
‡ *Primitive Culture*, vol. ii., p. 339.
§ Lord Avebury, *Marriage, Totemism, and Religion*, p. 162.
‖ Lord Avebury, *Marriage, Totemism, and Religion*, pp. 164-5, citing Henderson's *New South Wales*, p. 147.

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not a missionary—they have so far disappeared that he is now only said to have created the tribesmen themselves."*

Professor Frazer has dealt with the subject at length in an article in the *Fortnightly Review* (July, 1905)—since included in the third edition of his *Golden Bough*. He points out that—

> "it is to be observed that the reports of moral Supreme Beings among the Australian aborigines come chiefly from Victoria and New South Wales, that is, the parts of the continent where the natives have been longest under the influence of the white man. If we could deduct from these reports the elements of fraud, we should probably find that the residue would be small indeed; and we might acquiesce in the opinion of Professor Baldwin Spencer: 'I do not think that there is really any direct evidence of any Australian native belief in a "Supreme Being" in our sense of the word.'"

Professor Frazer also cites the testimony of Mr. J. F. Mann, who says:—

> "Many persons try to persuade themselves that they can detect the existence among these natives of a true religion and a knowledge of a Supreme Being; but they forget that these Blacks are extremely shrewd, so that when they perceive the object of the conversation, they readily adapt all that they have been taught on this subject to their replies. I have always found that the rigmarole stories which many of them told me, and which are supposed to represent their religious belief, were founded upon the teachings of missionaries and others."†

Professor Frazer also narrates the experience of Dr. A. W. Howitt, the ethnologist, who, wishing to learn some particulars about a spirit named Brewin, questioned two of the most intelligent natives, one of whom was a member of the Church of England:—

> "After consulting together for a few minutes, one of them said, 'We think that he is Jesus Christ.' When this answer proved unsatisfactory, they laid their heads together again, and after mature deliberation declared that he must be the Devil. Which, says Professor Frazer, illustrates the readiness with which the natives adapt their answers to the supposed taste of the inquirer, and the little dependence that can consequently be placed on their statements on this subject."

But whatever may be the case as to the coast tribes of Australia, who have been so long in contact with Europeans, there is no doubt as to the absence of religious ideas among the central tribes of Australia. Professor Baldwin Spencer and Mr. Gillen, who lived with the natives, learned their language, won their confidence, and who witnessed and took part in their most secret practices and ceremonials, and whose work, *The Northern Tribes of Central Australia*, is universally recognised as the most careful, minute, and trustworthy study of savage life ever compiled, declare emphatically in this work that—

> "the Central Australian natives, and this is true of the tribes extending from Lake Eyre in the south to the far north, and eastward across to the Gulf of Carpentaria, have no idea whatever of the existence of any Supreme Being who is pleased if they follow a certain line of what we call moral conduct, and displeased if they do not do so. They have not the vaguest idea of a personal individual other than an actual living member of the tribe who approves or disapproves of their conduct, so far as anything like what we call morality is concerned" (p. 491).

The women and children are taught to fear a powerful spirit; but the youth, at the initiation ceremonies, learns for the first time "that such a being does not really exist, and is only an invention of the men to frighten the women and children."

In future articles we shall consider the origin of religious belief.

W. MANN.

* Cited by Lord Avebury.

† J. F. Mann, "Notes on the Aborigines of Australia." *Proceedings of the Geographical Society of Australasia* (1885), p. 40.

The Fauna and Flora of the British Isles.—II.

(*Concluded from p. 389*)

THE fauna and flora of Scotland, like those of Ireland, are of composite origin. In Ireland, in the Hebrides, and in Skye a dark-furred field mouse is found which is special to these stations within the British Isles, and its only other known European habitat is in Portugal. This mammal is a relic from ancient days, and, in company with the natterjack toad, which is occasionally met with both in Ireland and Scotland, it is of southern origin. A weevil, which is quite common in Erin, occurs as a rarity in England and Scotland; but in order to again encounter it, one must travel to the Mediterranean region and the Atlantic Islands. Two species of woodlice which occur in Britain reach their northerly limit in Caledonia. Again, two species of snails are to be included with the southern fauna, and these also do not extend further north than Scotland. There is a fern which is found in secluded spots in Southern Ireland and Wales—the bristle, or Killarney fern—but we must journey to Spain to again encounter this plant, which also thrives in Madeira, the Canary Islands, and the Azores, while it is once more met with in the West Indies and South America. To once more quote Dr. Scharff:—

> "The thirteen species of liverworts peculiar to the British Islands all occur on the West Coast, and all have their nearest relations in tropical and sub-tropical countries. This seems to show that at some remote geological period, when a much milder climate prevailed in Northern Europe than at present, they advanced northward, and are the last remaining relicts of this modified tropical flora."

Plants and animals of Arctic ancestry are more fully represented in Caledonia than in the Emerald Isle. So far as the British area is concerned, the ptarmigan is confined to Scotland. It flourishes in Scandinavia, and, like the Arctic hare, it reappears in the Alps and Pyrenees. The snow bunting, a markedly northern bird, does not breed south of the Tweed. Scotland possesses several insects of boreal origin; the white underwing occurs in the North of Scotland, in Scandinavia, and in the Alps. Two dragon flies are confined within our area to Scotland, and one of them is found elsewhere in Norway, the Alps, and the mountains of Silesia. Various other organisms have a similar distribution.

Many of the vegetable growths of Scotland are pronouncedly Arctic in character. Crombie declared that the British Alpine flora bore a closer resemblance to that of Scandinavia than to that of any other country. The Scottish primrose, the rock draba, the blue menziesia, are special to Scotland and the Scandinavian countries. The dwarf birch and the mountain avens, whose remains are so conspicuous in many Glacial deposits, are members of the same Arctic group. The mountain avens still flourishes in the Alps and Asiatic highlands, and it grows in Ireland, on the Atlantic coast, in a mild climate, right down to the level of the sea. But whether the avens is of Arctic or temperate origin seems hard to ascertain, as it grows luxuriantly both in an intensely cold and in a quite equable climate.

The Lacustrine deposits of Scotland have given up the remains of the Irish giant deer, the moose deer, the reindeer, the beaver, and other organisms long since in that country extinct, as well as the remains of the roedeer, which is still to be numbered among contemporary Scottish mammals. This group must be regarded as of mixed origin.

Turning to the Germanic element in the Scottish fauna, the beaver commands attention. This highly intelligent quadruped, of which one species alone survives, is still extensively distributed. It is now completely extinct in Britain, but it was fairly abundant both in England and Scotland down to a couple of thousand years ago. The beaver is trembling on the verge of extinction throughout Western

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Europe, although a few colonies survive in the rivers of Germany and Austria, where they are protected both by public opinion and the State. In the Russian Empire it is still abundant, but as an undomesticated creature it is destined to die out in its old-world home. That the beaver belongs to the Germanic fauna is evidenced by the fact that its fossils have never been discovered in Spain, Italy, or Ireland.

The absence of that common British insectivore, the mole, in Ireland, is significant. Geologically speaking, its present distribution is of recent date, and, like the beaver, it is of Eastern origin. Its contemporary range is instructive. It is native to nearly all Asia north of the Himalayas. Nevertheless, its habitat is restricted, although it has had ample time for dispersal throughout the land masses of the Western World. The mole has reached Northern Spain, but has migrated no farther south in the Peninsular. In Italy the mole has now reached Lombardy, but is unknown beyond its boundaries. In the Scandinavian region it has so far failed to establish itself in the extreme north, although it is comparatively common in the south and centre. It cannot be contended that the climate has checked its advance, as the mole easily adapts itself to temperature and soil. Both the beaver and the mole have left their remains in the later Pliocene strata of Norfolk. They were therefore living in England many thousands of years ago, and although they invaded Scotland, the sea barrier which then divided Britain from Ireland prevented their entrance into the latter country.

Another Scottish mammal which is absent in Ireland is the roedeer. This animal lingered in England in the northern counties until quite recently, and may still be seen here and there. When the English forests were in their glory, the roedeer was quite plentiful in our woodland wilds; but those days are departed for ever. The Continental distribution of the roedeer is practically similar to that of the two preceding animals. But although its migratory powers were extensive, it is entirely unknown in the Mediterranean region. Its failure to secure a footing in Ireland is to be explained by the insuperable obstacle presented by the sea.

The prevalence of newts in Britain, and their extreme scarcity in Ireland, despite the Emerald Isle's highly favorable amphibian environment, constrains the conclusions to which the before-mentioned organisms have led us. The common toad, which is almost universally distributed from the South of England to the North of Scotland, has never been discovered in Ireland, although this organism has an extensive range from Gibraltar to Japan. Scotland entertains one snake only, the viper; but even before the days of the blessed St. Patrick, the sister isle refused, as she still refuses, to give any hospitality to snakes. A lengthy list of spiders, insects, molluscs, and other organisms of similar distribution to those already cited might be set forth. Suffice to say that all confirm the conclusion that the Scottish fauna blends with that of England, and differs materially from that of Ireland.

Weighty evidence exists that a land connection between the Isles of Northern Scotland and Iceland united the two countries within geologically recent times. Geikie contended that the flora of the Faröes and Iceland led to the conclusion that this land bridge existed after the Glacial Period had passed away. Ostenfeld, after a systematic survey of the vegetation of the Faröe Islands, came to a similar conclusion. The animal inhabitants of Iceland also support the view that this island has quite recently formed part of the European continent. Iceland appears to have been linked with Europe by way of the Faröes, Shetlands, and Orkneys.

One might surmise that many plants and animals may have been dispersed through the agency of winds, ocean currents, migratory birds, etc. These factors are by no means entirely inoperative in organic distribution; but the theory advanced seems much more fully to account for the facts. For instance, it has been shown that out of 277 species of plants growing on the Faröe Islands, not more than ninety-eight are at all likely to have been carried there by the winds.

> "The direction of the ocean currents is unfavorable to the occasional carriage of seeds by water. As regards the transport of seeds by birds, it appears that the flight of migratory birds across the Faröe Islands is inconsiderable. The suggestion that birds during migration might carry seeds on their wings or feet to distant lands is not confirmed by actual observation. Many thousands of such birds have been carefully examined by Professor Winge and Dr. Knud Andersen, who noticed that their crops and stomachs were always empty. They never observed any seeds adhering to the feathers, beaks, or feet of the birds. Dr. Andersen, moreover, is of opinion that migratory birds are scarcely of any importance as plant disseminators."*

Although the fauna and flora of Britain proper are closely allied, their distribution is related to local conditions. The more northerly Scottish forms become rarer as we journey south. The British grouse is special to our islands, but it is only a variety of the willow grouse of Northern Europe. This bird is resident both in Caledonia and Erin, and ranges in England as far south as Shropshire. A white flowering orchid which is distinctly boreal in character is distributed from Iceland to Sussex. The animals and plants of Arctic type are fairly numerous in England generally, but they are most fully represented in the northern counties and in Wales.

A faunal element which is mainly restricted to the South-West of England startlingly resembles that of Ireland. This Lusitanian series is composed of the lingering organisms of the once rich group which entered England from South-Western Europe at the period when our country was united to Ireland by links of land. Various plants furnish illustrations of this Iberian invasion, while a spider, a centipede, and sundry molluscs are to be numbered among the animals of this group.

Organisms of Germanic ancestry are also numerous. Some of these have extended to Scotland, while others have a distinctly southern range. The dormouse has not yet succeeded in reaching the more northerly region, while its present Continental range, coupled with the circumstance "that no member of the genus to which it belongs has as yet been found, either recent or fossil, outside the limits of Europe, suggests that the dormice and their allied genera all originated on our Continent."

Very local in England is the sand lizard, while it stretches across North-Eastern Europe into Western Asia. Four of our best known fresh-water fish are not native to Ireland, but are plentiful throughout the greater part of the European Plain. A surprisingly large percentage of our plants and invertebrate animals are considerably confined to the South-East of England. The Continental distribution of these organisms also indicates their Germanic origin. The stag-beetle, the swallow-tail butterfly, and various fresh-water and terrestrial molluscs are members of this group.

The facts furnished by contemporary forms of life find substantial support in the remains disinterred from the superficial deposits of the English area under review. The organic relics from caverns and brick-earth include those of various small rodents and the saiga antelope. These organisms still survive in Asia and Eastern Europe. But their fossils have never been discovered in Italy or Spain, although their bones occur in France and Germany in deposits similar to those that have yielded them in England. These mammals doubtless migrated to England from the Continent before the land bridge had been broken. There is another rodent, the hamster; but this animal does not appear to have reached England, although its remains have been found in France. The hamster seems to have advanced from the East, and then retreated; but there is some reason to think that it is again invading the West.

* *European Animals*, p. 64.

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Another group of animals, seemingly of more southern origin, lived in England in company with the organisms previously referred to. Among these was the lion, which appears to have survived in our country down to the dawn of the historic period. The hippopotamus has left its remains in the same deposits which contain those of the lion. This huge creature wandered as far north as Yorkshire, and its existence there certainly seems to presuppose a continuous land connection with Southern Europe, or possibly Africa.

Several of our native species are admittedly indigenous; at all events, several of our *varieties* must be of local origin. But this does not in the slightest degree invalidate the evidences of their ancestors having entered our islands from the Continental areas previously specified. Moreover, while the British fauna and flora have been enriched by the organisms which have wandered from other lands, our islands, in return, have been the scene of the evolution of other species which have probably added to the wealth of theirs. Nevertheless, the innumerable plants and animals which have been received in Britain immensely outnumber those it has given, and in consequence the overwhelming majority of our species are to be regarded as settlers from other soils.

Putting aside the few organisms of indigenous evolution, we find that a small faunal and floral group came to us from North America along an ancient land bridge which stretched across the Northern Atlantic to Europe. A more important series of organisms of boreal and Alpine character was derived partly from Scandinavia and partly from the mountainous areas of Continental Europe. The Lusitanian species arrived from Spain, while the Germanic group invaded Britain from Eastern Europe, or possibly from Asia.

The Spanish or South-Western element is probably the oldest, although the American group is undoubtedly very ancient. These migrations of flora and fauna were not the events of a few centuries, but covered immense periods of time. The incoming organisms established themselves in our islands when the land stood much higher than at present, and large areas of the former continents are now, and have long since been, subjected to the sway of the sea.

In conclusion, it becomes obvious that the chief flora and fauna of Great Britain and Ireland are of pre-glacial date, and, although countless plants and animals perished during the mournful Ice Age, a sufficient number survived in warmer retreats to replenish the country when the glacial wave retreated to its Arctic home. The persistence of the southern flora and fauna through all the Glacial Epoch cannot otherwise be accounted for. Another reason why the Lusitanian group is still so richly represented in Ireland is that the climate is mild and damp; and these southern organisms have also been spared the struggle with the hardier Germanic stocks which came into Britain while that island was still united with the Continent, a connection which continued after Ireland had been separated from us by the sea.

T. F. PALMER.

Farther still, they acknowledge that the providence of God is attentive to human concerns. Why, therefore, does he neglect the whole world, of which we are a part? If it is because he is not at leisure to look to it, neither therefore is it lawful for him to survey that which is inferior and us. Why also, when he surveys us, does he not behold that which is external; and thus look to the world in which we are contained? But if he does not look to that which is external, in order that he may not see the world, neither will he behold us.—*Plotinus*, "*Against the Gnostics.*"

We have no hope from theologians, to whatever school they may belong. They and all belonging to them are given over to their own dreams, and they cling to them with a passion proportionate to the weakness of their arguments.—*J. A. Froude.*

The Inquiry.

(AFTER CHARLES MACKAY.)

Tell me, thou sun, great source of life and light,
Of all man's faiths, hopes, fancies, which is right?
The sun, unceasing in his steady glow,
In you far sphere, responds—I do not know.

Tell me, thou wind, that blowing since the prime
In other chaos cosmos formed time,
The winds of doctrine that do round me blow,
Which is the true, oh, wind?—I do not know.

Tell me, thou gentlest moon, of sage and serious face,
Surely the record thou so far canst trace?
The silver moon, effulgent, stately, slow,
Sad heaven ascending, saith—I do not know.

Tell me, thou sea (whose tides the moon obey),
Tell me, majestic ocean—hush thy play—
Canst thou the riddle solve? In ebb and flow
The solemn sea replies—I do not know.

Tell me, ye clouds that o'er the azure pass,
And leave no stain on heaven's eternal glass;
Ye immemorial vapors, e'er ye go,
Pray tell us—ah, it rains!—I do not know.

Then to the faculties the question I
At length preferred, the everlasting "Why?"
Love grieved, faith shrunk, hope whispered soft and low,
Reason arose and answered—This we know:

The best is ours if we will take the best;
And let old dumb Oblivion take the rest:
Nor petulant and pessimistic go.
Know what you can—*and value what you know.*

ANDREW MILLAR.

What wonder if you torn and naked throng
Should doubt a Heaven that seems to wink and nod,
And having moaned at noontide, "Lord, how long?"
Should cry "Where hidest thou?" at eventfall;
At midnight, "Is He deaf and blind, our God?"
And ere day dawn, "Is He indeed at all?"

—*William Watson.*

Obituary.

We deeply regret to record the sudden death of Mr. Wilhelm Hecht, of Edmonton, who passed away quietly in his sleep, early last Sunday morning, at the age of 73. We tender our deepest sympathy to Mrs. Hecht and to their son, John, who is well-known not only as an energetic member of the Edmonton Branch, but to our London Branches generally, as one of the most earnest and devoted workers and speakers for the Freethought cause. A simple but impressive funeral oration was delivered at the graveside by Mr. J. T. Lloyd. Tributes of sympathy and respect in the shape of some beautiful flowers were sent by friends. One remarkably large and exquisite bunch of freshly gathered roses, from the members of the Edmonton Branch, having carried its silent message of sympathy to the mourners, was sent to the Winchmore Convalescent Home, so that its fragrance should bring pleasure to the inmates, rather than be wasted on a grave. Upwards of 40 local Secularists were present, the General Secretary, Miss Vance, and Miss Stanley, V.-P., representing the N. S. S.—E. M. V.

Our cause has also lost an ardent worker in the person of Ernest Leaver, who died at the early age of 28, on June 14, the cause of death being cancer. The deceased was a constant reader of the *Freethinker*, and unsparing in his work for Freethought. His desire that a Secular Burial Service should be read at his graveside was carried out by Mr. Nelson King, of Ilkeston, at his native town of Bridlington, Yorks.—E. M. V.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Mr. Miller's, 8 Matthias-road, Stoke Newington): Monday, June 29, at 8.30, Business Meeting—To receive Delegates' report, etc.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): Howell Smith, B.A., 3.15, "Atheism and Modern Thought"; 6.15, "Christianity and Buddhism."

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 6, Mr. Hope, a Lecture.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.30, Mr. Marshall, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, J. W. Marshall, "The Christian Life"; 7.30, Miss Kough, "Glorious Immortality."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Finsbury Park): 11.30, Mr. Hecht, a Lecture. Parliament Hill: 3.30, Mr. Rowney, a Lecture. Regent's Park (near the Fountain): 3.30, Mr. Davidson, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, E. Burke, "Luther and the Reformation."

COUNTRY.

ST. HELENS BRANCH N. S. S. (Carr Mill Bridge): Saturday, June 27, at 7.30, J. Hutton, a Lecture.



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CONTENTS.

I. The Question Stated.—II. "Freedom" and "Will."—III. Consciousness, Deliberation, and Choice.—IV. Some Alleged Consequences of Determinism.—V. Professor James on "The Dilemma of Determinism."—VI. The Nature and Implications of Responsibility.—VII. Determinism and Character.—VIII. A Problem in Determinism.—IX. Environment.

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THE
Freethinker
Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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We breathe but the air of books: we owe everything to their authors, on this side barbarism; and we pay them easily with contempt while living, and with an epitaph when dead.—WILLIAM HAZLITT.

The Word of God.—II.

An Open Letter to the

MINISTERS OF ALL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.

MOST of you, gentlemen, teach that Moses (for instance) wrote the Pentateuch, and that he lived, roughly speaking, 1,500 years before Christ. But what is the age of your oldest Hebrew manuscripts? The editors of the Revised Version admit, in a footnote to their Preface, that "the earliest MS. of which the age is certainly known bears date A.D. 916." Now this is 2,400 years after the time of Moses; and let me ask you, plainly, Is not this long enough for any amount of accident and vicissitude? And, unless you fall back on a miracle, have you the slightest reason for supposing that Moses himself would recognise the A.D. 916 document as his own production?

Besides the difficulty and obscurity of Hebrew, is it not the case that the existing Manuscripts are full of *different readings*? I gather from scholars on your own side, to say nothing of sceptical investigators, that the number of different readings amount to *many thousands*, indeed to many *myriads*. Will you kindly explain, then, how any man, even if he be a perfect master of Hebrew, can be sure of having the exact Word of God? You are also aware, or should be, that the more ancient versions of the Old Testament—such as the Greek *Septuagint* and the Roman *Vulgate*—differ very considerably from the Masoretic text.

Thus we have Version differing from Version, and a vast quantity of variations in the current Hebrew manuscripts; that is, collection differs from collection, and, in the same collection, document differs from document. It is evident, therefore, that the Hebrew Old Testament is no more the *real* Word of God than the English Old Testament. I may be told, of course, that the variations are *unimportant*, and do not affect the *substance* of the volume; but I deny this, and I add that no variation *can* be unimportant when we are dealing with a communication from God to mankind. *You* may think it unimportant, but how do you know that *God* does?

Supposing that God, for some reason which passes human comprehension, chose that the first part of his revelation *to all men* should be given in a language only known to a *small section* of them: even then, would it not be reasonable to suppose that he would take care to preserve it in its integrity, so that we might not be burdened with the difficulty of finding out its *words* as well as its *meaning*? You admit that the manuscripts have suffered the common fate of ancient writings, in the hands of custodians and copyists; and, to my mind, this is an evidence of their human *origin*. I believe that, if God wrote a message for us, personally or by proxy, he would take the trouble to preserve it as he wrote it.

The New Testament manuscripts are older than those of the Old Testament. None of them, however, go beyond the fourth century; that is, the oldest copy we have of any book in the New Testament, including the Gospels, was written at least three hundred years after the death of Christ. Why is this? Why are there no *earlier* manuscripts? Surely, if God inspired the writers of them, he would not neglect their safety for three centuries after their composition, and *then* begin to take care of them. Had he preserved them until the days of Constantine, the Church could have preserved them afterwards. I daresay you will tell me that God did not work *miracles* to preserve the autographs of the New Testament; but he worked miracles to be *recorded* in them, and miracles to inspire the *writers* of them, and I cannot see why he should not work *another* miracle to preserve what they wrote.

So much for the documents themselves; and now let me ask you whether, in the Greek documents as we have them, there are not hundreds and thousands of different readings? If this be so (and you cannot deny it), the Greek Testament itself, in a multitude of cases, must contain what the Apostles and Evangelists did *not* write, besides omitting, perhaps, many things which they *did* write; so that, here, again, your very New Testament, even in the original Greek, is not, and cannot be, the *real, exact, authentic* Word of God.

The Gospels are *four* in number, and there were many *others*. The Church selected the four and stamped them as *canonical*; it rejected the others, to the number of dozens, and branded them as *apocryphal*. To a Catholic, of course, this is quite satisfactory, for he holds the Church to be infallible; but the Protestant does not, and what is *his* guarantee? You, gentlemen, who belong to Protestant Churches, take the four Gospels on trust from the Catholic Church, which you so often describe as idolatrous and fraudulent; but I want you to give *me* a reason for accepting these four Gospels, and no others, as the inspired Word of God. What suits your *convenience* does not satisfy my *intelligence*. I want a *reason*; something different from custom and tradition, something founded on logic and evidence.

Let me now draw your attention to another aspect of your Word of God. Over the heads of the various documents it contains, you have their authors' names printed. Thus you announce that the first five books, the Pentateuch, were written by Moses; that most of the Psalms were written by David; that Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Canticles were written by Solomon; that the very curious story of a prophet and a whale was written by Jonah; that a certain prophetical book, referred to by Jesus Christ, was written by Daniel; that fourteen epistles were written by Paul, one by James, two by Peter, and three by John, who also wrote the Revelation; and that the four Gospels were written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

These announcements of yours, as to the authorship of the books of the Bible, are most of them *false*. You were told so, long ago, by sceptics like Spinoza, Voltaire, and Thomas Paine; but now the fact is not only admitted, but proclaimed, by scholars and professors within your own Churches.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded)

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Do We Survive Death?

AMONG the writers who have been contributing articles to *Cassell's Saturday Journal* on the question "What Happens to Us When We Die?" it has been left for a lady—Lady Groves—to hit the right nail on the head in the form of a question. Lady Groves commences her *very* brief contribution with what one may say is a too modest disclaimer. She says:—

> "When so many learned divines and distinguished philosophers have written on the subject of what happens to the human personality after death, I can hardly think that my opinion, even if I had one—which I have not—can be of great value."

This disclaimer seems quite needless. If the "learned divines and distinguished philosophers" were writing concerning anything they *knew*, Lady Grove's hesitancy would be highly commendable. But they are not. None of them know any more about the other side of death than she does. And when none of the participants in a discussion possess knowledge none of them can claim superiority. Under such conditions, cleric and layman, philosopher and fool are upon an absolute equality. Ignorance, like death, makes all equal.

Having disarmed antagonism by her modesty, Lady Groves next proceeds to pull these same "learned divines and philosophers" up to the mark by reminding them that they have forgotten to, so to speak, verify their quotations. They assume that something survives death, that they know what that something is, and then proceed to inquire what becomes of it. So says Lady Grove:—

> "It is futile to inquire into the unknowable, and also that, as each individual varies during his lifetime to such an extent as hardly to retain the same individuality manifested at one time or the other of his existence, it may be worth while to inquire *what* it is that is supposed to survive after death of all the complex phases and characteristics and characters even that go to make up one single human organism."

That, I repeat, hits the nail on the head. What is it that survives death? Something survives, certainly—the indestructibility of matter, or the persistence of force, guarantees that. But what? Everything turns upon that point. And it is one that believers seldom, if ever, face. They tell us of their faith in a future life, the comfort this belief gives them—both interesting enough as revelations of their own mental states, but absolutely valueless from any other point of view. They declare *I* shall survive, or *you* will survive, but never face the crucial question of What is the *I* that is going to survive?

What they *ought* to mean is plain enough. What much earlier generations meant is plain enough. Every person is made up to every other person, primarily, of a body possessing a certain shape, size, and color, with their varying peculiarities. Associated with these physical peculiarities are certain mental ones summed up under the heading of temperament, disposition, or character. Thus, I recognise John Smith because he is six feet high, instead of seven, white and not black, cheerful and not morose, sensible and not stupid, honest and not a thief. Reverse all these distinguishing marks, and he ceases to be *my* John Smith. I do not know him. More, if you could suddenly change a white, six foot, honest, sensible, cheerful John Smith, into a black, seven foot, dishonest, morose John Smith, he would not know himself. For all practical purposes he would be a different individual.

What people *ought* to mean, then, by surviving death is that each one of us, with all our physical and mental peculiarities, will persist unchanged; or, at least, with no more than the gradual change to which we are subject here. To say that we shall *not* possess the same kind of body, that people will not be short and tall, fair and dark, well-shaped and ill-shaped, is to deny the existence of the principal and primary marks by which we recognise each other. If in the next world *I* do not look or feel or think as I do here, it is a sheer abuse of language to say that my personality survives. It does not. Some other personality may, but it is no more *me* than I am a Central African now. All the talk of meeting again husband, or wife, or children, or friends, implies this. The belief is really based upon the persistence—unchanged—of the whole individual, physical and mental, that we now know. That is what the belief in a future life originally implied. And it implied that because the "soul" was originally the double of the living person, although a finer or more etherealised copy.

It is the persistence of the unchanged individual that is required, not the transformation of a "material" into a "spiritual" body—that is mere theological gibberish; nor yet the persistence of the elements of the body in some unindividualised form. And the moment the question is raised in this form we begin to realise, not merely the difficulty of believing, but the positive unintelligibility of the doctrine. The body we know does not survive. With death, decay and disintegration sets in, and is complete within a comparatively brief period. And the actual resurrection is not to-day a matter of mere disbelief; it is a physical impossibility. The resurrection of the body belongs to a pre-scientific age, to a time when almost anything was possible because very little was certain.

Under various forms, the reply to the question raised by Lady Grove is that man is a duality. He is made up of body and mind, or body and soul; and while the latter uses the former, it is independent of it, and survives it. But this is pure assumption; and when the disbeliever is asked to prove in what way mind can be shown to be dependent upon nervous action, the proper reply is to point to the fact, and leave it. The connection between mental phenomena and nervous processes is a fact. It is not the Freethinker's place to prove a fact that is as plain as daylight. *We* are not called upon to prove how they can be connected; it is the believer's duty to point out how they can be separated. We *know* they exist together; the question is, How can they exist apart? Can we even conceive of them existing apart? For man as we know him is not a duality. Man as we know him is a unity. He is not two, but one; and it is for those who hold that he is more than one to produce evidence for it.

It seems attractive to those people who habitually think in a fog, and to whom, consequently, words appear to have an inherent value, to speak of the mind as using the body, and that the differentiating peculiarities of mind are due to the body conditioning the mind. But grant that this were so, how does that help the theory of survival? No matter how caused, my personality is made up of the sum-total of my motives, thoughts, emotions, etc. If these are what they are because, having a peculiar bodily structure, they can only find expression in one way, they still remain the constituents of *me*. Remove this assumed conditioning body, and what becomes of me? Again, it cannot be my personality that survives, because, the body being no longer there, the conditions which created that personality have disappeared. You might have the survival of a "spiritual substance," but it would certainly not be me. *I* am annihilated as thoroughly on this hypothesis as on that of the most thoroughgoing Materialism.

There is really no evidence whatever that mind is independent of, or separate from, the body. A century and a half of scientific labor and research has furnished a host of presumptions against any such theory, and there is not a single spark of evidence in its favor. There exists a host of assumptions, a number of ingenious theories, forced interpretations of obscure and little understood mental phenomena, but of reliable evidence not a shred. And if it is without evidence in fact, the "soul" theory is absolutely useless as an explanation of anything. It cannot explain the phenomena of consciousness, it gives us no clearer conception of the nature of mental life. It only adds to the diffi-

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culties already existing that of assuming the existence of an unknown substance. Even the late Professor William James was forced to admit that "The soul-theory is a complete superficiality" so far as accounting for the actually verified facts of consciousness goes, and adds, "Altogether the 'soul' is an outbirth of that sort of philosophising whose great maxim, according to Dr. Hodgson, is, 'Whatever you are *totally* ignorant of, assert to be the explanation of everything else.'" So also another writer, Dr. Mellone, in the course of an argument for a future life, is forced to admit that "Modern psychology has nothing to contribute in favor of a belief in survival.....Psychology has effectually disposed of the conception of the soul and body as two separate things." Finally, we have Professor Munsterberg declaring, "The philosopher who bases the hope of immortality on a theory of brain functions.....seems to me on the same ground with the astronomer who seeks with his telescope for a place in the universe where no space exists, and where there would be thus undisturbed room for God and the eternal bodiless souls."

The truth is, that we do not know mind as an independent force, and it would never have been assumed to be so but for the need to bolster up a theory that rests upon no better foundation than that of primitive animism. "Mind"—if we must exalt an abstraction into an entity—is one of the most dependent of forces known to us. It is affected by most, if not all, bodily states, by degrees of temperature, by food, by air, by the secretory efficiency of various organs. We know nothing and can conceive nothing of "mind" apart from the activity of the central nervous system. Consciousness is not indeed co-extensive with nervous action, but nervous action *is* co-extensive with consciousness, and the correlation of the two is such that "no psychosis without neurosis" is now an accepted scientific axiom. The theory that mind has an existence apart from the body is a theological necessity, it may be a metaphysical speculation, but it is absolutely without evidence, and has no place in modern science.

In this science is only endorsing everyday experience. We all know how seriously affections of such organs as the liver or the kidneys affect frames of mind. We are all aware, in the same connection, of the importance of diet and of pure air. We see changes of mental disposition consequent on injury. We see mental character modified by alcohol or drugs. We see this "independent" force made quarrelsome or maudlin by an overdose of whisky or helpless by an inhalation of chloroform. Science only carries common observation a little farther in showing that a certain quantity and quality of the grey matter of the brain are indispensable to particular mental phenomena. It also shows that while this correspondence has grown more complex in the course of natural development, it has yet remained constant throughout. In health and disease the connection between nervous states and mental phenomena remain. It is admitted by all in practice—and by nearly all in theory. C. COHEN.

(To be concluded.)

Positive Freethought.

As a rule, especially in believing circles, a Freethinker is supposed to be a most miserable person who goes through life mourning the loss of something of incalculable value which he is powerless to recover. He would give the world to be able to hold once more the simple beliefs he was taught to cherish in his childhood. The Rev. A. C. Hill, a popular London preacher, informs us that all sensible men must take their unbelief "as a matter for regret rather than delight." The dream has vanished, it is true, but they "cannot refrain from casting a wistful glance on what was once to them a veridical reality." There is no doubt but that a dream *seems* real while it lasts, but there is absolutely no evidence of its reality save merely this *seeming*. When it is over the intellect is positive that it was a pure hallucination, and surely unbelief in the truth of a hallucination cannot reasonably be "a matter for regret." But Mr. Hill, falling back upon the great Bergsonian fallacy, declares that "fortunately for us all, the world is not governed by the scholar," and that the intellect is an inadequate and often misleading guide. He tells us that one of the most pathetic figures of the last generation is that of Goldwin Smith, who failed, not because his intellect was defective, but because he lacked faith—"the faith that can move mountains and make weak men and erring men into captains of the hosts of the Lord." Listen to the following strange estimate of Goldwin Smith:—

> "With intellect sufficient to set up a dozen ordinary men he had been denied, or else had lost, that buoyant gladness of the soul, that power to hold on to the few things that men may prove in their own heart-beats, such as the worth of man and the exceeding goodness of the Most High God. Here lies the secret of his non-success. And the moral of it all is the old and trite one, that the saving forces of the world are not intellectual alone. They have their genesis in a certain majestic faith towards God and man—a faith which once and for ever was verified when the Lord of men bought his crown by the acceptance of the Cross" (*British Congregationalist*, June 4).

Now, we shall expose the inaccuracy of that verdict by means of the very article in which it occurs. Mr. Hill traces the failure of Goldwin Smith to the fact that "the cloister had left its mark upon him," to the fastidiousness which put it beyond the power of this stern but genuine lover of the right and true "to feel that the drunken boor who goes rolling along the road shouting his song of delight to the watching moon, and thanking the kind fates that still permit a man to get drunk when he likes, was made of the same flesh and blood as himself," in short, not to the absence of faith in God, but to an icy wall that "encompassed him, through which not even his dearest friends could penetrate." Then he naively adds:—

> "He had not that diabolic gift of familiarity that made Mirabeau a terror to his foes and a perennial joy to his friends. In the midst of a crowd and at his own fireside he was always lamentably alone."

In reality, then, the one thing lacking in the case of Goldwin Smith was not "a certain majestic faith towards God," but that greatness and charm of personality which is always the dominating factor in an efficient life. Mr. Hill might remind us that a great and charming personality is the outcome of intimate commerce with God, but his allusion to Mirabeau forbids him to make that retort, because Mirabeau was at once one of the most distinguished statesmen and orators France has ever seen and a most uncompromising unbeliever. He had numerous faults, and who has not? but he was a most commanding and lovable personality, and his power with the people was immense. It is the opinion of historical critics, among whom is Carlyle, that had he lived a little longer the Reign of Terror would probably never have taken place. Though he lacked faith in God and immortality, he was yet, according to Carlyle, the one man in France in whom the light of genius itself brightly shone, "which was never yet base and hateful," simply "the one man in France who could have done any good as Minister." Thus, Mr. Hill's case for the impossibility of achieving the highest success in life apart from religious beliefs collapses the moment we seriously consider it, and it is he himself who shows how utterly fragile a case it is.

It seems that a believer is wholly incapable of furnishing an accurate description of an unbeliever. Because we do not believe in God it is taken for granted that we disbelieve in man and cannot appreciate him at his true value. At every point Freethought is regarded as a system of negation. One of the chief characters in Tolstoy's great novel,

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Anna Karenina, is called Levin, who is described by his friends as a Freethinker. Tolstoy says of him: "He could not believe; he was also equally unable absolutely to disbelive. This confusion of feelings caused him extreme pain and annoyance during the time allotted to his devotions." He fell in love with a beautiful young princess who was a Christian, and arrangements were being made for the marriage. Someone asked him if had his certificate of confession, as without it he could not be married. He had not been to confession for nine years. He was told that he must go to communion and obtain the certificate. Everybody assured him that it was only a matter of form, the priests being exceedingly accommodating. At this point Tolstoy gives us a vivid picture of the odious hypocrisy prevalent in the Greek Church. Levin appeared before several priests, and last of all before a little old man, who, crossing his hands under his stole, asked him:—

> "'Do you believe all that the Holy Apostolic Church teaches us?'
>
> "'I have doubted, I still doubt, everything,' said Levin, in a voice which sounded disagreeable to his own ears, and he was silent.
>
> "The priest waited a few moments, then closing his eyes and speaking very rapidly,—
>
> "'To doubt is characteristic of human weakness; we must pray the Lord Almighty to strengthen us. What are your principal sins?' The priest spoke without the least interruption, and as though he were afraid of losing time.
>
> "'My principal sin is doubt, which I cannot get rid of; I am nearly always in doubt, and I doubt everything'" (vol. ii., p. 81).

Throughout the empty ceremony Levin persisted in representing himself as one who doubted everything; but he returned to his friends with the certificate of confession in his pocket, and was duly married with all the formalities of the Greek Church.

Tolstoy, like Mr. Hill, is incapable of portraying a genuine Freethinker. According to him, the Freethinkers of his own day in Russia were "new-fashioned savages who rushed headlong into Atheism, Materialism, universal negation." Levin's wife "continued to go to church and to say her prayers with the calm conviction that she was fulfilling a duty," while her husband "amused himself, possibly, by calling himself an unbeliever, just as he did when he jested about her *broderie anglaise*." Our contention is that Tolstoy was totally unacquainted with the fundamental principles of Freethought, and that, in consequence, his portrait of a Freethinker is a miserable caricature. He makes Kitty, Levin's wife, say of him:—

> "Why does he spend all his time reading those philosophical books, which do not help him at all? He himself says that he longs for faith. Why doesn't he believe? Probably he thinks too much.....How can he be without faith, when he has such a warm heart, and is afraid to grieve even a child? He never thinks of himself—always of others" (vol. ii., pp. 443-4).

No, Levin was never a convinced Freethinker; he stopped at the half-way house known as Doubt. It was not in him, he had not the intellectual resourcefulness requisite, to complete the journey. Of course, he was profoundly miserable, yearning to return to the position he had abandoned. He could not live without knowing what he was, and why he existed, and so, devoid of pluck to go forward towards the land of complete emancipation, he went back to the region of intellectually blinding superstition and credulity, and accepted once more the answers of theology to his perplexing questions on the sole authority of the Church of his fathers. Had he completed his mental emancipation he would never have returned into the house of bondage. Once a man has tasted realities, he will never be able to subsist on dreams again. We often hear of conversions from Atheism to Christianity, but not one of them can be substantiated. If a so-called Atheist embraces Theism, it follows that his profession of Atheism must have been false. Once an American slave made his escape into Canada, he never voluntarily went back. The love of freedom is instinctive, while slavery of every kind is unnatural. To us, a return from Atheism to Theism is unthinkable. When a Theist becomes an Atheist, he merely reverts to the state wherein he was born—from Unnature to Nature, from dream-life to real life. And Atheism is not equivalent to universal negation, its negations being simply in order to affirmations. It negates the supernatural that it may affirm the natural, and give it the place and importance it demands and deserves. Freethought is negative merely in order to be positive, just as the builder is destructive in order to make clear the way for construction. And we aver that in Freethought alone is perfect mental peace to be acquired; and the truth, whenever clearly seen, maketh free, and is dearer than life.

J. T. LLOYD.

Yankee Claims for Christianity.

> "John P. Robinson, he
> Sez they didn't know everything down in Judee."
> —LOWELL, *Biglow Papers*.

A FEW years ago the shadow cast by the American theologian was small; but to-day, when the revivalists of the strenuous republic are occupying some of the most prominent pulpits of London, and their works are reprinted in England by tens of thousands, the situation is changed. Cocksure Americanism is no longer confined to the land of tall buildings and tall statements, and the weaker English Nonconformists are rapidly following in the footsteps of the imported theologians.

Dr. W. E. Barton, a distinguished American Congregationalist minister, has voiced the "spread-eagle" claims of his countrymen, and he has written an unconsciously entertaining article to that end in the American periodical, *Faith and Doubt*. Such is his transparent sense of humor that he has incorporated a manifesto of belief drawn up by some English Nonconformist scholars as embodying the essential truths of orthodox theology. As Dr. Barton has made a profound study of theological matters, he must be perfectly aware that such statements would be instantly repudiated by the Greek, English, and Roman Churches, and by many Nonconformist bodies, such as the Presbyterians and Unitarians.

Nonconformist though he be, Dr. Barton has the true priestly dislike of science, which he assumes, quaintly, to be "brand new." "Evolution," he says calmly, "is only fifty years old." Has he never heard of Lucretius, who before the Christian era suggested the theory of Evolution in his great poem, "De Rerum Natura"? Other branches of study, such as Comparative Religion, Dr. Barton says, are still more novel. We may grant this; but gratefully remember that this science, young as it is, has sapped the very foundations of the Christian belief. Moreover, Dr. Barton ignores the age-long conflict between religion and science, which keener eyes than his have perceived. Scientific teaching and investigation, or, indeed, any form of intellectual liberty, have always been incompatible with assent to the dogmas of religion. The entire organisation of priestcraft has invariably been brought to bear against science on the ground that it is a most powerful solvent of religious faith. This resistance of the Church of Christ to the prevalent opinions of scientists has no indisputable claim to respect. When we remember that the system of Copernicus, the discoveries of Galileo, the law of gravitation of Newton, the Darwinian theory, and the Spencerean philosophy were all in turn received in the same venerable quarter with equal disfavor and derision, we attribute that resistance, not to the invariable weakness of the scientists' arguments, but to the general clerical dislike of knowledge. Chemistry was opposed as an impious prying into the secrets of "God," and the early chemists were charitably regarded as agents of "the Devil." Physiology and medicine were opposed on similar grounds. Chloroform, one of the greatest blessings ever conferred

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on the human race, was resented as an infidel attempt to alleviate the pains "God" meant to be associated with childbirth. Geology was also opposed by "the Bride of Christ" because it made the chronology of the Bible look ridiculous. Biology was antagonised because it turned the Adam and Eve story into a myth. The Church always bitterly resented inquiry, and preferred explaining natural phenomena by mythological invention and revelation. Even Mrs. Eddy's attempt to erect a purely "Christian" science is disfavored by the orthodox.

Dr. Barton's delightful assumption that theologic dogma is necessary to morality needs direct contradiction. This inaccuracy of speech is simply the result of clerical bias. It is asserted by priests and clergymen who are attacking secular education for children, that without religious teaching morality is impossible. The "supernatural" view is that every act is moral which is in obedience to the commands of Deity; that these commands are known by direct revelation from "God," or through the conscience, which it is alleged is implanted by "God" in each person, and which decides for each individual what acts are right and what are wrong.

The Freethought objection is that the commands of Diety must be expressed either to individuals or to the whole race. In the first case, the sceptics ask, "How is it to be determined when any person is reliable who professes to be the recipient and interpreter of 'God's' commands?" In the second case it is asked, "Is it likely that any such command would have been given by 'God' without its most complete recognition by the whole human race?" The Mahdi claimed to be God-sent; Joanna Southcott declared herself charged with a special revelation; Joseph Smith professed to have a direct message from heaven; so did Mahomet; so did Jesus. How is it to be decided which prophet is sane and truthful? Is it to be determined by the numbers who accept, or reject, the message? If so, at what date or within what limits does the numerical strength become material? There are more Mormons now than there were Christians within a similar period. Mohammedanism in some countries would poll an overwhelming majority. Buddhism counts to-day more followers than can be claimed for Christianity. There is no single divine revelation universally admitted to be the command of "God." As for the Bible, the large majority of the world's inhabitants do not accept it. The greater number of the human family have never accepted it, and even of the minority who nominally take the Bible for their guide, Christians think the Old Testament imperfect, while the Jews reject the New Testament. Conscience, so called, varies in the same individual at different periods of his life and alters under different conditions of health. Three centuries ago it was moral in England and America to believe in witches, and it was moral to kill a witch. To-day it is immoral to believe in witchcraft; and to kill a witch would be regarded as murder. One hundred years ago it was moral to trade in slaves, to own slaves, and to breed slaves. Within living recollection it was moral to own and breed slaves in the United States. Why did Christians for centuries trade in slaves if morality is dependent on the immutable judgments of a God-implanted conscience? How is it that slavery, which was defended by clerical moralists only a few years ago, has now become utterly indefensible?

In England, until recently, it was immoral to marry the sister of a deceased wife, and the immorality was so clear that the children born of such union were illegitimate and legally treated as such. At the same time, in Canada and Australia, it was moral to make such marriages, and the children were legitimate. Since then the English conscience has fallen into line with the Colonial conscience, and these marriages are now recognised as being moral. The Freethinker asks how this is explicable from the supernatural standpoint?

One cannot always tell the condition of a man's mind from his writings. The most vehement assertions of the truth of a principle may be accompanied by a feeling not expressed in type, that certainty is lacking. Some such feeling was not absent in Dr. Barton, or he would not have penned the following remarkable admission, remarkable because it is preceded by such strenuous effort to prove Christianity unassailable. Says Dr. Barton, referring to the "essential truths" of the Christian religion, these "must express themselves in every generation, not merely in the language which men are speaking, but also with such imagery and unconscious figures of speech as are current and form the necessary background of men's thought." Such quibbling is only the beginning of the end. If we re-examine the Gospels in the light of the twentieth century, we shall find them anything but unassailable truths. "Miracles," said Matthew Arnold, in a celebrated passage, "do not happen." The newest of new theologians echo the same cry. Yet one thing must be evident to every unprejudiced observer. Christianity is based upon miracle. It is on the truth or falsehood of miracles that the personality of Christ must stand or fall. According to the Gospels, it was by miracles that he attested his divine sovereignty. It was by miracles that he won his first following. It was by miracles that he proclaimed himself the "Son of God," and without the credulous belief in the miracles Christianity would have died in its infancy. It is not, indeed, a creed of love and human brotherhood which has fascinated so many millions through so many centuries. Christ claimed that he was "God," and his "proofs" were that he multiplied loaves and fishes, healed the sick, and restored the dead to life. The whole question is reduced to one of facts. If we can believe that Christ was really born of a virgin, that he performed many prodigies, and that he actually and finally left the earth by ascension, then we need not hesitate to accept the pretensions of Christianity. If, on the other hand, we believe that the proofs for the miracles are inadequate, or that natural law is never broken, no amount of restatement in terms of twentieth-century enlightenment will make believable the miraculous events upon which the dogmas of Christianity are based.

The most important Christian body—the Roman Catholic Church—recognises this, and affirms that its own miracles are a continuation of those wrought by Christ, his disciples, and the saints. They tell us that the cures at Lourdes and elsewhere are precisely such as those mentioned in the Bible, and that the apparition of the Virgin to peasant children at La Salette is as genuine as the recorded appearance of Moses and Elias to a small company at Galilee. The ecclesiastics of the Greek Church take the same attitude, and contend that the annual revelation of the Holy Fire which takes place in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem is simply the latest link in a great chain that extends back to the commencement of the history of God's chosen people.

Dr. Barton admits that the present is a time of transition; but he does not appear to realise the effect of his own statement. The religion of otherworldliness is dead, or practically dead. The power of the Church has waned, and to-day exercises little influence except low down in the intellectual scale. The freethinking pioneers have sounded the march of humanity towards broader pastures and freer air. Honest human laughter has been heard in the place of the sobs of the religious, while the newer evangel of freedom and equality has been spreading over the earth. But suddenly, just as poor human nature has begun to breathe freely, this whisper of the ghosts of the Middle Ages is heard again, and the Nonconformist bodies, the youngest and rawest recruits of the Army of Superstition, are appealed to for corroboration of the fiendish formula that the human heart is evil, happiness a temptation, and the flesh a snare.

Granting that Dr. Barton and those who think with him are honest, so were their prototypes; so were the old priests and [illegible]sons who preached for century after century th[illegible]octrine of "original sin,"

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the corruption of man's heart, and eternal damnation. What Calvin and Knox said we now smile at; what Dr. Barton and his friends say we also smile at. It must be so, unless we are to accept an interpretation of Life's riddle which leaves Humanity for ever within the gloomy portals of Superstition. The latest Yankee Nonconformist statement of the claims of Christianity is in reality an indictment of orthodoxy. It explains nothing and adds nothing, but leaves the world where Calvin and Knox found it, a world given over to devilry, darkness, and despair.

MIMNERMUS.

Acid Drops.

Monsignor Benson, novelist and Roman Catholic priest, has been lecturing at Caxton Hall on "Modern Miracles." This consecrated gentleman is not a fool, but he can play the fool, which, as the proverb says, takes a good deal of ability. "I know that miracles can happen," he said, "because they do." But this is not an argument; it is a repetition of the same thing in different words. That miracles can happen, and that they do happen, are really the same statement. They can happen because they do happen, and they do happen because they can happen. This is simply turning round a wheel, one half painted (say) red and the other half blue. The red doesn't prove the blue; the blue doesn't prove the red; they are arbitrarily indicated halves of one and the same thing. As for what Monsignor Benson calls *modern* miracles, he can only refer us to Lourdes, where some nervous cures, mostly temporary, undoubtedly occur, and where, for the rest, imposture is carried on as a fine art. Nobody ever goes to Lourdes with one leg and comes away with two. When that happens it will be time enough to talk about miracles.

It must have been the ignorance of his audience that tempted Monsignor Benson to refer to the miracles said to have been wrought at the tomb of Thomas á Becket at Canterbury. A drop of the saint's blood put into a bottle multiplied itself, and the bottle became full; even then it could be diluted again and again, and sold by monks for money in opposition to the doctors' medicine. This is the least gross of the stories connected with Thomas á Becket's corpse. A lively account of some of the others may be found in Froude's fourth volume of *Short Studies*. They are enough to make a cat laugh or a dog vomit.

A test is applied to the miracles at Lourdes, says Monsignor Benson. Yes, and a committee of monks was appointed to examine each story in detail at the shrine of St. Thomas of Canterbury. "Their duty," Froude says, "was to assure themselves that the alleged miracle was reality and not imagination. Yet thousands were allowed to pass as adequately and clearly proved. Every day under their own eyes the laws of nature were set aside." The miracles became more and more wonderful. At first weak eyes were made strong; then sight wholly lost was restored. At first sick men were healed; then dead men were brought back to life. A test indeed! Monsignor Benson is a true priest. He belongs to a Church that has always lied as much as the people would stand it. And there has never been very much limitation in that. "The prophets," says an old book, "prophesy falsely, and my people love to have it so."

Monsignor Benson related how a woman at Lourdes, with "great wounds" in her back, was "entirely and permanently" cured in a day or two. We should much like to know the name and address of that woman, and also whether any reliable person saw her before and after her alleged cure. We are quite ready to accept the stories of *some* cures at Lourdes. It all depends upon the complaint. But "great wounds" entirely cured in a day or two by prayers to the Virgin! It makes Jonah's whale look trivial. Anyway, while there can be found people who believe that, there is small reason for wondering at their believing the Biblical miracles.

"Providence" doesn't seem to help people anywhere else in the world but at Lourdes, and Monsignor Benson might remind it of the fact. Devastating floods have occurred in China. There has been immense destruction of property, and the loss of thousands of lives. Yet the Scripture says "He doeth all things well." *Very* well.

Rev. Everard Digby, vicar of St. Agatha's, Shoreditch, acted as referee at the prize-fight between Bombardier Wells and Colin Bell on Tuesday evening. Some good Christians objected to this. But did not Jesus himself attend such a match, perhaps with a "bit on" one of the combatants. "It is I, Peter, be not afraid" used to be quoted in a common joke in our younger days as—"Hit his eye, Peter, be not afraid."

Despite the formation of the League of Worshiping Children, the youngsters show no increasing anxiety to worship. Quite the other way, in fact. The *Methodist Recorder* publishes the figures for Sunday-school attendance for 1913-14 among the Wesleyan Methodists, and there is a decrease of over 11,000 scholars. Last year the decrease was over 12,000. This, it must be remembered, does not allow for any growth in population. That would make the decrease much greater. During the last five years there has been an average loss of ten schools per year.

The *Recorder* asks, "What can we expect for the future of the Church so long as this sinister sign hangs in front of us?" What, indeed! The only chance of keeping people Christian is to make them so while they are young. Christianity, nowadays, is not a religion that appeals to the uncorrupted adult intelligence, and the loss of the children means cutting off the only genuine source of supply. That is a peculiarity of modern Christianity. Art, or science, or literature, or politics makes its appeal to the adult, and, no matter what his childhood may have been, he may still be won to these in his maturity. But with Christianity, unless the seeds are sown in the young and impressionable mind, the case is hopeless. We *know* it, and all the clergy *feel* it.

The following is from the *Daily Chronicle* (June 26) report of the Salvation Army International Congress:—

> "In between the meetings the Overseas delegates have been exploring London. Nearly all made a pilgrimage to Mile-end, to see where the Salvation Army was born, and an American officer was seen to kneel and kiss the stone which marks the spot where the old General held his first open-air services. Many also went to the General's grave at Abney Park.
>
> "At the Congress Hall, Clapton, one delegate picked up some pebbles from the path, saying, 'I shall take these home. The old General may have trodden on them.' Another place of pilgrimage was a room in a house in Gore-road, Hackney, where relics of the General have been preserved—his desk, his table, a chair, and the bed on which he died. In this house the General lived in the early days of the Army, and after serving as the first training home it is now a home of rest for officers."

This is what the old Reformation Protestants used to call relic-mongering and Roman idolatry. It seems to come easy to all sorts of superstitionists.

The publication of the *Life of Walter Bagehot* by his sister-in-law, Mrs. Barrington, reminds us of Bagehot's sardonic humor. A friend of his had a church in the grounds near his house. "I like that," said Bagehot; "it's well the tenants should not be quite sure that the landlord's power stops with this world."

An account of the work of the Rev. S. F. Collier, of Manchester, which appears in *T. P.'s Weekly*, mentions that he has organised labor yards, women's refuges, training homes, labor bureaux, and lodging-house visitations. What Secularists these Christians are!

A writer in *T. P.'s Weekly*, referring to the stories told by Christians concerning Colonel Ingersoll and Charles Bradlaugh, that both these gentlemen took out their watches and challenged "God" to prove his existence by striking them dead in three minutes, says that "the persistence of tales of this kind proves the underlying mysticism of life even in a materialistic age." It does nothing of the kind; it proves the existence and popularity of Christian liars.

"Men need religion to prevent them from worshiping idols," says Mr. G. K. Chesterton. The Roman Catholic Church, to which G. K. C. belongs, supplies both for the same foe.

The old midsummer Fire festival, of Druidical origin, is still celebrated in remote districts, particularly at Tarbolton, Ayrshire. The Christian superstition has only one fire festival, and that lasts for ever, and the bulk of the human race will be participants in it.

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The *Methodist Times* is nibbling at the bait recently thrown out by the Archbishops of York and Canterbury. It will be remembered that the Archbishops repudiated any desire for exclusive privileges, and said they would welcome in any reconstructed Second Chamber representatives of Churches other than their own. The *Methodist Times* does not decline the suggestion; it guards itself by saying that Free Churches are not anxious to be represented there, and thinks such representation would be extremely difficult. We think so too. A House of Lords as it is, is bad enough; but a Second Chamber partly filled with representatives of the Methodists, Baptists, Catholics, Salvation Army, and all the other odds and ends of the Christian world, would be an institution that only a Swift could adequately describe. One can understand a State teaching, or providing for the teaching, of *a* religion. That is a logical and an intelligible proposition. But a State endowing and teaching all forms of the Christian religion—some of which quite negative others—would be indeed Bedlam let loose.

The suggestion is, however, rather an astute one; and the Archbishops take the Nonconformist opposition to the Establishment at its proper value. They know, as we have often pointed out, that the bulk of Nonconformists are not objecting to the State establishment of religion, but only to the State establishment of a Church. And it is quite within the sphere of probability that some such plan as suggested may be seriously put forward as a means of perpetuating the State endowment of religion. If this were done, it would only be the policy of the Education Act over again. Neither the Church of England nor the Nonconformists ever seriously consider the presence of others in the State, or face the simple issue that the proper policy for the modern State is to stand aloof from all religions, protecting all in the expression of their opinions and favoring none. The Bishops are in the present House of Lords because they happen to be a relic of the Dark Ages. And it is to be hoped that, with the abolition of the hereditary principle in legislation, they will be abolished also. There is really no greater justification for the representatives of religion to be in the Legislature than the representatives of anything else. All who are there should be there by the vote of the people. There is no other sensible justification for their presence.

Mrs. Besant has discovered what will be to many a new cause of criminality, but which others will recognise as a very old spiritualistic theory served up afresh with a dressing of theosophic jargon. When a person commits murder, she told a Queen's Hall audience, it is because someone who has previously committed murder, and who are on "the other side of death," prompts them to do so. That, she says, is one of the reasons against capital punishment, and why in countries where capital punishment is common murders tend to increase. It seems we are all the time packing the next world with murderous spirits, who compel those still living to murder also. Their frequency is "due to the prompting which came from those miserable people who went into another world on the other side of death careless of what became of them." And with the abolition of capital punishment there comes a decrease in the number of murders, because there "is a diminution in the number of people who are forced hurriedly into the world on the other side of death." It is all so simple—and *so* stupid.

Stupid is really the only name for a theory of this kind. It has not even the merit of offering an explanation of what is otherwise unexplainable. For the facts of the case are adequately covered by what we know to be true. This is, the connection between the culture of a people and their criminal code. Where one is low the other is brutal. People accustomed to witness pain, and inflict pain on each other in daily life will, naturally, not hesitate to inflict pain by way of punishment. Familiarity breeds, if not contempt, at least, carelessness, here as elsewhere. When people were hanged for sheep-stealing, as Mrs. Besant says, sheep-stealing was common. But this particular crime diminished, not because we ceased to send sheep-stealers to the other world, but owing principally to commercial and industrial developments in other directions. Of course, the hanging did not stop the sheep-stealing. People were so familiar with it that it lost its terrors. Punishment, as Beccaria said, to be effective must be certain, and it must not become common. It is the brutalising effects of certain forms of punishment on those whose are alive that society has to dread. We need not trouble how it affects those who are dead.

Parallels are often drawn between our own civilisation and that of the Roman Empire during the days of its decline. Here is another that may be worth consideration. Socially, Rome showed the same extremes of great wealth and great poverty that we have to-day. It was oppressed by a swollen urban and a depleted agricultural population. A useless luxuried class developed. The more intellectual men and women of the time had ceased to believe in the old religion, and this gave the cruder and more superstitious believers a chance to assume positions of importance and control. The idle rich who were not overburdened with brains were always seeking some new sensation, and many found it in cultivating various forms of "occultism," which were as fashionable then as they are now. These facts—the withdrawal of the controlling influence of superior intelligence from the official religion of the country, and the craze for mystical religion amongst the idle classes—were very prominent features of the time, and played no small part in bringing about the retrograde movement that led to the establishment of Christianity. And they are the chief elements that make for retrogression to-day.

Judging by the authoritative tone of his pulpit utterances, one would naturally come to the conclusion that Principal Forsyth is God's plenipotentiary on earth. In the most dogmatic manner he speaks in the name of the so-called Sovereign of the Universe. Preaching on faith the other Sunday at Kensington, he said that men's "power with Christ is of more moment than Christ's own power over men." That is a strange assertion; but here is a stranger one still: "A living faith in him *does* move and alter the action of God." Jesus said, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove" (Mat. xvii. 20); but Dr. Forsyth, a much superior authority, contradicts Jesus flatly, saying, "We *cannot* move mountains, but we *can* move the God who made the mountains." The fact is that mountains have never been moved by faith, knowing which this modern divine conveniently gives Jesus the slip.

In other words, defeated by the known, the reverend gentleman flies for shelter to the unknown. It is so delightfully *safe* to talk about God. He never contradicts, or in any way interrupts, the speaker. Neither praise nor blame has ever tempted him to utter his voice. Not even the fact that men have always fought and killed one another in controversies concerning him has induced him to interfere. Is not this inexplicable if God there be? We know nothing about God; but we confidently challenge the reverend Principal to adduce one instance of an alteration occurring in the action of Nature, which is the only action known to us, in answer to human prayer.

Mr. J. Ramsay Macdonald was speaking at Leicester last Sunday. He represents the town in Parliament, and he evidently knows the tenure by which he holds his seat. He praised the good old orthodox view of the Sunday question, and even recommended the adoption of the Scottish Sabbath. All the talk about turning Sunday into a day of recreation, he said, was humbug and dangerous. He appealed to religious organisations to see that Sunday is not secularised. He was in favor of a "dull" Sunday. Well, now, we are quite willing to let his Sunday be as dull as he chooses to make it. What we object to is the right he arrogates to himself of inflicting "dull" Sundays upon other people. That is the real point at issue; not Mr. Macdonald's own preference, but his claim to make it the rule for everybody else. Fortunately the "dull" Sunday is doomed. A thousand Ramsay Macdonald's could not save it. And calling it "Scottish" will not help it much in England. For there is an England, after all, in spite of 1603 and what some call the Scottish annexation.

The "Methody" airs, as William Cobbett called them, which some of these working-class leaders give themselves are quite astonishing. Now and then they beat the bourgeois at his own game. You would almost think that they had invented morality, and that religion was one of their monopolies.

Mr. R. J. Campbell's progress is simply phenomenal. At last he has seen the eyes of God, tells his people all about them, and flatters them with the assurance that one day soon, when they "stand free from the shackles of sense," they too shall see them, and thereafter to all eternity look at all things through those ineffable Divine orbits. And there are still superficially intelligent people who can listen to such balderdash apparently without turning a hair.

For two thousand years the omnipotent Savior has been diligently seeking the lost world, and for six thousand years

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the lost world has been yearning unspeakably, from the depth of its sore need, for the omnipotent Savior, and to this day the two have never once met. Is it not all wholly inexplicable and passing strange, except only on the assumption that the tragi-comical story is a complete illusion? And in highest comedy is there not always the making of deepest tragedy?

The Catholic Bishop of Northampton has the courage to face the facts concerning the religious outlook. On the one hand, he warns his followers against the modern views on religion, which he stigmatises as "cruel, impudent lies," and on the other declares "that throughout the world religion is in bad odor with the male sex." This, of course, is an intolerable reflection on the female sex; and yet what his right reverence says is entirely true, though with an ever-increasing number of brainy women religion is in worse odor even than with the men. What the Bishop fails to realise is that the modern mind is steadily outgrowing and abandoning all the ancient superstitions, and getting to look at them with disgust.

How marvellously hazy and illogical, though superficially plausible, some would-be-men of God are, to be sure. Under a cloak of exceeding cleverness, one of them explodes into verse in the following manner:—

"There is no unbelief.
Whoever plants a seed beneath the sod,
And waits to see it push away the clod,
He trusts in God.
There is no unbelief.
Whoever says, when clouds are in the sky,
'Be patient, heart, light breaketh by and by,'
Trusts the most high."

When Daniel Webster, the celebrated American barrister, rose to address the jury in defence of the prisoner, on one occasion, all that he said in reply to the long and eloquent address of the prosecuting counsel was this: "Daniel Webster says, That's nonsense"; and the jury unanimously agreed with him. Well, of the sentiment expressed in the verses just quoted we venture to say, "That's nonsense." Unless Nature and God mean precisely the same thing, the lines are utterly meaningless.

"From seven to fourteen is the time for character building," says Mrs. Annie Besant. The lady need not have studied the "wisdom of the East" for twenty years to find this out, for it is engraved in every school copy-book.

A pious father found his small son's pocket book, and was struck by the entries "S. P. G.," followed by the figures 6d., 8d., 4d., 3d. Thinking his boy had subscribed to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, he asked him what it meant. "Oh! that is 'something—probably grub,' father," he replied.

Mr. G. K. Chesterton, who took the chair at a lecture on "Modern Miracles" the other day, gave vent to some of his usual quips and cranks, but incidentally touched on a rather important truth. The modern world, he said, was a sceptical world, and tried to flatter itself by calling itself daring. He maintained, however, that it was a very timid world. "It funked nearly all the problems of life." "Advanced people were holding back in a manner that was little short of cowardice." We are afraid there is a great deal of truth in this statement. Mr. Chesterton meant that if the modern world had more courage it would accept miracles—which is merely Chestertoness. But that the "advanced" world is timid we believe to be an unfortunate truth. In private conversation people will admit their disbelief in religion, or their indifference to it; they will admit the absurd and useless character of many of our institutions; and yet in practice they will be found either supporting these things or placing obstacles to the progress of those who are trying to achieve reform. There are, for example, quite enough Freethinkers in Great Britain to make Freethought a recognised power in the land. It is not so recognised because so many Freethinkers think far more of how to avoid offending Christians than of how to promote their own principles.

The truth is that the average Englishman takes less pride in his opinions than he does in anything that he possesses. He will take pride in his home, his family, his pictures, his athletic record, his possessions. He seldom evinces a genuine pride in his opinions. In the main, this is doubtless the expression of social heredity. He does not belong to a society in which the value and the power of ideas is properly recognised and appreciated. On the contrary, the man of strong opinions—particularly if they be unorthodox—is called a crank, a faddist, a fanatic, and is always regarded as more or less of a nuisance. He grows up impressed with the wisdom of keeping his opinions to himself—as if an opinion that one does not ventilate were worth the having. To realise this, one need only reflect on how few of us know the opinions of those around us on some of the most important and vital of questions. There is more or less concealment all round, with the result that there is more or less cowardice all round. And for this mental cowardice, so well established that it is practically accepted as a virtue, Christianity itself is principally responsible.

Learning was recognised in the "Honors" conferred on sundry persons on the King's Birthday. Professor J. G. Frazer, the author of that great book, the *Golden Bough*, received a knighthood. It reminds us of an earlier King George, who received a new volume of the famous *Decline and Fall* from the author with "Another big book, Mr. Gibbon!"

The Bishop of Wakefield wants children under sixteen kept from the cinema shows, which he thinks harmful. Yet the dear Bishop thinks that children under sixteen should be taught the horrors of hell.

The *Evening News* recently had a paragraph concerning a curate who received ten shillings a quarter. It seems like a choirboy's "honorarium"; but, really, the dear clergy may have thought that religion, like virtue, was its own reward.

According to our Nonconformist contemporary, the *Daily News and Leader*, William Morris "may have professed no religion," but he was among those who "whilst denying God with their tongues, admit him by their actions." This, we presume, is an admission that Morris did not worship at the same tabernacle as the members of a famous cocoa firm.

An inmate of the Milton Union Infirmary, Sittingbourne, has reached a hundred years, and the pressmen are taking photos and writing paragraphs If those scribes could only have met Adam, Methuselah, or Melchizedek! As the last-named gentleman, according to the Bible, had neither beginning nor end of days, he may be photographed yet in the halfpenny press.

Nothing shows the desperate plight of the Churches better than the way some of the religious papers are building hopes on the ridiculous "Come to church" movement that is to be tried next January. Everybody in the country is to receive a personal invitation to come to church on a particular day; and it is quite possible that some may. Anything large and impudent is bound to strike the fancy of some people, and they may attend to see what it is all about. But we doubt if the clergy are silly enough to quite believe that it will lead to any permanent increase in church attendance. People cannot have forgotten that there *are* churches, or that the clergy would like them to attend. Their staying away is not for want of being invited, but from want of conviction. And how is the "Come to church" game going to supply that? Besides, in the main, people don't advance *backwards*. A man may hang on to Christianity in spite of all one may do. But once he has outgrown it, how can you remove the knowledge of the truth that he has obtained? "Come to church" will be like the Christian Endeavor and other fads. It will amuse and interest those *in* the Church. It will have precious little effect on those outside.

A few weeks ago, at such an eminent Protestant centre as Edinburgh, Professor M. Bergson was hailed enthusiastically as a new religious ally, as a prophet of brilliant originality, and as a distinguished leader of twentieth century thought; though from the newspaper reports of his Gifford Lectures we do not learn that he expressed his views on the universe even in terms of eighteenth century Deism, to say nothing of Christian Theism. Now, the curious fact is that, while the Protestant world, being in a state of desperation, welcomed the pseudo-scientific philosopher with open arms, immense audiences hanging receptively upon his lips, the Catholic world was authoritatively called upon to disown him and all his works as a pernicious influence in modern life. We maintain that, having due regard to its own interests, the Church of Rome has taken a thoroughly wise action. In no sense whatever can M. Bergson be claimed as a force that is calculated, in the least degree, to help the cause of supernatural religion. He is simply an Idealist that must be put in a category by himself. But how amazingly self-contradictory the Christian world is.

Rev. Cyril John Valpy French, vicar of St. David's, Exeter, left £22,323. Pity the lot of "the poor clergy."

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To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £174 4s. 6d.

C. D.—We quite agree with you that people in love with the memory of great historical characters should not inflict them upon their children. Julius Cæsar Jones is rather a burden to carry through life. So is Charles Bradlaugh Barker. Whatever ordinary name a child bears may be *rendered* illustrious—by himself; to start with a ready-made illustrious name is apt to be unfortunate. There is much in the story of Voltaire and the Duke de Rohan. The dull, insolent Duke, when the company were hanging on Voltaire's lips, bawled out, "Who is that young man who talks so much?" "My lord," Voltaire replied, "he is not one who carries about a great name, but one who wins respect for the name he has. You, my, lord, are the last of your house; I am the first of mine." We presume you know that there is a legal way of changing one's name. This is often done when money is at stake. The late Mr. Watts-Dunton was a case in point. His original name was Theodore Watts.

E. B.—Thanks for cuttings again.

H. F.—See "Acid Drops." Thanks.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

G. E. FRANCIS.—We are quite aware that the Catholic Church does not encourage the reading of the Protestant versions of the Bible. Neither do the Protestant Churches encourage the reading of the Douai version of the Bible; which, by the way, though the English people don't know it, preceded the Authorised Version in print.

OLD READER.—We did not mean that Mr. Cohen had broken down, but that he might be on the way to it. We are happy to say he is better.

T. N. N.—We note your view that our "Open Letter" should be ear-marked for republication as a pamphlet.

R. OGILVIE wishes he could order fifty copies of "that valuable *Bible Handbook*."

W. M.—Thank you for noting it. It is just one of those abominable misprints that *will* happen. No book is so carefully "read" as the Bible; yet the famous Adultery Bible got through with the "not" omitted from the seventh commandment, so that all good Christians were told to "commit adultery."

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and not to the Editor.

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Editorial.

THE sudden attack of the torpid English summer has made me a sun-worshiper again. Any man, editor or otherwise, who writes more than he can help in this weather (Tuesday, June 30, 1914) is simply a fool. I will postpone fulfilling the promise I made in last week's "Editorial." Yet although the matters I mean to write about will keep a little, they are of great and grave importance.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

Wales is progressive in many things, but not in the matter of religion. Welsh Members of Parliament, even, are capable of talking the greatest nonsense in this respect. Mr. Hugh Edwards, for instance, told a Rhyl meeting the other day that they would be guilty of treason if they succumbed to the temptation to destroy their traditions as Sabbath-loving people by giving facilities for Sunday boating and Sunday excursions. *Treason!* What on earth does the man mean? Fortunately the growth of Sunday freedom in England more than balances any Sabbatarian reaction in Wales. Recreation, and innocent recreation too, takes thousands away from "divine worship" every Sunday. The latest development is a proposal to run People's Theatres on Sunday. Many actors and managers, including Sir H. Tree, are strongly in favor of this policy. Some actors and actresses are opposed to it on the ground of the danger of a seven-days' week to their profession. But a few strokes of the pen, in a new Act, would render this impossible.

We make the following extract from a letter written by a new subscriber in South Africa:—

> "For a long time I have wished to write and let you know what delight, pleasure, and *profit* I am afforded by the pages of the *Freethinker* from week to week. About two years ago a copy of the *Freethinker* accidentally came into my hands, and, after reading but a few pages of it, I instantly became a confirmed Freethinker. The reason I so easily became '*converted*' to Freethought will be obvious to your readers when I say that I was walking in the *black darkness* of religious superstition, many times wishing that something would happen soon to end my miserable existence. As I write this, I feel that I would like to be able to put a copy of your paper in the hands of every man and woman who find themselves in the same position as I was in then: knocking, but not getting any reply—knocking at a purely imaginary door; seeking, but not finding; asking, but no answer. To such people the *Freethinker* must be a real boon, a *genuine treasure*, and the Light of the World to them. I read many papers and magazines, but none will even compare with the *Freethinker*—written *by thinking men for thinking people*. I am deeply sorry to know that Mr. Foote is not as well as the readers of the *Freethinker* wish him to be, but I sincerely hope that before this reaches you he will be his old self again. I hope he may be spared long to be, as he has been all through his long and well-spent life, the Champion of English Freethought.
>
> "What a mighty difference it would make to poor distracted Ireland if only a few of her leaders—say Sir E. Carson and John Redmond—were Freethinkers. Then Ireland would be what she ought to have been, what she would have been, centuries ago."

The writer ends by remarking that the Irish question would have been settled long ago if it were not for "Protestant" and "Catholic" factions.

Mr. B. A. Le Maine, 526 Oxford-street, London, W., is organising the Annual Outing of the Metropolitan Secular Society, which takes place on Sunday, July 12, to Southend-on-Sea. Tickets, including rail and high tea, 4s. 6d. each, to be obtained at the aforesaid address before July 5.

For some years now there has been no organised work done by the National Secular Society in Regent's Park, in consequence of the North London Branch having concentrated their efforts upon the newer station at Parliament Hill. Regent's Park, thirty years ago, was celebrated for the large, orderly, and intelligent audiences that gathered round the Freethought platform, demonstrations held there being always most enthusiastic. This year the Branch has recommenced afternoon meetings, and we are pleased to have a report from Miss Vance, who attended the meeting last Sunday, that the audiences are as large and as enthusiastic as ever, notwithstanding the fact that other Freethought meetings both precede and follow the N.S.S. meeting.

White Christians—you must be white to be an *accepted* Christian—are such a selfish, conceited, and boastful lot of people, and go swaggering so insolently over this planet, that a Freethinker is naturally glad to see them taken down a bit. We rejoiced—assuming that there had to be a war—that Holy Russia was soundly beaten by Heathen Japan. In the same way—although we don't trouble our readers about prize fights, or trouble ourselves in ordinary cases who wins or who loses—we are glad that Jack Johnson has soundly beaten the "white champion" who was going to give him a licking at Paris. Nothing could be more hypocritical than the attitude of the Christian whites to the so-called Christian blacks; and we like to see the pride of color humbled now and then.

CHRISTIANITY A FAILURE.

Ah! how true it is that Christianity has not, as you say, Christianised the world! There is something curious in the spectacle of the embarrassment of every sect of Christians in accounting for this fact. I know no subject on which there is more miserable floundering among incompatible views and untenable assertions.—*Harriet Martineau.*

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Christian Apologetics.

VIII.—ORIGEN AND EUSEBIUS.

MANY years ago, when I was quite a youngster, I remember going several times with some older lads to hear the great Infidel-slayer, Thomas Cooper, hold forth on the London Fields. I can see him now in my mind's eye stepping briskly along, with books under his arm, followed by three or four disciples, to take his place in the arena. I cannot call to mind any of the arguments used—I was scarcely of an age to understand them—but no one seemed able to stand against this great Christian Evidencer. Upon one point only is my memory clear. This is, the method he employed, upon more than one occasion, to reduce an opponent to silence. Looking at the latter individual gravely, almost pityingly, he slowly asked: "Have you read Irenæus?" (a pause). "Have you read Origen?" (a pause). "Have you read Eusebius?" (a longer pause). "Then allow me to tell you, my friend, that you are very, very ignorant."

After this set-down, the opponent, however strong or cogent may have been his argument, was left without a leg to stand upon. Knowing nothing of the unimpeachable evidence borne by those Christian "fathers" to the truth of the Gospel records, he ignominiously collapsed. How, indeed, was it possible for anyone who had not read a line of Irenæus and Co. to impeach the credibility of the New Testament accounts? Who would be so rash as to question the Virgin Birth story, or that of the Devil placing Jesus on a pinnacle of the temple, without knowing what bombshells lay concealed in the pages of Irenæus and Eusebius? Years afterwards, when I came to examine the Gospel "history," I did not forget to consult Irenæus and his confrères, and then I discovered that the valiant Thomas Cooper had been making much ado about nothing. I also learnt that the great Christian advocate had written several volumes on "the verity" of the Gospel narratives—copies of which I procured and read. Among these were: *The Bridge of History over the Gulf of Time—The Verity of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ*—and *The Verity and Value of the Miracles of Christ.* On the title page of each volume the author calls himself "Lecturer on Christianity."

In the first of these works the writer undertook to trace back the existence of the four Gospels from the nineteenth century into the first—each century being considered a bridge. The author might, however, have saved himself much writing and a good deal of ink, by commencing at the end of the second century, and tracing back into the first; for no hostile critic then denied, or denies now, that all four Gospels were known and in circulation in A.D. 180. But had this been done, where would Thomas Cooper's great book have been? The letterpress would then have made but a small pamphlet—which accounts for the long succession of bridges. With the aid of one of his boasted authorities, Irenæus, our "Lecturer on Christianity" thought he had succeeded in placing the Gospels in the first century; but this task was accomplished by taking all the statements made by that mendacious "father" respecting the apostle John and Polycarp as historically true—which statements, I have already shown, are not in agreement with facts. This easy work of tracing back—which our credulous lecturer believed he had actually performed—still remains to be done.

Having already dealt with Irenæus, I will now say a few words respecting Mr. Cooper's two other authorities—Origen and Eusebius. The first of these, Origen (A.D. 230—250), was a voluminous writer; but his works have no evidential value. He was one of those who indulged in a system of allegorising the Jewish scriptures, and he carried his methods of distortion to extravagant lengths. According to this perverter, every passage of "holy writ" contained three meanings—the literal, the moral, and the mystical. He was also addicted to fanciful speculations on points beyond human knowledge or reason. After reading some of Origen's distortions of the Old Testament writings, the Pagan critic Porphyry is quoted by Eusebius (Eccl. Hist., vi., 19) as saying:—

> "But some Christians, ambitious rather to find a solution of the absurdities of the Jewish writings than to abandon them, have turned their minds to expositions, inconsistent with themselves, and inapplicable to the writings; which instead of furnishing a defence of those scriptures, only give us encomiums and remarks in their praise. For boasting of what Moses says plainly in his writings, as if they were dark and intricate propositions, and attaching to them divine influence as if they were oracles replete with hidden mysteries, and in their vanity pretending to great discrimination of mind, they thus produce their expositions."

It is probable that what Mr. Cooper liked in Origen's writings was his pretentious reply to Celsus in eight "books." This was of the usual argumentative and presumptive character.

I come now to our lecturer's third authority, the ecclesiastical historian Eusebius (A.D. 320). This bishop conceived the idea of arranging and putting into historical form all matters connected with the Christian religion which he found mentioned by the various Christian writers who lived between the first century and his own days, commencing with the alleged ministry of Jesus and the preaching of the apostles, as recorded in the Book of the Acts, including the New Testament writings which were received or rejected by the orthodox, the various heresies that arose, an account of the persecutions which had taken place at different times, and many other matters. For this work Eusebius had access to a large number of earlier writings, from the majority of which he made extracts; the only point upon which there can be any doubt is, as to the fairness of his methods. He says in his introduction: "Whatsoever, therefore, we deem likely *to be advantageous* to the proposed subject, we shall endeavor to reduce to a compact body of historical narration." As an illustration of his mode of making selections, I subjoin what he says about Celsus:—

> "At this time [i.e., A.D., 244] Origen also composed, in eight books, a reply to that work written against us by Celsus, the Epicurean, bearing the title *The True Account*" (E. H., vi., 6).

This is all; nothing in the work of Celsus against the Christians and their religion was "likely to be advantageous" to Christianity; nothing therefore was quoted from it. Upon this method of selection Gibbon has something to say in his *Decline and Fall* (chap. xvi.).

Eusebius wrote a life of the emperor Constantine, who caused his son Crispus, his nephew Licinius, and his wife Fausta to be put to death. Referring to the latter crimes, Gibbon, in another place, remarks:—

> "The courtly bishop who has celebrated in an elaborate work the virtues and piety of his hero, *observes a prudent silence* on the subject of these tragic events."

It should, however, be borne in mind that Constantine was the first Roman emperor that took the Christians under his protection; that he stopped all persecution, made Christianity the religion of the State, and was very friendly with Eusebius.

I will now take another example of the methods of Eusebius. In Acts xii. 23 it is stated of Herod Agrippa I. that "an angel of the Lord smote him..... and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost." This statement is, of course, unhistorical. On the occasion referred to, king Agrippa was seized with acute abdominal pains, which continued for four days, at the end of which he died (probably poisoned). The "worms" in the Acts were taken from the last illness of Herod the Great. Josephus, giving a detailed account of the death of Agrippa, says:—

> "As he presently afterwards looked up he saw an *owl* sitting on a certain rope over his head, and immediately understood that this bird was the messenger of ill tidings, as it had once been the messenger of good tidings to him," etc. (*Antiq.*, xix., viii., 2).

Referring to the Acts account of the death of Herod

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Agrippa, Eusebius says (E. H., ii., 10) :—

> "It is wonderful to observe.....the coincidence of the history given by Josephus, with that of the sacred scriptures" [he quotes a long passage from the *Antiquities*, and then the foregoing passage]......" After a little while, raising himself, he saw *an angel* sitting above his head. This he immediately perceived was the sign of evil, as it had once been the sign of good," etc.

Thus by the change of one word Eusebius has piously added corroboration to the mendacious Acts account. It may further be stated that Eusebius was the first to find—or at least to quote—the well-known Christian interpolation in the *Antiquities* respecting "Jesus a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man," etc. One point in connection with this interpolation is beyond question, namely, that it was not in the *Antiquities* in the time of Origen; for the latter, in his reply to Celsus, quoted the passages respecting James and John the Baptist (*Antiq.*, xx. and xviii.) in proof of the historicity of the Gospel history; but the great passage respecting Jesus (*now* found in *Antiq.*, xviii.), which would have completely disproved the allegations of Celsus, and which Origen would most certainly have cited, had it been there, is in this reply conspicuous by its absence.

It was, again, Eusebius who piously found the Letter of Jesus Christ to Abgarus, king of Edessa. According to the story, Abgarus, "who reigned over the nations beyond the Euphrates," being stricken with an incurable disease, and hearing of the wonderful cures wrought by Jesus, sent to the latter by hand a letter beseeching him to come and heal him. In reply to this request, Jesus sent the following letter by bearer to the afflicted king :—

> "Blessed are they, O Abgarus, who, not having seen me, have believed in me. For it is written concerning me, that they who have seen me will not believe, and that they who have not seen me will believe and be saved. But in regard to what thou hast written, that I should come to thee, it is necessary that I should fulfil all things here, for which I have been sent. And after this fulfilment, I shall be received again by Him that sent me. And after I have been received up, I will send to thee one of my disciples, that he may heal thy affliction, and give salvation to thee and to those who are with thee" (Eccl. Hist., i. 13).

This letter, Eusebius tells us, was "taken from the public records of the city of Edessa.....from the archives." And he further says that "it has been literally translated *by us* from the Syriac"—the supposed language of Edessa. Whence, its authenticity should be unquestionable. We have, at any rate, more evidence for the genuineness of this letter than for any of the Gospel miracles; yet there is not the smallest doubt that it is a Christian fabrication. That Eusebius found the letter written in Syriac, and translated it into Greek, may be readily admitted; but that it was a historical document "taken from the public records of the city of Edessa" is very unlikely indeed. I should perhaps have stated that Eusebius gives a copy of *two* letters—the other being that sent by Abgarus to Jesus Christ, in which the miracles alleged to have been wrought by Jesus, and the rejection of that Savior by the Jews, are mentioned as well-known facts of history. The two letters, both written in Syriac, bear marks which clearly prove that they were composed by a Christian. There is, therefore, no mystery in accounting for them. In the days of Eusebius the four Gospels were written in Syriac, as well as in Greek; the fabricator of the letters was a Syriac-speaking Christian. The statement of Eusebius, then, that the letters were taken from the archives of the city of Edessa, was made on his own authority; he had no warrant for making it.

As to the statements in the letter about believing and not believing in Jesus, the only passage in "holy writ" bearing upon the subject is the following :—

> John xx. 29.—"Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: *blessed are they that have not seen me, and yet have believed.*"

The foregoing is evidently the writing referred to by the third century Christian who forged the letters. That the Fourth Gospel was not written in the time of Jesus probably never entered this late forger's head. He could only know of some such statement by seeing it in Christian writings of his own day, which at that period were all ascribed to the apostolic age.

ABRACADABRA.

Pandemonium in the Balkans.

THE two recent wars, and the innumerable consequential massacres, in the Balkans, first as between Christians and Moslems, and then as between the rival races and religions of the Balkan States, might almost be regarded as colossal object-lessons wrought for us in blood and tears by the "Finger of God" in order to prove to the smug optimists of the twentieth century that the Middle Ages are still with us in all their callousness and naked horror. We watch on the tragic scene a group of newly formed nations who had enjoyed for centuries a community of suffering under the Turkish yoke, and observe that no sooner had they broken the power of their traditional enemy than they began to quarrel violently over the spoils of victory. They had enough religion, of a sort, to give their racial hatreds the keen edge of fanaticism, and having the same brand of religion, the difference between Patriarchalist and Exarchist came providentially in aid in order to exacerbate the primitive national enmities of the Greek and Bulgarian elements in the great Balkan imbroglio. The sanguinary war which broke out between the Allies for the political appropriation of Macedonia and Thrace produced a fresh crop of atrocities, and an equally vigorous crop of mutual accusations of murder and tortures, of mutilation, not only of prisoners of war, but of vast numbers of the civil population, of victims buried alive, burnt to death or accorded the doubtful honor of crucifixion.

The well-known Belgian Deputy, M. Georges Lorand, who knows the Balkans well, and its several races and tongues, revisited the scene of carnage in September last, and recorded his *Notes et Souvenirs** in a pamphlet published at the end of 1913. M. Lorand is inclined to think that oriental exaggeration played a large part in the relation of these atrocities, especially as regards the Bulgarians, but it is sufficiently horrifying to learn even from his temperate pen that more perhaps than in any other war grave excesses were committed by the various bands of irregulars, Turkish bashi-bazouks, Bulgarian comitadjis, and Greek irregulars, and by the populations themselves, "whenever the occasion was offered to them of sating the lust for vengeance lying dormant in their breasts during generations of hatred and oppression." Official Europe, which concerns itself with boundaries, treaties, and alliances, was naturally indifferent to mere questions of massacre and torture as between Bulgarians, Greeks, Turks, and Servians; and if the full truth is ever to be known, or even approximated by dint of comparison of data, it will be due mainly to the revelations of the Carnegie Commission of Inquiry.

The psychology of the Balkan War is sufficiently indicated by the religious fanaticism which was imported into the dreary procedure of massacre and outrage, and by the ominous fact that when King Constantine made his triumphant entry into Athens, he was acclaimed by the significant cry, "Long live King Constantine the Great, the Bulgaroktonos!" Bulgaroktonos (which means "the killer of Bulgarians") was the title of a Basileus in the tenth century, who bears the name in history of Bulgaroktonos because of the frightful massacres which attended his campaign against the Bulgarians. One of his exploits was the gouging out of both eyes of 15,000 prisoners of war, and the blinding in one eye

* *En Bulgarie : Notes et Souvenirs.* (Brussels : pp. 40.)

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of 150 others, in order that the latter might bring back the blind Bulgarians to their country, and show the nation of what noble feats of arms the Byzantine Greeks were capable. It cannot be said that the brutalities of war—civil or otherwise—have been sensibly diminished in the twentieth century when a name like Bulgaroktonos of infamous import is fixed by a band of Athenian Jingoes as a title of honor to their victorious King. The records of the recent campaign show that some of the present-day Greeks have not lost the art of mutilating their Bulgarian prisoners in the manner consecrated by the example of their first Bulgaroktonos.*

In the prosecution of the Balkan War, and in the resultant outrages which followed in its train, three prime factors dominated the whole situation: first, the instinctive antagonism of Cross and Crescent; second, the racial antagonisms between the miscellaneous elements composing the Balkan population; and thirdly, the fierce enmities of Patriarchalists and Exarchists, representative of the Greek and Bulgarian divergencies of religion. When this situation is embittered by actual warfare in the Balkans, everybody fancies he has excellent religious and patriotic reasons for being unjust and cruel towards his fellow-man. The shocking charges and recriminations of Turk, Bulgarian, and Greek are but the lurid commentary in fire and blood on the inexhaustible intolerance of the religious instinct of man, especially when that instinct is inflamed with the animosities begotten of racial antagonism.

In the eyes of the Greeks, the Bulgarians were guilty of two capital offences: first, they belonged to a race against whom the Greeks have preserved immemorial hatred, based on national antagonisms and religious divergencies; and secondly, the Bulgarian victories in the first war had created for Bulgaria the conqueror's right to Salonica and to a major part of South-East Macedonia, and thus stood as an inexpugnable bar in the way of Greek expansion in the conquered region. At the outbreak of hostilities against Bulgaria, her armies, which had borne the brunt of battle in the fierce contests which had broken the power of Turkey, were placed in a position of grave strategic inferiority relatively to the Servian and Greek armies, and the overwhelmed forces of Bulgaria in Macedonia were quite unable to protect the population, the major part of which was Bulgarian in race and sympathy, from outrage, decimation, and exile at the hands of the Greek army and its satellites. There is trustworthy evidence adduced by Professor Miletitch and by Dr. Kyroff that the Greek army, acting conjointly with the irregulars and the fanaticised Greek elements in the population, who were hounded on to the work of destruction by the local Greek clergy and their holy bishops, displayed their heroism last year by patriotically devastating Bulgarian villages and rooting out, either to death, exile, or torture, the Bulgarian elements in the Macedonian population. The results were as profitable to the sentiment of Greek nationality as they were calamitous to the cause of Bulgarian expansion; for an enormous body of Bulgarian exiles, estimated to be one hundred thousand or more in number, were compelled to flee from Macedonia, and only escaped after many hardships and dangers into Bulgaria, where they naturally became a serious charge upon the heavily burdened resources of the stricken country. The removal of the Bulgarian elements in the Macedonian population, whether by death or exile, providentially subserved the cause of the Greek megalomaniacs, who thereby acquired a sitting claim to the decimated country, where the work of massacre had received the consecration of true religion and high statecraft. At the same time, the assiduous circulation throughout Europe of the story of Bulgarian atrocities, thanks to the astuteness of the Greeks and the press agencies worked in their interests, dried up the fountains of European and American charity, which no doubt would have been moved to generous relief of the hapless exiles but for the stigma of horror which the Bulgaroktonos had affixed to the Bulgarian national character.

The horrors related by Dr. Miletitch and by Dr. Kyroff are among the most saddening documents that I have ever read. But perhaps the most sickening of all are the two collections of "Facsimile" letters written by Greek soldiers belonging to the 19th regiment of the VII. division of the Greek army. The original letters were captured by the Bulgarian troops at Razlog before transmission through the post. The letters are intensely interesting as illustrating the awful depths of moral depravity to which self-confessedly the Greek soldiers were sunken in the inebriation of victory, and as showing the curious psychology which war creates amongst its agents and glorifiers. Before me is a letter of a Greek soldier, dated July 11, 1913:—

> "We have burnt all the villages abandoned by the Bulgarians. These burn the Greek villages and we destroy the Bulgarian villages.....Out of the 1,200 prisoners whom we captured at Nigrita, only 41 remain in the prisons, and wherever we have passed we have left no sprig of that race."

I pass over a number of letters merely relating common or garden acts of massacre, to cite the letter, dated July 12, of a Greek soldier named Costi, who gloats that "I have taken five Bulgarians and a girl of Serrès.....The girl is killed. The Bulgarians have been made to suffer; while they were yet alive we gouged out their eyes." True warriors these of the valiant Bulgaroktonos! Another hero writes that "when we find one or two" of the Bulgarians, "we kill them like sparrows." "We burn here all the villages, and we kill all the Bulgarian women and children," writes one from Tricala, Thessaly, on July 14. Another soldier, writing to his brother on July 15, declares "that such things have never taken place since the coming of Christ." One soldier writes that out of 16 prisoners committed to his charge only two were brought along; the others "were swallowed by the darkness, massacred by me." The man's name is Theophilatos, which means a man who loves God! Another hero writes to his brother George that he thanks God that his health is good after the recent five battles, and states that, "by order of the King, we are burning all the Bulgarian villages," and adds that "we have violated all the young girls we have found." One gentle letter-writer describes a battle where the prisoners captured were killed, "for such are the orders we have. Wherever there is a Bulgarian village, we set fire to it and burn it in order that this filthy race of Bulgarians may never spring up there again." A soldier, writing to his mother, tells her that "we have orders to burn the villages, massacre the young men, sparing only the old folk, the children, and minors." And, of course, much piety and trust in God run through these edifying epistles. And so I might continue the sickening relation, but a limit must be imposed to the dreadful task of exposing the nakedness of these horrifying orgies which are glorified by the name of patriotism and sanctified by the halo of religion.

I do not wish to pretend that the Bulgarians are angels of light, or that they entered the Balkan campaign a race of sinners and emerged with the nimbus of beatified saints. They had their faults, and impartial history may have to apportion a heavy charge of responsibility upon them for their conduct during the two Balkan wars. But certain it is that much of that burden of responsibility will be rolled away, especially as regards the second war, when the true record is unearthed of the sinister part played in the grim Balkan tragedy by the Bulgaroktonos and his men of arms.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

* See the "Fac-simile" letters (both series) referred to in the *Freethinker* of June 21.

The *London Mail* had a paragraph the other day headed "A Religion that Appeals." We never heard of a religion that did anything else.

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Animals Recently Extinct.

THE long-since extinct forms of animal life with which primitive man was familiar, comprise a very interesting group. But the organisms which, during recent centuries, have departed for ever, are probably more interesting still. Among those mammals that were undoubtedly contemporaneous with the early races of mankind, but which died out before the period embraced by history or tradition, were several at which we will glance before dealing with those animals that have survived right down to our own era.

All the mammals of prehistoric times which have since disappeared were either the ancestors or the near relatives of surviving stocks. With the advent of the human biped the range of mammalian life was seriously restricted; the larger animals were driven to more sheltered areas; the cave-lion and the cave-hyæna became extinct in their European haunts, and their descendants, the common lion and the spotted hyæna, unless their present ruthless destruction is stayed, will be numbered, in the course of a few generations, among the departed glories of great Nature's handiwork.

The remains of the hairy elephant—the mammoth—a mammal that does not appear to have outlived the Glacial Epoch, are so abundant that we know its outward and visible signs as clearly as those of any living animal. In addition to its well-preserved bones, and drawings of great artistic merit executed by prehistoric men on ivory and on cavern walls, we have been fortunate in discovering the entire carcasses of mammoths frozen for untold centuries in the icy cliffs of Siberia. The first of these was found in 1799, and the skeleton and a fragment of the hide are still exhibited in the St. Petersburg Museum. Another was discovered in 1901 which is also on view in the same building. "The beast had evidently died by an accident, as was shown by a broken hip and foreleg, by the extravasated blood in the chest, and even by grass still in the mouth."

A more primitive type of elephant, also extinct, was the mastodon. The remains of this proboscidean have been found in Tertiary deposits from Miocene times onwards in all parts of the globe. About thirty different species have been described, but the career of this varied and widely spread organism ended with the advent of man.

The hairy rhinoceros was another contemporary of the mastodon and mammoth, and soon shared their fate. Cervus megaceros, the so-called Irish elk, an animal once widely spread, and whose skeletons, dug out of the Irish peat bogs, are so conspicuous in the Palæontological Gallery at the Natural History Museum, is likewise to be numbered among the things of the past. So far as is known, this defunct deer was the noblest of its race, alike in height, antlered splendor, and grace of form. Frank Finn in his delightful book, *Wild Animals of Yesterday and To-Day*, declares that the Irish elk,—

> "must have been far the most grand and beautiful animal which has ever existed, since no other creature combines gracefulness and size in the same way; while its strength must have been equal to resisting the attacks of any creature in fair fight, for the ordinary red stag has been known to beat off a tiger enclosed in the arena with him, and the moose can kill a wolf with a single blow of his hoof."

But such æsthetic considerations as these made no appeal to primitive man. Without compunction he slew the Irish elk and devoured its flesh. Still, there is much more excuse for the aboriginal hunter than there is for the modern "sportsman," who, with the true spirit of the barbarian, encounters no rare beast or bird which he does not scruple to destroy.

The gigantic ground-sloths of America must be numbered with the departed fauna of the world. The megatherium is the most celebrated of these, and is probably the largest edentate that has ever lived. Apparently herbivorous, these extinct animals were highly generalised, when compared with modern forms, as they combined the head and teeth of a sloth with the vertebræ, limbs, and tail of the ant-eater. These animals reclined on their hind limbs, and employing their forelimbs as hands, they pulled down the boughs of trees on whose verdure they fed. That these huge creatures were extant when man had reached the New World appears probable from Dr. Moltено's recent discoveries in Patagonia. The remains of the mylodon, another fossil ground-sloth, were found in a similar state of preservation to those of man in the same deposit. Dr. Rudolph Hanthal's cavern investigations have confirmed this evidence, and what is even more interesting, the accumulated ordure of the animals, artificially cut grass, and the presence of human bones in the same cavern, certainly point to their domestication by man. "The cave was, in fact, a stable in which these queer cattle were stall-fed by some primitive race, and examination of the droppings showed that the food consisted of grass."

These discoveries strengthened the opinion of those who suspected the continued survival of these ground-sloths in the unexplored regions of Patagonia; but an expedition specially organised to discover them in a living state has met with no success.

Among the organisms exterminated by man within the past few centuries is the bluebuck of the Cape, the third species of the genus Hippotragus, the two others being the roan and sable antelopes. When first noted by European naturalists, the bluebuck was a declining organism. Its range was restricted to Cape Colony, and the commerce which was soon set up in its skins quickly reduced it to the brink of extinction. The animal was first described by Kolbe at the commencement of the eighteenth century. A hundred years later, in 1803, Lichtenstein, writing of South Africa, remarked that while there was wild game in plenty, the "blaubock" was practically extinct. The last of these beautiful animals appears to have been shot in 1799, and all that now survive are to be seen as mounted specimens in natural history museums.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be continued.)

Correspondence.

"THE WORD OF GOD."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—It is very curious—clearly an act of Providence—that Mr. Foote's article, "The Word of God," appeared this week; for I was, for the how many hundredth time I don't know, discussing it with a friend on Sunday night, to whom I have sent the current *Freethinker*.

My feeble powers can but deal with this matter in a very inferior manner to Mr. Foote, and, considering that it is of perennial interest, I do hope that this article of his will appear in pamphlet form.

A. J. MARRIOTT.

June 26.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON JUNE 25.

The President, Mr. G. W. Foote, occupied the chair. There were also present: Messrs. Baker, Barry, Bowman, Brandes, Cohen, Cunningham, Heaford, Leat, Lazarnick, Lloyd, Moss, Nichols, Quinton, Roger, Rosetti, Samuels, Silverstein, Thurlow, and Wood.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

This being the first meeting of the new Executive, the following officers were elected:—General Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance; Benevolent Fund Committee: Messrs. Davey, Leat, Roger, Samuels, and Wood; Monthly Auditors: Messrs. Leat and Samuels.

The monthly cash statement was presented and adopted.

New members were admitted for Edmonton, Huddersfield, Leeds, St. Helens, and the Parent Society.

Several matters of routine business held over from the last meeting were transacted. The Secretary received instructions on various details arising from correspondence, and the meeting adjourned.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary.*

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): Howell Smith, B.A., 3.15, "The Duty of Freethinking"; 6.15, "The Dissolution of Christianity."

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 6, a Lecture.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.30, R. H. Rosetti, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): J. W. Marshall, 11.30, "The Insanity of Jesus"; 7.30, "The Atonement."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Finsbury Park): 11.30, Mr. Davidson, a Lecture. Parliament Hill: 3.30, Miss Kough, a Lecture. Regent's Park (near the Fountain): 3.30, Mr. Hope, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, W. Davidson, a Lecture.



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THIS Society was formed in 1898 to afford legal security to the acquisition and application of funds for Secular purposes.

The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularisation of the State, etc., etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

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The Society has a considerable number of members, but a much larger number is desirable, and it is hoped that some will be gained amongst those who read this announcement. All who join it participate in the control of its business and the trusteeship of its resources. It is expressly provided in the Articles of Association that no member, as such, shall derive any sort of profit from the Society, either by way of dividend, bonus, or interest, or in any way whatever.

The Society's affairs are managed by an elected Board of Directors, consisting of not less than five and not more than twelve members, one-third of whom retire by ballot) each year, but are capable of re-election. An Annual General Meeting of members must be held in London, to receive the Report, elect new Directors, and transact any other business that may arise.

Being a duly registered body, the Secular Society, Limited, can receive donations and bequests with absolute security. Those who are in a position to do so are invited to make donations, or to insert a bequest in the Society's favor in their wills. On this point there need not be the slightest apprehension. It is quite impossible to set aside such bequests. The executors have no option but to pay them over in the ordinary course of administration. No objection of any kind has been raised in connection with any of the wills by which the Society has already been benefited.

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Perhaps the great triumph of all moral writings, including sermons, is that at least they have produced some sweet and innocent sleep.—ARTHUR HELPS.

Providence.

THEOLOGICALLY providence signifies God as exercising his universal care and control. Very striking are the words in which the Gospel Jesus describes it: "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father; but the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows" (Mat. x. 29-31). Mr. K. L. Parry, B. Sc., informs us that "this is one of the most precious sayings in all the Scriptures. It is so precious that we are almost afraid to look at it, lest it should vanish." Its preciousness consists in the comfort it ministers to those who are in trouble and sorrow. To us, however, the saying presents no intelligible meaning whatever. We fail to realise how it can benefit or comfort anybody to believe that God is with every falling sparrow and has numbered the very hairs of our head. Even on the assumption that this is true of him it is difficult to perceive how the knowledge of it can be a source of consolation to the afflicted. Unless the Divine presence prevents the sparrow from falling and rids mankind of all its sufferings, what is the use of it? Of what service to the world is a God who never acts? Or, to put the case differently, if God exists, is it not he who causes the sparrows to fall? Is he not to be held responsible for all the evils that darken life? Now, Mr. Parry, in a sermon in the *Christian World Pulpit* for July 1, candidly admits that Nature teems with ugly facts for which he is unable to account:—

> "We read in the rocks the record of great upheavals; we hear of cosmic collisions; we witness the rise and fall of mighty empires, Greece and Rome, Egypt and Babylon; we see temples left derelict, the monuments of ancient religions, and we know what all this means, we know what it has cost in blood; horrid visions rise before us of wars among the beasts, of battles royal in ancient forests; we know what it all represents in terms of mortal agony and suffering, we know because this is a war from which there is no discharge, and we witness all around us this same struggle and strife."

With those painful facts in mind, Mr. Parry exclaims, "Such is Nature. So has its Maker ordained." What a dismal confession! What a humiliating description of the Creator. Nature is "red in tooth and claw with ravine" by the decree of the Almighty. He not only permits, but ordains all the evils under which creation groans. And yet this God, who thus ordains, is called the Father, whose love knows no bounds, whose mercy endureth for ever, and who "comes quickly in response to the feeblest cry of his creatures." "So has its Maker ordained." He has ordained that the spider should catch and devour the fly in its web. Our loving Heavenly Father has ordained that the eagle should sweep down from the high rock and snatch away the bleating lamb from its mother's side. Mr. Parry has the temerity to declare that "this is God's world, that the least of his creatures is precious in his sight," and that "we are made and given life because the Creator has a father's heart, and rejoices in his children."

Without a moment's hesitation, we repudiate the doctrine of Divine providence, because all the facts of life belie it. There is absolutely nothing to show that this world is under the care of a tender-hearted and loving father. Indeed, Christian ministers themselves often describe this world as bristling with imperfections, inequalities, disharmonies, and disorders, a fact upon which they base an argument for immortality. Even they who are proud to be known as the Lord's people cannot hide from themselves the fact they enjoy no immunities, but are as dependent upon their own faculties as all others. The old belief that the Lord is mindful of his own gets discredited at every turn in life. Nature recognises no distinction between the godly and the ungodly, but insists upon treating all alike. Mr. Parry asserts that "the Gospel is this, that God is to be trusted"; but everybody is aware that, as a matter of fact, God is never trusted. Even the most pious people on earth trust themselves. Trust in God is a sentiment which nobody ever translates into practice. It is a thing to talk and sing and pray about, particularly in church on Sundays. "Trust thyself," says Emerson; "every heart vibrates to that iron string." It is a lying Gospel Mr. Parry preaches, a Gospel which nobody ever dreams of putting to the test of practice. Jesus taught that "God could be trusted to provide for and protect those who made his purpose their supreme concern"; but there is no case on record in which it could be proved that God did provide for and protect such people. Super-human provision and protection are never experienced, as history abundantly testifies.

"Providence" is a term which some people are in the habit of using in a thoughtless, irresponsible manner. When a man says, "By the good providence of God I was enabled to do so-and-so," he only means that circumstances were favorable, or that luck was on his side. He certainly does not believe that the Divine Being interposed miraculously on his behalf. There are others, however, who imagine that God is specially interested in them, and constantly takes their affairs into his own hands. A well-known clergyman had arranged to sail on the ill-fated *Titanic*; but at the last moment the Lord rendered it impossible for him to go by inflicting a slight illness on his wife. This was rather rough on the lady, and an illustration of the overweening conceit of the man, while it represents God as guilty of the wickedest behavior. If the clergyman was right about his own escape, then the *Titanic* disaster was an act of God, as every such catastrophe must be. We are therefore irresistibly driven to the conclusion that Atheism is the only rational position, every form of Theism being flatly contradicted by the facts of history.

Mr. Parry acknowledges his inability to define God's purpose in the Universe. He is convinced that he has a purpose, and that he is steadily fulfilling it in his own wise but mysterious way; and our object ought to be to co-operate with him in that fulfilment. But if we do not know what God's purpose is, how on earth can we co-operate with him in its prosecution? Take this:—

> "We are here to do God's will, let the consequences be what they will. We are in this valley of earth, shut

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> in on every side by impenetrable mountains, and here we are to fight a battle of which we cannot know the ultimate issue. God alone knows his inscrutable purpose. His thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor his ways as our ways."

How can we do God's will when we do not know what it is? How can we co-operate with him in an inscrutable purpose? We are told that the light shineth in the darkness, and yet that the darkness abides. The darkness abides; we are compassed about by mystery; and yet, though the darkness abides, "we can see the face of God, and know when he is pleased with us and when he is angry." Only in the pulpit is such sheer nonsense tolerated at this time of day. On the lecture-platform it would be laughed to scorn. We dismiss both God and his purpose, and substitute self-reliance. We do not know why we are here. It is possible that in the scheme of things our existence serves no purpose whatever. All we know is that, being here, we can make our lives purposeful by devoting them to the service of the race. Our work, the only work known to us, is to act as our own providence and, as far as possible, the providence of our neighbors. As Emerson says, "a man is relieved and gay when he has put his heart into his work and done his best." He needs no supernatural interference or succor, no providential intervention from beyond the clouds, but derives all requisite encouragement or inspiration from the sense of kinship and solidarity; and in proportion as his life becomes natural, it becomes also efficient.

J. T. LLOYD.

Do We Survive Death?—II.

(*Continued from p. 418.*)

WHAT objections are there to the theory that mental phenomena stand to the brain and nervous system in the relation of function to organ? There is no objection to it on any ground of fact, because that *is* the relation presented to us all, and it is assumed on all hands. We do not know "mind" apart from body, but we do know "body" apart from "mind." The only objection is one of theory; or, rather, the objection is based upon the necessities of a theory of immortality which is doomed if the mechanistic view be accepted as true. And, curiously enough, the one who has accepted a theory of a future life in the complete absence of evidence is found demanding the most rigorous demonstration of every step of the mechanistic argument before he will surrender his own totally unsupported belief. Manifesting a credulity almost without limits in the one direction, he rushes to the extreme of scepticism the moment the belief based upon that credulity is assailed.

It is argued that nervous action and consciousness are incommensurables—that is, they are two things having nothing in common; and we cannot therefore see how the one becomes "transformed" into the other. These objectors seldom pause to consider that, if this argument is given its face value, it is not only fatal to the mechanistic theory of the relations of body and mind; it is equally fatal to any theory that may be proposed. If we reject the theory that "mind" is the function of an organ on the ground that we cannot see how they are connected, we cannot adopt the bedlam-like policy of immediately assuming that nervous action, which it is admitted always accompanies mental phenomena, is due to the activity of an unknown substance which we call mind. This is denying a connection in one breath, and asserting it in the next. If there is really an unbridgable gulf between the molecular activity of the brain and consciousness, the gulf remains from whichever side we contemplate the problem. If the gap lies with the facts, and not with our knowledge of the facts only, we may assume a sort of pre-established harmony, such as one may see established between a phonograph and a cinematograph display; but nothing else is possible. On any other line the Spiritualist, in slaughtering the Materialist, commits suicide himself.

The difficulty is largely due to not bearing clearly in mind what is the scientific sense of "function." Let us take, for illustration, the case of a muscle, about which there is no dispute. The prime function of a muscle is contractility. The constituent parts of a muscle are cells and cell-fibres. If we take these cells singly, they exhibit the normal irritability of cells in general. It is their combination, their organisation, their development of specific qualities in the course of evolution, that gives the function of contractibility. It is the special combination of specially developed cells that gives us the phenomena of muscular action. The "function" in this case, it is admitted, is the expression of the activity of the muscle. We cannot separate the two; and if we ask *why* the molecular movements of certain cells should result in the flexing of a muscle, we can only reply that the one thing invariably accompanies the other. And this reply is accepted as quite satisfactory. No one denies that contractibility is the function of a specially organised structure.

From a biological point of view, therefore, a "function" may be defined as the activity of an organ or of an assemblage of organs. This definition holds good whether we are dealing with muscle and contractility, brain and thought, or an organism and life. We have the structure, and we have certain functions which are the expression of its activity. We do not know that *any* function is more than this; and it must be for those who make such an assertion to prove it.

Here a further consideration must be borne in mind. Sir Oliver Lodge, and Professor Haldane in his *Mechanism and Personality*, asserts that on the mechanistic theory life and consciousness becomes nothing more than the physics and chemistry of the nervous system. As put, the expression is misleading. The function of an organ or of an organism is more than can ever be discovered by any analysis of the physical or chemical nature of their constituent parts. No analysis of a compound will give the properties of a compound. That is the most elementary of axioms in chemistry. A whole exhibits all the properties of its parts *plus* the qualities due to their combination. And it is this *plus* that Spiritualists and Vitalists conveniently overlook. Naturally, therefore, an analysis of an organic structure does not give, and cannot give, all that is manifested by the structure. And except for its greater complexity, the difficulty of seeing how brain action gives rise to thought is no greater than that of seeing how any function is related to its organ. In any case, we can only show that, given a particular structure and conditions, a certain activity ensues. In a general sense, our knowledge here, although of a less precise character than in other directions, is in substantial agreement with all that we know concerning the relation of function to organ.

Much of the confusion existing is due to the way in which the question is often stated. People look for the undiscoverable, and complain that it cannot be found. When they ask how neural motion becomes a sensation, or how nervous action becomes thought, two things are separated that are in fact inseparable. Molecular motion does not become thought. Molecular motion remains molecular motion, and cannot become anything else. The famous statement that the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile is true only in the sense that as we find no bile in the absence of a liver, so we find no thought in the absence of a brain. "Production" carries with it the notion of separateness, and it is here that the confusion arises.

It is said, for example, that in any succession of nervous motions there is no room for the introduction of thought or consciousness. When, for instance, I tread with a bare foot upon a sharp nail, there results a complete chain of ingoing and outgoing physical changes that result in the removal of

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my foot. And it is said that there is no point in the chain of physical sequences at which consciousness may be introduced. The sequence is complete in its absence. Yet the presence of consciousness is denied by none. In addition to the physical changes, there is a sensation. We have at the beginning a physical shock; we follow this through a number of stages, and there emerges something quite different in character—a sensation. And the triumphant conclusion is that there can be no genuine organic connection between the two.

Certainly not, if we are observing two different facts. But is this so? Are we observing two distinct facts, or two aspects of the same fact? If the latter, the case becomes greatly simplified, and we have no longer to ask how one thing becomes transformed into another thing; but what are the conditions under which certain phenomena occur? And the cardinal fact here is, that what is viewed under one set of conditions as molecular motion is, viewed another set of conditions, feeling or thought. We may describe the same thing from either the subjective or from the objective side. In the one case we describe a phenomenon in terms of sensation, in the other in terms of matter and motion. We may, for example, describe a sensation of light from the physical side as so many nervous shocks, or we may describe it in terms of sensation, without considering the physical aspect at all. But it is the same thing all along. The distinction arises in looking at the same phenomenon now from the objective, now from the subjective, point of view. The confusion results from not always clearly bearing in mind that we are all the time observing the same fact, or set of facts, under different conditions.

The folly of asserting that if the mechanistic theory be true there should be nothing but physics and chemistry, is thus clear. The subjective aspect is as real as the objective. We do not see how motion produces mind, and we do not see how mind produces motion, because we are in each case looking for the impossible. But we can see how the same thing, under different conditions, will present quite different aspects. The psychic fact is not something that is produced, any more than H^2O *produces* water. Water is H^2O under special conditions, and in the same way the psychic fact is the objective fact presented under different conditions. Two things have been separated in thought that are inseparable in fact, and having done so, we treat them as independent existences, and at once fall to speculating as to What can be the connection between them?

Finally, it must be borne in mind that the neurological theory is the only one on behalf of which anything like scientific evidence can be offered. It cannot, of course, answer every difficulty that presents itself, but it is the only theory that explains, even in a general way, known phenomena by an appeal to verifiable data. Objections to it are based chiefly upon the incompleteness of our knowledge, an incompleteness not at all surprising when one remembers how brief is the period during which science has possessed the tools essential to the working of the problem. But during that period it has shown very clearly the useless nature of a soul theory. So far as positive science is concerned that is as dead as a doornail. This is admitted by a writer of the standing of Professor McDougal, who says:—

> "It is a matter of common knowledge that science has given its verdict against the soul, has declared that the soul, as a thing, or being, or substance, or mode of existence, or activity, different from, distinguishable from, or in any sense or degree independent of, the body is a mere survival from primitive culture, one of the many relics of savage superstition that obstinately persist among us in defiance of the clear teachings of modern science. The greater part of the philosophies also, mainly owing to the influence of the natural sciences, has arrived at the same conclusion. In short, it cannot be denied that, as William James told us at Oxford three years ago, 'Souls are out of fashion.'"

This summary of the present position of science loses some of its force from the writers own attempt to revive the "soul theory."

C. COHEN.

(To be continued.)

The Word of God.—III.

An Open Letter to the

MINISTERS OF ALL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.

LET me take, for instance, a volume like *Lux Mundi*, edited by Bishop Gore. This clergyman allows that the Pentateuch was not written by Moses, who is only responsible for the Ten Commandments; he also allows that David did not write the Psalms, nor Solomon the Proverbs; and that Jonah and Daniel are "dramatic compositions," and not history; although, as a matter of fact, Jesus Christ referred to *both* Jonah and Daniel as records of actual occurrences. But the admissions of Bishop Gore are outdone by those of the late Canon Driver, in his *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*. According to this clergyman, the book of Genesis was written hundreds of years after the time of Moses, by more than one hand; Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers are just as modern; while Deuteronomy was written some time between Isaiah and Jeremiah. The Hexateuch—that is, the Pentateuch and Joshua—was the work of nameless Jewish scribes; and the whole of the Priestly Code, or Law of Moses, belongs "approximately to the period of the Babylonian captivity."

This view of the Pentateuch was advocated by Thomas Paine, and unanimously opposed by the Churches. Dean Graves, Bishop Watson, Dr. Marsh, and a host of other ministers, stood up for its Mosaic origin; and scores of men and women were sent to gaol for selling books in which the opposite was maintained. However, the case is now altered; Canon Driver could only urge that the Jewish priests, who made laws and ascribed them to Moses, should not be accused of the crime of "forgery," as they were only conforming to "the literary usages" of their age and nation; though, for my part, I hold with Mr. Gladstone, that, if the Pentateuch was not written by Moses, but by Jewish priests and scribes, eight hundred years after his time, both the Jewish and the Christian worlds have been made the victims of "a heartless imposture."

Let us take the rest of Canon Driver's admissions as to the Old Testament books. David did not write the Psalms, which "set before us the experience of many men, and of many ages of the national life." Proverbs was "formed gradually," and not written by Solomon; nor was Ecclesiastes, which belongs to the second or third century before Christ; nor was the Song of Solomon, which is a love poem, and not an allegory; so that the headings of the chapters, in our English Bible, are an absurd, if not a base, imposition on the British public. Job is not history, but a drama, belonging to the period of the Captivity, and the speeches of Elihu are interpolations. Daniel was written hundreds of years after the time of its ostensible author, probably about 168 B.C.; so that its prophecies were fulfilled, because the events occurred first and the writer predicted them afterwards. Jonah was written long after the prophet's age, probably in the fifth century; and it is "not strictly historical"; that is, Jonah never converted Nineveh, and never took a submarine excursion in the belly of a whale.

There is a great outcry in your Churches, gentlemen, against the *publication* of such conclusions as those of Canon Driver, but I did not observe that the clamorers tried to *answer* him. They wanted to *silence* him. But it is too late to do that; the cat is fairly out of the bag. People with any eyesight, and there are more of them than you think, now perceive that all you have been teaching, for so many years, about the Old Testament, is *a falsehood*. Its various books were *not* written, for the most part, by the

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persons whose names you have put at the top of them; in fact, you do not know *who* wrote them; and, if you have been all along mistaken as to who wrote these books, and when they were written, I say it is a thousand to one that you are also mistaken as to their *contents*. It seems to me downright nonsense to say you do not know who wrote a certain book, and at the same time to say you are quite sure that all it contains is true.

The books of the New Testament, as to their authorship, are just as uncertain as the books of the Old Testament. Of the fourteen Epistles by Paul, only *four* are generally admitted as *authentic*, and even those are *disputed*. The other Epistles, by Peter and John, are also doubtful, if not spurious. Nor are the Gospels in any better plight. Matthew Arnold thought it time to tell the public that the Gospels did not exist, as we now have them, before the last quarter of the second century; that is, a good deal more than a hundred years after the death of Christ. Dr. Giles, a clergyman of the Church of England, declared that *none* of the New Testament books existed, as we have them, within a hundred and twenty years after the Crucifixion. It is generally allowed by the most competent critics that the earliest writings about Jesus Christ are lost; that the four Gospels, bearing the names of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, were written long afterwards, in the second century, by unknown persons; and that it was a very common thing, in the early Christian Church, to compose books and attach to them the names of the Apostles.

Now, gentlemen, I want to ask you a plain question, to which I should like you to give me a plain answer. Your Bible is stuffed with the most tremendous miracles; that is, stories which no man is called upon to believe, unless they are accredited by the most tremendous evidence. Do you really think, gentlemen, that the evidence you offer is *good enough?* Can you expect people, who think for themselves, to believe a host of things contrary to sane experience, on the word of men who lived *somewhere*—God knows where; and at *some time*—God knows when?

The "advanced" ministers—that is, those amongst you, gentlemen, who patronise the "New Criticism"—are patching up a new theory of *Inspiration*. They see that it will no longer do to maintain the old position, that the Bible contains *truth* only, without any admixture of *error*; or, to use the words of the famous Mr. Spurgeon, that every sentence of it was written by an Almighty finger, and every word of it fell from Almighty lips. Knowing that their Word of God does contain errors, in science and history, to say no more; they now teach that the writers (whoever they were) were only inspired in relation to religion and ethics; in short, that the Bible is God's Word because it reveals to us religious and moral truths which we could not ourselves discover. But this is only a temporising theory; it may do for the time, but it will presently be seen through and abandoned; in brief, your Word of God will, sooner or later, have to stand on the shelf, side by side with other Words of God; and then, gentlemen, you will have to get your livings in a more honest and useful profession.—Yours, with best wishes,

G. W. FOOTE.

The Lesson of the Balkan Atrocities.

THE cruelties committed by the Greeks upon the Bulgarian soldiers and the Bulgarian population in Macedonia are too monstrous for condonation and too well attested to be denied. They are not to be excused as the savage outbursts of an infuriated soldiery; but are equally the outcome of the designed maliciousness of men whose official or religious status might have kept them within the bounds of a more or less decent ferocity. The public declaration made by the Bulgaroktonos, in advance of these horrors, that he would be obliged to "proceed to acts of reprisal" upon the Bulgarians, no doubt inflamed the national and religious rancor of the Greek soldiery and population against the Bulgarians, and more than accounts for the savageries which the blood-intoxicated but pious soldiers of King Constantine admittedly committed upon thousands of hapless members of a race upon which the royal lips had pronounced doom as a people that no longer had the right to be numbered amongst civilised nations.* Constantly in these horrors we find Greek archbishops and other liveried servants of God directing the operations of massacre, as at Serrès, where, in fact, the hasty tribunal of death was presided over by a Greek ecclesiastic in order that the Greek-speaking victims, who were found with the common herd, might not escape massacre by pretending that they were Greeks (Miletitch, p. 46).

The process of hellenisation, which began with slaughter and continued by enforced exile during the last two years, is still maintained upon the remnant of the Bulgarian race in Macedonia, though on a slightly diminished scale of ferocity. At the present moment, the situation of the Bulgarians everywhere in Macedonia is becoming untenable except as a temporary affliction which may, at some future time, goad the Bulgarian Government, perhaps in concert with Turkey, to wipe out of the national memory, as an intolerable affront upon humanity, by the terrible process of fresh blood-letting in the Balkans. It may be colorably contended that the harassing policy of persecution pursued by the Greek authorities in Macedonia to-day, is even more odious as being more cowardly and cold-blooded than the excesses which followed last year upon the triumph of the Greek arms over the betrayed and outnumbered Bulgarians. Accounts day by day in the Bulgarian papers show that Macedonia to-day is groaning under a veritable regime of terror, and the new masters of the Macedonian Bulgarians are burning, pillaging, and pitilessly destroying the remnants of the Bulgarian race native of this blood-drenched soil, as though to show the world how these Christians love one another. An astute policy of "beat my neighbor out of doors" is being adopted by the Greek Government, which has recently given its calculated hospitality in these parts to multitudes of Greek refugees from Turkish Thrace, and installed the new-comers—who, in fact, are the victims of another type of tyranny—in many of the villages inhabited from time immemorial by men and women of Bulgarian race. Adopting the noble principle of robbing Peter to pay Paul, the Greek authorities have winked at or connived at the plunder of waggon-loads of stock from the Bulgarian natives in order to establish the Greek refugees in their new land of enforced exile. In a number of villages the Bulgarians have recently been stripped of money, animals, furniture, clothing, and other things; and any of the poor devils who had the audacity to resist or complain were regaled with tortures of a refined character which recall the spirit of the Holy Inquisition. It was precisely because these abominations were in full swing at the time (and they continue till the present moment) that the Greek authorities frowned their disapproval upon the investigations which the Carnegie Commission of Inquiry were then proposing to make concerning the true inwardness of the Macedonian atrocities and as to the degree of responsibility resting upon the late allied nations in reference to the pandemonium in the Balkans.

In view of the present ugly complexion of affairs between the rival religions and races in the Balkans, and especially between Patriarchalist Greeks and Exarchist Bulgarians, it is easy to see that unless Europe intervenes with tact and vigor (and she will not do this, of course) war is sure to break out in the near future between the Greek and Bulgarian nations. I have no doubt that Bulgaria would be quite willing to submit her cause of quarrel to the arbitrament of the Hague Tribunal; but Greece—in the arrogance

* See "Fac-simile" letters passim cited in the *Freethinker* of June 21 and July 5.

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of her present triumphant mood, at least—will not deign to listen to any such proposal. Two things are happening to-day that alone would suffice to justify these grave fears. First, that the hellenisation of the Bulgarian inhabitants is being enforced by the proscription of the Bulgarian tongue, and the application of torture (the insertion of nails between the fingers or the driving of sharp persuasive instruments under the nails, are among the polite attentions which recalcitrants receive) in order to induce the Bulgarian peasants to talk Greek; and, secondly, that in the Churches which formerly belonged to the Bulgarians, but are now grabbed by their enemies, the Greeks are actually chanting prayers every Sunday imploring God Almighty to exterminate *the cursed Bulgarian race*.

In order to estimate the moral degradation which war—or shall we say war when waged in the Balkans?—engenders even in the minds of archbishops, the case of Monsignor Germanos, the Metropolitan Bishop of Pravichta, in Macedonia, will serve for profit and edification. During the late war this holy bishop of the Greek orthodox type, placed himself at the head of a Greek batallion and took advantage of his position to intrude his presence into the harems of Turkish subjects and violate the honor of Moslem women. His turpitudes recently came before the court martial at Constantinople and were rewarded by a sentence of fifteen years' hard labor. Unfortunately for the cause of justice, he was convicted *in contumaciam*, his episcopal pluck not being equal to anything more heroic than the storming of a harem. In point of fact, the bishops in Macedonia seem to have comported themselves in the Balkans like the old fighting, pillaging bishops of the Middle Ages. The sordid details set forth by Dr. Kyroff* clearly exhibit the Greek bishops in Macedonia during the last two years as a collection of brigands, blackmailers, and murderers. The exploits of the Archbishop of Serrès, and his holy complicity in the butcheries perpetrated at that place, are too terrible for the sober pages of this journal: they will be found set forth with harrowing particulars in Dr. Miletitch's book.† These frightful examples, which show how the "Holy Spirit," which these men monopolise and impart, does not always render them immune from the soiling influence of passion and hate, are for our instruction and warning; they teach us that men ordinarily virtuous and kind, even those men who are consecrated to holiness here and heaven hereafter, are not to be trusted with the God-like omnipotence that enables them to do what they like or wreak their animosities upon people whom they do not like. All history, in all times, is but the inventory of the misdeeds of irresponsible power; and much of the misery in times past, and especially much of the misery in the present situation in the Balkans, is but the sordid trail of crime left by the footprints of triumphant violence.

And here, on the eve of the publication of the Carnegie report,‡ I must suspend for awhile the preliminary skirmishes of my pen. I have no doubt that the disclosures of that report will sadden once again the hearts of those who hoped—and hoped in vain—that the Balkan nations, freed from the domination of the Crescent, would make the Cross the emblem not only of liberty, but of civilisation. For the present, liberty in the Balkans is trampled under foot; civilisation is clouded by the mists of racial hatred and furious national antagonisms; and the Cross has around it a wide-spreading nimbus of tears and blood. The most cruel war of modern times, which began as a holy crusade and finished as a bestial conflict between the Crusaders themselves, leaves the future prospects of the Balkans darkened by the grim shadows of impending war. Evidently, the scramble of the Allies for the biggest slice of Turkey has only passed through the first stage of its evolution. All the marks of impermanence are impressed upon the present dispositions of the international chess-board in the Balkans. A renovated New Turkey may ere long unite with a renewed and reinvigorated Bulgaria for the purpose of adjusting frontiers at the expense of Servians on the one hand and Greeks on the other. And once more the Balkans will be bathed in blood and its populations decimated by outrage and massacre; and Cross and Crescent will become, as of yore, the emblems of national hatred and the edifying excuse for interminable slaughter.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

* *Reponse*, etc., pp. 64-65.

† *Atrocités*, etc., pp. 45-58, and 137-140.

‡ This report (a magnificent but saddening volume in French) reached me whilst I was proofing this article. Its 496 pages corroborate many of the incidents of horror related in my three articles, and on p. 274 sets forth in detail the thefts and murders committed by Greek archbishops during the war.

Joseph Chamberlain.

OTHER journals are discussing the late Mr. Joseph Chamberlain as a politician, but party politics are outside our province. We have a few words to say about him as to religion.

We understand that Mr. Chamberlain came of a Unitarian family. He might therefore call himself a Nonconformist. Certainly he was not a member of the Church of England. It was rumored that even his Unitarianism was of a very advanced order. There was little difference, it was said, between his religious views and those of his friend John Morley, in the old fighting days, when John Stuart Mill was the "prophet and priest" of the Radical dispensation.

It must be admitted, however, that Mr. Chamberlain's heresy was largely inferential. He was judged by the company he kept. And some of it was bad enough. Morley was by no means the worst. There were outspoken Atheists amongst the soldiers of progress who gathered round the standard of the *Fortnightly Review* and afterwards of the *Nineteenth Century*. We do not remember any pious expressions even in his "demagogic" speeches to the "mob,"—to borrow some of the phrases of his adversaries. He also spoke as one whose only religion was the public welfare, and his only church the House of Commons. He never "hit" it with Bradlaugh, we believe. Probably it was a case of rival ambitions. But he was much more friendly with Labouchere; and "Labby's" biographer tells us that his opinions were identical with Bradlaugh's on philosophical and religious questions.

On the "Bradlaugh question" in the early 'eighties—the question whether the Atheist member for Northampton should take the seat to which he had been constitutionally elected—Mr. Chamberlain spoke and voted according to his principles; although we do not see his name in the Index of Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner's biography of her father.

Throughout his career Mr. Chamberlain was sound on the question of Secular Education. He kept to the old Radical program of "Free, Compulsory, and Secular Education." In his last speeches on Education in the House of Commons in relation to the unhappy Bills of the Liberal Government, in desertion of their own principles at the bidding of the political Nonconformists, headed by the Rev. Dr. Clifford, who stands for "Secular Education *plus* the Bible," Mr. Chamberlain plainly declared that his own views had not changed in the least. He was still in favor of Secular Education as the only wise and just policy. But he had never been able to persuade his Nonconformist brethren of this, and he had therefore to satisfy himself with the best course in the circumstances. He was sure, however, that the policy of Secular Education was the policy that all parties were bound to come to at last.

This, then, is one plank of Mr. Chamberlain's program which never changed. And it is to his credit that this plank was one that did not tend to increase his popularity.

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Opinions vary as to Mr. Chamberlain's personality. A French critic once said that he had the head of a Roman emperor of the decadence. Mr. George Meredith, in a later letter, referred to his "adventurous nose." His admirers, on the other hand, often spoke of him as the greatest statesman that ever lived, and for a long while at Birmingham it was dangerous blasphemy to differ from him on any subject whatever. But years have passed since bodily paralysis ended his political career. Death has only ratified the announcement made a few months ago that he would not stand again for his old constituency. It was a very touching end to a stormy career. Many people will regard it as singular that Mr. John Redmond, of all men, should say the best word on this point :—

> "Although Ireland in the past has had bitter memories in connection with Mr. Chamberlain's career, the Irish people are a generous people, and long ago these bitter memories were forgotten. There has been a universal feeling of sympathy in Ireland at the pathetic spectacle of his long illness. He was a great man."

We speak as something better than politicians in saying that we hope these generous words will help to soften the hard feelings that still keep Ireland a divided nation.

G. W. FOOTE.

Acid Drops.

Mr. Asquith's tribute in the House of Commons to the aged Emperor of Austria, who has suffered so many bereavements by violent death, seems to have pleased the Christians. In a certain way also it was pleasant to Freethinkers. "Around few figures in the history of Europe," the Premier said, "had it pleased Providence to gather and concentrate such a pitiless and, in the human eye, such an unmerited succession of dark and wounding experience." This is an admission that the assassin of the Archduke was merely the tool of Providence. Why then should the tool be tried and punished for the action of the wielder?

It has not yet been suggested, as far as we know, that the assassination of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife was due to "infidelity." No doubt the assassins were as good Christians as the victims were. There is no need to go beyond the Bible for encouragement to assassination. Look at Ehud who went to King Eglon with "a present from God" in the shape of a long dagger which he thrust into the monarch's fat belly with fatal effect. Look at Jael who killed Sisera when he was enjoying the hospitality of her tent, by nailing his head to the floor while he was asleep; whose praises were sung by Deborah the prophetess as "blessed amongst women." Look at Judith who turned General Holofernes' head with her beauty and cut it off when he was in a stupor of satiety. These assassins, male and female, are all glorified in Holy Writ; and the inference to every believer in the Word of God is "Go thou and do likewise."

Sir William Robertson Nicoll, whenever he writes or speaks on religious questions, adopts a tone of absolute infallibity. There is no possibility of his ever being mistaken, and so whoever differs from him is in hopeless error. Samuel Butler and H. G. Wells advocate theories of human society which he denounces as fundamentally false and pernicious. Readers of *Erewhon*, *The Coming Race*, *The World Set Free* are solemnly warned against the ridiculous and partly profane views therein enunciated. Then in the cocksure style of the divine he says: "We know what man needs and what Christianity supplies." One thing is historically beyond dispute, namely, that whatever man needs Christianity has signally failed to supply. Nothing is easier than to criticise the various Utopian visions that from time to time have been given to the world; but the fact remains, and it cannot be honestly blinked, that, under Christianity, the human race has always been disturbed and cursed by bitter strife, malice, hatred, persecution, and war. Christendom has been for nigh two thousand years nothing but a battlefield drenched with blood mostly spilt in Christ's name.

Now, Sir William, instead of facing undeniable facts, gets upon his high horse and blindly dogmatises thus: "We affirm that there is no prospect of happiness or stability in a purely secular society. Man must depend upon God." That is fanaticism of the worst kind. In point of fact, happiness and stability have prevailed and still do prevail in a purely secular society. This statement is susceptible of the completest verification; and were he to divest himself of Christian prejudice Sir William himself would be convinced of its truth.

The Rev. Ossian Davies says that "if man has no immortal nature he is only a beast—the first and wisest of beasts, it may be, but still *a beast*." A sillier sentence was never penned. Immortality is an inference from an unverified and unverifiable assumption. Not a single fact can be quoted to show that man's nature differs from that of an animal. He has everything in common with monkeys, and his end is exactly like theirs. In any case, man is not a *beast*, this being a term now applied to a four-footed animal, or one that arouses fear or repulsion, being commonly opposed to man. Has Mr. Davies forgotten that Shakespeare calls man "the paragon of animals"?

The Rev. Dr. Orchard imparts to us the startling information that Christ is now outside his Church, but has the strongest possible desire to get inside once more. Whether he went out of his own accord, in a huff, or whether he was forcibly turned out, we are not told; but the reverend gentleman is quite sure that he is standing at the door and knocking eagerly and loudly for admission, although somehow or other the Church is not prepared to receive him. We are equally certain that the whole thing is nothing but a fairy tale.

We were rather surprised, but not the less pleased, to find a Church journal protesting against the newspaper campaign in connection with the Royal family. In this case it is in connection with the Prince of Wales at Oxford—what he eats, drinks, wears, how he walks, and other equally uninteresting and trivial details. The press booming of royalty has now been going on for some years, and it is one of the many disquieting features of our time. It has not to commend it even the robust loyalty of an earlier generation. It is mainly catering to a morbid appetite for unimportant details about prominent persons. One sees yards of pictures with "the King watching a game of football," "Mr. Lloyd George leaving Downing-street," "Mr. Balfour walking down Whitehall," or similar inspiring legends underneath. So far as we can see, George the Fifth looks at anything in the same way as other people, and Mr. Balfour and Mr. Lloyd George when they walk put one leg in front of the other much the same as ordinary folk. We suppose this sort of thing must interest some people or it would not appear, but one is left marvelling at the intelligence of those whom it interests, and wondering at the value of a press that fills its columns with such stuff.

Although the Catholic Church in England does not show as great a decrease in membership as some of the Protestant Churches, it yet fails to hold its own in relation to growth of population. In a pamphlet recently published, Rev. J. H. Wright, S.J., points out that, without taking account of the number of converts gained last year, the Catholic Church in England numbers nearly 750,000 less than it should have had had it kept pace with the increase of population. These figures strike us as rather large, but they bring out the general truth that every Church in Christendom is losing its hold on the public. Some lose less adherents than others, but none of them are holding their own.

Dr. George Nickson, the recently appointed Bishop of Bristol, in an address delivered on his enthronement, also bears evidence to the decline of Christianity. He said :—

> "No one can say that Christianity is in possession. Men are turning in other directions than Bethlehem or Calvary for the solution of their problems. The evidences for this are widespread. In social and economic movements we see labor and capital organising on lines in which Christianity, at least avowedly, plays the smaller of parts, while any attempt on the part of the Church to bring her influence to bear is regarded with aloofness, if not with suspicion. In the domain of thought and science, we are warned that these are departments self-sufficing for their purposes, and while the old antagonism between science and religion has disappeared, the claim of emancipation from its direction is insistent."

Christianity is in possession socially and financially, intellectually it has been dispossessed on all hands. It is not overstating the case to say that the majority of thoughtful and educated people in every country in Europe have rejected Christianity. We do not mean by this that they reject the *name* of Christian; that is about all they retain of the original article. But tried by the test of any authoritative statement of Christian doctrine, they have ceased to be Christian. And nothing shows the desperate plight of the

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Churches more clearly than the fact that they are anxious to claim as Christian men and women who deliberately reject most, if not all, of the cardinal Christian doctrines.

An extraordinary case is reported in the *Transvaal Leader*, Johannesburg, of Tuesday, June 9:—

> "Before Mr. Justice Krause, at the Pietersburg Circuit Court on Friday last, a young native girl, about 17 or 18 years of age, was charged with practising as a witch-doctor in contravention of Section 30 of Ordinance 26 of 1904. She was undefended both in the Court below and in the Circuit Court. She was an ordinary barbarian native girl from that part of the Zoutpansberg district near Louis Trichardt.
>
> "Three witnesses were called to establish the case for the Crown. The first, a native named Nebudogwa, stated that about February, 1913, he and eight other natives, including two named Mudzuala and Mahengani, and a native woman, Nyalalumbe, consulted the accused, who was practising as a witch-doctor, as to who had been the cause of the death of their relatives. The accused threw the bones, after being paid 5s., and said that a witch-doctor had caused the death of the relatives, and indicated the native woman, Nyalalumbe, as the witch. She was then paid a goat and a sheep by the others present, and the consultation ended.
>
> "The second witness was Mahengani, who corroborated the evidence of the last witness, and also stated that on the 29th August, 1913, Mudzuala killed the woman Nyalalumbe, presumably because she was a witch. On the 9th November, 1913, Mudzuala was sentenced to death for the murder at the Pietersburg Circuit Court.
>
> "The third witness was the father of the accused. He stated that about December, 1912, she recovered from a long illness. She then came to him and said: 'I know everything; I am a witch-doctor.' She then provided herself with a set of bones and commenced practising as a witch-doctor. He also stated that he had seen her go into trances, and that she was quite a young girl.
>
> "There were no previous convictions nor any police record against the accused.
>
> "The jury brought in a verdict of guilty of practising as a witch-doctor.
>
> "The Judge, after reprimanding the accused for practising upon the credulity of the natives, said he would make an example of her, as witch-doctoring caused a great deal of mischief and had to be stopped. He sentenced her to the maximum sentence—imprisonment for life."

We suppose this is the good old Boer law, founded on the Bible, as the English law was in former years. But surely this sentence will not be allowed to stand. Such an infamous barbarity, if carried out, would disgrace not only South Africa but the whole British Empire.

Rev. Bernard J. Snell says that the other day he received a letter from a correspondent, asking, "How do you get over that scripture, 'Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live'?" To this he replied, "It has never caused me the slightest twinge of uneasiness. How does it affect you?" This does not strike us as a very courageous way of facing a plain question. It may be that the text has never troubled Mr. Snell; but if that is so, one can only say, So much the worse for Mr. Snell. It is part of the Christian Scriptures; it has been part of the teaching of every one of the historic Churches of Christendom; it has caused the deaths of many thousands of women, and even of children; and the possibility of commerce with Satan was endorsed by Jesus Christ. And yet a Christian minister can reply that the text never troubled *him*. What Mr. Snell's correspondent obviously wished to know was how he could account for a religion claiming all that Christianity claims teaching such a villainous doctrine, and one which we know to have been founded upon pure delusion. And to that Mr. Snell gives no reply whatever.

Mr. Snell would probably reply that we have to take such a teaching in connection with the culture of the time at which the books of the Bible were written. That is good advice from a Freethinker, and is, indeed, the advice that any Freethinker would offer. He sees that the belief in witches is a product of pre-scientific thought, and is not surprised to find it among uncivilised or semi-civilised peoples, whether in Biblical times or among contemporary savages. But the Christian is in a different position. If the Bible is wrong on this point, how can we be certain that it is right on any other? If the belief in witches was a product of the time at which the Bible was written, what about the belief in God, in heaven, in a soul, in the divinity of Jesus, in miracles? Must not these have been equally due to the same cause? Adopt this point of view, and the Bible as an authoritative text-book of religion disappears altogether. What we have left is a collection of legends and beliefs, interesting to the anthropologist, useful enough for illustrating varying stages of human culture, but of no greater intrinsic value than the legends of contemporary uncivilised peoples.

Writing in *T. P.'s Weekly*, Mr. G. K. Chesterton refers to "apple-pie bed" as a "good old Christian practical joke." We assume that some of the more serious Christian practical jokes consisted of burning heretics.

A volume of short stories has been published with the title, *The Mercy of the Lord*. We wonder if it refers to the Plagues of Egypt, Noah's Flood, the Massacre of the Innocents, and other examples of the Divine Benevolence.

Some years ago some workmen had been excavating in Westminster Abbey, and were told to be careful because Dr. Arne, the composer of "Rule Britannia," was buried on the spot. "It's too late, guv'nor," replied one of the navvies. "If we'd known, we wouldn't have driven that drain-pipe through him."

The Rev. Joseph Wallett, of Westcliff, one of the survivors of the *Empress of Ireland* disaster, says, "fathers and mothers, if you do anything for your boys and girls, for God's sake teach them to swim." Why drag in Deity? According to the Bible, "God" once drowned the whole world with the exception of a few persons. Has the reverend gentleman a premonition of another dose of the divine loving-kindness?

Cardinal Gasquet says it is certain that a clergyman or a priest is worth three policemen. We are not quite so sure about that. It *is* certain that the clergy have not done away with the necessity for policemen, and it is not unusual for one to find both flourishing in the same area.

The Cardinal also deplores the fact that the old dictum, "Christianity is the law of the land," no longer has any force, but that "everywhere the goodly framework of society, which is the creation of Christianity, is throwing off Christianity." This strikes us as a compound of bigotry and bluff. We can quite believe that the Cardinal regrets the change that has come over the law of the country, and would prefer the days when the reply to the heretic and the Freethinker took the form of imprisonment. But we are a little surprised at Cardinal Gasquet—whose historical studies ought to have taught him better—fathering such obvious rubbish about Christianity creating the framework of society. That bears about the same relation to Christianity that Monmouth does to Macedon. Society is primarily a biological and human fact. All that theology does is to modify some of the expressions of social life in its own interests. And it does not need a very elaborate study of history to prove that whenever these modifications have been made, it has been left for a later and riper experience to modify them in turn, and to ultimately reject them. That Christianity is no longer the law of the land is a case in point.

"Faith as an Aid to Beauty" ran a headline in the *Daily News and Leader*. Christians will need plenty of faith, for they mostly have the expression of tired hearse-horses. How much prayer will it take to make a snub nose into a thing of beauty and a joy for ever?

When a prisoner at North London, charged with biting another man's ear, protested that he was not a cannibal, the magistrate said cannibals eat other people to acquire their virtues, and were a noble race compared with backbiters. We agree; but cannibals cannot get much virtue from a solitary missionary; they ought to dine off a Sunday-school excursion or a mother's meeting.

His Majesty, George V., has an affection for fire-fighters. He reviewed the London Fire Brigade at Hyde Park last week, and he is constantly laying the foundation-stones of churches. The King thus patronises fires in two worlds.

Mr. Ex-President Roosevelt's physicians have forbidden him absolutely to keep out of politics for four months. We hope the prohibition also extends to theological matters.

The *Church Family Newspaper* attributes to Garrick the answer given by an actor to a bishop who wondered why the stage had so much greater influence on people than the pulpit—"Because I recite fiction as if it were true, while you deliver truths as if they were fictions." A much better story, and one with more truth in it, is Fielding's retort to the historian who remarked that the author of *Tom Jones* wrote fiction. No, said Fielding, it is you who write fiction. I deal with facts, using fictitious names and dates.

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With you, names and dates are the only real things. That touches a far more profound truth. A good novel deals with the enduring facts of human nature, its heights and depths, lights and shadows, and these have their value whether the actual characters of the novel ever existed or not. A good novel gives us life as we can all know it, if we use our eyes and our brains. The ordinary history gives us a list of quite correct names and dates, but attached to persons from whom all that is humanly interesting has been emasculated. History, as generally written, would be unintelligible but for the reader supplying from his own experience what the historian so often fails to give. As a case in point, let one read Flaubert's *Saint Antony*, and he will have a better appreciation of the life of the monk than could be derived from a score of histories.

But to return to the Garrick story. Naturally, the stage—given the right kind of actor—gripe more than the pulpit. But this is not because the first deals well with fiction and the latter deals badly with truth. It is because the stage is dealing with truth all the time. The loves and hatreds, the humor and pathos, of the stage appeals to all more or less because they are phases of human nature that everyone knows and recognises. The pulpit meets with a relative failure because it is actually and inevitably concerned with fictions. An incarnate Deity, a crucified God, a heaven and hell, angels and devils, are all fictions; they are all removed from the actualities of life, and their presentation only meets with a qualified success when they are associated with more human elements. The reason why even an indifferent actor may succeed in making a more powerful appeal than a good preacher is that the actor deals with truths, even though he robs them of some of their power in the presentation. It is the clergyman who deals with fictions, and the sense of their unreality remains when the glamor of the preacher's personality has passed away.

The *Times* published the other day (June 29) a special supplement on Spain. It will be interesting to many because of the evidence offered that, despite opposition, educational influences in Spain are gathering strength. The work of Ferrer and other reformers is thus bearing fruit, although the dead-weight of clericalism, Conservatism, and reactionary forces generally, is still enormous. It is also plain that there is a considerable circulation in Spain of Freethinking works, and although the *Times* is discreetly reticent as to their influence, there is no doubt that they are steadily undermining the authority of religion. With the power of the Church broken, there is no reason whatever why Spain should not again take its place among the foremost civilised nations of Europe. The country possesses great possibilities from both a commercial and an intellectual point of view. These have been lying idle for centuries, thanks to the power of the Christian Church, but with this out of the way their development is certain. Spain, under its Mohammedan rulers, played a part in civilisation; it sank to the depths under Christian control, and its removal is the indispensable condition of its resurrection.

Churches, a theological professor assures us, "are the only societies on earth possessing the Holy Spirit." We know nothing about the Holy Spirit; but, judging by the general character and history of the Churches, we cannot escape the conclusion that to possess him is by no means an unmixed blessing.

According to the *Evening News*, the Psychical Researcher is "arriving at a conviction that his own comrades, as they die, carry beyond death their own curious interests that something like a Society for Psychical Research is beginning to operate from the Other Side." It is very like the poor Indian dreaming of the Happy Hunting Grounds.

"The British Sunday remains a thing to be wondered at, laughed at, and deplored," says Mr. Arthur Bourchier, the famous actor. The world does move after all, for this is a thing that Freethinkers have said for centuries.

A squadron of Italian soldiers have at last captured the stronghold of the notorious Corraine brigands. It contained a large store of provisions sent in by persons marked out for vengeance as well as from villages by way of blackmail. Crucifixes and prayer-books lying on the floor suggested that the brigands had been disturbed at their devotions.

The Rev. Silvester Horne left over £5,000. We thought it would have been more. Perhaps the secret of that lies with Mrs. Horne. It would be absurd to say that five thousand pounds is a fortune as things go, but it is a good deal for a disciple of him who taught "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth," "take no thought for the morrow" and "blessed be ye poor."

Here are two other professional Christites who did better than Mr. Horne. Rev. Roger Edgeworth, rector of Rusper, Horsham, Surrey, left £10,848. Rev. Charles Stead Hope, vicar of Holy Trinity, Southport, left £34,502. "And their works [but not their cash] do follow them."

A later report makes the Rev. Silvester Horne's "little bit" £8,450. We thought it would be even more than *that*. And here are a few more poor Christites cropping up as we go to press. Rev. Charles Fleetwood Porter, of Staverton Grange, Oxford, left £11,916. Rev. Canon Robert Hudson Borradaile, of Oxted, Surrey, left £27,171. Rev. Herbert George Morse, of Holland Park, London, formerly Rector of Littleham, Bideford, Devon, left £44,429.

An Indiana, U.S.A., lady is on her way to Europe to startle the inhabitants by a dress displaying £100,000 worth of jewels, diamonds being worn in the heels of her shoes. The lady should feel more at home walking the golden streets of the Christian heaven.

The King is interesting himself in the movement for founding an American church in London, which is to cost £150,000. In order to fill this huge building, we presume that the accepted Yankee methods of giving cups of tea and chocolates to the worshipers will be resorted to.

Mr. Israel Zangwill says, "Let me write for the clergy—I do not care who writes for the crowd." Is he grateful because the dear clergy have made the crowd worship a Jewish God?

An advertisement appears in a Sunday paper championing "Celestial Shepperton." We imagine Heaven-on-Thames is better than the Petticoat-lane ideals of the Christians.

The Archbishop of Canterbury has been quoting Victor Hugo as saying that there were only three men in the world's history who were really worthy of being commemorated—Moses, Homer, and William Shakespeare. Well now, Moses is certainly a legendary being, Homer is probably so too; which leaves us Shakespeare as the great reality.

A new religious sect has recently come into existence in Great Britain, which glories in the high-sounding name of the Brotherhood of the Universal Bond. It is said to have 16,000 members, who assemble for worship in numerous temples up and down the country, five of which are situated in London. Many outsiders call them sun-worshipers, but, in reality, they are simply reverers of nature, and of the Great Spirit which, they believe, manifests itself through Nature. They have points in common with the ancient Druids, and they share some of the views held by modern Buddhists; but justice demands that we should regard them as a distinct communion. Like all sectarians, they are noted for their sense of self-sufficiency. Their mission is to set the whole world right, and they publish a journal, the avowed object of which is, "the spiritual illumination of all mankind." After all said and done, all advocates of "spirituality," or of "the spiritual life" as the ideal life of man, are in the same supernaturalistic boat which drifts perilously and uselessly, if not very harmfully, upon the sea of life, never reaching any harbor.

Miss Elizabeth Ellis, aged fifty-eight, formerly proprietress of the "John Barleycorn" public-house at Hitchin, hung herself from a beam in the kitchen of her house in King's-road. She had dressed herself in black, and her gloves were of the same color. On the table was a Bible; also a Prayer-book open at the burial service. It is just as Talmage and Torrey said: You can't keep these Atheists from suicide!

The Bishop of London's Bill for raising the age of consent to eighteen is too modest. In view of so many clerical scandals, his Lordship should make the age eighty, not eighteen.

The Rev. R. Fotheringham, writing in *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*, says that if Methuselah were alive, he would be the saddest man in the world. Poor old Methuselah wouldn't be half so sad as the poor wretches who have to live for ever in the next world, and who had corns on their fingers through playing their harps.

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To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £174 4s. 6d. Received since:—T. Raff, £2 2s.; T. Turner, 5s.; A. Gardener, 2s. 6d.; S. Clowes, 2s. 6d.

T. RAFF (S. Africa).—Thanks for your encouraging letter, and your good wishes for our future health and success in our labors for Freethought.

F. E. COPE.—The proper way to form a Branch of the N. S. S. is to join yourself first, through the General Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, 2 Newcastle-street, London, E.C. Then to get forms of application for membership for others, and send same (with subscriptions) to the same address. There must be seven members to start a Branch. When formed, the Branch may be announced in the *Freethinker*.

GENUINE INQUIRER.—There is no contradiction between the two statements. "Abracadabra" refers to the *authorship*; we refer to the extant *documents*.

S. BURNS (S. Africa).—We did not regard the report of that self-appointed committee of parsons and doctors as of any importance. Thanks all the same for your trouble in the matter. Glad to have your high opinion of the *Freethinker*.

THE correspondent who sent us the "witchcraft" cutting from Johannesburg omitted his signature from the letter it was enclosed with. We cannot therefore thank him by name.

E. B.—Obliged for cuttings.

W. P. BALL.—Your cuttings are always welcome.

A. J. MARRIOTT.—Thanks for the reference.

S. CLOWES.—Ours is, as you say, a "tremendous struggle." This will be clearer than ever when we begin our address to the Freethought party next week.

J. W. O'LEARY.—We will look it up. Thanks.

F. GIBBONS.—It must be "a rare nuisance" to have so much difficulty in obtaining your weekly copy of this journal.

W. CROMACK.—Cuttings would do as well as the papers. Thanks.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

The July number of the *Humanitarian* contains an excellent article on "Leigh Hunt," presumably by the editor, Mr. H. S. Salt. Hunt is an author who should be much better known. He had the misfortune of coming in the way of friendship between two such men as Byron and Shelley, and suffering in the uninvited but inevitable contrast with those mighty spirits. But he had a genius of his own, nevertheless, and it was mostly devoted to good, and unpopular, and even dangerous causes. And noone is better qualified than Mr. Salt is to press Hunt's humanitarianism upon the attention of a later and forgetful age. Another item of interest in this periodical is Mr. Salt's setting the *Hospital* right on "Spare the rod and spoil the child." This is generally quoted as from the Bible; which shows what *care* the generality of Bible readers must have! The quotation is from Butler's *Hudibras*.

Mr. Salt fights for many good causes. One of the most unfriended amongst them is the preservation of English scenery. Mountain scenery, for instance, if once destroyed by the sordid hand of commercialism, is destroyed for ever. It was produced by Nature. Man is incapable of such production. But he can spoil what he cannot create, and degrade what he could not so much as imagine. Solitude is the greatest charm of mountain scenery. The bleating of sheep, the neigh of a horse, the thin, blue smoke from a cottage altar-fire dedicated to the first and best religion on earth, the occasional voice and footstep of a fellow pedestrian; such inaggressive sights and sounds rather add to than detract from the sense of solitude by the force of contrast—just as a ship on the horizon gives a last touch to the otherwise too austere grandeur of the sea; but the bustle of a holiday mob, carried up the hill and carried down again, is simply an abominable desecration. England is slowly waking up to these things. The unspeakable exploitation of Shakespeare's Cliff in the interest of the patent pill trade has been stopped. Let us hope that prompt public action—for nothing else really avails—will save the natural beauties that still remain in our country. Mr. Salt himself is not very sanguine. He says that, "While we are willing to spend vast sums on grabbing other people's territory, we have not, of course, a penny to spare for the preservation of our own." A bitter reflection! But the writer's own conscience is free from reproach.

The July *English Review* opens with a poem entitled "Morphia," by a Victim. It is not without a certain power, but it lacks art. "The Meaning of Pain," by Edward Carpenter, is thoughtful and suggestive, but is it satisfactory? Can anything on that subject be satisfactory on a Theistic basis? Mr. March Phillips' "Democracy and Art" is well worth reading. Sense as well as poetry is expressed in Mr. Eden Philipotts' "Home of the West Wind." A lady writer calling herself "Cornelia," writes with great vigor on "Epidemic Hysteria." She calls upon the men who are in authority to put down the criminal Suffragette. The immunity of the destructive woman in a calculating frenzy, trading all the while on the privileges of her sex, must be put an end to. Those who clamor for equality should have it. But the militant Suffragette objects to her share of this "divine equality"—to borrow a phrase from Shelley. "With one hand," "Cornelia" says, "she waves the banner of liberty, with the other she smacks a policeman's face, knowing that he won't smack her back." And so on through many vigorous pages. A careful and informing article by W. M. J. Williams on "The Crown Estate in London" is a valuable feature of this month's *English Review*. Mr. Harrison writes ably on the Irish question, but at the finish he is obliged to admit that all the trouble is at bottom religious, and is summed up in two brutal shibboleths, "To Hell with the Pope!" "To Hell with King William!"

We inserted *two* lists of subscriptions to the Ramsey Testimonial Fund, signed by the General Treasurer, Mr. B. T. Hall, Club Union Buildings, Clerkenwell-road, London, E.C. Two other lists have been sent us, but both obviously inaccurate, names being duplicated and maybe other mistakes committed. It is no part of *our* business to undertake the correction of such things. We must beg whoever is acting as the Secretary to the Fund to have a complete and accurate list of subscriptions sent to us on the Treasurer's behalf. We will gladly insert it in our next issue. By *complete* we mean a full and correct list of all the subscriptions received since the date of the second list acknowleged in our columns. We really cannot take further trouble in this matter.

ORIGIN OF WORSHIP.

Among primitive peoples life in the other world is conceived as identical in nature with life in this world. Hence, as the living chief was supplied with food and drink, oblations are taken to his burial-place and libation poured out. As animals were killed for him while he lived, animals are sacrificed on his grave when he is dead. If he had been a great king, with a large retinue, the frequent slaughter of many beasts to maintain his court is paralleled by the hecatombs of cattle and sheep slain for the support of his ghosts and the ghosts of his attendants. If he was a cannibal, human victims are furnished to him dead as when alive, and their blood is poured on the grave-heap, or on the altar which represents the grave-heap. Having had servants in this world, he is supposed to need servants in the other, and frequently they are killed at his funeral or sent after him. When the women of his harem are not immolated at his burial-place, as they sometimes are, it is usual to reserve virgins for him in his temple. Visits of homage made to his residence become, in after times, pilgrimages made to his tomb or temple; and presents at the throne reappear as presents at the shrine. Prostrations, genuflexions, and other obeisances are made in his presence, along with various uncoverings; and worship in his temple has the like accompaniments. Laudations are uttered before him while he is alive, and the like or greater laudations when he is dead.—*Herbert Spencer*.

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Broken Thought-Threads.

LISTEN to their prattling! You would think Humanity were a huge and ugly growth on Nature to hear those religious realists. What tales of woe these interpreters of life tell. What baleful stories of man's degradation they relate. What awful pictures they paint of the bitterness of the struggle against evil. Down they go into the mire of immorality for their colors; and the scenes they depict impart to our minds a darkness that is sorely unpleasant.

Raw life is their material. Blood, brutality, horror, and hopelessness are woven in the texture of their canvas. Everything is heavy, gloomy, and hateful. Your mind seems to have become entombed. You sicken in the prison. The odors are nasty. The atmosphere savors of decay. Nausea-tion floods your stomach and soul. The robust activity of the decomposition, its burdensome vitality, the lustiness of its depravity, poison your ideas. You feel weak; and you seem to stand before the strength of weakness, cowering, shivering before it; and you feel afraid.

And then your better nature revolts. You long for fresh air with a new appreciativeness. You want to feel merry. Life is not all tragedy, not all misery, not all woe. Damn those religious realists! you murmur. Drat 'em! We want some happiness. And the natural man in you longs for sunshine, for the healthy, inspiriting breeze, for the mountain slopes and the fragrance of the heather, or for a smell of the sea. As you imagine the sweetness and loveliness of Nature, disgust masters you. This is unclean; it is loathesome; it is ugly. Life has more than one side. Humanity is not a gruesome thing, excreted by Nature for Jesus Christ to purify. And you send religious realists and their realism to purgatory.

Still, there are times when Christian realism cannot be so easily sent floating there; and the pictured ugliness gathers and becomes so crudely immoral that your soul—the higher ideas and tendencies and longings of your mind—rises in red-hot rebellion. You revolt against the darkness. You want to fight this mental slavery to gloom, base passion, and low life, instilled by religious realism. You see the disastrousness of it, the fatal influence it wields; and you want to tear the dirty curtain in twain, so that light and loveliness may enter. Give us purity, not dirt. Let's see beauty. Let's feel free. This makes us sick, you say. We want to get out of the dungeons of living death to the highlands of virile life. Sunrays, not gloom, we need; a breeze, not stagnation; happiness, not dirty joy; laughter like the lark's, not the sorrowful croaking of an evil-tipsy raven.

Certain types of books make us feel like that; and certain types of preachers have a similar effect upon us. It is a strange feeling of repugnance that passes through our minds. Something seems to be deepening in tint the stains on our lives. We would rather feel clean; and the soul, as we call it, having striven, even in a quiet, natural way, towards some semblance of purity, feels as if it were being defiled by these religious realists. Why do these men drag the minds of their audiences down into the gutter? How, in the name of everything beautiful, can they think and speak so much ugliness? And religious literature is full of this kind of realism.

. . . . .

Humanity is a wonderful thing. Well may we liken it to the ocean. Powerfully restless, its vast surface tossing in eternal dispeace, its expansive magnificence casting a sense of marvel upon the mind, its innumerable, passing shapes, and incomputable, dissolving shades of purple, grey, and green; how similar the ocean is, in its oneness and variation, to the great sea of Humanity. The breast of the waters knows no prolonged quietude. The face of the ocean reflects, in startling manner, every emotion that circles the human heart; but underneath there is the steady flow, more startling in the magnitude of its complacency than all the wonders of its vivid breast. Here you see love; there hate; yonder tempestuous anger; but below is the quiet, steady life.

A mass of glorious confliction, it puzzles and enthrals. Imagination is stunned by the scene. Its complexities amaze and charm. Solemnity and riot, laughter and tears, softness and hardness, solicitude and enmity, resolve and indecision; one observant glance, and you see them all.

Sweeping majestically onwards is a great crested wave, its haughtily poised head delighting yet awing you. Seemingly omnipotent, it draws to its might hundreds of smaller waves. Conqueringly, it imprisons them, using their foam-tipped beauties to heighten its own dignity and loveliness and strength. You would think it had determined to rule the ocean. But, as you observe its movement, you notice that, near the horizon, it subsides, losing its power; and you laugh as you see it roll away, ignominiously, to become the underflow for a bigger brother. But it, too, in turn, relinquishes its power and majesty; it, too, droops into individual extinction; it, too, falls into the underflow.

And so the wonderful scene is played on, unchanging in its varieties, eternal in its passing glories.

You look upon Humanity, and you see the same activities. Human movements, the waves on the ocean of human life, have their day and are dead. Prophesy permanency for a wave like that of Christianity, and you accuse yourself of narrowness of mental outlook. It sweeps over a portion of the great human ocean, for a little only; and is gone. The conjectures, the joys, the beauties of it depart at its departure. There are other waves to distract attention from its memories. Into it you put the life, the individuality, that abideth for ever; the supremacy that no man can challenge, you think; the glories of things unalterable, upon which man will do well to place all his trust, all his hope, all his faith; and, lo! it cheats you before your mind has lost the dying glamor of it. Movements, like men, perish. The greatest wave, like the tiniest ripple, falls into the underflow. The ocean exists.

We are funny people in our exalted moods. What giants we think we are. What terribly conclusive ideas we crystallise in words. What dreadful, "amen" truths compose our beliefs.

That poor little gutter-snipe, sitting in the mud, over there, at the alley-mouth, will one day shake God's hand, and be kissed by Mary the Mother of God. That little jigger—looks like a girl—who is sucking a banana-skin will, some day, be embraced by Jesus. She will get a bigger hug than that given to the black tot who, down under, is playing with pieces of coral in a shallow, silver pool. The dirty white one will become a Christian; and Christianity, being God's last gift to Humanity, cancelled all the boons and blessings of his earlier kindheartedness.

We are apt to forget that the waves on the ocean of Humanity lose their individuality.

. . . . .

In the country, at the present time, there is a considerable number of Humanists. The one spring of their beliefs is the conviction that life would be better and happier for the most of us if only we could abolish certain social customs. The very fact that the power of these people is made weak by their segregation into opposing sects seems to prove that mind possesses more potency over their actions than anything else. They must reach the mind if they would succeed in their task. If they would fight against the causes of social evils, they must use mental weapons; but, somehow, they do not consider it advisable to clear the field of action with a broom first. This is strange. They teach new ideas without troubling to destroy the old ones.

The majority of these Humanists are hoighty-toightily unconcerned over the greatest obstacle of the lot. Some of the oldest, fustiest ideas are even championed by many of these people. They would

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try to patch up; make a new framework with rotten boards. They would bring the anti-scientific to strengthen the scientific. Now, if our revolutionist and reformative friends and enemies believe that Christianity is not true, are they reasonably justified in their attitude of unconcern? The less they have to do with Freethought the better, seems to be their belief. Is the social power of Religion so negligible in quantity and quality as to support that outlook? Privately, these Humanists, many of them, will tell you they believe that Christianity should be fought. Publicly, they like to tell their audiences of what Jesus Christ would have to do were he alive to-day. They like to quote Scripture. They make the teachings of Jesus Christ the code of individual morality, if not openly and straightforwardly, then by insinuation.

All this must tend to bolster up Religion. Christianity, which is not true, receives support from a quarter that should be inimical to it. Hypocrisy is the only suitable word. To play with the false is to be treacherous to the true. There are no honorable half measures. Compromise is friendly greeting. To linger on the road with error is to stay awhile with pain. Give a lie a smile and you add a day to its life. Humanists who are "plittering" with Christianity, believing it to be untrue, are assisting in its survival.

Whether they work for social reform or for social revolution, they must clean the minds that will make reform or revolution successful in its results. If the teachings of Christianity are stains on the human mind, errors to be conquered, customs to be overthrown, and the majority of Humanists believe this privately, then, logically, methinks, this present unconcern amounts to nothing less than hypocrisy. The treatment they accord to the Freethought movement is as bigoted as Catholics.

The mind comes first. Mental change precedes social change. Keep alive the idea of God, all the fundamental ideas of Religion, and you keep alive privilege, class, autocracy, and plutocracy. Teach the human mind to worship God, and it will worship the greatest men, who are nearest God. Teach it to reverence a body of men, and you will teach it to recognise class privilege. Unreasonably admire the aphorisms of the New Testament, and you help to deify the central and essential figure of the books, and assist in the survival of Religion, with all its tremendous social powers, powers that inevitably war against the Humanists' honest beliefs. Reason demands antagonism to Christianity. Our beliefs demand nothing less than unswerving enmity towards everything that is opposed to them.

I wonder why the Freethought movement is disliked by the many Humanists in this country? Can anything be said for British hypocrisy whose other name is Respectability?

ROBERT MORELAND.

Christian Apologetics.

IX.—THOMAS COOPER ON MIRACLES.

IN his apologetic work entitled *The Verity and Value of the Miracles of Christ*, the great "lecturer on Christianity," Thomas Cooper, opens the discussion as follows:—

> "'We see unchangeable law in nature,' say our leading men of Science: 'fixed law, inexorable law, meets us on every side.' And, because they say so, hundreds of simple folk are being frightened out of their belief in the miracles of Christ."

Having thus introduced the subject, our "lecturer" takes no less than five pages to point out that the Gospel miracles are not in agreement with the usual order of nature. "It is *not* an ordinary fact of Science," says Mr. Cooper, "that a spoken word cures leprosy or blindness, and that instantaneously." To this I can only reply, "True, O king; it certainly is not." And such being the case, our lecturer proceeds to define a miracle as—"A deed which is an exception to the usual order of nature: a deed which suspends or transcends what are called the laws of nature." Just so; and further remarks upon this remarkable fact bring us to the end of the first and introductory chapter.

In chapter ii. the writer discusses the somewhat irrelevant question, "Is a miracle possible?" This, of course, was bound to come. Our lecturer says:—

> "We expect that the sun will rise and set to-morrow, and the next day, and the next. We expect that the moon will shine, and the stars glitter, for years to come. We expect the return of the seasons, as we have seen it all our lives.....But, now, can you give me *a reason* why you believe that the sun will again rise and set, the stars still shine, and the harvest be gathered in the future? You will reply, 'So it has been in the Past, and *therefore* the like will be in the Future.' How do you know that? You know nothing about it. There is no 'therefore' in what you say. You have not, really, given a *reason* for your belief.....That all these facts have occurred over and over again—although it may be thousands of times—is not a ground of *certainty* that they will occur again. There is not a rational man in the world who would dare to assert that. Custom—usage—is all that we can allege as the ground of our expectation and belief in these recurrences.....The Materialist may boldly tell us that he believes the order of nature, such as it is now, has always been, and always will be. But he cannot assert—he cannot affirm—that it will always be. He can give no true *reason* for his belief."

Our lecturer, it will be seen, knows how to take full advantage of the distinction between practical and absolute certainty. But "the ground of our expectation and belief" in the recurrences of natural phenomena is something more than "custom or usage." The latter terms have reference to long-established modes or practices, and long-continued use of matters connected with the people, considered as a nation or race, which could, and often has been, changed. The bold "Materialist," moreover, does not go so far as to say that the present solar system, or "the gathering in of harvest" on this planet, "has always been, and always will be." He knows that change in the material world has always been going on, is going on to-day, and will continue to do so throughout all futurity.

Our "lecturer on Christianity" next takes exception to the word "law," and proceeds through eight or nine pages "to weigh and consider some of the strong terms employed by Professors Huxley and Tyndall, and other men of science—'fixed laws'—'unchangeable laws'—'inexorable law.'" This apologetic objection was also bound to come; but, in the end, the "strong terms" are resolved into "stated, fixed, or settled order," though, as everyone knows, one of the meanings of law is "order." But here an addition is made, which, though only one word, completely alters these fixed or unchangeable laws. In the next paragraph the writer says:—

> "Man ought to consider it his bounden duty to get acquainted with the order of nature; because it is *God's* order, and God preserves it for man's benefit."

Having thus inserted the thin end of the wedge, our lecturer proceeds to drive it home.

> "Nature never becomes independent of God. It exists solely by His sovereign Will and Energy. He could stop all the movements in the Universe—He could arrest all the operations of nature—He could deprive nature of all her forces—He could annihilate all nature in a moment, if He chose. Otherwise He is not Almighty, the Absolute One."

Here we might reply to the lecturer in his own words—"How do you know that? You know nothing about it." And the latter statement would be true; for the only authority Mr. Cooper had for the foregoing ridiculous assertions about "God" is the ascription of omnipotence and the creation of the universe to the god Yahweh in the Hebrew scriptures, made over two thousand years ago by the most ignorant and credulous men then living.

After the addition of "*God's* order of nature," the question as to the possibility of miracles is, of course, answered in the affirmative. And this point being satisfactorily settled, the lecturer gives the

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finishing-stroke, in the most approved Christian Evidence style, to all incipient Atheism. He says:—

> "Who shall dare to say that God cannot, if he chooses, suspend the usual order of nature, or by some act, and for some reason worthy of Himself, transcend the usual order of nature?"

The answer to this question is, "No one." But the way the query is put looks very much like an attempt to "frighten" the timid sceptic out of his disbelief in the Gospel miracles. Still, one of those much-maligned individuals might, perhaps, be permitted to say that, as a matter of scientific inquiry, we have no evidence of the existence of a god who possesses the power to "suspend the usual order of nature"; that, as a matter of history, we have no evidence that any of the laws of nature has, in a single instance, ever been suspended; and that the accounts in the Old and New Testaments which assert the contrary lack the support of contemporary evidence, and are simply Jewish or Christian fictions. No one, indeed, need deny that in some remote corner of the universe, too distant to be perceived by the most powerful telescope, there may be some sort of a god, hidden perhaps behind one of the most remote stars; but if so, he could have no connection with our solar system, and, travelling with the velocity of light, it would take him thousands of years to reach this planet. Such a deity could have no part in the government of our portion of the universe, or hold any intercourse with the inhabitants of this earth; while his heaven and hell, supposing them to exist, would be in the neighborhood of the aforesaid star, and therefore inaccessible to the imaginary souls or spirits of the denizens of this planet.

In chapter iii. our "lecturer on Christianity" represents a "doubter" among his audience as asking: "Suppose you have shown that miracles are possible, is there any reason to be alleged, worthy of God, why miracles should be performed?" The lecturer's reply to this query takes up thirteen pages, the nature of which may be perceived by the following extracts:—

> "Our Savior most plainly and positively told the Jews that His miracles were the credentials of His Messiahship—'The works which the Father hath given me to accomplish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me.' It is his own blessed declaration.....God did not expect the Jews to receive Christ as the promised Messiah, simply because Jesus told them that he was that Messiah. Nor did Jesus Christ expect men to receive Him as their Redeemer, simply because he said He was the Redeemer. The Jews were expected to believe on rational and open proof."

The "words of Jesus" quoted in this extract are from the Fourth Gospel, and were *not* "his own blessed declaration." They were the words of the Gospel-writer himself, who fraudulently placed them in the mouth of his Savior. The Jesus of the Synoptics never employs such absurd language. Our lecturer, in bringing this chapter to a close, says:—

> "We conclude, then, that miracles are probable, because God could not leave His fallen creatures, inevitably, to the fatal ruinous consequences of sin, but must provide a Redeemer for them: and that Redeemer needed to produce His miraculous credentials to mankind in order to assure them of the truth of His mission."

The force of this concluding statement is considerably weakened when we come to consider that "God" *did* "leave his fallen creatures" to the "consequences of sin," and *without* "providing a Redeemer for them" during the whole period of Old Testament history, with several centuries added to reach A.D. 30; that is to say, for not less than four thousand years. And, judging from the Old Testament writings, the Jewish god had no intention, at any time during this long period, of "providing" a Redeemer of the character of Jesus Christ. All the Messiahs or deliverers predicted in the Hebrew scriptures were to be great warriors of the David or Judas Maccabeas type, who should give the Jews their independence, and ultimately make them the greatest nation upon earth. The Mosaic Law, with its animal sacrifice, was to continue for ever, priests and Levites were to officiate, and proselytes from other nations were to go up to the temple at Jerusalem to keep the principal Jewish festivals, including the Sabbath, New Moon, and feast of Tabernacles (Isaiah ii. 2—4; lxvi. 21, 23; Micah iv. 1, 2; Zech. viii. 22, 23; xiv. 16—18). Moreover, according to the Gospels, Jesus Christ was to descend from heaven, with his angels, to judge the world before that generation should pass away—during the lifetime of many of his hearers—immediately after the destruction of Jerusalem.

We are thus asked to believe a most extraordinary story: that for 4,000 years prior to A.D. 30, the Lord God ordained that atonement for the sins of the people should be made by the sacrifice of animals, as prescribed in the Mosaic code of laws. Then, at the end of that period, he devised a new plan of salvation—but for one generation only (A.D. 30—70)—by which simple belief in Jesus should take the place of the former animal sacrifice.

No orthodox Jew of the apostolic age could believe in any such alteration of plan; for he deemed his deity to be unchangeable, and the Mosaic ritual to have been given for all time—both of which alleged facts are plainly stated in the Old Testament.

As it happened, however, the generation of the time of Jesus passed away, as did also the succeeding generation, without the Savior making his promised appearance. Then excuses began to be made for him by the Christian teachers, the most ingenious, perhaps, being the following:—

> "In the last days mockers shall come.....saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for, from the day that the fathers [*i.e.*, apostles] fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning.....But forget not this one thing, beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness," etc. (2 Pet. iii., 3—9).

The Epistle from which the foregoing words were taken was forged by a second-century Christian; but it shows that the Church of that day had lost all hope of Jesus ever keeping his promise, and that there were many in the Church who were called "mockers." Generation succeeded generation, down to the present day, and Jesus has made no move—and now never will. So, instead of only forty years of the new plan of salvation, we have had 1,884—and there is no saying when the old Christian superstition will end. But any intelligent reader of the Old Testament ought to be able to see that the god Yahweh had no hand in originating it. I must leave Cooper's other arguments to the next.

ABRACADABRA.

Animals Recently Extinct.—II.

(Continued from p. 429.)

THE quagga is another defunct representative of the fauna of South Africa which lingered on until quite recent years. The quagga was closely related to Burchell's zebra, and was regarded by Selous as the extreme southerly form of that widely ranging quadruped. Its extinction is deeply to be regretted, as it was one of the handsomest of the equine order. The quagga was variously striped, some of the markings being very beautiful. Its disposition was normally mild and gentle, it was readily tamed, yet, abundant as they were in South Africa, the Boers seldom employed them as beasts of burden. Like the blue-buck, the quagga's habitat was restricted to the Cape area; it formerly abounded almost everywhere south of the Vaal River, but beyond that it very rarely ranged. It congregated in troops of from ten to a hundred in the plains of South Africa, frequently accompanied by the gnu and even the ostrich. It was a high mettled animal, and when wounded or infuriated would kick or bite its human enemy. The quagga was quite a match for the hyæna and wild dogs, and the Cape Dutch occasionally utilised

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domesticated quaggas as guards to their horses when abroad at night at a period when dangerous beasts were more common than they are at present. But the lucrative hide business which the Boers pursued proved fatal to the preservation of the animal, and the quagga, which was still abundant in 1843, seems to have been completely exterminated some thirty years later.

The quagga interbred easily with the domesticated horse, and Lord Morton's mare became famous when, after having given birth to a male foal from a quagga, she subsequently bore to an ordinary horse a foal that was slightly striped. The belief which is so general among practical breeders that once a female animal is covered by a mongrel or an alien species, the "stain" can never be removed, in this instance received very strong support. Ewart's test experiments were alleged to have disposed of this belief, but his results may be legitimately regarded as quite inconclusive. The truth of telegony, as this phenomenon is termed, is taken for granted by several breeders and owners of pedigree animals with whom the writer has corresponded and conversed on the subject. And telegony was warmly championed by the philosopher of evolution, Herbert Spencer, by its prophet, Professor Haeckel, and Samuel Butler, the gifted author of *Erewhon*, seems to have had no doubt as to its truth.

Steller's sea cow is an additional organism which owes its destruction to human shortsightedness. This mammal was a member of the small animal group known as Sirenia, of which the manatees and dugongs are surviving representatives. The sea cow was first discovered by Bering's exploring party in 1741 on what is now called Bering Island. The expedition was shipwrecked on the island, and the crew were stranded there for some ten months. The ship's surgeon, Steller, penned an excellent account of the habits and appearance of the Arctic sea cow; and, despite the greatest difficulties and discouragements, he carried out a careful anatomical study of the animal. The rhytina, or sea cow, was an unwieldy creature, which weighed about 8,000 lb., and measured nearly 25 ft. in length. The males displayed the fondest affection for the females, and both sexes were remarkably attentive to the young calves. These mammals were inoffensive herbivorous animals, which fed on the sea-weeds and sea-grasses growing near the shore. But, having no previous knowledge of the ways of man, they were innocently unconcerned by his proximity, and were quite easily harpooned. The fundamental basis of all morality, the recognition of reciprocity, was highly developed among these doomed animals. Says Finn, translating from Steller:—

> "As soon as any of the beasts were harpooned and began to struggle, its comrades in the herd immediately came up and tried to help the captive. Some, with this idea, tried to capsize the boat with their backs, others bore on the line and strove to break it, or struggled by beating it with their tails to drag the harpoon from the back of the wounded animal, in which attempt they sometimes succeeded."

The sea cows supplied the sailors with fat, which proved a splendid substitute for butter, while its flesh provided excellent meat. Later adventurers in the Arctic seas who sailed there in search of copper, or for the skins and furs of the northern beasts, made the unfortunate sea cow their chief article of food, and the animal was stupidly, wastefully, and wantonly slaughtered by the human invaders. Twenty years after Bering's landing, the fauna of the island had been reduced to insignificant proportions. A party of hunters who visited Bering Island in 1767 or 1768, in quest of foxes, seem to have sealed the fate of the expiring sea cow. In any case, it was never afterwards seen alive, so that in twenty-seven years from its first discovery the unlucky animal was eliminated from Nature's book of life.

One of our poor relations, Kirk's guereza, a beautiful long-tailed monkey which was restricted to the island of Zanzibar, has been blotted out by the head of the family. Sixteen years only after Europeans had made its acquaintance, the animal had become exceedingly scarce. Man's passion for sport, coupled with the clearing of jungle and forest, were together responsible for the extinction of this interesting organism. Sir John Kirk, after whom the monkey, Colobus kirki, was named, was informed that the animal was still to be found in the uninvaded island districts. Says Sir Harry Johnston:—

> "Thither Sir John sent his chasseurs to report on the monkey's existence. After a week's absence they returned, triumph illuminating their swarthy lineaments. 'Well, did you find them?' asked the British Consul-General. 'Yes,' replied the men with glee, 'and we slew them every one!' Wherewith twelve monkey corpses were flung on the floor, and Colobus kirki joined the dodo, the auk, rhytina, and the moa in the limbo of species exterminated by man."

The only carnivorous mammal that man has done to death within historical times is the Antarctic wolf of the Falkland Islands. It was an exceptionally large wolf for such small islands, and the only other mammal indigenous to this area is a mouse which is still abundant there. The wolf preyed in the main on the feathered fauna of the islands, particularly on the wild geese which abounded, and continue to abound in the Falklands. But the animal was not averse to the penguins and the young seals when these were available.

This extinct wolf was first observed by European navigators in 1768-4, and a short time afterwards a war of extermination began. Darwin, who visited these islands during the celebrated voyage of the *Beagle*, forecasted the wolf's early extinction, and with reason. The hunting of the animal served to gratify the sporting instincts of the original settlers, and when the colonists commenced to utilise the new settlements as sheep-runs, its end was certain. The Antarctic wolf appears to have fled the earth in 1876, although a related species still survives on the neighboring shores of South America.

The ancestor of our common European cattle is also to be numbered with the dead. This animal, the aurochs or urus, is probably the only wild mammal that has been reduced to extinction in Europe throughout the period usually assigned to history and tradition.

Among the reptilia, a few only, and those confined to one group, have been led to the brink of extinction in recent times. We will deal with and dismiss these before reviewing the important avian animals which during the same period have been permitted to perish.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be concluded.)

GROWTH ESSENTIAL TO LIFE.

If the mind is artistic, it must not sit down in hopeless awe before the monuments of the great masters, as if heights so lofty could have no heaven beyond them. Still less must it tremble before the conventionalism of one age, when its mission may be to form the whole life of the age succeeding. No amount of erudition or mechanical skill or critical power can absolve the mind from the necessity of creating, if it would grow. The first condition of mental development is that the mind should be creative rather than acquisitive; or, as it has been well said, that intellectual food should go to make up mental muscle, and not mental fat. A mind that would grow must let no ideas become permanent except such as lead to action. Towards all others it must maintain an attitude of absolute receptivity; admitting all, being modified by all, but permanently biassed by none. To become crystallised, fixed in opinion and mode of thought, is to lose the great characteristic of life. Propriety is the crystallisation of a race. And if we consider that a race, in proportion as it is plastic and capable of change, may be regarded as young and vigorous, while a race which is fixed, persistent in form, unable to change, is as surely effete, worn out, in peril of extinction, we shall see the immense importance to a nation of checking its conventionalities. The positive condition is that the mind should act rather than assimilate, that its attitude should be one of creation rather than of acquisition.—*W. K. Clifford.*

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Freethinker
Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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Some of your griefs you have cured,
And the sharpest you still have survived;
But what torments of pain you endured
From evils that never arrived!
—EMERSON: translated from old French.

The Carnegie Report on the Balkans.

"*Enquête dans les Balkans. Rapport presenté aux Directeurs de la Dotation Carnegie par les Membres de la Commission d'Enquête.* (Paris: 1914; volume hors commerce.)

THE long-awaited "Report of the Carnegie Commission of Inquiry on the Balkans" only came to my hands on July 1, and I have not yet had time to read all the 496 massive pages, with deeds of almost unexampled ferocity recorded in every line, which compose this eloquent and terrifying impeachment of war as waged by Christian nations against each other or against "the malignant and turbaned Turk"—whose malignancy in the light of these revelations seems to have lost its primitive splendor. So far as I can see, after a careful preliminary scrutiny of the findings of the Commission, there is nothing for me to withdraw or even to modify, except in the sense of amplification, in respect of the statements made by me in the three articles on the "Balkan Pandemonium" which appeared in the *Freethinker* issues of June 21, July 5, and July 12. In point of fact, many of the documents and atrocities cited by me in my articles, and especially the horrors contained in the Greek "Fac-simile" letters and the delightful doings of the Greek bishops are set forth at length, and accepted as authentic, in the Commission's Report. Up to the present stage in my studies, I have had the melancholy satisfaction of finding that the better informed and more authoritative verdict of the Report confirms the general thesis of my argument and relieves my mind from the haunting fear of having exaggerated or distorted the repulsive features of fanaticism and ferocity which, as I contended, marked with especial savagery the conduct of the Balkan War. My sin was in erring on the side of moderation.

The Report, which is enriched by fifty fine engravings and eight valuable maps and ethnographic charts, is preceded by an admirable "Introduction" (pp. 27), by M. D'Estournelles de Constant, who presided over the labors of the Commission. This contribution of the distinguished statesman makes a broad philosophic survey of the critical situation in the Balkans, where we find a medley of populations mixed together, as he tells us (p. 9), in an inextricable chaos of languages, religions, races, and nationalities, consisting of Turks, Bulgarians, Servians, Serbo-Croats, Albanese Servians, Koutzo-Wallacians, Greeks, Albanians, Gipsies, Jews, Rumanians, Hungarians, Italians, who are no worse and not less endowed than others of their race in Europe and America. "Those amongst them who seem worse have only lived a longer time in servitude and neglect. They are martyrs rather than criminals"—a judgment which is no less sound philosophically than well-merited as a difficult but necessary act of social justice to men and races placed by the cruel accident of history in abnormal conditions of conflict with each other.

The temperate, but lurid, pages of this timely analysis and report enforce, with terrible illustrations of man's inhumanity to man, and of religion's failure to humanise him, the historic statement of a well-known fighter that "War is hell"; only they prove with twentieth-century atrocities that war is never so hellish as when waged in these modern times between Christian races and nations who have had numberless temptations and opportunities during the ages to treat each other—as, for instance, Greeks and Bulgarians, Serbs and Albanians—as wild beasts. As M. D'Estournelles de Constant pertinently remarks (p. 20), "It is time that people should learn what war really is," and the Report now presented to the world by the Commission over which he so worthily presided will help to stimulate our torpid imagination and stir up our sympathies in directions favorable to the cause of peace, which, after all, is the cause of humanity.

The Committee, while issuing the awful revelations in their Report, are careful not to cry "Peace, Peace" under conditions by which our modern Zimris, with their shameless policies of national expropriation and enslavement, render peace impossible. The dignified language that M. D'Estournelles de Constant employs (p. 7) I can applaud and make my own:—

> "We repeat to those who accuse us of 'bellowing peace at any price,' the statements we have always made:
> "Rather than slavery, we prefer war.
> "Rather than war, we seek arbitration.
> "Rather than arbitration, let us have conciliation."

But the present conditions in the Balkans, as disclosed in this Report, which in every page shows us religion everywhere as the accomplice or handmaid of the rival races and politicians, would only serve to make peace the sleep of death for the oppressed races, as also for the bottom-dog religions, of this fateful region; for peace in the Balkans to-day is but a sinister period of truce during which the sleepless animosities of the Balkan races will be biding their time for fresh outbreaks of war, massacre, and mutilation. The outlook is not a pleasant one, nor creditable to European civilisation.

Nothing could be more severe—nor, alas, more true—than the summary which M. D'Estournelles de Constant makes of the net result of the most horrifying of all modern wars, where, as he tells us (p. 22), "We see hundreds of thousands of human beings systematically degraded by their own hands and corrupted by their own violence." With all its carnage and heroism, the second Balkan War, so far from being a solution, is only the prelude of other wars, or rather of the sort of war waged without intermittence in the Balkans, this being the worst of all wars, as he tells us, inasmuch as it is a war of religion, a war of reprisals, a war of races, a war of one people against another, of man to man, and brother against brother. What is actually taking place to-day and every day in Macedonia (as shown in the *Freethinker* of July 5) is really something more pitiless and meaner than the full-dress pomps and circumstances of official war; for what goes on is the pettifogging rooting out and administrative harassing of the bottom dog—Bulgarian, Greek, Turk, Albanian, etc.—who has been driven away from his ancestral kennel, is kicked and cuffed, "converted," proselytised, and tortured by an un-

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holy combination of petty officialdom and narrow piety. Nothing is bettered in the Balkans after all the recent horrors. The churches and schools belonging to the rival Christian sects are left fighting against each other, and are to-day "less free," we are told, "than they were under the Ottoman domination." The result is that a new region—the Mediterranean and the countries laved by his blue waters—has received its solemn consecration as the fresh battlefield of races and religions in readiness for an endless vista of future years of carnage.

The documentary evidence, forming some 240 pages of appendix, including depositions and oral testimony proffered to the Commission and records of personal examination by its members *in loco*, leave no doubt in my mind that acts of horrible atrocity were committed by the soldiery, the irregular troops or volunteers, and by the racial partisans of the different armies who made the Balkans during 1912 and 1913 the theatre of their ghastly operations. In these matters, wherever war is waged, and at whatever period of human history it breaks out, one must look with placid fatalism for a certain amount of savagery as the normal product of soldierly violence, but the utmost latitude of modern charity must learn to draw the line at acts of bestial mutilation like those recorded on pp. 126-7 and those on p. 385, which were committed on the bodies (no doubt before death) of Servian soldiers by the Bulgarians. Equally horrible were the outrages of Servians upon the Bulgarians (pp. 128, 325, *et seq.*). The record of such atrocities takes the mind back to the worst excesses of barbarian armies at the dawn of history, and seem incredible in an age of civilisation, with churches and bishops in every nook and corner of the world. It is due in justice to the Bulgarian Government and army to note that from the outset severe measures were enjoined and put in operation against marauding and outrage; on the other hand, no regulations can avail in repression of these abominations where racial feelings are exacerbated by the bloodthirsty sentiments of animosity which moved the statesmen above and solders below during the reign of terror in the Balkans. In the case of Serbs, Greeks, and Bulgarians, it was one set of religionists mutilating and massacring their dearly beloved brethren of the common faith—a clumsy interchange of cruel compliments between the Nationalists and Orangemen in the Balkanic Ulster, which, let us hope, does not prefigure the realities in store for us when the civil, but religious, war at last breaks out, according to the threat of prophecy, in the real Ulster. But, as the Report tells us very truly (p. 76), there was never any need of artificial excitement to produce the race hatreds which serve to explain the violence of the Christian allies in the late war, "and more especially the outbreaks of Bulgarian violence against the Turks." Race, language, history, and religion had built up a barrier between Turk and Christian which was insurmountable except for the more tolerant spirits of the rival faiths, to the zealots of which all things were possible and everything permissible. The Greek press could find no word of blame for the Bulgarian excesses against the Turk when the memory of these crimes was still fresh. But as soon as the subsequent differences arose between Bulgaria and her former allies, the lightest details of Bulgarian criminality were flourished belatedly as arguments against the hated rival in the race for territorial aggrandisement in the Balkans. King Constantine began the new crusade by his celebrated telegram, dated July 12, 1913 (p. 300), in which, after fathering a number of massacres upon the Bulgarians, which are of doubtful authenticity (see Miletitch passim) he stated that he found himself obliged to proceed to reprisals, and declared to all Europe that "the Bulgarians had surpassed the horrors perpetrated by their barbarian hordes in the past, thus proving that they have no right to count themselves amongst civilised peoples." Very soon the Athenian press represented the Bulgarians as a race of monsters and exerted public opinion to a degree of jingo passion which inevitably made the war, when it broke out, one without mercy. Oral or printed, the same phrase summed up the general sentiment of the Greeks against the Bulgarians—*Dhen iné anthropi*—"they are not men" (p. 77). A Greek officer expressed himself thus before the writer of chapter ii. (from which I have here cited): "When you are dealing with barbarians you must conduct yourself like a barbarian. It is the only thing they understand." In the course of the inquiry the Commission saw in the streets of the Pirea and Salonica an atrocious picture, which the Greek soldiers were greedily buying, representing a Greek mountaineer bearing down to the ground, from behind, a Bulgarian soldier, whose hands were firmly gripped, whilst the Greek is seen gnawing the face of his helpless victim with his front teeth, just like a wild beast (p. 77). This disgusting emblem of national hatred is entitled "The Eater of Bulgarians" (*c.f.* the term Bulgaroktonos) and is embellished with four ferocious verses in the classic tongue of Homer. The picture, beautiful as a work of art, but inexpressibly horrible in its sanctification of animal ferocity, is reproduced on p. 108, and is described as a popular Greek illustration published at divine Athens. Another popular picture, also described on p. 77, represents a Greek soldier in the act of tearing out the eyes of a Bulgarian while still alive. The reproduction of the picture faces p. 116, and the letterpress represents the inhuman act as one of the episodes of the battle of Kilkich. Another popular picture illustrates a Greek making a meal off the cheek of a stricken Bulgarian as an actual event in battle. As the Commission state in their report: "These things have their importance because they tell of the sentiments which animated the Greek Army. They make it clear that the Greek soldiers were happy to think that they or their comrades in arms were able to accomplish these bestial horrors" (p. 77). The letters of the Greek soldiers seized at Raslog, which the Commission accept as authentic documents, reveal the depths of infamy to which the soldiery were brought by the inflammatory appeal of the regal telegram and the pictorial glorifications of barbaric savagery.

By the publication of this Report the Carnegie Foundation has rendered a world-wide service to the cause of humanity and fulfilled a necessary task of public enlightenment which puts to shame the indifference and reticence of European Governments who watched the shameful carnage and did nothing beyond the proffer of platitudinous words. Its just and fearless award of responsibility and blame should chasten the consciences of Balkan kings and politicians, and especially the spiritual directors of the martyred peoples who inhabit this region of the earth.

The Report is published already in French and English. I have good reason to believe that it will also be published in Spanish for the behoof of the Latin Republics in South America. I hope the Foundation will see its way to issue the Report in German and Russian, if not in other languages of widespreading influence, in order that the terrible object-lesson of racial hatred and religious rancor which the Balkans now exhibit to the world may not be lost upon the democracies nor fail to act in restraint of the jingoes who control their destiny.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

Do We Survive Death?—III.

(*Concluded from p. 435.*)

FROM the physiological point of view there is still another argument against the survival of the human personality beyond death. There were no insuperable difficulties against believing this so long as the primitive conception of a double, or ghost, or soul inhabiting the body obtained, either in the original form of that conception or in the form given it later

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by philosophical speculation. But now we know, not as a mere theory, but as an absolute fact, that what we call the life of man is not single at all, but multiple. However deeper research may go, this one fact remains—the unit of every organism is the cell. Every organism is built up of myriads of cells, each living its own life, and at the same time contributing to the life of the organism of which it is a part. These cells are born, they live, they die, and all the time the health and complexity of the total organism is, so far as we can see, absolutely dependent upon their health and complexity. There is hardly room for doubt about this. It is, indeed, an accepted biological truth.

In a rough and ready way we may treat individual and national life as analogous. In the one case we have cells constituting the organism, in the other we have individuals constituting the nation. And just as what we call national life is no more than the combination of individual lives, so what we call the individual life is no more than the combination of cell lives. New cells replace old ones without disturbing individual existence, just as individuals come and go without disturbing the national existence. In each case the birth of new individuals makes good the losses caused by death. But suppose instead of the deaths of individuals in a nation being partial and gradual, they were sudden and universal? Suppose that *all* the individuals comprising a nation were to be suddenly blotted out. What, in that case, would become of national life? It would simply cease to exist. No one individual may fully express national life, but national life in the absence of *all* individuals is a sheer inconceivability.

Is it not equally inconceivable that the life of the individual should persist after the destruction of the cells composing the body? Death is to the individual exactly what an overwhelming catastrophe would be to the nation As the latter means an end to all the units of a nation, and so to the nation as a living fact, so death means the cessation of cellular activity. And it would be as rational to talk of national life existing apart from the individuals composing the nation, as it is to speak of individual life persisting after the cellular activities, of which it is an expression, have ceased to exist.

Some little time back, this aspect was put by Edison in reply to the question as to whether he believed in immortality. Edison replied:—

> "No—no. I am not I—I am not an individual—I am an aggregate of cells, as for instance, New York city is an aggregate of individuals.....I do not think we are individuals any more than a great city is an individual. If you cut your finger and it bleeds, you lose cells. They are individuals. You don't know your cells any more than New York City knows its five millions of individuals. You don't know who they are. No; all this talk of an existence for us, as individuals, beyond the grave, is wrong. It is born of our tenacity of life—our desire to go on living—our dread of coming to an end as individuals. I do not dread it, though. Personally, I cannot see any use of a future life."

What has been said may be taken as the physiological aspect of Lady Grove's question as to which of the complex characters and varying characters that make up a single organism—in the course of its existence—survives? Loosely, but perhaps conveniently, we speak of "self" as though it were something more or less independent of bodily changes or states, and so obscure the fact that each organism exhibits, not a single "self," but a multitude of selves, each gliding more or less imperceptibly into the other. And, as Lady Grove asks, which is to survive? Is it the last "self"? If so, why that more than the earlier ones? Or if the earlier ones do not persist, why should the last one? The reasoning is of the same value, and the evidence is the same, in both cases.

The only reason we have for believing that there exists a "self" separable from the actual organism, is the requirements of metaphysical theories and religious beliefs. Otherwise, it is easy enough to see the way in which the conscious self is built up, and also to note, in many cases, its disintegration. A newly born infant has no consciousness of self; and even with young children it is of the weakest possible character. At an early stage of life the limbs of a child appear to have to it a quite independent existence. It actually *discovers* its limbs as it discovers their uses. It will appreciate blame being attached to its hands for breaking something before it can appreciate being itself blamed as the cause. We can watch the development of a consciousness of a psychic self, and trace the steps by which that self is built up. The child's experience of home, of friends, of the outside world, of school, and of the larger social life, gradually builds up that consciousness of a "self" which each possesses. The "Ego" of the philosophers is not, therefore, something that is struggling to find expression through the physical medium of the body; it is something that is being evolved before our eyes.

In brief, "self" is never more than the aggregate of sensations felt at any given moment, together with the memories of past sensations and experiences, and the ideal representations of experiences that may occur in the future. It is manifestly not simple, but complex; not indecomposable, but always offering the possibility of decomposition into simpler elements.

For we can not only observe the "self" being built up, we can also observe it being destroyed under the action of disease. Loss of memory—which is only the psychic side of neural derangement—will place an impassable barrier between the self, that is, and the self that was. In other cases, we may see how the wearing action of disease reduces a brilliant personality to absolute imbecility. Or, we have cases of alternating personality, where one personality has no recollection of the other. Which is the true self here? And which is it that is going to survive? Will it be Jekyll or Hyde? Or, yet again, we have the permanent alteration of a human personality as the consequence of an accident. In such cases we say, quite properly, So-and-so is not the man that he was. In any intelligible sense, he is not. In all such cases we are witnessing the disorganisation, the alteration, or the degradation of a personality that has been slowly organised and integrated. These cases offer no difficulty whatever to the Materialist; they do offer insuperable difficulties to the believer in the existence of an independent "Ego" and of survival after death.

Consciousness of the persistence of a "self" throughout all change is really no more than a memory of past experiences. Where this memory is lacking, no such consciousness exists. Thus, in the fairly common case, where, from accident, or other causes, a person forgets his name, friends, family, and all his previous associations, we, quite correctly, call it a loss of memory. But, in reality, the man's "self" is lost, and a new one is built up. In every case this sense of personal identity can be shown to be entirely dependent upon memory. We are told that I know *I* am the same person that existed twenty or thirty years ago, in spite of the constant change of bodily structure. This is quite true, so long as memory is there, but how when memory is lacking? The testimony of parents and friends assures me that *I* am the same person that, as an infant, extracted nutriment from a feeding-bottle, or crawled, more or less helplessly, about the floor. But, so far as my personal consciousness is concerned, that person forms no part of me at all. I have no recollection of myself as an infant, and because no memory exists, there is no sense of personal continuity. There never is, in fact, a complete sense of persistence such as is assumed. Some experiences are lost, some are blurred, others are fused together. All we have is a succession of changes—a stream of consciousness—with the fact of memory producing the illusion of a "self" that is superior to, and independent of, all change.

Now, memory is only the psychological aspect of a universal quality of organic matter. We are all, for example, familiar with the fact that, within

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limits, a muscle becomes stronger as it is used. It not only becomes stronger; it does its work with increased efficiency and ease. All nervous tissue has this quality, which may be described as the capacity for repeating the response to identical stimulations. This lies at the basis of all education, scholastic and otherwise. We perform an action slowly at first, then more rapidly, and at last automatically. Put in psychological language, we may say that the nervous tissue is all the time learning that particular stimuli call for particular responses. The nervous elements are contracting a memory. They remember, and they also forget; for just as frequent repetition makes an action easier, so desistence for any length of time makes its recurrence difficult.

Let me emphasise the statement that to speak of nervous tissue as possessing memory is rather more than a mere figure of speech. It is no more than an expression of the same fact, now in physiological, now in psychological, language. On the psychological side there is a memory of previous events, because there is on the physiological side a structure that responds to stimulation, conserves to some extent the effects of past stimulations, and repeats itself when identical stimulations occur. To say that memory recalls an event tells us nothing Memory is the act of recalling, and we are merely giving a name to what occurs. But to say that the structure registers impressions, and, under appropriate conditions, repeats them, offers us something in the nature of positive information. We have related the psychological state to a physiological condition, and it is only along that line that genuine information can emerge.

As I have already said, it is the necessities of a theory, not the logic of facts, that is responsible for the assumption of a "soul," a "self," an "ego," inhabiting the body, and so surviving its disintegration. No genuine verifiable evidence has ever been offered in its behalf; and, what is quite as important, all the phenomena met with may be explained without its aid. I say *may* be, not can be, because there are many obscurities connected with the problem that still remain. But the soul-theory removes none of these obscurities. It only adds to what is at present unexplained something that not only itself calls for explanation, but which is wholly inconceivable. And so far as questions have been answered or difficulties removed, it has been done by ignoring the hypothesis of a transcendent soul, and treating all mental phenomena as the equivalent aspects of neurological conditions. In practice we all—Theist and non-Theist alike—do this; for in practice the logic of facts is stronger than the logic of theory, and the connection between bodily states and mental phenomena, with the dependence of the latter on the former, will not be denied. The soul-theory is useless in theory and ignored in practice. It is, as Professor McDougal says, "a mere survival from primitive culture, one of the many relics of savage superstition that obstinately persists among us in defiance of the clear teachings of modern science."

C. COHEN.

Christian Courtesy.

WE are frequently reminded that Christianity is pre-eminently a religion of love. Its God is said to be love and its Savior the manifestation of love on earth. St. John's words are most emphatic: "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; for everyone that loveth is begotten of God and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love" (1 John iv. 7, 8). This is declared to be the Christian doctrine of love, and a supremely beautiful and fascinating doctrine it seems to be. St. John comes to the practical point thus: "Whoso hath the world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him?" (1 John iii. 17). We are pointed to these and other similar words, and asked, "Is not this doctrine of brotherly love by far the grandest and noblest in the world?" We answer, "Yes, if you can take it as it stands." Then we are authoritatively assured that the two central truths of Christianity are, the Universal Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of all Mankind. Clergymen are continually telling their hearers that Christianity surpasses all other religions by its enthronement of love. Now, as all Christians recognise the Bible as their Court of Appeal, let us examine more critically the New Testament doctrine of brotherly love. We have acknowledged the ideal beauty of this teaching, *if it can be taken as it stands*. Unfortunately, it cannot be so taken, because it occurs in a context which robs it of the super-excellence claimed for it. A part of the context is to be found in chapter ii. verse 15, where the "brethren" are exhorted not to love the world, and an eminent commentator says that the "world" here "is *man and man's world*, in his and its fall from God." That this exegesis is correct is proved by other passages in the same epistle. In chapter iii. verse 10, the world is divided into two opposite classes, the children of God and the children of the Devil, between whom there should be no fellowship because they are supposed to possess nothing in common. In 1 Peter ii. 17 the saints are enjoined to love the brotherhood and honor all men. In St. Paul's Epistles the exhortation to believers is to love one another, not the world outside.

Now, the only legitimate inference from such teaching is that, in the opinion of the Apostles, God is not the father of all mankind, but exclusively of believers in Christ, and that all men are not brothers, but only the redeemed of the Lord. We are fully aware that many modern divines *teach* the very opposite; but it is equally undeniable that what they put into *practice* is the apostolic teaching. The other Sunday, Dr. Horton was celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of his ministry at Hampstead; and in the *British Weekly* for July 9, he is reported to have spoken "very beautifully" on the cloud of witnesses who looked on at those midsummer services. Many of the witnesses, he said, were beyond. Then he referred to the belief in immortality as "an imperious necessity." Becoming extravagant, he exclaimed: "We live just because we are convinced that our loved ones live and that we are moving to meet them." What a deplorable and contemptible character the reverend gentleman by implication attributes to himself. What his language means is that, were it not for his hope of a future life, he would not live at all, or, in other words, would commit suicide. In other words still, Dr. Horton thinks so badly of this world, though made and governed by a loving Heavenly Father, and is so utterly tired of living in it that he would certainly destroy himself did he not believe that God had prepared another and better one into which he shall pass at death and live therein for ever with his loved ones. This is an exceedingly doubtful compliment to the God of love, to say the least. But that is only by the way. What we wish to call special attention to is this godly gentleman's following allusion to the people who do not share his belief in a life to come:—

> "The people who are unaffected by this, whose hearts are so callous and so selfish that they never loved anyone well enough to be heart-broken by a loss—these people do not count. They are of no importance in the world. They are of no importance to those who live, just because they are of no importance to those who are gone."

It was taught in the early Church that Christians were not obliged to keep faith with unbelievers. It is quite certain that Dr. Horton does not believe in being courteous towards them. Many years ago, being unable to meet Professor Haeckel's arguments, his Christian charity permitted him to fling at his honored head the most vulgar abuse. And now, unchastened by the passage of time, he is still at the same despicable game. The words employed on this

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occasion are coarse as well as discourteous. It by no means follows that when unbelievers in immortality lose their loved ones, their hearts are so callous and so selfish that they do not miss them. If the reverend gentleman is accurately reported, he is guilty of wickedly calumniating people of whom he evidently has no first-hand knowledge. Possibly what Dr. Horton really meant was that Freethinkers would be heartbroken by the loss of loved ones if they were not so callous and so selfish. If these wretched people could but love passionately, the death of their relations and friends would cast them into unfathomable despair; but since they are not so overwhelmed by grief, the only possible inference is that they are heartless and selfish brutes who do not count at all. They are beneath notice. It is believers alone who are of importance in the world; and apparently, of all believers, those who sit under Dr. Horton Sunday after Sunday are of the greatest importance. He said at his thirtieth anniversary: "I think no building ever gathered so many hearts that were faultlessly loyal to those they loved." We hold that such insulting treatment of unbelievers is shockingly unfair and unjust, though characteristically Christian. It is the kind of rudeness we naturally expect from the pulpit.

A few weeks ago we censured Sir William Robertson Nicoll for asserting that every Briton is "a Christian in many respects, and cannot cease to be one, however much he may wish it." This week the offender is the Rev. A. C. Hill, of Tollington Park Congregational Church, London, who, with more ingenuity and plausibleness than Sir William displayed, represents Christ himself as claiming all good men everywhere. Mr. Hill must be aware that the Gospel Jesus never makes such an absurd claim. Indeed, this preacher bases the title of his sermon in the *Christian World Pulpit* for July 8, "Christians Without the Name," upon a deliberate misrepresentation of the narrative as contained in Luke ix. 49, 50. He says that "these disciples of his were a little concerned because a certain man had been casting out devils, *and not doing it in the name of Jesus*." The actual Gospel words are these: "And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forebade him, because he followeth not with us. But Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against you is for you." Upon that slenderest of foundations, while misrepresenting an essential part of it, Mr. Hill bases this tremendous claim:—

> "He [Jesus] will not try to make his goods cheap in the market place. He is not content to strive and cry in order that men may be won and allured. But he does desire with all his heart that where there is no active, concrete opposition, where men are not deliberately opposed to him, it may be taken for granted that they are with him."

But Jesus, if he ever lived, has been dead for two thousand years, and desires nothing any more, and no preacher has any right to speak in his name. What Mr. Hill does is to place the responsibility for his own biassed opinions upon the shoulders of a purely imaginary being. As everybody knows, and some divines admit, the Christ of the Churches is a creation of theology. Whatever criticism may ultimately say about the Gospel Jesus, it is beyond all serious dispute that the Christ of theology never lived; and to represent him as claiming all good men is an act of unpardonable impudence. Even on the assumption that Christ exists, we unhesitatingly declare that he would have no right to claim as his own the people who do not believe in him, however good they may be. The Christ Mr. Hill preaches is a supernatural being; but there are millions of thoroughly good people in the world who have no faith in the supernatural, and who have a conscientious objection to be called what they are not. "With a daring that is absolutely startling," Mr. Hill thus advances his own and the Church's claim in Jesus' name:—

> "Wherever men are good citizens, wherever they are obedient to the laws, wherever they are rebellious against unrighteous laws, wherever they are pitiful, tender, loyal, Jesus claims them as his servants, followers of his banner, disciples of his person."

Jesus does nothing of the sort, and even if he did he would deserve the severest condemnation, or, to adopt the preacher's own words, he would "illustrate an arrogance that ought to be met with derision and contempt."

Christian courtesy towards non-Christians there is not. Even to claim all passive unbelievers who are eminently noble and good, as well as to denounce all active opponents of Christianity as people of no importance in the world, "illustrates an arrogance that ought to meet with derision and contempt." As all Christians are by no means good, so all good people are in no respect Christians.

J. T. LLOYD.

Acid Drops.

Some hundred and fifty years ago there was a sort of young men's debating club at Tarboltom, not far from the residence of the peasant poet of Scotland, who was indeed a member of it, and is said to have drawn up its rules, which we can well believe. One rule declared that every young fellow fit to be a member of that club was, amongst other things, to be "a professed admirer of one or more of the fair sex." *One or more!* Surely this shows the generous genius of Robert Burns.

Burns was then only nineteen. He spoke of love with mingled innocency and ardor. No woman could hate him. Some loved him; most of them not wisely but too well,—one of them wisely *and* well—the woman who was his wife, and bore his children, and mothered one of them who was not hers, and put up with all his faults and failings, and whom he in his heart of hearts loved too from first to last. This should be said in justice to "Jean," and it would have her husband's approval; for he quite understood his own case, as we could prove by many profound lines from his own poems; indeed, at bottom, his views on morality in general, and sex in particular, were as austere as Wordsworth's. No doubt this statement would astonish a crowd of Burnsites who really do not admire him for his genius and his greatness, but for other qualities that bring him into too much likeness to the common herd of the Scotsmen, to whom the Kirk had left no recreations but drink and fornication—to use Henley's true and strong account of the situation.

If there are such things as "holy places"—which religion declares but which Freethought rather doubts—surely the birthplace of Robert Burns is one of them. It is a place of pilgrimage from all parts of the world. When the great "infidel," Robert Ingersoll, visited it he felt "as one who touched a shrine." Ingersoll said that in one of the two poems he wrote, speaking formally; in prose he said that he would rather stand up drunk at the Day of Judgment and say he had written "A man's a man for a' that" than stand up sober and say he had written the Westminster Confession of Faith. And every man who *is* a man would endorse the same statement with regard to himself.

Many a woman also would sign that statement. It was not little but great love that made Bassanio tell Portia—"only the blood speaks to you in my veins." Perhaps the blood of Robert Burns was too often in that condition, but he was not a mere sensualist, even when the "old hawk," as Stevenson called it, was dominant in him. His general feeling towards the sex of his wife, the sex of his mother, was one of love and reverence: we might call it adoration. His essential gallantry is not to be doubted; and it was not selfish but disinterested. Robert Burns could never have accepted—in the *full* sense of the word—the Bible theory that God made man "good" and then made woman to spoil him. He put it the other way about. He eliminated "God" altogether from the business. It was Nature who first

> "tried her 'prentice hand on man
> And then she made the lasses O!"

What a superb compliment in comparison with the Bible story of creation! And one would think that the ladies would feel it. But some of them evidently don't. Two don't for certain. They are what is called militant suffragettes.

Two of these extraordinary ladies, who imagine that the way to persuade men to agree with them is to burn down

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their property, took it into their heads to blow up Robert Burns's birthplace. It is the last place in Scotland one would expect they (as women) would think of touching. But it had no sanctity for them. They did not recognise that it memorised a great man, and a great woman. Robert Burns produced some wonderful poems, but his mother produced Robert Burns: and which is the greater, the man's works or the man himself? Forgetting all this, the amazonian arsonists got their bombs ready and placed them against the lowly walls of the birthplace of that mighty spirit. Fortunately they were disturbed and the famous cottage was saved. One of them escaped, the other was arrested, jabbering just like a lunatic all the time; which she must indeed have been to fancy that such a deed could benefit any man, woman, or child on this planet.

In his latest Monthly Lecture, Dr. Horton admits that thousands of thoughtful and educated people "find golf more attractive than God," that religion has lost its attraction, and that, consequently, the multitudes have become totally indifferent to it. This is perfectly true; but the reverend gentleman is entirely wrong when he alleges that this decay of interest in Christianity is the antiquated and utterly inadequate statement of its truths still in force in the Churches. To set matters right, what is needed, he tells us, is "such a statement or setting of religious truth as will carry complete conviction to the thought of our time"; but we confidently affirm that such a statement neither man nor woman shall ever be able to make. It is not the ruling statement or setting of Christianity that is unattractive, but Christianity itself. Golf is more fascinating than God simply because golf is real and God is not. It is the supernatural, as such, that is losing its hold upon the world, not merely an imperfect doctrine of it.

In the very lecture under consideration, Dr. Horton makes assertions which are both false and absurd. It is not a fact "beyond all dispute," that "by far the greatest moral and spiritual dynamic in the world is simply the story of Jesus." Only a person blinded by prejudice would dare to put forth such a silly claim to-day. Why, the story of Jesus is just now seriously called in question by hundreds of Christian scholars. Christendom, even Great Britain, yea, London itself, in which the reverend gentleman waves the Christian banner, is a living witness to the colossal moral impotence of Jesus and his religion.

"The Heat Wave" was the advertised topic for a sermon at St. Mary-at-Hill Church, London, E.C., recently. There was no need for publicity, for parsons have preached on that subject for centuries.

The Rev. J. M. Thompson, the famous Oxford divine whose views on miracles have brought him into trouble, has a remarkable article in the current number of the *Hibbert Journal*, entitled "Post-Modernism," in which he maintains that criticism has a right to handle every conceivable subject. We mention it simply because it raises a point that has been raised, again and again in this journal, namely, the evidential valuelessness of religious experience. Mr. Thompson is, perhaps, the first divine to admit that it is a mistake to appeal to experience as evidence for the truth of Christianity, because it is legitimate to ask whether it springs direct from a real person called Christ, or whether it is derived from what is believed about Christ. We are firmly convinced that religious emotion is altogether due to religious beliefs, and is never shared by those who are devoid of such beliefs. Thus, the "new apologetic," as it has been called, falls completely to the ground.

"Brigham Young abolished monotony by harnessing commerce to theology," says "Vanoc" in the *Referee*. The same teams are driven nearer home; but our newspapers do not notice them.

"Mr. Carnegie has deluged Britain and the States with free libraries, and the effect of those libraries has been to encourage the begging-letter writer to multiply the discontented portion of the community," remarks Mr. Arnold White in the *Referee*. If this be so, they must be nourished on inferior fiction and worse theology, which form the staple output of such seats of learning.

The new county borough of Southend-on-Sea has a coat of arms under consideration of the Town Council, the predominant features of which are the figures of two monks. Presumably, the holy men are meditating on the Sunday bands, cinemas, and other amusements, to say nothing of the thousands of Sabbath trippers.

The Westminster Abbey authorities quickly offered to bury the late Mr. Joseph Chamberlain in that famous building, although he was known to be a Unitarian. We thought the building was full when Swinburne and Meredith died—but they were not Unitarians.

Naturally, Nonconformists have made the most that could be made of the death of Joseph Chamberlain. He has been acclaimed as a product of Nonconformity, despite the fact that for some years before his enforced retirement Nonconformists were loudly denouncing him as a "Judas," as having betrayed the democratic cause, etc., and despite the further fact that all Nonconformists are not of the Chamberlain type. And so one is left wondering what these other Nonconformists are the product of. Surely not of Episcopalianism? And if Chamberlain was a product of Nonconformity at one stage of his career, what was he a product of at another stage? The only conclusions that follow from such senseless chatter is the amount of foolishness current among those who claim to play a large part in modern political life, and also the readiness with which religious parties seize upon anything in order to practice their favorite game of self-advertisement. The steps of the reasoning are as follows: Chamberlain was a great man. Chamberlain was of Nonconformist descent. We are of Nonconformist descent. Therefore —. Anyone can draw the implied conclusion for himself.

Mr. R. J. Campbell says that Mr. Chamberlain was "a great Free Churchman, unswervingly faithful to his religious convictions." Well, we imagine that what Mr. Chamberlain's religious convictions were are very doubtful. He never paraded them; he never went about preaching in chapels, like some other political leaders, and rarely, if ever, introduced religion into his speeches. We fancy that what Mr. Campbell—who has quite a genius for giving words wrong implications—means is that Mr. Chamberlain was faithful to what is called "religious equality," but what we prefer to call the equality of opinion. We are not now discussing whether this is true or false of Chamberlain, but only pointing out that it has nothing whatever to do with religion. It does not originate with religion, and religion does nothing to favor its development—save so far as the division of religious opinion into sects makes for a larger measure of tolerance than would otherwise obtain. Indeed, we should like to see Mr. Campbell tackle this problem: If the equality of opinion is a religious conviction, how comes it that the countries in Europe where it obtains in largest measure are those in which religious opinion is weakest, and that its bitterest and most numerous opponents are always found in the ranks of the devout?

The Bishop of Bristol has been preaching on the subject of "Will Christianity Survive?" When that question is asked by a Bishop, one knows what kind of answer to expect. Of course, he thinks it will, although he admits that it is "desperately hard at times to understand the ways of God." But the attitude of the proper devotee is not to *understand* the ways of God, but to *believe* that they are for good. Christianity never taught that people were to be saved by understanding. That has always been an heretical doctrine. It is as Ingersoll said, if the world could only be saved by understanding religious doctrines, it would surely be damned beyond redemption.

Although the number of church attendants has declined, the number of parsons has increased. The 1911 census shows that there is a slight increase in all the Churches except the Established Church. That shows a decrease of about 400. The others, however, make up for them. Evidently the decline of worshipers is not due to want of preaching.

The Canterbury House of Convocation has been considering whether it should admit women on the Central Board of Missions or not. After considerable discussion, it was decided to co-opt women members to the number of twenty. The Dean of Canterbury opposed their admittance on the ground that it was contrary to the spirit, if not the letter, of the teaching of St. Paul. The Dean was unduly cautious. Both the letter and the spirit of Paul's teaching, and, one may add, the whole spirit of Christian legislation, is dead against such an innovation. Their place, if Paul is to be taken as an authority, is to obey their husbands and to keep silence in the churches. The discussion only made clear the utter hopelessness of expecting anything in the shape of a rational lead in social matters from a congregation of Christian clergymen.

The *Church Times* warns Dissenters not to expect too much in the way of stopping the leakage from the Churches

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by forcing religion on children. It points out that there are other factors beside early training to be considered; and in this we quite agree with them. Early training is a very important thing, and undoubtedly a large number of people remain with the Churches because of this. But it is not everything, for in that case there would be very few non-Christians about. As the *Church Times* says, there are other factors, and these remain even though every child received a sound religious education. Early training is nearly all-powerful when the general currents of life enforce it; but when the forces of life pull in one direction and early training in another, it may well happen that the former triumphs. And this is obviously what happens in the case of the majority who throw off religion when they reach maturity.

It is a little noted but extremely significant fact that this great concern about the religious training of children is, on the whole, a modern thing. In earlier ages children were, of course, taught religion, but only as they were taught other things. There was no need to specially emphasise religion, because the general social environment enforced it. Religion was a part of life, and there was no greater need to surround the child with a special "religious atmosphere" than there is to give it to-day a geographical or an arithmetical atmosphere. A change of conditions necessitated a different policy. The environment, instead of endorsing religious teachings, began to be in flat contradiction to them. The general tendency of life became anti-Christian, and it became necessary to guard the growing generation from its influence. Hence the present position. The secular teacher asks only the opportunity to instruct, and leaves it to daily experience to endorse and enforce his lessons. The religious teacher knows that this is impossible with him. He must keep the child insulated, as it were, against the hundred and one tendencies of modern life if he is to keep him religious. To some extent this may be done with children. But it is impossible to do it with adults. Life is there when the Churches have finished their work; and although early religious training may minimise, it cannot annihilate its influence.

One of the easiest things in the world is to say that a thing you dislike is dead. And to a certain type of mind saying it appears to develop a conviction that it is so. People have gone on, generation after generation, saying either there could be no such thing as an Atheist, or that Atheism was dead, quite blind to the fact that the number of Atheists in the world steadily increases. So with Materialism. It is always being killed, but yet it is always alive. Always being crushed, and yet never losing its activity and potency. Of course, this cheap and easy way of getting rid of an enemy largely owes its efficacy to confusion of thought and looseness of language. The *Christian Commonwealth*, for instance, says in its last issue:—

> "All the great scientific thinkers of the world have given up the materialistic hypothesis of the Universe. No thinker of reputation to-day stands for the materialistic philosophy."

The sole ground assigned for this is that the old conception of matter is shown to be inaccurate. Well, suppose it is; what then? Materialistic philosophy is no more dependent upon a particular conception of "matter" than the science of geology is dependent upon a particular theory of coal formation. The essence of Materialism is that the forces of the universe are of a determinable, and ultimately calculable, character; and with that the character of "matter" has simply nothing to do. As to scientific thinkers having given up Materialism, that is sheer nonsense. Sir Oliver Lodge knew better when he asked the British Association to be tolerant towards the anti-materialistic explanation. He knew quite well that, instead of Materialism being discarded, it is the working creed of every scientific thinker worth troubling about.

We do not deal with party politics in the *Freethinker*, but when "King Carson" introduces "God" into the Preamble of his new Constitution for Ulster, as being on the Protestant side, we feel like saying a word or two, and replying to those who resent our doing so by reminding them that "he spoke first." Carson represents himself and his "covenanters" as "trusting to be strengthened by the Power who helped our fathers in their need." This is not politics: this is religion: and is not entitled to pass uncriticised because it is in connection with politics. We say at once that, if there be a God, this is the most blasphemous and hypocritical language we ever read. It was not God, but Great Britain, that made the Protestant the upper dog in the Irish fight. And who dares to say that God made that upper dog the brutal and bloody beast he was? It was the story of an Irish peasant, thrashed at a cart-tail—stroke by step and step by stroke—that made young Charles Stewart Parnell clench his teeth and silently resolve to do—what he did. For the man was tied to the cart so that he had to walk backwards, and the dreadful lash cut open his belly as he went, protesting that such cruelty was against human nature itself—though an English colonel *ordered* it to be done and *saw* it done. God helped them, did he? Helped them to tear out the living entrails of a poor Irish peasant, for doing what Carson and Craig and the rest of them now profess to be doing in their turn, and call upon "the Power" (which surely must be the Orange God) to help them as he helped them before.

Lord Chief Justice Coleridge, in the course of his address to the jury in the *Freethinker* prosecution in 1883, said that the persecution of Catholics by Protestants in Ireland for a period of a hundred and fifty years was unparalleled in human history. The very last infamy was practised by the Protestant landlords, with the full consent of the British Government. They pulled down the peasant's cottage when they could get no more blood out of him in the shape of rent. Never before had *that* been done. It was a scanty dwelling, but it was hallowed by life and love, and births and deaths, and joy and pain, and all that makes a poor man's home what a rich man's mansion can never be. To strike men *there* was an attempt to murder the very "soul" of a nation. And the rich did it to the poor, and the men of one religion did it to the men of another religion, and "God" was with them in that "man's inhumanity to man" which has thrown a last black insolubility into the problem of evil, and made the world vile beyond redemption.

Had not Protestants been divided amongst themselves—first of all into the two great parties of Church and Dissent—they would have exterminated the Irish Catholics, which they very nearly succeeded in doing as it was. We don't say the Catholics would have been any better if they had possessed the same power; but they did not possess it, and they are not guilty; you cannot make men responsible for hypothetical crimes. Neither do we wish to stir up religious passions unnecessarily. But when convicted persecutors cry to "the Power" for help against their victims, and convicted bigots clamor against a merely possible intolerance, one can only ask if any such spectacle has been witnessed since Satan rebuked Sin?

All we have said has been provoked by that appeal to "the Power." We have nothing to do with Ulster Protestants' politics. When they publicly appeal to "the Power" of this infinite universe to take sides with them in a political contest, they are posing as religionists and they invite the most candid criticism even from non-politicians.

It is pretended that the Battle of the Boyne, the triumph of Dutch William, who was imported from the Continent to uphold the Protestant interest in Great Britain, was a victory for religious toleration. It was nothing of the sort. All the toleration it secured was between Protestants themselves. No toleration was extended to Catholics. None, of course, was extended to Freethinkers. Less than ten years after the "glorious revolution" of 1688 a fresh statute was directed against Freethinkers. It was called "An Act for the more effectual suppressing of Blasphemy and Profaness." It was a long Act, but in substance it was this: that anyone having been educated in the Christian religion, or at any time made profession of it within this realm, who shall deny the Holy Trinity, or shall say that there are more Gods than one, or deny Christianity to be true, or the Bible to be of divine authority—such person shall be disabled from holding any public employment, and on a second conviction be imprisoned for three years and deprived for ever of all civil rights. *That* was the "religious toleration" which followed the Battle of the Boyne, the flight of James II., and the safe seating of William III. upon the throne of Great Britain.

The government of Ireland, while it is purely secular, may be this or that so far as we are concerned. But the government of Ireland has never been anything else than the government of Irish Catholics by British and Irish Protestants. "To hell with the Pope!" was the sublime shibboleth on one side. "To hell with King William!" was the sublime shibboleth of the other. We do not mean that religious bigotry was responsible for *all* the misrule and misery in Ireland; we mean that it sanctioned and exasperated every other cause of quarrel; the chief of which, of course, was the oppression and exploitation of the majority by the minority of the nation.

Protestants had all the power when the Act of Union was passed. There was not a Catholic in the Irish Parliament.

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After the revolutionary period of 1848 the Protestants made it "treason felony" to suggest that the Act of Union could ever be repealed. This was to make every Nationalist orator or journalist a criminal punishable by death. That is, mere reformers, like John Mitchell, who wrote pretty much what T. P. O'Connor writes now—only with real literary genius—stood in fear of capital punishment. On the occasion of Mitchell's trial, with a batch of his colleagues on the *Irish Tribune*, the Crown exercised its right of unlimited challenge, and every Catholic was kept off the jury, as well as every Protestant who was not thought "sound" enough. Every defendant, of course, was found guilty; every one of them, of course, was sentenced to death.

History is written too much in the abstract. The bestial circumstances of the execution of the English Regicides, for instance, is almost unprintable. Historians use abstract language; they say that the unhappy men were cruelly executed, or use some other polite circumlocution. But what was the actual death sentence on these Irish patriots—for such every man must be who risks his liberty and even his life in opposition to the government of his country by foreigners? The following sentence on William Smith O'Brien will do for all the rest,—there being only a change in name:—

> "The sentence is, that you, William Smith O'Brien, be taken from hence to the place from whence you came, and be thence drawn on a hurdle to the place of execution, and be there hanged by the neck until you are dead; and that afterwards your head shall be severed from your body, and your body divided into four quarters, to be disposed of as her Majesty shall think fit. And may the Lord have mercy on your soul."

There, dear reader; let that sink into *your* "soul." This horrible sentence was commuted to penal servitude for life, but it sounded in the ears of the prisoners in the dock. Had the Irish been *all* Catholics, or *all* Protestants, those infamous words would never have been uttered. The hellish spirit of religious bigotry turns men into beasts. Nay, worse than beasts; for what beast ever hated another beast for a mere difference of opinion on any subject whatever?

Party politics are nothing to us. Neither are we very much concerned about the "business government" which some people wish to see. But when a great political problem is discussed in the light of religious dogmas, and in the spirit of religious animosity, it becomes Freethinkers, at least, to insist that every word of religion should be eliminated from this controversy, and that the discussion should turn upon what is actual and appreciable by ordinary human intelligence in this world.

At the present time, Scottish Sabbatarians are fighting most strenuously for the preservation intact of their field-day. The magistrates of Saltcoats have unanimously refused to consent to the holding of Sunday evening concerts. The Ardrossan and Saltcoats *Herald* assures their Honors, however, that they are laboring under a delusion if they assume that their finding has the approval of the entire community. It certainly has not the approval of the *Herald*. But there are Sabbatic stalwarts at Saltcoats, who have the courage of their convictions. Mr. (or should it be Rev.?) W. M'Neil Biggam, for example, is a modern Goliath, who looks down with blustering contempt upon all and sundry to favor the secularisation of the Lord's Day. This warrior, flourishing two hundred years after his time, goes to the absurd length of asserting that "it is seriously open to question whether the rendering of even the finest sacred music by competent artistes, *under concert conditions on a Sabbath evening*, would result in permanent moral good." We contend that it is more seriously open to question whether the most eloquently and impressively conducted Church services, *taken by themselves*, have ever contributed to the moral elevation of the people. But the question is, Will intelligent Scotland patiently listen and submit to such crass and fumid exhalations of seventeenth century Puritanism in this enlightened twentieth century? Will the residents of Saltcoats allow themselves to be led by the nose by such obsolete teachers as Mr. M'Neil Biggam? We are confident,—

> "O Caledonia, stern and wild,
> Meet nurse for a poetic child,"

that thou wilt take thy full share in the grand task of rescuing the venerable day of the sun from the tyrannous rule of the Sabbatarians.

There was an altercation in High-street, Southend, on Sunday, between a policeman and a citizen of London, who had come down to "see the fleet" and *had* been seeing it, not wisely but too well. Presently the policeman lost his temper a bit and began to use "language." Whereupon the other disputant, who seemed to belong to the working classes, said, "Look here! Don't you Bernard-Shaw me!" Such is fame.

Rev. Paulus Askanazie (an odd name), vicar of Ulrome, in East Yorkshire, had an odd experience. He went up to inspect an upper chamber in the church tower, but the ladder broke and he could not get down again. Tolling the bell for three hours brought no relief, although it caused wonder in the heads of his parishioners. Providence rendered no help—as usual. At last the reverend gentleman broke a window and held out a white flag in the form of a handkerchief with the "S. O. S." signal, which brought him relief.

Rev. George M. Norris, of South Cove, Wangford, Suffolk, left £73,897. Pity the poor clergy!

Lord Halsbury, who was the leading counsel for the crown in the *Freethinker* prosecution in 1883, was an elderly man then. He seems to be living from everlasting to everlasting. But he does not appear to spend much time in improving his knowledge of the Bible. He quoted Scripture the other night in the House of Lords against the Government, and this is what he made of it:—"Make no more vain orations; your hands are for blood." The real quotation, from Isaiah, is—"Bring no more vain oblations; your hands are full of blood." *Orations* for *oblations* is distinctly good. Lord Halsbury is getting quite comical in his old age.

A most remarkable man is the Rev. R. F. Horton, of Hampstead! Between his facts and his conclusions there is a connection so subtle that only the initiated are able to discern. Thus, under present conditions, he has grave doubts as to whether the British people are fit for Empire. And, as becomes so subtle a reasoner, he supplied the data on which such a conclusion was based. An Australian on a visit to England gave Dr. Horton the benefit of his experiences. One Sunday morning this Australian visitor went to High Mass at the Cathedral at Westminster. In the afternoon he went into Surrey, and found about a thousand people playing golf. That was sufficient. His next move was to visit Dr. Horton's church—all in the same day—and he "emphatically declared" that we were not fit for Empire. That is a quite wonderful chain of reasoning, and very few beside Dr. Horton would be capable of it. Because there is High Mass on Sunday morning and golf on Sunday afternoon, the English people are in a state of decadency. We cannot quite see the connection; but Dr. Horton says it, and Dr. Horton is one of the shining lights of Metropolitan Nonconformity.

The following is from the *Daily News* of Friday, July 10:—

> "A dock worker named William James Ahern, who said he was 'not religious,' gave some trouble to the Rotherhithe Coroner's officer when he sought to induce him to take the oath at an inquest yesterday.
>
> "The Coroner's officer (P.C. Allen) commenced: 'Repeat after me, I swear by Almighty God——'
>
> "Witness: No, I don't.
>
> "Officer: Repeat, 'I swear——'
>
> "Witness: But I won't.
>
> "Will you take the oath?—No, I ain't religious.
>
> "Then affirm, 'I do solemnly and sincerely affirm.'—No, I shan't.
>
> "The Officer: But it is not religious. Repeat, 'I do solemnly and sincerely affirm.'—Yes.
>
> "Repeat it.—Yes.
>
> "Will you please repeat what I say? 'I do solemnly and sincerely affirm.'—Yes.
>
> Officer (sternly): Will you either affirm or take the oath?
>
> "Witness (looking disgusted): No.
>
> "The Coroner (Mr. H. R. Oswald): If you do not you will get into trouble. Repeat after the officer.
>
> "Witness said he would not, but the officer urged, 'But it is not religious,' and witness consented to have another try.
>
> "Finally he rounded off the last words of the affirmation with the addition of words from the disliked oath, 'So help me God.'"

We hardly think this gentleman can be amongst our readers. If he were he would probably know that the Oaths Act passed by Charles Bradlaugh gives every witness or juror a right to affirm in any court of law simply on the ground that he has no religious belief or that the taking of an oath is against his religious belief. We may add that the form of affirmation in the Act was drawn up by Charles Bradlaugh himself, and it may therefore be taken as quite satisfactory.

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To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £176 16s. 6d. Received since :—Mr. and Mrs. Kerslake, 10s.; H. Silverstein, 10s.

HERMANN SHACKLETON.—Pleased to have your encouraging letter, and glad to hear that this journal has been so much good to you for so long a time.

J. H. KENNARD.—How is it, we wonder, that Christian Evidence people are nearly always such blackguards?

EDWIN PURCHESS.—Mr. Foote may see the "saints" at Portsmouth some other time.

RATIONALIST.—It is amusing, as you say, to see Mr. W. H. Thresh described as "a new speaker." He lectured for several N. S. S. Branches ten years ago, and his advertisement as a lecturer appeared (gratuitously) in the *Freethinker* at the time. We believe that there was an editorial paragraph about him in this journal. Mr. Thresh's lectures were well appreciated. What we object to is the "new." Others may be responsible for that.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

MR. AND MRS. KERSLAKE.—We should be fortunate indeed if all our friends' good wishes were realised. Thanks for yours.

W. R.—Translations received with thanks. We hope to see you before long. The "Positive article" is being considered. We are afraid of trespassing beyond our proper province in the *Freethinker*.

R. H. WELLINGS.—Glad to hear your *Freethinker* has been delivered regularly since our intervention.

E. B.—Your weekly "batch" is always welcome.

EDGAR JONES.—Mr. Foote's *Will Christ Save Us?* would probably have served your purpose, but it is out of print at present.

H. R. WRIGHT.—We are sending you a supply of "specimen" back numbers of the *Freethinker* for free distribution, and shall be glad to supply other friends in the same way.

ANDREW MILLAR.—Too late for *this* week; but see *next*.

H. SILVERSTEIN, a member of the N. S. S. Executive, and in a position to know what he is talking about, sends his annual subscription to the President's Honorarium Fund, and writes: "My admiration for your great ability and devotion to our cause becomes greater with the passing of the years, and as long as you remain our leader I shall always give you my unswerving support."

J. W. DE CAUX.—Glad you think our "Word of God" *first-rate*. If reprinted, as you say, there would have to be footnotes to enlighten the reader on some technical points.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote's special address to the Freethought party generally, and to his many personal friends in particular, is postponed still further. It must not be interrupted when it has once begun, and a good deal of standing matter has yet to be used up first.

One part of Mr. Foote's address will be concerned with the heavy financial strain involved in some unavoidable changes. There is more, rather than less, need of the President's Honorarium Fund being well supported. It is to be hoped that all intending subscribers who have not yet remitted will do so as promptly as possible. The money is likely to be badly wanted in the early future.

There are fewer clergymen in England than there were ten years ago. Actors and actresses have increased by fifty per cent. These are sure marks of the growth of civilisation.

Mrs. H. Bradlaugh Bonner objects to the N. S. S. President's statement, backed by the Executive, that all the effective fighting against the Blasphemy Laws has been done in the law courts. She does not state where else it was done. It was the fight over the *Freethinker* prosecution more than thirty years ago that produced Lord Chief Justice Coleridge's epoch-marking judgment, which made all discussion on religion, as such, entirely free, and confined the punishment of "blasphemy" to the use of outrageous language. Twenty-five years elapsed before another "blasphemy" case occurred. The President and Executive of the N. S. S. saw the importance of fighting the Boulter case. They did fight it and they won. It was a critical occasion. And the result was the endorsement of Lord Chief Justice Coleridge's declaration of the Common Law of Blasphemy. That is settled for ever. Just as Mr. Foote said it was in 1898 when he established the Secular Society, Limited. His view was that our funds were safe, but our personal liberty was still in danger owing to the *manner* in which Christians might choose to find that we had attacked their faith.

Nearly everybody said that the N. S. S. President was mistaken. It was they who were mistaken. He was right—as he usually is in such matters. Some of those who were pleased to think he was a blunderer in 1898 were just as mistaken in 1908. They advised Boulter to climb down, to express regret for his "blasphemy" and to promise never to do it again. And one of them plainly stated in print that English Freethinkers had quite as much freedom of speech as was good for them. Now they are posing as the heroes of the "repeal" movement, and ignorant people are actually believing them. No wonder Matthew Arnold called History a Mississippi of falsehood.

Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner objects to the statement that while the Deputation to Mr. Asquith, and his reply, were good things in their way, they "could not possibly lead to any fresh steps in the direction of the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws." She does not tell us what steps they *could* lead to, or what fresh step they have led to. Nothing fresh has been attempted. Circulars, questions for candidates, petitions, questions in Parliament,—all had been done before. Mrs. Bonner hints at another Bill. There cannot be a better one than her father's, which was introduced (and lost, of course) in 1889. He was still President of the N. S. S., by the way, when he made this gallant effort. To tell the plain truth, all the fighting against the Law of Blasphemy, until quite lately, has been done by the N. S. S., and by no one else. The monster has long been moribund. What is being arranged for now is its funeral. To give it the *coup de grace*, to bury it out of sight and sound, is a good work in its way. But the real work was the work of the pioneers—who dared and suffered and did all that men could do to maintain their and every man's right of free thought and free speech.

The circumstances under which the suggested new Bill is to be introduced "will be more favorable than has ever been the case hitherto." Very likely. But those more favorable circumstances only mean, after all, that much progress in the general spirit of toleration has taken place since 1883 and 1889.

Mrs. Bonner throws out a final hint about the necessity of Freethinkers working unitedly together in respect to the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws. This will sound a little odd to some members of the Blasphemy-Laws Repeal Committee.

A vicar for a long time had to bear what was to him a very unpleasant state of things, namely, a large number of empty pews. He had tried to find a remedy, and at last thought of a novel idea. He had bills and posters printed, and sent broadcast, announcing that on a certain Sunday he would preach a special sermon on "The Old and the New Sacrifice," and that to illustrate the old sacrifices "real fire" would come down from heaven. The vicar accordingly arranged for a boy to go up in the roof of the church, and when he repeated, for the second time, the text, "And fire came down from heaven and burnt the sacrifice," the boy was to light some paper and drop it down. The appointed service came; the church was, of course, filled almost to suffocation. The vicar arose, and gave out the text—once—twice—but no fire came down, and on looking towards the roof to find the cause, the boy shouted out, "If you please, sir, the rain has got on the matches, and they won't strike." At the end of the sermon the vicar said he hoped there would be a good collection to carry on the work of the Lord at that place.

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From the West Country.

The Judge's Chair. Dartmoor Stories, by Eden Phillpotts. John Murray: 1914. 6s.

MR. EDEN PHILLPOTTS has given the reading public many surprises. First, when the capital, short stories which made the magazines unwonted sources of laughter, were collected and issued over his signature, and later and greater, when the ingenious historian of *The Human Boy* dropped the cap and bells, and, in *The Secret Woman*, contributed the most powerfully written novel of its year to our wonder and amazement. In a still later book, *The Thief of Virtue*, Mr. Phillpotts gave his admirers yet another surprise, for he translated the philosophy of Nietzsche into the vernacular of the West Country, and gave us a convincing picture of the superman in homespun.

No one among the present day writers has a better claim to the succession to the mantle of Mr. Thomas Hardy than Mr. Eden Phillpotts. Since the Master has forsaken novel writing for poetry, the younger writer has been gradually adding volume to volume of his Dartmoor Stories until he can claim to have attempted a prose epic of the West Country. The latest volume of this splendid series of novels, *The Judge's Chair*, is before us, and forms a triumphant finale to the master-work, well worthy of the strong hand of the famous Devonshire novelist.

This volume of stories bring to a conclusion the author's Dartmoor work. They are along the line of previous volumes and mingle comedy and tragedy; but as in the case of *Widecombe Fair*, he ended the longer stories with a play of humor and a glimpse of the happier side of life; so, for the most part, these tales, told by an old Moorman from *The Judge's Chair*, are laughter-moving and saturated with the quaint and original philosophy of the Moor folk.

Because of the range and maturity of the stories, *The Judge's Chair* is a most characteristic work. These peasants, with their racy and vigorous dialect, are not merely West Country photographs, they are "forms more real than living man" which the imagination of the author has created. The reader knows that the important factor is nature, and that the simple story is but a portion of the world's life. And the struggles and love-affairs of these peasants are to this theme merely as the hare running along the railway is to Turner's rainstorm and express train racing one another in his world-famous picture. It is a true instinct that impels Mr. Phillpotts to choose backgrounds of landscape rather than houses and furniture; for, in like position, did not the great painter crown his Ariadne with stars?

There are no less than eighteen stories in the book, and they include tragedy, comedy, and even farce. Mr. Phillpotts tells stories, too, in such a way that his readers are counted by the tens of thousands, for in this phase of his art he is irresistible. Listen, for example, to his description of Tommy Caunter, the patriarch of *The Judge's Chair*:—

> "A little old man with a brown and withered face all wrinkled into one laugh. Every line of a thousand lines was merry. His eyes were small, bright suns, and the obvious happiness in them must have astonished an observer. Could it be that any mortal had found seventy years on Dartmoor one long jest? Teeth Tommy Caunter had none, but his shrunken mouth followed the skull lines and grinned a genial smile. He wore a blue shirt, corduroy trousers, and battered black leggings. His coat and his hat were beside him on the seat. He was bald save for a thin ring of white hair—a half halo of silver that had slipped off his head and been caught behind his ears."

This Tommy Caunter is the character to whose memory Mr. Phillpotts professes to owe the stories. In keeping with this genial supposition, on page after page brilliant touches of homely wisdom strike the reader, as, for instance:—

> "We always remember the man who trod on our corns, though we may forget the man who tried to set our house on fire."
>
> "Talk is very well; but it won't heal a cut finger."
>
> "The youngest of us makes mistakes."
>
> "If cleanliness be next to godliness on one side, 'tis close kin with a devil of a temper on t'other."
>
> "Youth will rush in where middle age casts a look and goes by."

For Freethinkers these stories have an unusual interest, for the keynote of all is frankly and fearlessly Pagan, and interpenetrated with the Greek ideals of life. It is this quality that gives Mr. Phillpotts' art an imposing and elemental quality. He is, in a word, a thinker; but he is too clever an artist to allow his æsthetics to be overshadowed by his ethics. One of the most charming of the stories deals with the scientific truth that the child of to-day is nearer his prehistoric ancestors than the adult by many an age. This story, "The Apostates," recounts the superstitious wonder of two children who find a rock idol, and the dialogue between the brother and sister is very suggestive:—

> "'You oughtn't to pray but to Gentle Jesus,' she repeated.
>
> "'I don't see that,' argued Bobby. 'Gentle Jesus have got His hands full without me and you. Everybody be always at Him for one thing and another, and you can't expect Him to hear a couple of little squirts like us. But if this here gent chap be a real idol, so like as not he's just busting to help somebody to show his cleverness. He might be a proper friend to us, and none the wiser.'"

How the young apostates fared, and the result to the rock-god is told with consummate art.

In quite another vein is the poignant story of "The Wife" written, with a lucid and compact sense of craftsmanship; whilst "Providence and Tommy Caunter" is seasoned with a delightful irony. The remainder of the stories are the work of a writer to the manner born, and the book should increase the already wide reputation of Mr. Phillpotts.

Amid the rampant commercialism and frivolities of modern literature, it is pleasant to find a popular novelist taking his art seriously, and producing works which not only command the admiration of the many, but compel the attention of the critics. Mr. Eden Phillpotts is in this enviable position that, while he is on easy terms with his publishers and his many thousands of readers, his work shows a really notable advance from the days when he lighted up the magazines with his humorous stories until he had given us the epic of Dartmoor, and also proved by the publication of *Wild Fruit*, a refreshing volume of verse, that he could wear with a grace the singing robes of Apollo, and who sings for singing's sake, and who seems indifferent to the praise or blame of coteries or critics. The Dartmoor series of novels, of which *The Judge's Chair* is the concluding volume, have a real and lasting value. For in the country, where ways are simpler and men less prone to hide their moods, we get nearer to the heart of things than in towns. And, to his credit be it said, Mr. Phillpotts has never sold his birthright as a thinker. Like Meredith and Hardy, he has passed through the Valley of Dead Gods, and looked with wondering eyes upon the celestial ocean of Truth.

MIMNERMUS.

Animals Recently Extinct.—III.

(Concluded from p. 445.)

REPTILE life, which reached such a marvellous state of development in the remote past, had long been deprived of its lordship before man appeared on the planet. Their fossil remains prove that gigantic terrestrial tortoises were widespread on the leading land surfaces of the earth in many areas in which they have been for ages extinct. These reptiles were latterly driven to seek shelter in secluded island sanctuaries, and from these, their last retreats, the coercive hand of man has now expelled them. During the last few generations the expiring land-tortoise has been restricted to a small number of islands in the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

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That these organisms were the stranded survivors from a greater continental past, appears evident from the fact that far apart as their localities were, these tortoises displayed the closest affinity, and that the minor tortoises were entirely absent from these island havens. Unfortunately for themselves, these reptiles became a favorite food with the men who landed on their wave-encircled homes, and their numbers sadly declined. A few giant tortoises have recently been protected in Aldabra; some are kept in captivity in zoological collections, but for all practical purposes these interesting relics of the earth's earlier fauna may be regarded as departed things.

During the historical period, more than fifty species of birds have been suffered to expire. Nearly all these extinct animals were island dwellers, and it is to be feared that other feathered creatures similarly circumstanced are destined to extinction at no distant date. In the interests of science and humanity it is to be trusted that these isolated species will be protected and their perpetuation secured, for our feathered fauna are among the most lovable and beautiful of Nature's children.

The dodo is dead. There is, and there has long been, no doubt that it is as dead as Queen Anne. Our first knowledge of this "ponderous pigeon" dates from the time when the Dutch navigators landed on the island of Mauritius and annexed it to their country's possessions. The bird was not a thing of beauty, with "its huge beak, hooked and covered except towards the tip, with a bare skin..... the short, thick legs, with the usual four toes, three in front and one behind, the wisp of a tail, and the heavy, fat body, much too big for the wings, which were not actually absent, but simply very small and useless."

This fat, flightless bird was, of course, quite at the mercy of the human intruders in its only place of refuge; it was hunted down for culinary purposes without compunction, and although some of a more delicate palate complained of the coarseness of the dodo's flesh, not one was spared, and the last of its race perished towards the close of the seventeenth century.

Professor Reinhardt contended that the dodo was related to the pigeons. This theory was at one time derided until the great anatomist Owen's study of the bones, says Professor Newton, "confirmed the judgment of the Danish naturalist, and there is now no possibility of any other view being successfully maintained." The dodo was bigger than the biggest cock turkey and its nearest living relatives have been identified in the green-tinted pigeons of the tropical east. These birds, however, are strictly arboreal in habit, while the dodo was a ground bird. One of these tropical pigeons possesses a bill that is shaped remarkably like that of the dodo, and although this organ is smaller, both absolutely and relatively, its resemblance is very striking to that of the defunct dodo. The didunculus or dodlet, of Samoa, is another connecting link with the dodo, and although the dodlet is a terrestrial bird, its powers of flight are very considerable. No reliable specimen of the extirpated dodo has survived, but the earlier descriptions are amply corroborated by the fossil remains that were brought to light in 1865 when large tracts of the marsh-lands of Mauritius were drained.

The solitaire of the neighboring island of Rodriguez was a big bird with a bill similarly formed to that of the dodo. The cock bird, which was much larger than the hen, weighed as much as forty-five pounds, and, like the dodo, was pleasing to the palate. It was not, however, so easily caught; but it was captured and devoured nevertheless. The solitaire owes its name to the circumstance that its habits were solitary; it was usually found singly or in pairs. A nest some foot and a half high was constructed in the open, in which one large egg was laid. The hatching was a prolonged affair that extended over seven weeks, the two birds relieving one another in the task. They were very jealous of their nursery, no other solitaire being permitted to approach nearer than two hundred yards of the nest. But one curious characteristic of the bird, and one that attracted the attention of several observers, was the remarkable aversion of the parent birds to an attack on one of the opposite sex. If the solitaire which happened to be sitting saw "a stranger of the opposite sex approaching, it would summon its partner by a rattle-call of the wings to drive it away, for males would not attack females, or *vice versâ*."

The newly hatched bird remained in the nest for several weeks; but even when it was able to walk abroad, the mother bird was in constant attendance. It was repeatedly noticed that a short time after the young solitaire had left the nest, a crowd of thirty or forty others brought a second young one to it. The parent birds then joined their visitors, and all wandered away together. After an interval of time, the assembled solitaires dispersed separately or in pairs, and the two young ones were left in peace together. This custom was known among the colonists as the solitaire's marriage.

No solitaire ever left its native island alive. It moped in captivity, refused food, and soon pined to death. There appears no record of the bird's skin having at any time been sent to Europe. For its appearance and habits we are entirely dependent upon the testimony of travellers and the early colonists of Rodriguez. A large number of bones and skeletons of the solitaire have been discovered in the island during the past fifty years, and a pair of these skeletons may be seen at the South Kensington Museum. The upshot was that in less than a century after the bird's discovery it had passed to its long rest.

The great auk is the only flightless European bird, and also the only feathered creature that has become extinct in the Northern Hemisphere in modern times. Although well known in Northern Europe, the great auk's chief habitat was North-Eastern America, and there its extermination was carried out with unrestrained cruelty. As early as 1497, the war against this bird began in America, where its numbers must have been extraordinarily vast at the outset, since, nearly three hundred years later, the great auk was still very abundant. At the latter date the auk was slain wholesale for its feathers, and its numbers were seriously reduced. This destruction continued unchecked until the great auk disappeared for ever from the shores of America. In Europe the birds lingered in isolated stations until the nineteenth century, but their days were numbered. They were persecuted in their last retreat, and captured by collectors. The surviving birds were reduced to a single pair; these were killed in 1844, and since that date they have never been seen alive.

A very remarkable group of extirpated birds which inhabited New Zealand, and to a smaller extent Australia, was made up of the various species of moa or dinornis. These feathered bipeds differed considerably, both in size and structure. Some were about 2 ft. in height only, while the large moas attained a height of about 14 ft. One of the leading peculiarities of these birds was the entire absence of wings, but the lower limbs, on the other hand, reached quite massive proportions. One of these immense birds had "a drumstick bone over a yard long, and stood 12 ft. high, while the ostrich is only eight, and is much less massive in build than the moas were." An allied genus also existed, the Palapteryx, which possessed rudimentary wings and also a fourth toe, while the moas were all three-toed birds. These defunct birds find their nearest relative in the still extant apteryx, which is a tiny creature in comparison with his departed allies.

The extinction of the moa is of comparatively recent date, for, apart from the native traditions, feathers, and "a part of the neck with muscles and skin attached," have been found. Their bones have been discovered in large numbers in the sea-shore sands, in meres, stream-beds, and swamps. Many of these are in an excellent state of preservation. In general appearance the moas more closely resembled the emu than any other living bird.

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As in most of the other instances dealt with, the food problem played a large part in the extinction of the moa. Despite a supposedly ancient Maori poem which is alleged to refer to something as being "Lost as the moa is lost," there are several reasons for thinking that the giant moas were still in existence a few centuries since in fairly large numbers, and that one or two survived down to the nineteenth century. In this connection it may be remarked that the notornis, which flourished in the days of the moa, and whose existence was first made known to science through remains which were found in association with those of the extirpated moa, has since been discovered in a living state. Native traditions do not as a rule carry very far, and as Finn justly says, "even the dodo was suspected of being fabulous at one time, since no tradition of its existence survived in its native island."

But, apart from the injurious intervention of the human biped, the moa is almost certain to have died out. They appear to have frequently perished from the dearth of food, from accident and disease. Moreover, the remains of an extinct eagle—a sanguinary bird of prey much larger than the golden eagle—have been found in company with those of the moa. This bloodthirsty bird doubtless devoured the young of the larger moas and easily preyed on all the smaller species of these flightless birds. Still, man must have been the chief antagonist of the ornithological fauna of New Zealand.

It has long been a puzzling problem why so small an area as that of New Zealand should have contained so surprising a number of species of moas. But this remarkable moa variety is no more amazing than that of the cormorants. Of the forty species of cormorants distributed throughout the earth, New Zealand possesses sixteen, or nearly half of the entire number.

If the innumerable accounts of the enormous flocks of passenger pigeons which flourished in America within the last few generations are moderately accurate, the utter extermination of these birds is simply astonishing. As a rule, the gregarious habit is distinctly advantageous to the animals which display it, but in the case of the passenger pigeon (Ectopistes migratorius), its communal customs aided materially in its undoing. Migrating at uncertain intervals in vast flocks, amounting at times to millions, in search of food, they perished in incredible numbers. They nested together in countless multitudes; no secrecy was possible in such circumstances, and all their enemies, "human, furred, and feathered—gathered to the spoil," and wrought wholesale destruction on the defenceless birds. Their human foe was pre-eminent at this work of slaughter:—

> "On one occasion, in 1881, 20,000 were used for the so-called sport of trap-shooting. Thus they were gradually killed out. In 1894-1902 they were still to be seen in pairs or half-dozens; but by 1905 it was believed there were none in the wild state and very few in captivity."

A number of these pigeons were sent to Europe, and some were set at liberty in England, and possibly a few may still survive in woodland retreats.

Although the enemies of the passenger pigeons were legion, and despite the fact that they supplied food to the American agriculturalists and the Indians in almost as easily accessible a form as the fabled omelettes that grew on trees, even then it is hard to understand how the birds became utterly exterminated in America in so short a period. That the birds were driven from their favorite breeding-places to less hospitable quarters, where their young commonly succumbed to cold, and that the forced migrations of the adult pigeons were attended with heavy mortality from accidents and inclement weather, must have been important contributory causes of their extinction. And what is more probable, diseases of an epidemic nature, when once they had established themselves within the flocks, would wreak appalling destruction among the millions of pigeons congregated together. But whatever the factors involved may have been, this beautiful bird may now be considered as an exterminated creature.

Deeply as we deplore the departure of so many interesting representatives of the world's fauna, and greatly as we feel inclined to reproach the human actors in the various tragedies briefly described, we are, nevertheless, bound to remember that the extinction of floral and faunal forms is no new feature of the earth's career. Thousands of different plant and animal organisms have arisen and developed, only to decay, without leaving legitimate issue. The giant amphibians were descended from puny ancestors, but, having attained the limits of growth, they were soon eclipsed by the superior splendors of reptile life. The reptilia evolved a wondrous wealth of form and function, but were destined to be completely outclassed by that rising mammalian life which grew apace while the earlier lords of the land sank to comparative insignificance. Side by side with the now reigning mammals flourished the winged and feathered avian fauna which had also sprung from reptilian stock. But mammalian life has long since passed its meridian, and is hastening towards its end. Will the proud inheritor of all the ages prove a permanent denizen of earth, or is the brainiest mammal, man, likewise doomed to pass from the scenes of his triumph and glory, having prepared the path for some other mode of Nature's eternal energies?

T. F. PALMER.

Homewards.

"WHY should your voices be lifted up in weeping? Why should your souls faint on the path of woe? Why should the sunrays be dimmed by your tears, and the merry laughter of man grow cruel in your ears? Have you no faith, O, my people? Has the love of God perished in your hearts, my children? Do not I tell you he awaits your home-coming? And who, other than my Father which art in heaven, is greater than I?"

Jesus Christ often used words similar to those in addressing his audiences. When he died and became a God, his sayings developed from dogmatic advice into commandments; and it as the latter that Christians should recognise them. The modern apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ should make no row over the matter. Almighty God cannot, in the very nature of him, give counsel. He commands. Advice can always be neglected. It gives room for choice; and were the All-in-All to concede choice to the infinitesimal bit of omnipotency, in other words, the ordinary Christian, it would simply shatter the deistical nature the All-in-All possesses. At least, I think so; for I cannot imagine such an autocrat giving all and sundry the opportunity to deem him in the wrong, so much in the wrong with his guidance that they would treat it with contempt, doing that which was directly opposed to his wishes.

No one will deny that God should have a utility value, that the usefulness of him should be most evidenced in the exigencies and hardships of life. There should be no doubt upon its clear recognisibility. In these matter-of-fact days it is necessary that Christians should be plain; and if Christians were plain in their faith they might work wonders with the minds of the rest of the people, even yet. God's activities should be felt and shown. They can be most serviceable during periods of trouble; for emotions cannot well be subdued and hidden at these times. Naturally enough, if God and his commandments are of any use-value at all, the human heart, having, as priests say, the esoteric divine knowledge in its depths, will, undoubtedly, appreciate them most when it is molested. God's commanding advice will be actualised. Strangely contrary to our expectations it is not. Something is awry.

We can sympathise heartily with the sevenpenny novelist who says that love is life. We also know

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what the loss of love means: the cinema tells us. Understanding these things, we cannot be justifiably accused of callousness. Professing allegiance to the aphorism that love is life, we cannot be deemed cynical regarding its influences. Possessing, at times, a nearly unrestrainable dose of sentiment in the realm of ideas, we cannot be termed serpent-hearted. For all that our gorge rises in disgust at the mawkish sentimentality, otherwise contemptible snivelling, that fills the atmosphere to putridity when the hand of God comes out, like an embracing tentacle, from the skies to the waters or to the earth, to pull a few thousand lovers of him homewards.

God is a God of love, and therefore his doings are lovable. Being lovable, he is a good God. When we imagine he smites us we are mistaken. We know, deep in our souls, his ways are not ugly and cruel; we know they are beautiful and kind. How foolish we are when we think he gives us sorrows; they are not really sorrows; they are blessings. We all know it. Besides, Jesus Christ told us; and he should have known. God's great heart is so overflowingly full of love for us that he cannot possibly chasten his children. It is not misery, nor tribulation, nor suffering, that comes to us. It is all love, all joy, all divine wisdom. We are fools to think differently. If we grieve over the loss of loved ones drowned in a sea tragedy, killed in a railway disaster, burned in molten lava, we are blasphemous fools, and we all know it. God cannot mean ill towards us and ours. Naturally and supernaturally he knows best. When we see a child torn from its mother's arms by a devouring wave; when we see a fair young girl crushed in its spray-white breast; when we see a powerful man, hopelessly futile against their wrath, tossed to death by the surging waters; when we see a mother sucked relentlessly into an ever-moving grave; there is no need for bitter grief. We are fools to moan when we see our wife's body, battered to pieces, in the wrecks of an express. We are fools, blasphemous fools, to weep when we gaze on the purple, blotched face of a once lovely daughter lying dead amidst the ruins of an earthquake-shaken town.

These are God's ways. They are beautiful, lovable, wise, and kind. They are divine. We know nothing can mar God's exquisite craftsmanship. Nothing can blight the beauty of his delicate and cunning artistry. Everything he does, he accomplishes so marvellously, and so full of his supernatural originality, so laden with evidences of his stupendous power is it, that we actually wonder how it happens that Freethinkers can disbelieve in him. Yes; God is in the riven ship and in the raging waters that engulf our friends; he is in the shivering town as its walls fall before the lava stream; the crash of a collision is the noise of his mighty voice; and in the demons of fire flames his eyes shine with joy.

For twenty centuries Christians have been endeavoring, sometimes feebly, sometimes strongly, to inculcate the household wisdom of try-try-try again. Nearly every individual in Britain has come under the sway of this Christian instruction. We are told dogmatically that a bad habit can easily be conquered if the Lord is on our side; a good habit can be easily acquired if God's grace is with us. Christians, by this time, should be able to experiment with the good habit of praising God joyously when their friends are done to death by God's most wonderful works. Long enough have they had the training essential to the substitution of a good characteristic for a bad one. It is strength of faith, of divine love, of the grace that is never dimmed, to recognise the kindly Father of Heaven in all his manifestations. It is weakness to weep within sight of the all-seeing eyes. For twenty centuries the omnipotency of God has been assisting Christians to be strong. For the same span of years his apostles have been helping God to help his followers to see that death, whatever the circumstances, is just a going home. And God, plus Jesus Christ, plus the Apostles, a trebly concentrated dose of omnipotency, with faith, mountain-moving faith, divine love, and wonder-working grace, thrown in, have been so weirdly successful that one is compelled to regard their beneficence with awe. For when God's hand clutches the souls of our friends, in storm, in fire, in calamities of all kinds, poor, weak human nature, despite its beliefs, its ideals, its heavenly joys, its divine assistance, still prostrates itself in grief. Tears fill our eyes; sadness and weariness our hearts; and the human mind silently denies its most cherished beliefs. In the dumbness of the aching soul of Humanity there is no God.

Human life denies the goodness of God oftener in tears than in laughter. Religion fights life; and life always wins. The hard facts of existence discredit Religion and deny its reality. The truths of life are the denials of Deity.

How long are the priests going to bolster up supernaturalism? How long deserve the accusation of hypocrisy? They know that all the so-called religious powers are useless to stay the tears and solace the hearts of Humanity. Thoroughly do they know that Christianity has been utterly and ignominiously unsuccessful in making even the religious mind decently religious. God sleeps in his heaven while Humanity suffers.

Christians are still preaching and praying and believing. Let them demonstrate their faith. When the next Transatlantic liner, chosen by God to be the tomb of thousands of his children, goes down into the cold darkness, let them prove their love of God beyond the love of their friends. They owe it to God. Let them be religionists first; and, if they *must* be natural, let them keep their sorrow for the blasphemous quietnesses of their own hearts. Let them rejoice publicly that they can see God in the fog, in the storm, in the lightning, in the collision. Let them sing hymns of praise that the Heavenly Father has taken their friends homewards in the strong grip of his fingers and the death embrace of his mighty arms. Their beliefs enforce such a demonstration from them; and when so magnificent an opportunity as at a time of national disaster? Let them prove that religious emotions are stronger than human emotions; let them show if human life, with its love, tenderness, solicitude and pathos, its grief and tears, its natural sorrow and inevitable suffering, can lay down its head on the bosom of God, in a sweet sleep, and smiling like a happy child, serenely free from trouble, while God's dark messenger, Death, busily reaps the waters of their burden of human suffering and anguish.

ROBERT MORELAND.

A patriarchal artist's model in Rome was known as "God the Father," because his benevolent aspect and long beard made him chosen to represent the boss of the Trinity in religious pictures. He, however, eked out his living by combining a little brigandage with his deific attributes. An American student, who had been absent from Rome for some time, missed his model, and inquired of an old friend, "Where is God the Father now?" "Alas!" replied the artist, "God the Father has been hanged." What an unfortunate family!" exclaimed the American.

"I am deeply interested in discovering the lost tribes of Israel," said Mr. Musty, as he came in and sat down by the busy editor for an hour's discussion on the subject. "So?" replied the man of resources. "Why don't you advertise for them? The business office is on the first floor. Here, Dick, show the gentleman to the advertising department."

When the notorious Lueger, whose platform was the extinction of the Jews of Vienna, was up for election as Burgomaster of that town, a poor Jew took a bribe of a couple of florins to vote for him. "God will frustrate him," said the pious Jew. "Meanwhile, I have his money."

Fond Parent (reprovingly) "You should not say, Bobby, when you have been out on your wheel, that you have had a hell of a time."

Bobby: "Why not, when I've been scorching?"

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15 and 6.15, E. Burke, Lectures.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 6, Miss Kough, a Lecture.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.30, Jas. Rowney, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, R. H. Rosetti, "Man and His Religion"; 7.30, Mrs. H. Rosetti, "Graves and Their Meaning."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Finsbury Park): 11.30, Mr. Hope, a Lecture. Parliament Hill: 3.30, Mr. Davidson, a Lecture. Regent's Park (near the Fountain): 3.30, R. H. Rosetti, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, R. H. Rosetti, "Man and His Religion."

PROPAGANDIST LEAFLETS. New Issue. 1. *Christianity a Stupendous Failure*, J. T. Lloyd; 2. *Bible and Teetotalism*, J. M. Wheeler; 3. *Principles of Secularism*, C. Watts; 4. *Where Are Your Hospitals?* R. Ingersoll. 5. *Because the Bible Tells Me So*, W. P. Ball; 6. *Why Be Good?* by G. W. Foote. *The Parson's Creed*. Often the means of arresting attention and making new members. Price 6d. per hundred, post free 7d. Special rates for larger quantities. Samples on receipt of stamped addressed envelope.—MISS E. M. VANCE, N. S. S. Secretary, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE LATE

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THE
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This thing is God: to be man with thy might,
To go straight in the strength of thy spirit,
and live out thy life in the light.
—A. C. SWINBURNE.

The Origin of Supernatural Ideas.

"Religion, as understood by the lower savage races, differs essentially from ours; nay, it is not only different, but even opposite. Thus, then, the deities are evil, not good; they may be forced into compliance with the wishes of man; they require bloody, and rejoice in human, sacrifices; they are mortal, not immortal; a part of, not the author of, nature; they are to be approached by dances rather than by prayers; and often approve what we call vice, rather than what we esteem as virtue."—SIR J. LUBBOCK, *The Origin of Civilisation*, p. 116.

"There presided nothing sentimental or meditative at the origin of religion, there was a stampede simply of a multitude of souls in mortal terror or hope, and no such thing as independence of thought; it is less of sentiment, properly so-called, than of sensation and of action, that religions have been born. Primitive religion was not a means of escape out of this world, a port-hole into the blue; the earliest gods were not in the least ethereal, they were possessed of solid muscles, of arms capable of dealing blows. To explain the origin of primitive beliefs by a nascent idealism, is to explain them by their precise opposite. One becomes an idealist when one is on the point of ceasing to believe."—M. J. GUYAU, *The Non-Religion of the Future*, pp. 41-42.

HUNDREDS of different definitions have been given of the word "religion," but a definition upon which all scholars are agreed has yet to be found; probably it never will be.

According to Schelelermacher, religion consists in the consciousness of dependence on a higher power. Hegel pricked this definition by remarking that if consciousness of dependence constituted religion, the dog would possess most religion.* Professor Ratzel, on the contrary, thinks "Religion is everywhere connected with man's craving for causality, which will ever be looking out for the cause or causer of everything that comes to pass."†

Professor Brinton defines religion as the belief that behind the activities of nature "lies the ultimate, invisible, immeasurable power of Mind," and that "man is in communication with it."‡ Herbert Spencer finds the origin of religion in ghost or ancestor-worship. Guyau holds that "religion is the outcome of an effort to explain all things—physical, metaphysical, and moral—by analogies drawn from human society, imaginatively and symbolically considered."§ The late Mr. Andrew Lang held that "The origin of a belief in God is beyond the ken of history and speculation."‖ According to Tiele, "the essence of piety, and therefore the essence of Religion, is adoration."¶

Matthew Arnold, by his definition of religion, as "Morality touched by emotion," excluded the supernatural altogether—a proceeding similar to playing *Hamlet* without the Prince of Denmark.

Professor Seeley applies the name of religion to "any habitual and permanent admiration."** Professor Leuba truly observes of this definition that "Should we concur in this extension, it would be difficult to stop anywhere. We should have to admit almost anything which anyone may have a fancy for designating by that much-abused word"; and adds, "Since the function of words is to delimitate, one defeats the purpose of language by stretching the meaning of a word until it has lost all precision and unity of meaning." Professor Leuba defines religion as "(1) A belief in a great and superior psychic power—whether personal or not. (2) A dynamic relation—formal and organised or otherwise—between man and that Higher Power tending to the preservation, the increase, and the ennobling of life."* Professor Max Müller, in his *Origin and Development of Religion*, contends that religion arose from a conception of the infinite—a notion derived from his study of the highly metaphysical religions of ancient India. Mr. J. M. Robertson, dissatisfied with every existing definition of religion, claims to have deduced a definition in which—

> "there is room for every religion ever historically so-called, from Fetishism to Pantheism, and from Buddhism to Comtism, without implicit negation of any claim made for any one religion to any moral attribute, save of course that of objective truth or credibility."†

The definition runs to six clauses, and fills a whole page, which he sums up shortly as:—

> "Religion is the sum (*a*) of men's ideas of their relation to the imagined forces of the cosmos; (*b*) of their relation to each other as determined by their views of that, or by teachers who authoritatively recast those views; and (*c*) of the practices set up by those ideas."‡

As this definition does not exclude Atheists, it seems rather too comprehensive.

Charles Bradlaugh observed:—

> "On the whole, then, as all believers in God include in the word 'religion' some belief in a Deity, and as they certainly have a prior claim to the term, it appears to me to be wiser, franker, more honest, to avoid using an old word in a new sense, and thus to prevent the certainty of misconception on the part of those around us."§

Then, again, we have the difficulty of denying the name of religion to certain faiths of China and Japan, like Buddhism, whose founder denied God, and Confucianism, which ignores him.

Professor Frazer—whose services to science in these investigations has just been acknowledged by the title of knighthood—defines religion as the "propitiation, or conciliation, of powers superior to man, which are believed to direct and control the course of nature and of human life"‖—which is as good as any. For our part we prefer the definition of Reclus:—

> "'Religion is the feeling which falls upon man in the presence of the unknown.' Man fears and must fear the unknown, because the unknown may be dangerous and terrible, because the infinite is hidden in the unknown. Man personifies the Unknown; when his mind is strongly excited he cannot do otherwise. And that personification he seeks to propitiate."¶

* Cited by Max Müller, *Contemporary Review*, May, 1878.
† Ratzel, *History of Mankind*, vol. i., p. 41.
‡ D. G. Brinton, *Religions of Primitive Peoples*, p. 47.
§ Guyau, *The Non-Religion of the Future*, p. 2.
‖ Cited by Brinton, *Religions of Primitive Peoples*, p. 47.
¶ Cited by Leuba, *Psychological Origin of Religion*, p. 2.
** J. R. Seeley, *Natural Religion* (1882), p. 74.

* Leuba, *Psychological Origin of Religion*, pp. 92-3.
† J. M. Robertson, *Pagan Christs*, pp. 52-3.
‡ *Pagan Christs*, p. 52.
§ Charles Bradlaugh, *The Freethinkers' Text-Book*, p. 198.
‖ Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (second edition), vol. i., p. 96.
¶ Elie Reclus, "Ethnography," *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

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That is, man fears the unknown cause of the terrifying phenomena of nature—such as the storm, the earthquake, the thunderbolt, etc.; and fashions this unknown cause in the likeness of a man; like himself, only more powerful. This origin of religion, says Professor Leuba, is "widely held." And he further remarks:—

> "'Fear begets gods,' said Lucretius. Hume concluded that 'the first ideas of religion arose.....from a concern with regard to the events of life and fears which actuate the human mind.' Among psychologists, Ribot, for instance, affirms that 'the religious sentiment is composed first of all of the emotion of fear in its different degrees, from profound terror to vague uneasiness, due to faith in an unknown, mysterious, impalpable Power.'* The fear-theory is well supported by two classes of interdependent facts observed, we are told, in every uncivilised people: (1) Evil spirits are the first to attain a certain degree of definiteness; (2) man enters into definite relations first with these evil spirits."†

Dr. Barr Mitchell, the archæologist, also observes: It is—

> "this timorous state of mind, in respect to the unexpected and unknown, so characteristic of the ordinary savage, which lies at the bottom of the religious as well as of the superstitious sentiments. This is admitted in the scriptural expression, 'the fear of God,' which all theologians and religionists recognise as the essence of piety."‡

The same writer also remarks that is a mere waste of time to attempt to define the difference between religion and superstition, seeing—

> "that there is only a difference of degree between the belief of the savage in the possession by distinct personal spirits, both good and bad, of terrestrial objects and the heavenly bodies, and that of the educated European in the universe possessed and governed by a good personal spirit, with a subordinate region in the possession and rule of a wicked spiritual being."

And instead of regarding religion as standing opposed to superstition, it would be more accurate to regard them as both opposed to the rational interpretations of science, which form the true antithesis to—

> "all the superstitions, whether existing in their original baldness among savages, and in the nurseries and lower ranks of cultured society, or among educated people, wrapped up in the traditional verbiage and sterile conventionalisms which still pervade the teaching of our schools and colleges."§

In fact, "religion" is one of the most ambiguous words in the English language. It has ten times more meanings than a cat is said to have lives. It is a significant fact that none of the great writers—since Hume—who have done most to solve the purely natural origin of supernatural ideas have used the word religion in the titles of their books. Lubbock's works are *The Origin of Civilisation* and *Prehistoric Times;* Herbert Spencer's, *The Principles of Sociology;* Dr. Tylor's, *Primitive Culture;* Professor Frazer's, *The Golden Bough.* Mr. J. H. King, who has written one of the best works on the subject, entitles his book *The Supernatural: Its Origin, Nature, and Evolution.* The term "supernatural" is a much better word than either religion or superstition, and the use of it would save an enormous amount of unprofitable wrangling and waste of time.

In reading the many works dealing with the origin of supernatural ideas, we have noticed a tendency to attribute the origin of these ideas to the same causes all over the world. We do not believe this to be the case. Man is governed by his environment, and the environment of the African Negro is very different from that of the Eskimo of the Polar regions, which in turn differs from that of the Australian Blackfellow, the North American Indian, or the Polynesian. We do not believe that all those tribes who have evolved the idea of a God did so by way of ancestor-worship, as Herbert Spencer states; although it is demonstrable that some, perhaps the majority of them, have done so.

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

* Ribot, *The Psychology of the Emotions*, p. 309.
† Leuba, *The Psychological Origin of Religion*, pp. 81-2.
‡ Barr Mitchell, *Dates and Data*, pp. 25-6.
§ Barr Mitchell, *Dates and Data*, p. 24.

An Easy Trade to Follow.

WHAT to do with our boys? is a question that naturally appeals to parents, although the answers given are not usually very helpful. Most of them leave out of sight the party chiefly concerned—the boy. Parents are advised to put their boys to this or that profession, as though it were just a question of a boy going into any department, drawing top salary, and reaching a position of distinction. It really depends upon the boy. If he is shrewd and methodical and far-seeing, he might do well in a commercial career. If he is of an acute, observant type, he might do well as a lawyer. Or he might have other qualities that would fit him for a scientist or a writer. It all depends on the boy. But if he is neither astute enough for commerce, logical enough for the law, smart enough for journalism, nor patient and persevering enough for science; if, on the positive side, he possesses a fair presence, glibness of speech, confidence in himself, and, while not manifesting ability in any direction in particular, shows a fondness for managing the universe in general, then it would seem safe advice to say, make a clergyman of him. There are few professions that suit such a character so well, and none that would suit him better.

Over a generation ago, George Eliot wrote of the evangelical preacher:—

> "Given a man with moderate intellect, a moral standard not higher than the average, some rhetorical affluence, a great glibness of speech, what is the career in which, without the aid of birth or money, he may most easily attain power and reputation in English society? Where is the Goshen of mediocrity in which a smattering of science and learning will pass for profound instruction, where platitudes will be accepted as wisdom, bigoted narrowness as holy zeal, unctuous egotism as God-given piety? Let such a man become an evangelical preacher; he will then find it possible to reconcile small ability with great ambition, superficial knowledge with the prestige of erudition, a middling *morale* with a high reputation for sanctity."

Nothing has occurred since the above was written to weaken the force of the characterisation. The pulpit still remains the place in which mediocrity may easily achieve distinction. Deficiencies that would be fatal elsewhere oppress but little there. Qualities that would be of small service, or positive disservice, out of the pulpit, are of advantage in it. A training, of a sort, is of course necessary. But once through with that, all is plain sailing. There is no need to keep oneself abreast of new facts, or to be ready to revise one's opinions in the light of new knowledge. For the clergyman, everything is arranged for him—his beliefs, his prayers, his postures. He need be under no bondage to so commonplace a thing as facts. On the contrary, it is better to treat them with a lofty disdain; to be most certain where proof is impossible, and to talk most when one knows least. All that is essential is to acquire the knack of pouring a deluge of words over a desert of ideas, and to confuse by a display of sheer verbosity. Given these things, and it is the easiest thing in the world for a clergyman to acquire a reputation. He may pose as a "mystic," simply because his ideas are misty. He may pass as a a daring thinker on the strength of questioning such absurd stories as the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection. And he may gain credit as a social reformer by mouthing vague and useless generalisations concerning the working classes. One need only bear in mind the reputations gained by men like Gipsy Smith, Dr. Horton, R. J. Campbell, or the Bishop of London. None of them would ever have been heard of out of the pulpit. They are heard of in it

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because the pulpit is, as George Eliot said, the Goshen of mediocrity.

Here is another passage from George Eliot that is as true now as when it was first written. The clergyman

> "has an immense advantage over all public speakers. The platform orator is subject to the criticism of groans and hisses. Counsel for the plaintiff expects the retort of counsel for the defendant. Even the scientific or literary lecturer, if he is dull or incompetent, may see the best part of his audience slip out one by one. But the preacher is completely master of the situation; no one may hiss, no one may depart. Like the writer of imaginary conversations, he may put what imbecilities he pleases into the mouths of his antagonists, and swell in triumph when he has refuted them. He may riot in gratuitous assertions, confident that no man will contradict him; he may exercise perfect free-will in logic, and insert illustrative experiences; he may give an evangelical edition of history with the inconvenient facts omitted; all this he may do certain that those of his hearers who are not sympathising are not listening."

Here, then, is a profession for which almost anyone may qualify. Short of downright imbecility, lack of intelligence is no serious obstacle. Men have been expelled from churches for thinking too much, but never for not thinking enough. And modest as the requirements of the Churches have been in the past, they are likely to make the test of intellect still less severe in the future. A little over two centuries ago there were still great men in the Churches. Life was simpler, less sophisticated; and the gulf between scientific teaching and religious doctrine less obvious. But life broadened and deepened, and men of ability turned their energies elsewhere. The Churches were left with what could be got, and had to be thankful for even that. Mediocrity in the secular world thus became genius in the Church, because the stronger and better minds could no longer rest content with its teachings. To ask for more was both dangerous and hopeless. It would, indeed, be an eye-opener to many if they had drawn up for them a list of the men of ability—men like Darwin, Froude, Stephen, and others—who were *intended* for the Church, but whose strength of intellect compelled them to remain outside.

The profession of a clergyman has this great recommendation: bad times are reduced to a minimum. Of course, many of the clergy get but modest incomes, but all hope for more, and, in any case, it would be difficult to find many who are getting less as clergymen than they would be getting in any other occupation. Even if there should be a "slump" in the business, and the number of parsons turn out to be greater than there are churches to fill, the prospect is not so gloomy as it appears. There is the mission-field still open; there are some very comfortable jobs, both at home and abroad. The home secretaries are very well paid, and generally, abroad, the missionaries manage to lead a very comfortable life. If a man is a failure at home he can always go abroad to convert the heathen. All that is needful is the display of a lively imagination in sending home the reports.

Or, if one does not care to leave the country, there still remains the home mission-field. Here the sphere of operation is limitless. Christian society presents no lack of material for philanthropic efforts, and the method of working is so simple and so profitable. You rent a large house, partly furnish it for yourself, and label a room or two "offices." All your expenses of food, clothing, travelling, etc., are put down to the "Mission." And after living up to anything from £500 to a £1,000 a year, you are able to come before the world as a Christian philanthropist, and entitled to ask the Freethinker where *his* charitable institutions are situated? So long as something is given out of the funds you are safe. You are not obtaining money under—legally—false pretences. Of all professions that of a Christian philanthropist is the most profitable. It combines the maximum of profit with the minimum of risk. The capital is found by the public. The profit is taken by the promoters. A liberal use of religious phrases disarms all criticism—except such as may be offered by Freethinkers, and their comments are hardly likely to weigh heavily with the religious public.

Above all, and this is a consideration that should have considerable weight with the average Briton, the occupation of a clergyman will provide facilities such as no other profession furnishes for giving all one does a moral flavor. In politics, some amount of courtesy towards one's opponents is considered necessary. In business, one must keep one's word if one is to succeed. In science, regard for truth is imperative. From all these fetters the pulpit delivers one. One is not even expected to be friendly and courteous towards one's opponents. To be so renders one more or less "suspect." No one seriously blames a clergyman for regarding a Freethinker, or a member of an opposing sect, as one with whom social intercourse is not to be held. His narrowness of mind will be simply put down to religious zeal, and will be so far counted to him for righteousness. No one, again, expects a clergyman to be strictly truthful in his statements concerning other people—so long as these other people do not belong to his religious world. What outsider would trust a Protestant's account of Catholics, or a Catholic's account of Protestants? What amount of condemnation from the religious world have clergymen ever received for circulating their falsehoods concerning Paine, and Ingersoll, and Bradlaugh? The nature of these falsehoods have been exposed over and over again, but what clergyman has lost status for circulating them? I know of none, and should be surprised if anyone else does. Such conduct would not be tolerated in science or in general affairs. It is excused only in the world of religion. It is the pulpit that enables a man to gratify the miserable, petty vices of a misdirected human nature by throwing over them the cloak of zeal for religion and pietistic morality.

Of course, there are certain drawbacks to the clerical life. One can get nothing in this world without paying some kind of a price for it. And, as Lord Morley says in his excellent book *On Compromise*—a work that forms such a satire upon much of his own career:—

> "It is no light thing to have secured a livelihood on condition of going through life masked and gagged. To be compelled week after week, and year after year, to recite the symbols of ancient faith and lift up his voice in the echoes of old hopes, with the blighting thought in his soul that the faith is a lie, and the hope no more than the folly of the crowd, to read hundreds of times in a twelvemonth with solemn unction as the inspired word of the Supreme what to him are meaningless as the Abracadabras of the conjuror in a booth; to go on to the end of his days administering to simple folk holy rites of commemoration and solace, when he has in his mind at each phrase what dupes are these simple folk, and how wearisomely counterfeit their rites; and to know through all that this is really to be the one business of his prostituted life."

Truly, no light business this to one who takes the higher and better view of life. And it is a burden that, apparently, is borne with ease by many thousands of our fellow-countrymen.

C. COHEN.

Why Not Face the Facts?

THE inability or unwillingness of Christian ministers to see things as they are is simply amazing. It is doubtless the result of constantly wearing specially colored spectacles; and it is even possible that some verily believe that what they see through them is the truth—"the truth as it is in Jesus." Mr. R. J. Campbell has more than once publicly boasted of his superior knowledge of history, particularly the history of the Christian centuries. In the very last sermon which he preached prior to his regrettable illness, from which we wish him speedy and complete recovery, and which appears in the *Christian Com-*

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monwealth for July 15, that claim is certainly belied. The object of this discourse is to enthrone Jesus as the King of mankind. In the effort to accomplish this tremendous task the preacher affects a wonderful originality. "There is a point here," he says, "to which, perhaps, your attention has never been directed before." We prick up our ears, and await the astounding revelation. Imagine our astonishment when the novel point turns out to be merely this:—

> "I mean that, humanly speaking, the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ on earth nineteen hundred years ago actually saved civilisation and gave humanity a new start. I do not think that this is generally realised either by Christians or non-Christians."

We can assure the reverend gentleman that such a statement is not realised by non-Christians, solely because there is no truth in it. The "point" gloried in because of its unique originality is a wholly lying point. Christianity neither saved civilisation nor gave humanity a new start, and this we are prepared to demonstrate to the satisfaction of every unprejudiced person.

Let us look for a moment at the picture of Paganism painted by Mr. Campbell. "There was no real vision anywhere, life had lost point and purpose; the bottom seemed to have dropped out of existence." Now listen to the following words of wisdom from the *Thoughts* of Marcus Aurelius:—

> "First, do nothing at random or without a purpose. Second, let that purpose have no goal save the good of the community" (p. 117).
>
> "'Do little and be happy,' quoth the sage. But is it not better to do the things that are needful, whatsoever and howsoever the laws of our being, as living creatures and by nature members of one community, prescribe? For this resolve brings with it not merely the happiness of well-doing, but that of little-doing. For the vast majority of our deeds and words are aught but necessary. Eliminate these, and how much toil and trouble will vanish with them. Hence, on every occasion, let us ask ourselves, 'Is this one of the needless things?' remembering, at the same time, that it is not enough to eliminate the idle in action, but that we must purge our thoughts as thoroughly; for so only can we prevent the motiveless in deed from following in their train" (p. 27).

We might quote innumerable passages, equally relevant, from Seneca, Epictetus, and others, but we confine ourselves to Marcus Aurelius because Mr. Campbell singles him out as one of the great Stoic teachers who "were so filled with foreboding about the general tendency of things that all their thoughts were tinged with sadness and gloom." We affirm that this illustrious man did not tinge his thoughts with sadness and gloom, but dwelt serene in a centre of confident tranquillity, cherishing faith in the resources of his own nature and in those of his fellow-beings. He lived "as on a mountain," and exhorted all others to do the same. He lacked passion, but peace was his in great abundance. By the way, Mr. Campbell very naïvely gives his case away when, after alluding to the "sombre picture" of Roman life under the Antonines, furnished by Professor Samuel Dill, he observes that it is "a picture in many ways resembling the present civilised society," after two thousand years of "Jesus Christ our Lord."

Now, what did Jesus do? In his usual vague manner the preacher expatiates emotionally upon the transcendental blessings which his advent conferred upon the world. Among these are, a radiant vision of God piercing human life with a force and intensity never before known, the impartation of something worth living and dying for, the linking of the human and Divine. This is sentimentalism of the very worst type. "All would have been lost but for Jesus," exclaims the City Temple oracle, in the very teeth of the protesting facts. He must have read Dill's *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius* very carelessly to have the temerity to claim it in support of his view. If he will reperuse that valuable work he will see that the trend of things in the Roman Empire from the year A.D. 70 was towards political and moral betterment, and that the author speaks of a Pagan period of "unexampled peace and prosperity, a period of upright and benevolent administration and of high public virtue." Renan tells us that during the whole of the first Antonine's reign not a drop of Roman blood, nor a drop of the blood of foreigners was shed; and he was in power for twenty-three years. Now, what happened after Christ began to don the imperial purple? Was an all round improvement initiated? The first Christian Emperor was Constantine the Great. His conversion was at best a very doubtful transaction. He embraced Christianity without completely renouncing Paganism, though he transformed the former into the religion of the State. Well, what was done to save civilisation under him? Nothing. One of the first fruits of the new order was the legalising of intolerance. Paganism received its death-knell, and the death threatened was to be by no means a natural one. Constantine himself set the example in the actual destruction of Pagan statues. He pursued a policy of bitter persecution towards Jews and heretics, and ordered the destruction of the books of the Arians immediately after the triumph of Athanasius at the Council of Nicæa; and yet, just before his death, he received baptism at the hands of an Arian bishop, which, according to Athanasius, was no baptism at all. In addition to all this, it must be recorded that Constantine was a heartless Christian criminal. On his conscience lay the burden of the murder of a son, a nephew, and a wife; and as he neared the end the dread of something after death began to grip him. What did he do? Like a madman he rushed about in all directions in search of some consolation. First of all he applied to the college of fifteen Pagan priests devoted to the services of Jupiter, Mars, and Quirinus, who calmly informed him that for such dark deeds their religious ritual knew no expiation. Then he turned to philosophy with the same heart-breaking result. At last he came across an Egyptian magician, a ladies' man about the imperial court, who comforted him with the assurance that in the Christian Church there was a special provision for purification from all crimes, however great. This magician was a Spanish bishop, Hosius by name, and this is what he said: "There are no sins so great but that in Christianity they may find forgiveness." Whether it was Hosius, Bishop of Cordova, or Sylvester, Bishop of Rome, who absolved the Emperor, is immaterial, the all-important point being that he *was* absolved, that his conscience became insensible under the influence of the most pernicious drug ever concocted. How long all this occurred before his decease we have no means of ascertaining. When seized with his last illness it is related that he suspected that he had been poisoned, and that he handed to the Bishop of Nicomedia a will which, on opening and discovering its contents, he placed for security in the dead Emperor's hand, where it lay till Constantius arrived and read his father's dying instructions. What followed was the massacre of six of the surviving imperial family. That is the manner in which civilisation was saved and humanity given a new start.

Then the Roman Empire gradually drifted into black chaos and red ruin. The Dark Ages set in, civilisation languished, morals coarsened, and all sorts of corruption reigned supreme. For nearly eight hundred years Christendom was held as in a vice by the evils from which it seemed utterly incapable of extricating itself. Several centuries were consumed in acrimonious theological controversies, during which thousands of lives were lost. From Constantine onwards the love of truth steadily declined, and by the tenth century, according to Dean Milman, "chastity was so rare at Rome as to be called an angelic virtue." Lecky tells us that in the sixth century "all classes seem to have been almost equally tainted with vice," the two queens Fredegonde and Brunehaut being conspicuous for their ferocity, and for the number and atrocity of their crimes. Lecky proceeds thus:—

> "We read of a Bishop named Cautinus, who had to be carried, when intoxicated, by four men from the

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table, who, upon the refusal of one of his priests to surrender some private property, deliberately ordered that priest to be buried alive, and who, when the victim, escaping by a happy chance from the sepulchre in which he had been immured, revealed the crime, received no greater punishment than a censure. The worst sovereigns found flatterers or agents in ecclesiastics. Fredegonde deputed two clerks to murder Childebert, and another clerk to murder Brunehaut; she caused a Bishop of Rouen to be assassinated at the altar—a Bishop and an Archdeacon being her accomplices; and she found in another Bishop, named Ægidius, one of her most devoted instruments and friends" (*History of European Morals*, vol. ii., pp. 336 7).

Baronius, a Catholic, and Milman, a Protestant, no less than Gibbon the Sceptic, make it abundantly evident that the Christian Church has been the perpetrator and abettor of multitudes of the worst crimes on record. It has often been, as Mr. Campbell tells us, "the one live thing," and it lived almost alone to perform acts of persecution, suppression, execution, and to wage bloody war against all of whom, for whatever reason, it disapproved.

J. T. LLOYD.

Tess of the Woods.

THE evening was cool and quiet. A pleasant breeze played with the leaves, and from the music that lingered in rustling cadences rose the songs of birds as from a murmuring accompaniment. Overhead, through the traceries of foliage, the soft cloud-shades of summer nights were stealing the brilliancy from the blue of the sky and mellowing their appropriation. The white shafts of sunlight, alabaster columns that sloped to the swaying roof, and seemed to support it more powerfully than the tree trunks themselves, had disappeared; and around the trees were gathering, in solemn silence, the weird shadows that give the woods their grave charm, and wave invisible magic wands over human sentiment.

Religious romanticists have no difficulty, at these times, in picturing their dream God; nor is it a task for them to feel his activities in the sensuous appeals of Nature. Surely there is something more than mere material forces at work. Surely all this loveliness is not the essence, the blind result of blind circumstance. There is some spirit, some soul, something incomprehensibly divine in this. It can only emanate from God, they say. There is something behind the beauty of a star, within the loveliness of the woodland at nightfall, beyond the intense life-incipience of the pale, cold dawn. Naturalism cannot give us any satisfactory elucidation, we are told; God alone can make it clear.

Freethinkers, however, have no trouble in understanding the influence of the sensuous upon minds inoculated with the modern religious interpretations of natural phenomena; but, when reason has burned the curtain of Deism, it is sometimes hard to realise the thickness of that veil around the minds of others. For absurdities are not so few that we need to be abnormally acute of vision to observe them. The laughter of inanimate things is not so secret that we need to be particularly keen of ear to hear it. The merriment of speechless nature is not so dumb that we require genius to portray it for us. All around us there are happenings that render the claims of Religion absurd. Nature laughs continually at man's dreams of Deity. Anywhere, everywhere the assertions of Religion can only be entertained if the eyes and ears are fast closed to the facts of life; and it is, amongst other things, because Deism can envelop contradictions, denials, and absurdities in awful solemnity, and force the mind to genuflexion, that it is, mentally, a grave social danger.

Just as I entered the wood a cat leapt from a grass thicket to a bough, seized an unsuspecting thrush, and dropped. The crush of teeth on bones made a tragic epilogue to a song of joy and liberty.

The other birds sang on unheedingly, to the murmuring accompaniment of leaf music. The beauty was still as sensuously delightful, not a whit dulled by the sudden ending of a lithesome life in its midst. The clouds still trailed their white fleecy draperies across the deepening blue of the skies. One poor, happy bird had ceased to sing. One hungry cat had, after the exercise of perhaps unimaginable patience, obtained a much-needed meal.

With nature so is it with Humanity, despite all the religions in the world, despite Gods, and Christs, and Holy Ghosts.

Somehow my mind kept convoluting the little commonplace tragedy, and when I lay down, after a bit, on a bank behind a sturdy oak, to watch the color changes between its many-tinted leaves, I wondered how it was anyone could even attempt to harmonise the tragedies of nature and humanity with the popular ideas of Deity.

Voices, coming indistinctly from the distance, broke upon my wonderment. Soon I could hear the words.

"We're far enough away now. Let's sit here," said a girl.

"All right," replied the coarser voice of her companion; and from the intonation I judged he was annoyed.

"See here, Mary!" he blurted out after a short silence, "it was all a lark. You enjoyed it as much as me; and you're as much to blame as me, too. If I egged you on, you egged me on; and there the matter ends."

"But it doesn't end there at all, Will. Can't you understand that the serious side is just beginning, now that I'm beginning to understand. Besides, things are being said at home; and if it goes on I won't be able to stand it. Something's got to be done. You'll marry me, Will, won't you? Oh! you must! You must! I can't bear it all myself. I can't! You must help me, Will. I know I'm as much to blame as you; and you've told me so often."

"That's just it, Mary. You're as much to blame as me; but that's no reason for me marrying you. In fact, it's a jolly good reason why I shouldn't. What's more, I don't want to. I'm not going to bury myself yet, for you or anyone else."

"But it's harder for me, Will, much harder, and I'm ——"

"Maybe it is; but if you do enjoy a lark, and it turns out bad, you've to bear the brunt of it. You knew, as well as I did, what might happen; and if you're fool enough, well, you've just jolly well got to suffer it out."

"I know it was all a lark," sobbed the girl after a pause in the conversation. "But I was so happy at the time that I might have been sound asleep, for I didn't know what I was doing."

"You tell that to the horse marines, Mary," he said with a harsh laugh.

"You can afford to marry me, Will; you've a big enough wage; and everything will be better and easier."

"For you, not for me; but I'm not going to. I've asked some of the chaps about it, and they're of the same mind. If you suffer because of some fun, you've just got to suffer," he said, with a hard, stubborn ring in his voice. It was like the crunch of bones.

The girl wept bitterly for a while; but her grief seemed not to affect him in the least. Then he said roughly, "Come on! I'm fed up with this anyhow."

They rose, and Tess of the Woods returned on the homeward path with her unmarried husband.

My mind went back to an old literary sweetheart of mine, Tess of the d'Urbervilles, and the sadness of her life seemed to become enwoven in the gloom of the drowsy wood. I loved her, and lived with her again. My sympathies rushed out anew to warm themselves against her wronged heart. The black flag of sorrow was entangled in the dark tree-foliage over Tess of the d'Urbervilles, Tess of the Woods, and myself. Our three lives were inter-

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linked in some mysterious way. The hearts throbbed together, and the minds were striving against the despair that robs the Deity of its value. Again I felt the strange, weird vibration of my being, the feeling that is the echo of genius, the response of sensitiveness to the call of the master mind. Again, Hardy was touching the chords of my life; and, for a moment, the ordinary individual that is myself was drawn into the sacred circle.

The moment passed; the echo of genius sighed, and faded into silence; the nerves resumed their commonplaceness; but the old thought shone out afresh in my brain, as it did, in similar circumstances, when I first read the book—whatever Hardy may have meant to imply, Tess of the d'Urbervilles, to me, is a glorious indictment of Deism, an immortal monument against the President of the Immortals, who, we are told, sported with Tess to satiation, tortured her, murdered her, and flung her beautiful body into the ugly mire of his own making. It is a magnificent denial of Deity.

ROBERT MORELAND.

Acid Drops

The head of Jesus Christ is alleged to have appeared to the congregation of a small mission hall at Llanelly. To the eyes of some it was crowned with thorns, but the preacher saw nothing of the kind, from which we see how *objective* it was. It was equally true, no doubt, that "many unbelievers fell on their knees." They must have been got there for the purpose. We suggest that J. C. should repeat this miracle at Westminster Abbey or St. Paul's Cathedral.

A few wills from recent newspapers. Rev. Leonard Edmund Shelford, Prebendary of St. Paul's Cathedral, left £5,469. Rev. C. E. B. Bell, of Chelford, Cheshire, left £1,419. Rev. Richard Pringle, of Stowford Rectory, Devon, left £4,591. Rev. Robert Alexander, Queen Anne-street, Dunfermline, left £3,123. Rev. George McGuffie, Blair Lodge, Stirling, left £11,334. Poor clergy!

There are at least 10,000 lepers in Russia. No wonder! It is the most pious country in Europe.

Sir George Turner, who is a specialist on the subject of leprosy, says there are about a hundred lepers in this country, only two of whom are women. Defenders of the Design Argument will explain, perhaps, this chivalry on the part of Providence.

The *Church Times* is strongly of opinion that the offer to bury Mr. Chamberlain in Westminster Abbey ought never to have been made, as a service such as would have accompanied the interment ought not to be performed over one who has never accepted the Christian faith. We are not without sympathy for the *Church Times* view, and we wish that all Christians would carry out the principle of refusing to read a Christian service over those who did not belong to them while living. Still, here is another aspect to the matter. Westminster Abbey is a national building, and if the nation decides on honoring a man by placing him there, it is almost impertinence for a Christian to object. There is more than one Freethinker in the Abbey already, and it is, after all, only a question of time for the English people to imitate the French people, and give their national heroes a civic funeral, leaving the sects to do as they please in the matter.

Rev. Conrad Noel writes exultingly in the *New Weekly* of what he calls "The Catholic Recovery"—that is, the growth of altar service, and the revival of a number of the cruder forms of superstition. We fancy that what he takes as signs of recovery are really symptoms of decay. It means that, as the stronger intellects leave the Churches, the less rational ones begin to exert power, and superstitions that were kept under find an opportunity for expression. The best brains of the country drift away from the Churches, and this is a chance for the "weaker brethren" to do as they please. Personally, we expect to see a still greater development along the lines indicated by Mr. Noel. And then will come the settlement of the final question—whether the control of civilisation is to be finally with the thoroughly rationalised portion of society, or is civilisation to undergo another eclipse such as occurred with the establishment of Christianity?

The *New Witness* for July 16 is a special military number, and the editor leads off by remarking that "all mankind has ever felt that arms are the ultimate test of a nation. And all mankind has been right." The sentiment seems to us incomplete. It should also be pointed out that the lower in the scale of civilisation the more profound is the conviction. Nations that are uncivilised see nothing wrong in the rule of the physically stronger, and nations that are only partly civilised see nothing very regrettable about it. With increased civilisation and culture, the value of the test is questioned. Then people begin to realise that the test of physical fighting is no more decisive as to the value of a nation than it is decisive as to the value of an individual. Indeed, if it comes to fighting as the test of fitness, there are plenty of animals that will beat man hollow, and humanity will have to vacate the premier position in the animal world. The truth is that Mr. Cecil Chesterton is writing rubbish — simple, unadulterated rubbish.

What Mr. Chesterton is probably muddled about is the fact that the readiness to *struggle* is one of the tests of a high vitality, national or individual. But that does not mean of necessity an appeal to arms. All social life involves struggle, as does all intercourse between nations. But it is only on the lower stages of culture that this readiness to struggle takes the form of an appeal to brute force—an appeal that means, not the survival of the best man, but only the survival of the strongest animal. In higher stages of culture we have the same repulsions and attractions working themselves out in a class of ideas, principles, ideals. The combative element is still there, still active, but it expresses itself in a worthier fashion. Mr. Chesterton thinks only of the lower stage, and evidently finds it difficult to conceive anything higher.

Mr. Chesterton says that if anyone wants an example of what the military spirit can do when it is still alive in a nation, we should turn to Ireland, where, in a few months, two armies have been raised. Well, what then? Is anyone insane enough to imagine that these two armies will settle the Irish question? Suppose these armies were let loose, and fought until one beat the other. Would that settle the Irish question? It would only be the Irish problem over again, with either the North or the South as the top dog. The problem in Ireland is not the raising of armies, but getting all the population to live at peace. And this cannot be done by an appeal to arms, but by an appeal to reason. Mr. Chesterton might reflect that even now nations only appeal to arms when reason fails, and the appeal to force does not mean that it is admirable; it only proves that men are not yet civilised enough to be guided by reason. That we all recognise as an unfortunate truth. But one is not paving the way for better things by a glorification of the brute, even though the brute be restrained a little by the rules of "civilised" warfare, and appears in the trappings of the modern soldier.

The insistent sea-serpent has made its welcome reappearance—in the columns of the press; the Nonconformist *Daily News* being in the front. Yet the sea-serpent is but a poor thing compared with Jonah's whale, who had a bed-sittingroom in its "tum-tum."

In a conversation recently with a veteran evangelist, the old preacher mentioned that Northampton was a stubborn place, for there were so many Freethinkers. He attributed this to the number of shoemakers, who are engaged in a sedentary occupation. "They have plenty of time to discuss things," he added, reflectively, "but I've always been too busy a man to think."

With one eye on the bonnets in their churches, the clergy are beginning to think there may be something said for the political equality of men and women, and the House of Convocation is favoring the voting of women. Yet according to the Word of God woman is but a side issue.

A sporting contemporary, describing a recent boxing encounter, informed its readers that one of the combatants was like a Greek "god." The resemblance was closer, we imagine, when the "god" had his nose broken, like the others in the museums. The defeated champion, presumably, was "a man of sorrows."

Mr. Thomas Tyler, speaking at the half-yearly meeting of the Southend Trades Council, said the local Education

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Committee was an affront to working people. The members of the Committee were chosen from the Anglican and Nonconformist Churches, with two Roman Catholics "thrown in as a make-weight. When they inquired the reason they found it due to the fact that the religious people could not trust each other." A palpable hit!

What a change there is in children's books. A generation ago all publications for juveniles were palpably pietistic, but this is no longer the case. In the *Childrens' Magazine* for July there is an article on Henri Bergson, and it is stated that "many people think that in the nineteenth century the wisest man, the philosopher with the widest vision and the clearest eye for guiding men onwards, was Herbert Spencer. He taught us that all things change from age to age in an orderly way, and this great, eternal process of change he called evolution, a word now famous." It is a pity that the same clarity of thought is not shown in publications for adults.

The *Evening News* and the *Daily Mail* are both screaming hysterically because the opposition press will not pay much attention to their Civil War Scare, and the former journal is quite delirious concerning "the hush-up press." Both papers have hushed up Freethought affairs for years, and it is good to find the engineers blown up with their own gunpowder.

The question of the Sunday theatre has been debated in *T. P.'s Weekly*, and among the latest contributors is the Rev. Stewart Headlam, who says "there is nothing wrong in seeing such acting, or acting yourself." The Rev. A. J. Waldron thinks differently, and wishes "Sunday more divinely human," whatever that may mean. Most people will have no difficulty in choosing between these two very opposite ministers.

As we expected, the Government has decided that the promised Education Bill will not be proceeded with. The immediate reason is want of time, but we imagine that behind this lies the conviction of inability to get a Bill through the House such as will satisfy the Government's supporters. A Bill that would satisfy them would most probably have to reckon with the hostility of the Irish party; it would, naturally, have against it a solid Conservative vote; and when to this is added the advocates of Secular Education and some of the Liberal M.P.'s, the Government might easily experience yet another defeat on its educational proposals. Naturally, the Nonconformists are exasperated, and are beginning to be suspicious of their having been misled, and threatening a "revolt." Well, they can only revolt by putting the Conservatives in, and that will certainly not get them what they desire. For our part, we quite welcome the Government pronouncement. It brings us a step nearer the day when even politicians will recognise that a straightforward policy of Secular Education is the only plan to end the sectarian strife once and for all.

"Viator," of the *Church Times*, wields an exceedingly facile pen, and his articles are always interesting, if not instructive. Indeed, the ease with which he writes often tempts him to write superficially, if not flippantly. For example, in the issue of the *Church Times* for July 10, he has a letter on "Podister," the Freethinker. This is a deplorably sarcastic contribution, and must be pronounced essentially unfair. He seems to take "Podister" as a typical Freethinker, who, as here described, is by no means a desirable character. In reality, he is not a typical Freethinker. We agree with "Viator" when he says that to call the personage he depicts a Freethinker "would be a grotesque perversion of language." Look at him. He has "an insular mind," so restricted that it is not capable of enlargement. He never "postulates a cause outside his own experience for an effect within his experience"; he is not God, nor much like God. He cannot appreciate the writings of Robert Browning, nor the book of Job. He honestly detests Mr. Chesterton, and God or Nature has withheld from him the faculty of imagination.

It is needless to observe that the above description is a grotesque caricature. We know intimately many hundreds of avowed Freethinkers, but "Podister" is not amongst them; nor have we conversed with anyone who has met him. We do not deny his existence, nor the possibility that "Viator" is acquainted with him. All that we aver is that he is not by any means a typical Freethinker, though it pleases this ready writer so to delineate him. Most of the Freethinkers we know are zealous students of science and history, as well as ardent lovers of literature. Browning is one of their favorite poets, and they revel in the Drama of Job. To them the whole Bible, regarded as a merely human document, is one of the most interesting and illuminating books in the world. So far are they from detesting Mr. Chesterton that they derive much entertainment and some profit from his fantastic and paradoxical writings. We beg to remind "Viator" that he, too, is not God, and knows no more about God than we do, which is NOTHING. We wish to remind him, further, that he cannot render any signal service to his own cause by putting on superior airs, and talking down to people he either deliberately or ignorantly misrepresents.

During the recent visit of the fleet to Southend-on-Sea a banner bore the pious legend, "God bless the Union." A Cockney visitor, glancing at the motto, said, "We don't get religious over our blooming workhouses."

It was reported in the press that Grigori Rasputin, "the Czar's favorite monk," had been stabbed by a woman, and the act was attributed to the old, old reason of the holy man treading the primrose path of dalliance. From later reports it appears the monk is still alive; and, if he can persuade his followers that it is his second time on earth, his fortune should be made ten times over.

According to the revivalists, it is only Freethinkers who commit suicide. A further proof to the contrary is found in the death of Miss Muriel Steward, daughter of Canon Steward, rector of Boyton, who shot herself with a rifle.

In a White Book on St. Helena it is stated that there were seven cases of flogging during 1913, one for a conviction under the Juvenile Smoking Ordinance. It is appropriate that a place in which boys who smoke are flogged should be named after a Christian saint.

"The war of pamphlets," so named by the *Church Times*, now being waged within the borders of the Established Church, is really becoming highly entertaining to disinterested witnesses. The warriors are high-placed clerics, from Bishops to Canons, and theological Professors; and it is perfectly amazing with what sublime ease they slay one another. Bishop Gore and Professor Bethune-Baker originated the warfare, but they were speedily put to death by Dr. Sanday and Professor Gwatkin. Then two fresh warriors, Dr. Scott Holland and Dean Strong, entered the field, and together gave his quietus to Dr. Sanday. And the end is not yet. The man in the street may ask, "What are they fighting about so fiercely?" but no one can tell him, nor do the warriors themselves know. There is not one unbiassed critic amongst them, not one who has the courage to be logical. In reality, their quarrel is over mere *shadows*, even Dr. Sanday's *criticism* being but shadow-criticism.

Dean Strong very properly says that if the story of the Resurrection could be decisively shown to be false, the affirmation of it by the Church in the Creed could not save it, and a ruinous blow would thereby be dealt at the authority of the Church as a teacher. Curiously enough, the *Church Times* admits that the *details* of the proofs are missing, and says: "We accept the Creeds because they come to us with the authority and guarantee of the Church; we do not regard them simply as deductions from Scriptures." What is this but a falling back with a vengeance upon the infallibility of the Church, which is the most unsubstantial of bubbles?

Why does the Rev. Dr. Orchard, of Enfield, persist in misrepresenting the teaching of eminent men of science? In the *Christian World Pulpit* for July 15, he asserts that commonsense revolts from materialistic conclusions concerning mental activities. This is at once a false and foolish statement, seeing that some of the sanest men living are Materialists. It is perfectly true that Huxley repudiated Materialism as a philosophy, but it is equally true that he described psychical processes in terms of Materialism, which proves that his philosophy was by no means a deduction from scientific facts. Possibly this partially explains his inability to become a whole-hearted advocate of Darwinism, as well as his ardent admiration of David Hume.

Dr. Orchard maintains that "distinguished psychologists, like William James in America and McDougall in England, have been compelled by their own psychical studies still to employ the term 'soul' for the organ of consciousness, the controlling power, the inmost self whose presence and operation they have to admit." Will the reverend gentleman give chapter and verse wherein Professor McDougall is

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compelled to employ the term "soul" in the manner described? On p. 16 of his *Psychology*, published two years ago, this "distinguished psychologist" says:—

> "It is no longer possible to define psychology as the science of the soul, for the notion of the soul is a speculative hypothesis, one much too vague and uncertain to be made the essential notion in the definition of a large province of natural science."

The book contains much more to the same effect. What does Dr. Orchard say to this?

Our Nonconformist contemporary, the *Daily News*, had a headline recently, "Streets Paved with Gold." It did not refer to heaven, but to the charges to be made for motor-'buses using public roads.

At a Salvation Army meeting at the seaside a stoker was the speaker. If he preached on "blazes," it ought not to have ended in smoke.

"The Church is at best a schoolmaster," says the Rev. Hugh Chapman, of the Savoy Chapel. If so, the teacher is weak in mathematics, for the dogma of the Trinity in Unity is a puzzle in arithmetic. Jonah's "whale" and Noah's ark should *settle* the question of the Church's zoology.

An entertaining note was introduced in the discussion on "The Sunday Theatre" in *T.P.'s Weekly*, by Mr. R. H. Fisher, Secretary of the North Liverpool Y.M.C.A., who wrote, "Man was told what to do with it [Sunday] by Him who gave it." May we remind Brother Fisher that the commandment relates to the Sabbath, and not Sunday; and that "Him" includes two gods and a ghost.

The famous negro educationalist, Dr. Booker Washington, is to visit Europe early next year, and will be welcomed by the Free Church Congress, which will be held at Leicester. In the advertisements of the approaching visit, Dr. Washington is described by Mr. Carnegie as "a Joshua and a Moses combined." What with? Japan black?

Amelie Rives, the American novelist, says that she loves England "because of the soft voices of the people." The lady has never heard our famous Christian Evidence lecturers, who shout the leaves off the trees in the parks, and frighten the park-keepers by dropping their h's.

The Primrose League, founded partly to commemorate a Jewish statesman, has for one of its objects the maintenance of the Christian religion. At Norton Fitzwarren recently the sports at a League meeting included clay-pigeon shooting, weight-guessing competitions, and skittling for a live pig. Remembering the great statesman, the promoters might have left out the last item.

According to the *Christian Globe*, the Rev. Stephen Swift, an evangelist, is "working for God." That fact should be sufficient to keep the Great White Throne in its place a little longer.

The authorities of the Roman Catholic Cathedral at Leeds brought an action against a local printer, named Stembridge, claiming an injunction to restrain him from disturbing them and the worshipers by the use of his machinery. Mr. Justice Warrington found for the printer. The Chapter House should not have been built in such a busy part of a city like Leeds. Peace and quiet could not reasonably be expected there. And the clergy cannot hope to rule the roost all around them as they used to do.

Mr. George R. Sims sometimes delights his readers with flashes of his old humor. Writing on the Sunday theatre question in *T. P.'s Weekly*, he says, "The Sunday theatre proper is only a question of time. The Sunday theatre improper we have had with us for some years past." Well said, Dagonet!

"Tell the children quite frankly," says the *Christian Commonwealth*, in a preliminary talk on the Bible, "that we have here a collection of legends and traditions of a great race who got nearer to God than anyone else in those days." But is this dealing frankly with the children? "Those days" can only mean the date of the Old Testament writings, and where is the evidence that the Jewish people were—even in the religious sense—"nearer to God" than many others? There is no such evidence. The Biblical God is as vengeful, as local, and as crude as the gods of other people, and in some respects falls below the higher levels attained by India, and, as we now know, in Greece, Babylon, and Egypt. The *C. W.* is simply advising that a comparatively safe falsehood may be told children, instead of the usual one that is decidedly dangerous. The proper thing to tell the children is that the Bible contains a collection of religious legends, such as the early history of every people supplies, and of value only so far as they illustrate the modes of thought current at the time they were written. That would be dealing honestly with the children. But what the Christian teacher wants is to impress the children with the notion that in some peculiar way the Bible is superior to, and different from, all other religious writings. And that cannot be done without taking advantage of their ignorance and helplessness.

Another writer, Mr. A. Burrell, M.A., in the *Educational Record*, complains that nowadays "Young England neither knows nor reads nor respects nor finds interest" in the Bible. He complains, moreover, that there is a "conspiracy of silence" in "all books on history, geography, psychology, and school method, in regard to this book. The Bible seems to be a book which must not be referred to, even distantly." We are not alive to the existence of any such conspiracy. On the contrary, the Bible receives far more than its share of attention in non-religious literature, and very much more praise than it deserves. If Mr. Burrell is merely referring to text-books on history, geography, etc., and complaining that they do not mention the Bible, one need simply inquire, Why should they? It is not the business of writers on these subjects to go out of their way to advertise the fetish-book of the Christian world. If the Bible were essential to the study of any of the subjects named by Mr. Burrell, it could not fail to get mentioned. If it is not mentioned, we may safely conclude that it is not essential. This is one of those instances that prove the logic of fact to be stronger than the logic of theory.

The Rev. A. D. Belden, of Westcliff-on-Sea, calls Calvary "one of the hills of God's joy." Is this a cruel misnomer, or is it a dark reflection on the character of God? How can the hill upon which was committed the foulest crime in all history be yet "one of the hills of God's joy"? Besides, that dark deed, that horrible murder of the only begotten Son of the Most High, occurred in fulfilment of the eternal decree of the Father himself. If he can rejoice in contemplation of what transpired upon that hill, he is indeed an Almighty Monster, in whose existence it is highest wisdom not to believe.

Mr. A. R. Hope Moncrieff, better known as "Ascott R Hope," has written an entertaining *Book About Authors*, in which he has some hard things to say of religious companies, "which, trading on a capital of subscriptions," have made their godliness a gain in the market, without displaying due consideration to the authors they employ. This is a further proof that religion covers a multitude of shortcomings.

The Rev. H. G. Houseman, of St. Peter's Church, Staines, has invited worshipers to attend in white boating flannels. If this sort of thing extends, church parades in England will resemble those in the South Sea Islands.

A clerical correspondent of the *Yorkshire Post* says the Church has "an incomparable liturgy," but it is recited by the clergy in a language "not understood of the people." We should imagine that the Athanasian Creed was "not understood" by the clergy either.

Humanitarian Christians are objecting to the hymn "There is a fountain filled with blood." They are not sufficiently numerous, however, to stop the hæmorrhage.

At Southend-on-Sea they sell sweetstuff "rock" of varying lengths. A Cockney visitor, purchasing a very long piece, said to the shopkeeper, "'Ere y'ar, guv'nor, give us the rock of ages."

"Weak in the head, though perhaps strong in the body," was Mr. Harry Lawson's description of the Post Office Department. The remark would apply equally to the Christian Churches.

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To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £177 16s. 6d. Received since:—Six Atheists (Liverpool), 13s.; T. S. (Wimbledon), 3s.; P. & J. Partridge, 10s.; R. Taylor, 5s.; J. Garrett, 10s.

W. P. BALL.—Much obliged for weekly cuttings.

B. C.—We cannot see anything worth dealing with in the Vicar of Clifton's sermon on "Rationalism," except a few passages, which are all quotations.

G. HARVEY.—The geographical dispute between Landor and Roosevelt is not for our intervention. The libel on Thomas Paine, of course, is quite another matter.

E. B.—Thanks for cuttings. The third article on "Laws Against Religious Liberty" was not published; partly on account of Mr. Foote's illness and partly because the Stewart case was not taken to the Court of Appeal. The third article cannot be written, as intended, until a more favorable occasion occurs.

SIX ATHEISTS (Liverpool).—Your and your friends' appreciation is welcome.

A. POWELL.—We have made use of your old friend's letter again.

JOHN LATHAM (S. Africa).—We should like to hear from you again.

ANDREW MILLAR.—To do justice to a certain point in your letter we put off dealing with it for another week. The verses shall appear.

W. H. HICKS.—See "Acid Drops." Thanks.

J. ANETTE.—See paragraph. Thanks.

CAPE COLONY.—Glad to hear you are trying to promote our circulation in your part of the world. It may be said that the *Freethinker* goes everywhere, though it is not read by everybody.

R. POPPER.—(1) Bradlaugh must have referred to Tithes somewhere in all those volumes of his paper, but we cannot give you a precise reference. (2) We did not agree with the late Edwin Johnson as to the chronology of the Christian faith and the Christian scriptures. (3) We agree that "many people would buy the *Freethinker* regularly if they only knew of its existence." The problem will have to be dealt with somehow.

J. PARTRIDGE.—We will write you very shortly on the matter.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Editorial.

I HAVE resolved not to be hurried, and not to begin printing my long-intended address to the Freethought party in the dog days. A very old and valued friend writes to me almost querulously. He is *so* disappointed at the delay. I promised to make a certain statement at the Conference, and I did not—and now I don't make it in the *Freethinker*—and so on. Begging my old friend's pardon,—I did make a statement at the Conference on the subject of future reorganisation. He was not able to be there to hear it. There was a discreet report of it in the paper. That will have to do till I am prepared to go further. For the rest, that subject will have to take its proper place in the contemplated address.

I am really under no obligation to anybody in these matters. I have not contracted to do anything in particular. I have said that I have some very important things to say to the Freethought party. At least I consider them so. But I have also said that there is no absolute urgency in point of time.

There was a time when I could get up at any moment and talk, or sit down at any moment and write. But I never scamped a bit of work, and I don't intend to do so now. Whatever I speak or write, it shall be the best of me.

I may begin next week as likely as not, but I am under no pledge. Everything must depend on the weather, and how I feel, and the exigencies of the paper.

Moreover there seems something like the promise of another "blasphemy" case in London, and if things take a certain turn I shall be busy enough, in all conscience.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

Some of the most interesting things we ever read came from the pens of non-professional writers. Common soldiers, for instance, have sent home letters from the field of battle that for vivid description of real facts,—the pathos of suffering that happened casually and was noticed in the natural course of things,—the irresistible comedy of the incongruities of tragic experience,—and the unartificial sense of the weary weight of all this unintelligible world,—throw the best war-correspondence of your Russells and Forbess into the shade. Somehow or other it is in Shakespeare, the greatest of the great, who includes everything, like Nature herself, and in Shakespeare alone among the modern poets, that one finds this very quality. He is not so much literature as life. Tennyson's noble ballad, the "Revenge," is vitiated—where it *is* vitiated—by this artificiality, this exaggeration, in short, this cant. But look at Shakespeare's picture of the ship-boy in that wonderful praise of sleep; one never begins to understand how wonderful it is until one has read it dozens of times. That picture was not laboriously painted, it was mentally photographed with one flash of heated imagination. The very thing is there. Shakespeare saw it. He was not a "literary gent." His was an art, to use his own language, that vied with great creative nature. Of course there is only one Shakespeare, but the pure naturalness of the spontaneously able, if unpractised pen—with unperverted feeling and intelligence behind it—which we meet with unexpectedly now and then in utterly unknown men and women—suggests to us that we have fallen upon a final proof of the Master's all-inclusive genius.

There was an English captain who went ashore with some of his men after the tremendous earthquake at Messina some years ago. On the top of several ruined buildings flung pell-mell together, people were waiting to be rescued. How many, or how much hurt, it was impossible to say, but women were in the number, and apparently some children. The sturdy captain flung up the rope himself, which was to be made fast by amateurs at the top. The whole thing might break away while the first rope-climber was in mid-air. But some cool strong person had to go up and superintend the lowering of those dangerously situated people. The captain tried the rope with a tug, and then turned to one of his men, and said "Now, Smith." That was all; simply "Now, Smith." And Smith said nothing, but just went. He might easily meet death on the way. But death may be met on any way, if you come to think of it. So Smith went. He had his captain's order. That was good enough for him. The course of a true man was to do his duty and chance the rest. And it seems to us that "Now, Smith" was one of the most eloquent speeches we ever heard of. Napoleon's under the Great Pyramid, Nelson's at Trafalgar, were hardly as heroic. The captain knows that two words are all that is necessary. It is inconceivable that Smith should disobey his captain's order; besides, Smith's a good fellow, and isn't the man to leave women and children in deadly peril without trying to save them. "Now, Smith."

Every now and then we receive a letter from which we should like to quote a good bit that most of our readers would relish, but it very often slips through, either from want of time or want of space. We have the opportunity just now, however, of quoting some excellent and interesting passages (never meant for publicity) from a letter written to our friend Mr. A. Powell by an old friend—the same that we mentioned some months ago. The writer, in thanking

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Mr. Powell for recent copies of the *Freethinker*, took occasion to pen some criticisms and reminiscences. He appears to have know the Freethought party a long while, and at one time rather intimately.

Referring to the case of Mrs. Besant, Mr. Powell's correspondent says:—

> "The slashing editorial 'appreciation' of Mrs. Besant's very erratic career reminds me that I was present at her first appearance in London as a Freethought lecturer; it was at South Place Chapel, Finsbury—C. Watts in the chair: subject 'Civil and Religious Liberty.' All quite satisfactory, both in matter and manner. What a contrast to the present Mrs. Besant, with her many wild ideas and her theatrical make-up!"

Another incident of the long-ago was John Stuart Mill's candidature for Westminster and the part played in it by Woman Suffrage:—

> "I was present at one of his meetings. At the conclusion of his address a woman suddenly appeared on the platform, and made a passionate appeal to the audience to vote for him, because he was in favor of 'Votes for Women.' It was Mrs. Harriet Law, for some time a Freethought lecturer."

Mill lost the seat for Westminster at the next election, and the ordinary public sighed with satisfaction to see the book-writer go out and the bookseller go in. The oratory of neither counted for much in the result. "As a speaker," this correspondent says, "he was rather disappointing—an insignificant trifle as applied to the brilliant scholar, writer, and Freethinker, John Stuart Mill."

A last extract from the letter of Mr. Powell's friend's letter pays a merited compliment to Mr. Palmer's scientific articles in the *Freethinker*:—

> "Mr. Palmer's ably written Fauna and Flora of the British Isles ought to encourage readers to take up the interesting study. The subject is a very big one to grasp in all its many bearings."

Finally, in pointing out what he rightly concludes to be a misprint, he remarks that "the *Freethinker* is so carefully edited, and nearly always so carefully 'read.'"

A lady, writing from British Guiana, wants to know if the author of the Bible has answered our *Bible Romances* yet. Not that we know of. He is too late now. The battle is practically over.

Mr. Cohen has left home for a holiday in Cornwall. He will be away three weeks. We hope he will have a good time and pick up a lot of health. We might refer him to one of Wordsworth's poems, but we daresay the sunshine and the Atlantic air will compete successfully against the company of books—for a while.

"Have We Free Will?" is the heading of a recent notice of Mr. Cohen's *Determinism or Free Will?* in the *Birmingham Gazette*:—

> "Sir Oliver Lodge explains the troubles of man by referring them to Free Will, but, if we may credit Mr. Chapman Cohen, mankind has no Free Will worth naming; could not have; the thing, he argues, is impossible. His shilling book, entitled *Determinism or Free Will?* issued by the Walter Scott Publishing Co., apparently begins at the beginning of the subject, and ably and moderately pursues it to the end, in nine chapters of which one of the most interesting is devoted to a statement of the question. 'Beliefs,' we are told, 'do not usually die with the conditions that gave them birth. Society always has on hand a plentiful stock of beliefs, that are, like so many intellectual vagrants, without visible means of support. If a belief is in possession its ejection is the most difficult of operations. Possession is here not merely nine points of the law, it is often all the law that is acknowledged.' The book furnishes a concise and complete statement of the case against Free Will, concerning which Dr. Inge, Dean of St. Paul's, addressed a congress of Unitarians the other day. Whatever may be the reader's opinion at the close, it will be admitted that Mr. Cohen's book is a masterpiece in its way, by reason of its conciseness and fine literary style."

All this is true enough, but one fact should be added. Mr. Cohen's valuable and well-written little book is "issued by the Secular Society, Ltd." That is to say, it was financed by that Society—both as to the publishers and the author. And all the advertisements and announcements in the *Freethinker*—amongst whose readers the bulk of the book's public lie—have been given gratuitously. We took as much interest in the book as if it were our own; perhaps more so. Which is the way amongst good soldiers. For the pens of the *Freethinker* men are swords fighting the battle of their convictions.

The Partnerships of Plants and Animals.

THROUGHOUT the domain of organic Nature, individualism, in the strict sense of the term, is frankly impossible. No floral or faunal structure lives, or can live, alone, and many and varied are the associations of organic forms for selfish or for mutual benefit and aid. Among these innumerable vital associations almost every conceivable aspect is displayed. The dependence of flowers upon insects, and of insects upon flowers, is a biological truism. Lowly plants, such as algæ, are epizoic on animals, as, for example, those that live among the hairs of sloths. Internal and external parasites infest the bodies and structures of all animals and plants, usually to their detriment or demoralisation. Mosses, lichens, fungi, ferns, orchids, and many other organisms are epiphytic on various higher botanical growths.

The phenomena, however, with which we are about to deal are much more remarkable than any of these. Those organic associations which are covered by the term "Symbiosis" are truly among the most extraordinary phenomena which modern science has made known to men. In these cases, the organic connections lead to the advantage of each organism concerned in the partnership, and the close interdependence which characterises these unions is positively startling in its complexity.

The powers of adaptation which all progressive organisms possess appear almost limitless. And when any adaptation is favorable to the organism's well-being, it is strengthened by use and bequeathed through heredity; and that important factor in organic evolution, Natural Selection, is certain to promote its further development.

Symbiosis, or the association of separate organisms for mutual advantage, was first discovered by two philosophical botanists, Schwendener and Anton de Bary. But these organic unions are not confined to the vegetable kingdom. Not only do they exist between different plants, but they also occur between plants and animals, and even between separate species of animals. These mutual benefit associations are to be found in the simplest as well as in the most complicated states, as the succeeding examples will abundantly prove.

Naturalists were long aware of the close union which exists between hermit-crabs and sea-anemones, before any special attention was paid to the phenomenon. But now that the subject has been thoroughly investigated, another chapter has been added to life's romance. It is now known that several species of hermit-crab usually carry

> "a large sea-anemone about with them on the mollusc shell which they use as a protecting-house; indeed, two or three of these beautiful many-tentacled polyps are often attached to them, and this is not at all a matter of chance, but depends upon instinct on the part of the animals; they have the feeling of belonging to each other. If the sea-anemone be taken away from the hermit-crab and put in a distant part of the aquarium, the crab seeks about till he finds it, then seizes it with his claws and sets it on its house again.....The sea-anemone, on its part, calmly submits to the crab's manipulations—a fact surprising to anyone who is aware of the anemone's ordinarily extreme sensitiveness to contact, and knows how it immediately draws itself together on any attempt to detach it from the ground, and will often let itself be torn to pieces rather than give way."*

The wonderful manner in which the habits of the two creatures have been modified for their joint benefit is plainly evidenced by the following well-ascertained facts. Eisig, a most capable observer, and one of our leading authorities on organic partnerships, has propounded the theory that the bond of union which subsists between the anemone and the crab was evolved through the agency of Natural Selection. That the association of the two organisms is mutually advantageous has been proved by

* Professor A. Weismann, *Evolution Theory*, vol. i., p. 162.

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Eisig himself. The benefit derived from the partnership by the polyp is sufficiently obvious, as it thereby secures the advantages of locomotion, it is to some extent protected, and it participates in the hermit-crab's meals. The real difficulty was to discover the benefits conferred upon the crustacean host by the presence of its anemone guests; but a simple observation of Eisig's at the Naples Zoological Station solved the problem completely. Eisig witnessed an encounter between an octopus and its intended prey. The octopus assailed a hermit-crab, and strove to drag it from its shell; and the assault would have proved successful but for the timely intervention of the crustacean's partners. The contest was speedily terminated by the circumstance that no sooner was the attack made than the anemone spread its stinging threads over the arm with which the octopus was striving to secure its victim, when it at once relaxed its hold and hurriedly withdrew. The threads, or *acontia*, of the sea-anemone are well stored with stinging-cells, which evidently cause sufficient smarting to compel a hungry octopus to abandon his crustacean repast. Thus we see that the partnership of the anemone and the crab may be of vital importance to the latter organism. The uneasiness always manifested by the crustacean when deprived of its attendant polyps needs no further explanation; in a state of nature their absence may soon prove fatal to the crab. And it is of interest to observe that the stinging organs of the anemone reach their fullest development in those species which dwell on the shells tenanted by the hermit-crabs, while in some of the solitary anemones these acontia scarcely exist at all.

Remarkable as the foregoing phenomena are, they are quite simple in comparison with another example which Weismann sets forth. In this instance the structural modifications undergone to meet the pressing necessities of life are wonderfully complex. In the Bay of Naples a very common hermit-crab dwells in the sea at a depth of about 100 feet. Its purloined mollusc shell frequently bears a small polyp on its outer side, which forms colonies composed of numerous individuals. These individual polyps have developed several distinct functions. Some are feeding creatures; others attend to the reproductive department; a third kind serve as guardians, inasmuch as they have evolved hard spines, within which the tender polyps withdraw when the waves dash roughly on the colony. These, then, minister to the well-being of the polyp group; but a fourth group of polyps has been developed which takes the form of stinging-threads, but among these mouths and tentacles are entirely absent. These aggressive polyps render no direct service to their own colony; their office is to protect the hermit-crab from the onslaught of their various enemies. From their restricted arrangement on the margin of the shell within which the crab shelters itself, it may be readily realised that they are powerless to protect their own species in moments of danger. From a position just above that from which the limbs of the hermit-crab protrude,

> "these defensive polyps stand in close array, sometimes spirally contracted, sometimes hanging loosely down over the hermit-crab like a fringe. Their function, like that of the acontia of Atinæ [sea-anemones], is to defend the crab when an enemy tries to follow it within the shelter of its domicile. This can be easily demonstrated by drawing out the hermit-crab from the Gasteropod shell and, when the colony has settled down again, seizing the shell with the forceps and drawing it slowly through the water. The water-stream which then flows upon the shell mimics the attack of an enemy, and immediately all the defensive polyps, as at a given signal, strike from above downwards, and repeat this three or four times; they are scaring off the supposed enemy."

As the preceding quotation from Weismann's great work proves, from the partnership between a crustacean and a colony of hydroid polyps has been built up a special set of organs whose sole function is the protection of the crab from injury. Of course, in guard ng their host from dangerous foes, the polyps indirectly benefit themselves, as they always appear to receive their share of his food. The association is, therefore, one of mutual advantage, which has been promoted and perfected in the struggle for existence. It is highly probable that even so involved an instance of animal partnership has been gradually evolved out of what was originally a casual connection. Many polyp colonies attach themselves to empty sea-shells, which merely stand and wait as resting-places for such settlers. Beyond their utility as points of attachment, the shells supply no further advantage. But when polyps established themselves on mollusc shells that were used as houses by moving crustacea, other phenomena naturally arose. Consequently, in the course of ages, the never-ceasing play of the incident forced upon the crab and its colonial guests slowly brought into being the beautiful and harmonious adaptations we have endeavored to describe.

The well-known instance of the association of ants with aphides—those pestilent plant-lice which prove such a plague to the gardener—may also be regarded as symbiotic. Instead of devouring the aphides, the ants wander among them on a rose-bush or other feeding plant, and gently stroke them with their antennæ until they void their excrement, which the ants suck up with infinite relish. Nor does the partnership end here. Various species of these highly intelligent insects carry aphides into their nests, and keep them there in much the same manner as we tend our milking-cows.

A curious organic partnership exists between yellow sea-anemones found on the coral islands of Batavia and small gaily colored fishes. These fishes flourish among the forests of sea-anemones, and while within these sanctuaries the fish are practically immune to the attacks of their various enemies. These phenomena have been carefully observed in the aquarium. When provided with its anemone partners, the fish

> "swims blithely about among the tentacles, and the sea-anemone does not sting it; for there has been a modification on its part as well as on that of the fish. The advantage it gains from the fish is that the latter brings large morsels of food—in the aquarium, pieces of meat—into the anemone's mouth. In doing so it tears away fibres for itself, and, even if the Actinia has swallowed pieces too quickly, the fish pulls them half out of the gullet again, and only relinquishes them to be consumed by its partner when it has satisfied its own appetite."

In the foregoing case, as in the others, the animal union must have been the result of a quite accidental association of the two organisms in the first instance. That the anemone does not now use its stinging organs against its finny partner cannot be held to prove that it did not do so originally. But the originally truculent attitude of the anemone—and all aggressive acts are more or less the outcome of irritability—would become softened and subdued as it gradually associated the presence of the fish with the prospect of a meal. This consideration is strengthened by the researches of Plate, who has discovered several other cases of a similar character among the organisms of the Red Sea. In one of these a little fish lives alongside an anemone, which assails it with its stings; but the fish is apparently immune to these attacks, which it treats with the utmost unconcern. Again, another fish passes its life unharmed in the presence of the powerful poison "secreted by sea-urchins of the genus Diadema from the points of their spines among which those fishes live." These last examples are not true cases of symbiosis, but they powerfully illustrate the processes involved in the evolution of organic partnerships.

A most astonishing instance of symbiosis, in which the two partners are plants and animals, was established by the researches of Belt, Fritz Müller, and Schimper. In the forests of tropical America are candelabra trees, species of the genus Cecropia, so named because their bare branches spread out like candelabra, and produce small groups of leaves at their extreme ends only. These singular leaves are menaced by the formidable leaf-cutting ants, who pile up foliage in their nests, upon the decaying

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matter of which fungi—for which these ants have an intense fondness—quickly grow. These ants are so numerous and destructive that they are terrible enemies to the tropical vegetation. Now, the candelabra tree defends itself from these marauders through its amicable relationship with ants of another species that live in its hollow stem and feed on its sap. Placed here and there on the tree's stem are tiny pits, through which the female ant can easily pierce her way into the hollow interior.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be continued.)

Science and Theology.

I HAVE always been interested in calling attention to the difference between science and theology: Science limits its activities to the visible; theology is always coquetting with the invisible. There can be no science where there is no light; and there can be no theology *where there is light*. When a mine explodes and we are in the dark as to how the thing happened, we call it an accident. The word accident, or chance, represents not our knowledge but our ignorance. Not knowing the cause of the explosion we invent the word chance to explain it, but as soon as we discover by study and research the cause which blew up the mine then we cease to explain it by calling it an accident. The word God, like the word chance, represents our ignorance. When we do not know who made this or who made that we say, God made it. When we cannot answer a question we say, "God knows," which really means that nobody knows. The words "God" and "chance" are the frontiers or the boundaries of human knowledge. Beyond the line of knowledge lies the unknown, and that is chance, accident—God!

By the help of science the boundary lines are being constantly extended—that is to say, the territory allowed to God and chance is being encroached upon steadily. As our knowledge increases the word chance and God are less frequently used. When everybody was uninformed and there was no science, chance and God were very much more in evidence, but as science extends its empire these symbols of the times of our ignorance slowly slip out of our vocabulary. Once upon a time we could not explain the weather without a reference to the Deity, but now we rarely use his name to account for the weather. Few preachers pray for rain or cold now. Science has explained to us the laws which govern the atmospheric movements.

It is this increasing illumination which alarms the theologian. The progress of knowledge compels him to look for some spot in the universe still dark—some cave, some thick bush, which he may still regard as the dwelling-place of the Unknown. He guards with zeal and jealousy every new darkness until advancing science compels him to seek a newer darkness. In vain he warns science from his latest retreat; in vain he calls it "holy ground"; in vain he invokes anathema, and hurls epithets at science. Slowly but surely the rising sun of knowledge compels him to move again. Science has made a tramp of the theologian. As each dark place becomes lighted up the theologian packs up his effects to move to the next darkness. —M. M. MANGASARIAN.

Christian Apologetics.

X.—THOMAS COOPER (No. 2).

IN his fourth chapter on "the Verity" of the Gospel miracles our "lecturer on Christianity," Thomas Cooper, reopens the discussion by saying:—

> "It is a remarkable fact that the earliest foes of Christianity did not question the reality of the miracles of Christ. In the second century, Celsus, a physician, wrote a book against Christianity; but we learn from Origen, who replied to his treatise, that Celsus threw no discredit on the fact of Christ's miracles. In the third century, Porphyry, a Platonic philosopher, wrote a book against Christianity; but the fragments of his work, preserved by Eusebius and Jerome, show that he did not deny the reality of Christ's miracles. In the fourth century, the Emperor Julian wrote a book against Christianity; his reasonings are preserved by Cyril; but neither did he call the miracles in question."

This statement is correct; not one of the opponents named did actually question the *performance* of the Gospel miracles. And the reasons for this have been already stated. In the age in which these opponents lived, the working of miracles was believed to be possible either by magic or by the aid of invisible demons. In that age, too, it was impossible to investigate the alleged performance of miracles so many years before. The opponents were not in a position to deny that those wonders had been wrought, as recorded; but all three asserted that they had *not* been worked by the power of God. Our lecturer admits the latter fact; but he says: "If anyone were to tell us that Christ performed His miracles by magic or the agency of demons, in our day, some of us might be inclined to give the reply, Tell that to the Marines." I really cannot see the force of this observation; for no unbeliever "in our day" lives in a period of such dense ignorance and mental darkness as prevailed in the days of the opponents named. Mr. Cooper next turns his attention to a book which, he says, "is deemed by some to be the most complete and triumphant refutation of the truth of Christianity ever published"—which book is entitled *Supernatural Religion*. He says:—

> "The anonymous author of this book maintains that the first followers of Christ undoubtedly shared, with their contemporaries, the prevalent belief in magic, the common slavery to superstition—and that, therefore, their low, ignorant, and grovelling character renders their recital of Christ's miracles unworthy of the regard and belief of people living in this enlightened nineteenth century."

I have no space here to question the partial statement respecting "the most complete and triumphant refutation of the truth of Christianity"; but assuming it to be correct, I reproduce our lecturer's reply to the charge. This is—

> "to remind this anonymous author that the elevated character of the miracles attributed to the Savior, and, still more, Christ's own elevated character, remove these records entirely out of the region of ignorant, low, unreasoning superstition.....If the evangelists were poor, low, credulous, and unreasoning creatures, how is it that they soar above all other writers, in drawing a portrait of such moral perfection, beauty, and dignity, as that of their Master?"

"This difficulty," our lecturer says, "has been so nobly expressed and presented by Prebendary Row," that he quotes two pages of those "nobly expressed" words, and then tacitly assumes that the contention of the author of *Supernatural Religion* has been refuted.

Now, as to the "elevated character" of the miracles attributed to the Savior, all that need be said is—that they are miracles of healing, suggested to the primitive Gospel-maker by the following passage:—

> Isaiah xxxv. 4—6.—"Behold your God will come with vengeance.....he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing."

This is metaphorical language, indicating the joy of Hebrew captives at returning to Jerusalem (see verse 10), but was understood by the primitive Gospel-makers literally; hence the narration of miracles of healing. It is one of the two passages to which Jesus is represented as appealing in proof of his messiahship (Matt. xi. 4—6); the other, relating to the preaching of the Gospel, is quoted in Luke iv. 16—21. It is almost needless to say that neither of the two passages had the smallest reference to Jesus.

Next, as to the four evangelists being "credulous and unreasoning creatures." In the first place, then, the fact that all four Gospel-writers have repre-

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sented Jesus Christ as fulfilling Old Testament "prophecies," which had no reference to him *at all*, proves that they were either very ignorant and unreasoning men, or that they deliberately perpetrated a series of frauds; they *must* have been one or the other.

In the next place, these evangelists all believed —as did the common people—that epilepsy, madness, and many other infirmities were caused by demoniacal possession; and they have represented their Savior as casting out the "evil spirits" and restoring the demoniacs to perfect health. They also describe Jesus as speaking to the demons as real beings, and as giving his disciples "authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out." Moreover, "the unclean spirits" in many cases "fell down before him, and cried saying, Thou art the Son of God" (Mark iii. 11). Knowing, as we do, that this belief of the apostolic age was a delusion shared by all the evangelists, there is not the shadow of a doubt that "their records of Christ's miracles" *are* "unworthy of the regard and belief of people of the enlightened nineteenth century."

If we require further evidence of the unreasoning credulity of the Gospel-writers, we need only turn to their accounts of the following fictions: the angel Gabriel and Mary the virgin, the priest Zachariah and the angel, Joseph the carpenter and his dreams, the Magi and the star, the "heavenly host" singing "peace on earth," the baptism of Jesus with its dove and voice from heaven, the encounter between Jesus and the Devil, the transfiguration of Jesus in the presence of the resurrected Moses and Elijah, the turning of water into wine, the angel at the pool of Bethesda, the raising of Lazarus, besides many other examples. It should further be stated that all the Gospel wonders were simply matters of belief; no evidence has ever been produced for the occurrence of any of them.

I come now to the "elevated character" and "moral perfection, beauty, and dignity" of the Savior, as portrayed in the Gospels. And here I must say that there is no such portrait of Jesus to be found in the Gospels. The alleged "elevation of character" and "moral perfection" are simply assumed or read into the narratives; the Jesus of the Gospels is a very ordinary personage indeed. It would take many pages to go into this subject fully: here I can only find space for a brief reference to a few salient points.

1. The Christian Savior, according to the Gospels, was an unmarried Jew who wandered about the country, for a year or more, without following any trade or occupation, and having no ostensible means of livelihood. He was accompanied by twelve disciples, besides a number of women who "ministered unto him of their substance" (Luke viii. 2, 3; Mark xv. 40, 41). Apart from the last-named contributions towards his support, this Savior and his disciples were dependent for food and lodging upon the few well-to-do people in the places he visited. When, for a short time, he sent his disciples out to preach, he commanded them to take neither money nor changes of raiment with them, and promised to punish the people of every city who did not receive them favorably (Matt. x. 5—15). Where, I ask, does the "elevated character" or the "moral perfection" come in here? Is the doing no work and living on the liberality of others a sign of elevation of character?

2. In all three Synoptics it is recorded that, upon one occasion, the mother and brethren of Jesus desired to speak with him, but could not come near him on account of the press. Did Jesus, when informed of their presence, make his way to the edge of the crowd and welcome them? Certainly not; his character was of far too elevated a nature to permit him to descend to such a commonplace action. Instead of which, he looked round upon the multitude and said: "Who is my mother and my brethren? .....Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother" (Mark iii. 31—35). Comment upon the "moral perfection" of such a teacher is unnecessary.

3. In Luke ix. 59—62 it is recorded:—

> "And Jesus said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. But Jesus said unto him, Leave the dead to bury their own dead.....And another said unto him, I will follow thee, Lord; but first suffer me to bid farewell to them that are at my house. But Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

Here the "elevation" of character ascribed to the Savior lacks simple common sense; a more suitable word to describe his action would be "stupidity" or "wrong-headedness."

4. Upon one occasion, when Jesus was asked to dine in the house of a Pharisee, that Savior took advantage of the invitation to inveigh against the Pharisees as a sect, and then launched out in a style peculiarly his own in condemning their alleged shortcomings—"Woe unto you Pharisees," etc. (Luke xi. 37—44). If this kind of conduct towards a host by one treated as an honored guest be a mark of "elevation of character," then no one can deny that the Gospel Jesus possessed it in abundance. The same "moral perfection" is still more beautifully shown in Matt. xxiii.—the whole chapter being one long denunciation of the alleged hypocrisy of the "scribes and Pharisees." In this chapter the "elevated character of the Savior" can be plainly perceived by exalted expressions like the following: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites"—"Ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of hell?" Christian advocates tell us that the evil doings ascribed to the "scribes and Pharisees" in this chapter were true; but this statement is a slander unsupported by evidence of any kind. As a fair specimen of the Pharisees of the apostolic age we may take the historian Josephus.

5. In two of the Gospels Jesus is represented as saying to men skilled in the interpretation of the Jewish Law:—

> "Woe unto you lawyers! for ye build the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. So ye are witnesses and consent unto the works of your fathers. .....Therefore also said the wisdom of God.....the blood of *all the prophets*, which was *shed from the foundation of the world* may be required of *this* generation.....Yea, it *shall* be required of this generation" (Luke xi. 47—51).

This is truly a most edifying example of the "moral perfection" of the Savior, as well as of his high sense of justice.

Here I must pause, though I have not noticed half the passages I had selected as clearly proving the arbitrary, capricious, or irrational character of the Christian Savior, who, furthermore, reposed implicit faith in all the stories recorded in the Old Testament —Jonah and the whale—the Genesis account of creation—Cain and Abel—the Deluge—the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire from heaven—Lot's wife a pillar of salt—Moses the author of the Pentateuch, and David of the Psalms—the historicity of the book of Daniel, etc. This Savior, like the evangelists, believed in demoniacal possession, and though he had no knowledge of the cause of *any* disease, essayed to cure every kind by merely speaking the word. He also believed that the god Yahweh fed the ravens, took care of the sparrows, counted the hairs of people's heads, and appointed guardian angels for little children. He taught that it was a blessing to be poor or meek, but a great calamity to be rich; that no rich man could go to heaven unless he gave all his goods to the poor, and left himself penniless; that one should allow oneself to be robbed or plundered rather than resist or prosecute the despoiler; and so on, and so forth.

We are asked to believe that the amazing ignorance, wrong-headedness, and credulity which characterise both the sayings and doings of the Christian Savior, are of such an elevated nature, and exhibit such moral perfection, that no one of the present day can ever hope to equal, much less to surpass.

The rest of Mr. Cooper's book I leave to the next.

ABRACADABRA.

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Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

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INDOOR.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Mr. Miller's, 8 Mathias-road, Stoke Newington): Monday, July 27, at 8.30, Business Meeting —Nomination of Chairmen, etc.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15 and 6.15, Mr. Hope, Lectures.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 6, Mr. Davidson, a Lecture.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.30, Mrs. Rosetti, a Lecture. Derby-road, Ponders End (opposite "Two Brewers"): Wednesday, July 29, at 7.30, W. Davidson, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): J. W. Marshall, 11.30, "Who Made God?" 7.30, "The Free Pardon."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Finsbury Park): 11.30, Mr. Hecht, a Lecture. Parliament Hill: 3.30, Mr. Ratcliffe, a Lecture. Regent's Park (near the Fountain): 3.30, Miss Kough, a Lecture.

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THE
Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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Into the winter's gray delight,
Into the summer's golden dream,
Holy and high and impartial,
Death, the mother of Life,
Mingles all men for ever.

—W. E. HENLEY.

Freedom of Thought.

PROFESSOR BURY'S little *History of Freedom of Thought* has seriously annoyed the Christian world. His offence has been, apparently, that he not only put in a plea for freedom of thought—he was not content with pointing out in an amiably vague manner how often it has been curtailed or denied—but he plainly indicated that Christianity had been the arch-offender in this direction. Had he been content with placing the Roman Church in the pillory, Protestants would not have complained. Had he even blamed Protestants for what some people foolishly call *unchristian* intolerance — as though any genuine Christianity could be tolerant—he might have been forgiven. But he managed to make it fairly clear that the Christian religion itself was intolerant, that its control of the world meant a set-back to the freedom that existed before it appeared, that there was, indeed, a deeply seated antagonism between the Christian faith in all its forms and freedom of thought. And that was unforgivable. Consequently, as he could not be ignored, he has been denounced. It is still far from common for public men in England to speak out plainly with regard to Christianity, and when one does so, Christians resent it. There is no telling where such an example may end. Other public men may be tempted; and if they *all* were to say what they think, the outlook for the Churches would be black indeed.

The latest reply to Professor Bury occurs in the July issue of the *British Review*, and is by Mr. J. G Vance. He says that Professor Bury has written a "preposterous" *History of Freedom of Thought*, and so he sets out to supply a corrective. Minds of an "unrefined and misshapen calibre," he tells us, rejoice in sharp contrasts, and in this case it is supplied by placing freedom of thought in one category and Christianity in another. But this, according to Mr. Vance, is quite wrong. He does not face the position that, as a matter of fact, Christianity always has been in opposition to freedom of thought, and so general and so universal a fact certainly calls for some explanation. He thinks you may get to the heart of the matter by settling the question, "What does or what can freedom of thought mean?" And so you might if the question were properly handled. Mr. Vance's plan is to argue that it is a shibboleth in theory, a fiction in actual life. It does not exist, unless one means by it freedom from reason.

Presumably, says Mr. Vance, freedom of thought,—

> "is supposed to offer some parallel to freedom of the will, which simply implies that the stimuli presented to the will as motives are not, of themselves, necessarily sufficient to force the will to act. Pursuing the analogy, we should be led to believe that thought is free in the sense that no stimulus is sufficient to force us to think or to reason in a particular way; that we can pick and choose, think or reason as we will, just as we select the alternative of our preference in free-will acts."

Of course, it is quite natural that one who does believe in such a psychological absurdity as the "will" picking and choosing between motives, and still remaining uninfluenced by all, should credit others with believing that "we" can think and arrive at conclusions without allowing the conditions of our thinking to play a determining part. Still, it is quite wrong. When the Freethinker speaks of freedom of thought, he means freedom of thought, neither more nor less. He does not mean the absence of determining conditions; he does not mean that he can reason and draw conclusions irrespective of the facts presented, or the influence of training, capacity, and environment. He knows quite well that all these things have their share in determining his thinking, and that between them and his conclusions there exists a relation of cause and effect. Mr. Vance writes that "by freedom in inference we mean the breaking away from the fixed laws of reasoning." On the contrary, by freedom in inference the Freethinker means allowing reason to proceed along its natural lines of determination. You cannot escape the laws of reasoning in any case. They would not be "laws" if you could. But you can allow these laws to express themselves in a legitimate or an illegitimate manner.

What, then, is the legitimate meaning of freedom of thought? One might reply by asking another question—What is meant by "freedom" when applied to any natural force? A force in nature may act in freedom, or it may operate under control. In the first case, can we properly say that it operates at random, or, as Mr. Vance says of inference, that it breaks away from the fixed laws of that particular force? Certainly not. By operating in freedom, we mean that it follows the conditions of its own being, and is not coerced, or deflected, by the operation of other forces. In the second instance where a force is not free, we do not mean that the "laws" of that particular force have ceased to operate: that would be a sheer impossibility. But it operates under coercion. It is deflected from the course it would have pursued because another influence has been brought to bear upon it. The result is not a breaking away from "fixed laws," but a product which represents the "laws" of that particular force, *plus* the "laws" of the other force or forces acting upon it.

Now, exactly the same principle holds good of thought. Whether free or unfree, there are always certain fixed laws that are in operation. If I say that I will not walk half-a-dozen times the length of my garden because I do not care for the exercise, there is an orderly sequence of ideas running through my mind. If I say that I will not do so because my neighbor is leaning over the wall, armed with a revolver, and threatens to shoot me if I come out, there is also an orderly sequence of ideas in my mind. Yet in the one case I should call my decision a "free" one; in the other case everyone would agree that my decision was not free. Consequently, what the Freethinker means by freedom of thought, or its absence, is this: our thought is free when it

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is allowed to move from premises to conclusions so determined that it can follow the "laws" of its being. It is not free when the conclusion reached is brought about by outside pressure that is deliberately applied with the intention of inducing bias. It is not the absence of "law," but the absence of coercion, that makes for thought freedom, as it makes for bodily freedom.

If Mr. Vance had considered the subject from this point of view, his article would never have been written, and he would have been saved the trouble of elaborating what should have been obvious to a schoolboy. It is quite true that the "rationalist possesses no privilege or power, no insight or method, no secret mysteries concerning truth or knowledge, which are not known to the Christian." Quite so; and, on the other hand, the Christian possesses no privilege or power, or insight or method, that is not known to the Rationalist. But it is not true that the thought of the Christian is "free" as is that of the Freethinker. His conclusions are determined by facts or considerations that do not belong to the subject before him. His mind is deflected from its true course by the operation of a bias that has been created with the deliberate intention of preventing him seeing the facts in their true light. As Mr. Vance says, the professor of dogma and the lecturer on physics all follow the same laws; but in the one case the laws of reasoning are operating free from restraint, in the other they operate under coercion. Certainly, also, many Christians yield to none in the vigor of their thinking; it is not, however, the vigor of the thinking, but its accuracy, that is of primary importance.

Mr. Vance appeals to history; let me follow suit. What stood in the way of the acceptance of the Copernican astronomy? The facts were there alike for all. Many, however, declined to look at the facts; others who did look failed to perceive their significance. To-day there is no alteration in the facts, and a schoolboy is able to appreciate the reasoning on which the Copernican system is based. Whence the difference in the situation? It lies wholly here. Those who declined to examine the facts did so because their religious training made them afraid to do so. Either they feared they might be led to doubt the teachings of the Church, or the establishment of a bias through religion closed their minds to all processes of proof in other directions. In either case the thought was not free. It still worked under the determination of all incident conditions, but amongst those conditions was the distorting and extraneous one of Church pressure and religious teaching.

At a much later date we have the same principle illustrated in the opposition to the doctrine of Evolution. The essential conditions here were the facts of animal life and the human mind. *Any* conclusion reached through the interplay of these two factors —whether favorable or unfavorable to Evolution— would have been "free." But between these two essential factors Christianity introduced another, and a non-essential one. It told people that it was wrong to draw certain inferences from the facts presented, because to do so would be to reach a conclusion contrary to religious teaching. And it is the plainest of truths that multitudes of people were prevented fairly facing the facts by the religious bias thus introduced. Under these conditions, the mind operated under the clear influence of bias. It was exactly like a gambler playing with loaded dice. The dice never cease to illustrate the laws of gravity, but their manufacture forces a manifestation of gravity in a special direction.

There lies in the nature of the case, says Mr. Vance, "no reason why a Christian scholar or student should not conduct a thoroughly scientific or dispassionate inquiry into any question of philosophy or natural science." On the contrary, there are dozens of reasons why he should not do so. The average Christian brings to the study of a whole host of problems a mind that is already biased in favor of a conclusion that will be agreeable to his religion. If he is genuinely orthodox, he is already convinced that his own salvation, and the salvation of others, depends upon certain teachings being accepted as true. And human nature being what it is, there is set up an almost irresistible tendency to ignore things that should not be ignored, and to reject conclusions for no better reason than that they conflict with established prejudices. To conduct a "dispassionate inquiry" on anything that has a direct bearing on his religion, a Christian must overcome the bias of his whole training. He must forget that he is a Christian; and the man who can forget that in theory soon becomes one in fact.

C. COHEN.

Palpable Absurdities.

A BRILLIANT new preacher is said to have suddenly arisen in the Nonconformist world, whose praises are being loudly sung these weeks in the religious press. Mr. Nathaniel Micklem is a distinguished graduate of Oxford, and it is confidently predicted that he "will take his place among the great preachers of England." Great preachers are few and far between; but whenever one appears he has no lack of followers. It is the gifted man, the born speaker, not Jesus Christ, who draws crowds to church or chapel. Mr. Micklem seems to possess all the requisites of a popular pulpiteer. But we are more concerned with his teaching than with his qualifications for gaining the ears of the public; and in order to ascertain what his interpretation of Christianity is we only need to consult a sermon which he recently delivered at Dr. Horton's church, entitled "Grace, Faith, Salvation," and which appeared in the *Christian World Pulpit* for July 23. Having perused this discourse with special care, we are prepared to deal with it from the point of view of criticism. He is described as having a style peculiarly his own, and "a quite distinctive outlook." Indeed, we are informed that "the stars in their courses have fought to give him an early and wide reputation." In our estimation, his distinction lies in the specially heavy emphasis which he lays upon the most irrational and absurd aspects of the Christian Gospel. Founding his address upon St. Paul's words, "By grace have ye been saved through faith," he states that by "grace" is meant "the sheer goodness of God." "Sheer" is a splendid and most audacious adjective, signifying pure, bright, unmixed, absolute, downright, utter, and might very properly have been used by the preacher as an intensive expletive; and we naturally ask, Where does this sheer goodness of God show itself? Taking the existing conditions, as well as the history, of the world into consideration, we are face to face with the inevitable conclusion that, if there be a God, he is utterly devoid either of goodness or of power. If he has "sheer goodness," he must be cursed with sheer impotence. Dare Mr. Micklem aver that even Christendom can be regarded as a credit to a God of "sheer goodness"? It is easy enough to weave pretty parables about the loving Father extending the warmest of welcomes to the returning prodigal; but staring us in the face all the time are the hard, frightful facts of life, which bear absolutely no witness to "the sheer goodness of God." If the Gospel story is true, Mr. Micklem's statement of it sets the facts in the very worst light possible. Here are his words:—

> "The grace of God by which, according to St. Paul, we are saved is the sheer goodness of God, and that is of course a very central point for Christian theology—that in the first instance we are not saved by our love to God but by his love to us; not by our striving after him but by his yearning after us; not by the closeness with which we may succeed in clinging to him but because he cleaves to us more closely than a brother. A writer said, 'Oh Love that will not let me go,'—that is the grace of God in the New Testament."

We frankly admit that the above definition of grace is a legitimate inference from St. Paul's teach-

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ing. Many modern preachers declare that God can do nothing in the absence of faith, saying that unbelief is the only sin that damns the soul, and their declaration is fully justified by the Epistle to the Hebrews. "If you are lost," the impenitent sinner is warned, "it is your own fault. The moment you believe in Christ you shall be delivered from all condemnation." But that is not the Pauline Gospel. The verse, part of which Mr. Micklem utilised as his text, reads thus:—

> "By grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Eph. ii. 8).

Thus salvation is wholly God's gift. Faith is also a Divine gift. In Eph. vi. 23, St. Paul says: "Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." It is, indeed, beyond dispute that Mr. Micklem only puts his own emphasis on a purely Pauline doctrine, which emphasis, however, brings into full relief its inherent absurdity.

At this point we drop upon a fatal contradiction in Mr. Micklem's sermon. He seems to forget that he has just assured us that we are not saved by our clinging to God but by his cleaving to us, and proceeds thus:—

> "It is only as we give ourselves to God, that God is able to give himself to us, and this life, which I must call a supernatural life, which is the life of salvation, of deliverance from self, can only be given to us as we are willing to receive it, as we make that utter surrender of our own wills to God."

This fundamental contradiction, into which most preachers fall, reveals to us the essential irrationality of the Gospel message. On the one hand, we have infinite, omnipotent love yearning after a lost race, and clinging to it with a closeness unspeakably more tenacious than that of any brother; and on the other, man's finite and weak personality successfully resisting or gladly yielding to the Divine drawing at will. In other words, God's omnipotence has to bow and bend to man's feeble will. Jesus, the Savior of the world, says: "No man can come unto me, except the Father which sent me draw him" (John vi. 44). The loving Heavenly Father, the Sovereign of the Universe, doing "according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth," sadly confesses: "But I can draw no man unless he actively wishes to be drawn." Where and how the Holy Ghost comes in, it is not at all clear; but here are two Divine Beings, brimming over with tender compassion, both willing and able to save the lost, if the lost would only be good enough to allow themselves to be saved. Instead of "the sheer goodness of God," what we have here is the sheerest nonsense talked about, and usually in the name of, a being who never expresses either approval or disapproval, either praise or blame; that is, a being who has never intimated, either directly or indirectly, that he exists.

"God has never spoken, or in any way shown himself," cried the Freethinker. "O yes he has," answered the Christian; "he has spoken to me." "What did he say to you?" "He told me that my sins were all forgiven, and that a fully furnished mansion is waiting for me in the skies." As Mr. Micklem was speaking about God's great personal love and ability to save he said he knew that there were men and women in Dr. Horton's church who were anxious to get up and say in the loudest voice, "I know he can do it; he did it for me." The preacher said that this was a fact that he could not get away from; but we positively object to its being spoken of as *a fact*. We are convinced that such an assertion is founded on a pure hallucination, just as the experiences of a dream are. We offer no objection to the statement that the sense of being lost, as well as the sense of being saved, is a thing to which we cannot attain in our natural state. It implies a condition of abnormality to which people must be artificially worked up. Religious experiences and exercises represent the extraordinary behavior of abnormal men and women. The so-called spiritual life, which Mr. Micklem is impelled to characterise as "a supernatural life," is dream-life, a life which depends entirely upon the possession of certain supernatural ideas and beliefs, in the absence of which it is never experienced. We prefer to think of it as *anti*-natural. God, like King Arthur, is a being on whom you can lay hold only by faith. It is impossible to know, you can only imagine, him. Sin is an imaginary transgression of the imaginary laws of this imaginary Deity, and salvation is a purely imaginary deliverance from the consequences of an imaginary offence. Hence, religion is an affair of the emotions when under the dominion of a misguided fancy, and Mr. Micklem cannot prove that it is anything better. Instead of attacking such an impossible task, he chooses to rant about the mighty things Christ has done for our Western civilisation. Well, then, what *has* Christ done for Europe? *He has converted it into an armed camp.* He has put class against class, party against party, Catholic against Protestant, and Protestant against Catholic. Most of our worries, troubles, misunderstandings, wranglings, and warfares have their origin in religion. If Christ has done anything at all in Europe he must be held directly responsible for all these evils. We have no patience with a man who wildly asserts that "a great number of people in England who say that they owe nothing to Christ, that they can get on without him, have been saved by Christ already," or "that in a degree he has already saved those who deny his name." Does the reverend gentleman number Atheists among the ransomed of the Lord? Are Rationalists heirs to an immortality in the reality of which they do not believe? Does Christ manufacture blasphemers against his own cause whom his avowed disciples take pleasure in casting into prisons and variously tormenting? Does not Mr. Micklem realise how perfectly idiotic such a claim really is?

After all, this "born preacher, with a style of his own and a quite distinctive outlook," belongs to the same general school as all his brethren, a fact abundantly illustrated by the following statement: "There is all the difference in the world between a gentleman and a Christian." That is the finest sentence ever composed, and the truest. We will commit it to memory and repeat it daily. A gentleman is not a Christian, neither is a Christian a gentleman: there is all the difference in the world between the two. Gentlemen, whom Christ has already saved, are not in consequence Christians, and though saved by Christ himself are not saved "in the Christian sense." Verily Christ is an extraordinary Savior. Gentlemen are "members of the highest civilisation," and possess "a spiritual philosophy, a high morality, kindly hearts, and elegant manners." And Christians are not gentlemen: there is all the difference in the world between the two types. We prefer gentlemen, but *minus* "a spiritual philosophy."

J. T. LLOYD.

"The Ultimate Goal."

IT is the habit of many modern thinkers to base systems of philosophic idealism upon effective catch-phrases which will not bear even the slightest investigation. I have chosen for my title one of the most prevalent of these catch-phrases—"The Ultimate Goal." The necessity for such a phrase springs, I imagine, from what Mr. Chesterton has termed "fear of the present," for it is obvious that an "ultimate goal" is part and parcel of a problematical future of which we can know nothing, and panders to our modern dislike of facing the uncomfortable truths with which we are in immediate contact.

Where, either in the realm of philosophy, sociology, science, or theology, is to be found an adequate, definite, final, and satisfactory conception of "the ultimate goal"? Does not science with philosophy deny the possibility of such a concept? Has not theology become reactionary by reiterating to the contrary?

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What universal truth has been evolved from the agonies of the human mind throughout the ages? Something certain and beyond dispute. What has modern philosophy, modern science, and modern theology to offer the seeker after truth to-day that is thus substantially and self-evidently divine? What particular or unique truth has our civilisation evolved that is of indisputable value to us in our search for "the ultimate goal"? The philosopher, the scientist, and the theologian is, to-day, basing his conception of human existence upon the generally accepted theory of evolution. But, apart from the fact that evolution explains nothing in an ultimate sense, is there anything satisfactory about the theory of evolution? Assuredly not; for we have learned that evolution involves devolution—retrogression as well as progress. Further, we have learned that these two lines—the upward and the downward—are infinite; so that man, whose existence in time is finite (as far as we know) cannot possibly discover, with any certainty, exactly where he is. A man who cannot ascertain exactly where he is cannot be in a favorable position to determine exactly where he desires to go.

Evolution may be a true conception of the working method of life: devolution also—but upon which track, the upward or downward, are we moving? and what *is* "the ultimate goal"?

"The ultimate goal" of the idealist is the complete happiness of all mankind. The idealist will therefore ask himself, "Is the world nearer the complete happiness of all mankind to-day than it was fifty, forty, thirty, twenty, or ten years ago?" He will believe, quite consistently, that if evolution be the true theory, and, furthermore, if a noble and altruistic idealism is a part of the purpose of evolution, mankind must be nearer the idealist's hope to-day than it was last week. But, in order to answer this question satisfactorily—that is, in order to justify his attitude towards life—the idealist must decide exactly what he means by "the complete happiness of all mankind." He must define "happiness." What constituted man's "happiness" in the past? What constitutes man's "happiness" in the present? He may, of course, generalise about "happiness." He may maintain, for example, that a large number of people feel completely happy in a picture palace while watching an old gentleman being pushed into a tub of whitewash. But ask these individuals, as they filter out, whether they were "completely happy," and you will instantly be mistaken for a lunatic. These people are not "happy" in an idealistic sense; they are merely complacent spectators, acquiescing in life as they find it, and indulging in no abstract problems as to "the ultimate goal" at all. Whether they are evolving or devolving, or whether they are static (which M. Bergson will not allow you to believe), it is impossible for you to decide. In any case, they themselves are neutral to the problem. Their "ultimate goal" is inconceived and inconceivable; they are dimly conscious human atoms manifested in eternity—existing and competing with each other for the material means of subsistence. You may, by the aid of a powerful imagination, endow them with a conscious spirituality which they do not possess; you may see them as a million of divine creations, spoiled by the superficial life-values which their civilisation has forced upon them; false values which can have no intelligent connection with what you feel to be the mystic reality which quickens them; the reality which is the cause of their being. You may raise their limitations into the greatness of the infinite which admits of no limitations; the infinity which absolves finite things by absorbing and annihilating them; but in the present moment, and in terms of the individual, you must remain dumb—"The Ultimate Goal!"

What has been "the ultimate goal" of the Church? Based upon the teaching of Christ, its "ultimate goal" would have been "life." It would have endeavored to bring life more abundantly. What has the Church accomplished in this direction? Can a thing which brings life more abundantly perish itself of impotence and sterility? If ever a human institution had an "ultimate goal," assuredly it was the Church. Every individual was travelling direct either to absolute eternal happiness or to absolute eternal unhappiness. But where have these two intellectual abstractions landed humanity? Is life more abundant? Can it be possible that the obstinate conservatism of the human race is a subconscious protest against the futility of progress? Glance back into the written history of the human race, and you must acknowledge that in relation to the average life of man, as an individual, the whole "process of evolution" has failed. It has not justified itself in the eyes of those idealists which it has produced. What might conceivably have been progress in the infinity of time which preceded Christ was, in reality, no progress at all. Christ came condemning the process of evolution which had produced him. And whether this view be entirely pessimistic or not, there can be no refutation of its foundation in truth, for the *known* past can, with some certainty, be compared with the known present; and, moreover, in an ultimate sense, for every idealist conceives an "ultimate goal" which can never be "ultimate," nor even contemporary with his desire. The idealist with his "ultimate goal" mocks divinely at a process which has produced his dream, and, at the same time, made it impossible of universal realisation.

ARTHUR F. THORN.

The Origin of Supernatural Ideas.—II.

(*Continued from p. 466.*)

"Man judges of the unseen by the seen, and his natural curiosity compels him, when he feels certain sensations the sources of which are hidden from him, to seek for some cause to which they may be referred,—one, it may be, which he has already seen associated with like effects, but, if not, one which he considers to be sufficient to produce them."—WAKE, *Chapters on Man* (1868), p. 27.

"To say mystery is to say fear. Man, like the animals, fears the unknown, even though a kind of fascination draw him towards the object of his terror, that he may learn to give himself some account of it. This two-fold feeling unquestionably lies at the root of religion; and, in this connection, the Latin poet might well say that fear was the first creator of the gods: 'Primus in orbe deos fecit timor.'"—COUNT GOBLET D'ALVIELLA, *Origin and Growth of the Conception of God* (1891), p. 68.

"Fear of inanimate nature is the foundation of superstition, and the heroic efforts of a few to overthrow it have led the world into the path of science."—LESTER WARD, *Dynamic Sociology*, vol. i., p. 687.

"Almighty Fear the Fiend—God."—SHELLEY, *Revolt of Islam*.

"Terror-generated piety."—WINWOOD READE, *Martyrdom of Man*, p. 432.

HOW did man acquire the ideas of the supernatural which we find so widely spread to-day? Were they revealed to mankind by some God, from some far-away heaven in the depths of space? Or did some crafty priests invent these ideas, in order to control mankind, and hold them in bondage to the terrors of the unknown?

Science dismisses both explanations. Science knows nothing of any God or heaven; and has no need of the hypothesis of fraud, or craft, to explain the origin of these ideas. Science shows that the ideas of the supernatural had as natural an origin as arithmetic or music.

Jesus Christ, in the Gospels, said that we should judge a tree by its fruit. If we judge the supernatural by this standard, and if these ideas of the supernatural were revealed by a spiritual being, or beings, then we maintain that this spiritual being, or beings, are cruel, malignant, and bloodthirsty monsters, who, instead of deserving our adoration and gratitude, should receive our maledictions and curses.

As man has evolved from the animal world—and still bears the marks of his parentage in his body and mind—it is reasonable to expect to find the

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germs of all his qualities—moral, intellectual, and religious—in the animal world to which he belongs; and there are no lack of facts to support this idea. Carl Vogt says:—

> "The germ at least of a belief in some mysterious higher power exists also in animals. The dog is evidently afraid of spectres, quite as much as the Breton or the Basque; every out-of-the-way phenomenon not explained to it by its nose renders even the most courageous dog a coward. I knew a grove which the peasants firmly believe to be haunted by a fiery spectre, and prove it by the alleged fact that dogs which have passed the night in it will not re-enter it. It is in the fear of the apparently supernatural which is the germ of religious ideas; and this fear is developed in a high degree in our domestic animals, the dog and the horse. The germ of these ideas, as well as of others allied with it, being by man developed into a system, becomes a faith. Mathematics has just as much claim, as this belief in the supernatural, to be considered an exclusive, fundamental quality of man. No animal knows mathematics, geometry; but there are animals which can count, though only up to a few ciphers, and this is the germ of the whole edifice which man has erected, and by means of which he has measured the celestial spaces. In the same way, the animal has no faith, but it fears something unknown—the fear of God—from which man has developed his religion."*

As Professor Chantepie de la Saussaye rightly observes, "The relations between a master and his dog are religious; and many other animals must certainly regard the mysterious and often hostile strength of man as a god-like power."†

Charles Darwin noted this sense of the mysterious in animals, by the behavior of his own dog, when lying on the lawn one hot day:—

> "At a little distance a slight breeze occasionally moved an open parasol, which would have been wholly disregarded by the dog had anyone stood near it. As it was, every time the parasol slightly moved, the dog growled fiercely and barked. He must, I think, have reasoned to himself in a rapid and unconscious manner, that movement without any apparent cause indicated the presence of some strange living agent, and that no stranger had a right to be on his territory."‡

Professor Romanes was led to make several experiments by reading this instance given by Darwin. His dog, a remarkably intelligent Skye terrier, sometimes amused himself with dry bones, by tossing them in the air, or to a distance, to give them the appearance of life, so he could enjoy worrying them. One day, Romanes tied a long, fine thread to a bone and gave it to the dog to play with. After he had tossed it about a short time, and it had fallen to a distance, the dog following after it, Romanes gently drew it away by means of the invisible thread:—

> "Instantly his whole demeanor changed. The bone which he had previously pretended to be alive now began to look as if it were really alive, and his astonishment knew no bounds. He first approached it with nervous caution, as Mr. Spencer describes (in the case of a dog hurt by a cane with which he was playing); but as the slow receding motion continued, and he became quite certain that the movement could not be accounted for by any residuum of force which he had communicated, his astonishment developed into dread, and he ran to conceal himself under some article of furniture, there to behold at a distance the 'uncanny' spectacle of a dry bone coming to life. Now, in this and in all my other experiments I have no doubt that the behavior of the terrier arose from his *sense of the mysterious*, for he was of a highly pugnacious disposition, and never hesitated to fight any animal of any size or ferocity; but apparent symptoms of spontaneity in an inanimate object which he knew so well, gave rise to feelings of awe and horror, which quite enervated him."

And concludes that the dog "must have felt the same oppressive and alarming sense of the mysterious which uncultured persons feel under similar circumstances."§

Still more apposite is another case which the same writer also relates, as follows:—

> "I had a setter dog which was greatly afraid of thunder. One day a number of apples were being shot upon the wooden floor of an apple-room, and, as each bag of apples was shot, it produced through the rest of the house a noise resembling that of distant thunder. My dog became terror stricken at the sound; but as soon as I brought him to the apple-room, and showed him the true *cause* of the noise, he became again buoyant and cheerful as usual."*

Here we see fear of the unknown giving way to ease and satisfaction when a natural explanation of the cause has been arrived at.

Thompson tells us that "A dog chasing a raven fled with astonishment as the bird faced it and uttered the words it had been taught."† As Letourneau has remarked:—

> "If we could read the brain of the superior animals, we should undoubtedly find there a rudimentary mythology. Many mammalia, dogs for instance, have, like man, dreams and hallucinations; they can connect certain facts with their real or imaginary causes. We do not want more evidence than this to arrive at the puerile conceptions of primitive mythology. There is no essential difference in a mental point of view between the African negro who worships the crocodile, and who will probably eat him afterwards, and the dog fawning at the foot of his master and licking the hand that has beaten him."‡

What difference is there between the horse who shies at a white object in the hedge, at night, and the rustic who takes the same object to be a bogle or a ghost? Lindsay observes:—

> "Bartlett speaks of a sense of mystery or mysterious dread in certain animals, inmates of the London Zoological Gardens. In many animals, in short, under certain circumstances, awe or dread of the unseen, unknown, untried, unheard, readily gives birth not only to a feeling of mystery, but, as is pointed out in another chapter, to genuine *delusion*."§

And he further remarks that "Thunder occasionally causes panic in menagerie animals" (vol. ii, p. 189).

As Professor Leuba well remarks:—

> "A dog will beg from a man; he will not beg from a ham suspended out of his reach. Towards animals and men, animal behavior is similar to that of men when dealing with invisible anthropopathic beings..... The feelings and emotions which appear in a dog's intercourse with his master are of the same species, if not of the same variety, as those felt by a man when he deals with his fellow-men and with superhuman beings."‖

And he points out that the most significant difference between men and animals is not to be found in the manner in which they interpret certain striking natural phenomena, but in the inability of animals to *fix* the interpretation they have arrived at, by communicating it, by means of signs or language to their kind. He observes:—

> "Without the advantage conferred by speech, upon even the lowest savages, to hold, clarify, keep alive, and bring to fruition impressions of this evanescent nature, I do not see how a stable belief in animism could have been established. The decisive rôle played by language appears forcibly when one considers the part it takes in introducing dream experiences into waking life. The baffling evanescence of dreams caught sight of on awakening is familiar to everyone. Unless one succeeds in putting them in linguistic form, they are soon completely lost; verbal expression makes them part and parcel of our mental possessions. The mental differences between man and the higher animals to which the presence of Magic and Religion is to be referred, are not in themselves startling, however considerable their consequences may have been. Psychological analysis leaves absolutely no standing ground to those who insist upon interpreting the advent of Religion as the manifestation of essentially new kinds of powers, of the birth of a 'spiritual life,' for instance. We hope to have made clear that the use of this term

* Carl Vogt, *Lectures on Man*, p. 229.
† Chantepie de la Saussaye, *Manual of the Science of Religion*, p. 14.
‡ Darwin, *Descent of Man* (1881), p. 59.
§ Romanes, *Mental Evolution in Animals*, p. 157.

* Romanes, *Mental Evolution in Man*, p. 59.
† Thompson, *Passions of Animals*, p. 124.
‡ Letourneau, *Sociology*, p. 275.
§ Lindsay, *Mind in Animals*, vol. i., p. 223.
‖ J. H. Leuba, *The Psychological Origin of Religion*, pp. 17-18.

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in this connection constitutes a misrepresentation of the facts."*

Religion is not a divinely bestowed gift from heaven, but has developed naturally from very low beginnings. Animals, says Lindsay, suffer from "spectral delusions," and he cites Fleming, who writes of a rabid dog:—

> "It appeared as if haunted by some horrid phantom. At times it would seem to be watching the movements of something on the floor, and would dart suddenly forth and bite at the vacant air as if pursuing something against which it had an enmity. In another case the dog would throw itself against the wall yelling furiously, as if there were a noise on the other side."†

Romanes gives a similar case, described by Pierquin, of an ape who suffered a sunstroke, "and afterwards used to become terror-struck by delusions of some kind; she used to snap at imaginary objects, and acted as if she had been watching and catching at insects on the wing."‡

Lindsay also points out that animals dream; for instance, the dog sometimes moves his paws and tail, sniffs and growls, during the progress of his dream; and dreams have played an important part in the origin of religion. And so have delusions, for that matter.

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

Acid Drops.

King George's reason for calling eight men together, with the Speaker of the House of Commons as chairman, to discuss the Irish question with a view to finding a practical settlement that all parties might agree upon, is not a matter for investigation in the *Freethinker*. But, unless the last clause of his speech on receiving them at Buckingham Palace, was sheer blarney, he could hardly have been very hopeful of the result. These were his Majesty's words:—

> "Your responsibilities are, indeed, great. The time is short. You will, I know, employ it to the fullest advantage and be patient, earnest, and conciliatory, in view of the magnitude of the interests at stake. I pray that God in His infinite wisdom may guide your deliberations so that they may result in the joy of peace and honorable settlement."

Any well practised journalist could make mincemeat of these sentences in five minutes. It is presumable, therefore, that they are his Majesty's own composition. And from that point of view they are invested with a certain pathos.

His Majesty may believe in Prayer and Providence as available agencies in human affairs, even when they are in the critical stage where Home Rule stands, but in that case why call in God to help man when you are really calling in men to help God? If prayer could settle the matter the King might stop at home and do the business himself—unless "God" is hard of hearing just now, so that it takes eight men (including the Royal Commission) or nine men (including the Chairman) or ten men (including the King) to make an adequate impression on the divine tympanum. It might be objected that the Deity's answer to the King's prayer on behalf of the nation, or the nation's prayer on behalf of itself, might be difficult to ascertain. But the objection is not insuperable. The Archbishop of Canterbury could keep the key of a holy ballot-box, which could be opened in the presence of trustworthy witnesses, and the Lord's vote would decide the question at issue. It would save a lot of time and trouble in the House of Commons. "Aye's" and "No's" would not have to tramp through the lobbies and be counted by tellers. They could all sit still and "wait upon the Lord." Or, for that matter, there need be no parliament at all. The whole thing could be worked mechanically like a Buddhist prayer-wheel.

"God's" wisdom would have to be more than infinite (the Hibernicism may be pardoned on the Irish question) to guide the deliberations of eight politicians of at least four different parties. Ingersoll well said that some people expected the Deity to do sheer impossibilities. "I heard a man this very day," he said, "ask God to give Congress wisdom." A mental wink of this kind must have passed between those nine men when the King came, as it were, to the "Let us pray."

By the way, did King George forget that a professional, well-paid supplicator had asked "God's" blessing on the Home Rule Bill discussions every day it had "come up" in the House of Commons? Did his Majesty think that a more private prayer might be more efficacious?

Tennyson's praise of "honest doubt" in "In Memoriam" was excusable. That was a long time ago and Christians not only believed then, but took it for granted, like the rising and the setting of the sun, that whoever differed from them *must* be wicked. It was a step forward, in its way, when Tennyson sang:—

> "There lives more faith in honest doubt,
> Believe me, than in half the creeds."

But that a Bishop should go about nowadays presenting this sentimentalism as if it were quite a recent discovery, proclaims him a fool of the first water. "Ninny" is the only word applicable to such a person. Plain "ninny" without any adjective whatever. And who will be surprised to learn that this "ninny" is the Bishop of London? It is doubtful if any other Bishop is capable of such flatulent imbecility.

"Honest doubt," if we may vary the metaphor, was a useful stepping-stone. But here is the Bishop of London sitting upon it sixty years afterwards—and with his face still toward the past. Everybody with even a tincture of psychology knows by this time that there is no "*honest* doubt" because there is no "*dis*honest doubt." Doubt is doubt. And there is an end of it. Doubt is a purely intellectual process and will not bear a moral adjective. Yet the Bishop of London actually goes about telling his fellow Churchmen that allowance must be made for doubters as some of them are honest, when, as far as they *are* doubters, they are *all* honest. We repeat that there cannot be a *dis*honest doubter. But there may be a foolish Bishop. That's certain. "Bishop" bears *any* adjective—rogue as easily as fool.

What unfathomable nonsense theological authors do write about religion. In their case is abundantly illustrated the unspeakable harm that has accrued from subordinating the reason to the vague faculty of intuition. The Rev. J. Cohu has just published a five shilling book, entitled *Vital Problems of Religion*, the main themes of which are the spirituality of Nature, the freedom of personality, and the element of will, progress, and aspiration in the processes of the Universe. Now, all these are pure assumptions inscrutible of verification. Nature presents herself to us as anything but spiritual, and it can be demonstrated that personality is subject to the unbreakable law of causation, while progress and aspiration are relative terms, of which Nature as a whole knows nothing. We know that Mr. Cohu rejects the dogmas of the Catholic Church, but he introduces peculiar dogmas of his own, and to us the latter are quite as unacceptable and irrational as the former.

Rev. John Birch-Reynardson, of Canley Rectory, Lincs, left £177,706. His housekeeper was in the will for £150 a year, his butler £200 a year, and his cook to £150. Fancy! What would Jesus (or Judas) have thought of these figures? The possession of the hundreds, let alone the thousands, would have made them feel like millionaires.

The Rev. Dinsdale Young, President of the Wesleyan Conference, stated, in his address from the chair at Leeds, that "while there was much to cause them deep concern, there was also much to hearten them, especially in the fact that the masses of the people were not averse to the great message of the Christian evangel when it was intelligently and sympathetically interpreted to them." Is not Mr. Young fully aware that the "masses of the people" never hear that "great message"? It has lost all interest for them because they do not regard it as true. Mr. Young is fortunate enough to have a crowded church; but all the people who attend places of worship form but a handful in comparison with the population. The truth is that in Great Britain, as well as on the Continent, Christianity is perceptibly dying, and its officials are losing caste.

Mr. Young is an orthodox theologian, and he was certainly right and "carried the Conference with him when he declared that a non-theological Church was a non-intelligent Church, and soon became a mere ethical establishment, a purveyor of entertainments, or, worst of all, a political caucus." The President is thoroughly consistent in

* Leuba, *The Psychological Origin of Religion*, pp. 37-38.
† Lindsay, *Mind in Animals*, vol. ii., p. 104.
‡ Romanes, *Mental Evolution in Animals*, p. 150.

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his rigid adherence to the dogmatic positions so ably defended by his fathers. The Bible, we know, is entirely discredited, and theology undoubtedly doomed; but a Christian minister, who decries theology and criticises the Bible, sails under false colors, and is despicable in the extreme. That such hypocrites are possible proves that Christianity is far gone in consumption.

Miss Vance advises us that our "old opponent, the Rev. Z. B. Woffendale, is dead." We had but one public debate with him more than thirty years ago, and he always avoided another. He rested his reputation on a faked report of that debate, which we always repudiated. He used to advertise it as "The Great Debate." It was nothing like a verbatim report, and it contained about three times as much of his speeches as of our own. At the same time, according to his own assertions, he won a victory in "The Great Debate" over a thoroughly incompetent adversary. For some years Mr. Woffendale lived retired from the pulpit, and presumably on a pension. Speak no ill of the dead, the proverb says. Well, we will not. We merely say that he was a typical Christian Evidence speaker. Those who know what that is will understand. Those who do not would want more explanation than we have time to give now.

Commenting on the discussion going on between Bishop Gore, Dr. Sanday, Dr. Strong, and others, as to whether the New Testament story of the Ascension is to be accepted as a fact or not, the *Christian World* quotes the following from the late "J. B." as giving a common-sense view of miracles:—

> "Belief in them was easy because it coincided with a certain phase, not then outgrown, of the human development. Every religion, every history of the early world, produced them, and for the reason that it was the nature of the mind, at its then stage, to produce them. They grew in this soil as naturally as wheat grows to-day in a Midland shire. But a stage was reached when the production ceased. And that not because the outside world had changed. *The change was in mind and thoughts.*"

We fully endorse this; it is, indeed, only what we have been saying ourselves over and over again for many years. All the same, it is a very dangerous argument for a Christian to use. It deposes all supernatural occurrences from the realm of objective fact to that of subjective delusion. The outside world is to-day what it always was. That is, the outside world always was as it is to-day. People no more walked on the water, held intercourse with the Devil, miraculously increased the supply of food, turned water into wine, or rose from the dead, than they do these things to-day. That is, they never occurred. If we could resurrect a crowd of Judæan peasants, and place them in the centre of London to-day, we could have all the old miracles over to-day. If you could have filled Judæa with a modern population two thousand years ago, the Christian religion would never have been heard of. That is the logic of the *Christian World's* sane view of the situation.

Great Thoughts is a professedly pious paper. No doubt its beliefs are absolutely right, but it might cultivate carefulness in other respects. Last week it quoted Tom Hood as singing: "It is not women you're wearing out, but human creatures' lives." This is a *huge* joke. Hood, of course, wrote *linen*. It was precisely *women* that the sweaters of those poor shirtmakers *were* wearing out.

The last of the prophets, Old Moore, has issued his forecasts for 1915, and, apparently, the next year is to be a stock-size one, for the prophecies are very humdrum, the most exciting features being an influenza outbreak, strikes, accidents, and the customary rows in Russia. One thing we are thankful for, our penny prophet is far saner than "St. John" with his "Revelation."

The *Times* is always bright and up-to-date. In the last issue of the Literary Supplement, two columns are devoted to "The Religion of Cicero." Perhaps the editor considered the old boy's theological views better than much of the religious hogwash of the day.

Five people were struck by lightning at a Sunday-school treat at Lyminge, near Hythe, Kent. If that had been a Secularists' Excursion there would have been a moral—quite a long one.

Mr. G. K. Chesterton has been protesting in characteristic fashion against the proposal to cut children's hair, and he says "All institutions should be judged and damned by whether they have fitted the normal flesh and spirit." This is a hard saying, for Mr. Chesterton's Church upholds celibacy for men and women, and every priest has a flies' skating rink on his head.

Men of God are proverbially false prophets. How many times have they fixed the exact day and hour on which the world would surely come to an end! Very vividly some of us remember the awful dread we experienced on the day appointed by Dr. Cumming, the famous Scottish divine, for the final catastrophe, and how thankful we felt next morning that it hadn't come off, though vaguely believing that, if it had, it would have meant our translation to the Glory Land. By the time Prophet Baxter, of the *Christian Herald* fame, appeared on the scene, and repeatedly fixed dates for the collapse of the Universe, we had become so hardened that we paid no heed whatever to his false predictions. The curious thing about Baxter was that he was neither humiliated nor daunted by the continuous falsification of his own prophecies. No sooner was one date discredited than he as confidently appointed another. Many, alas, believed in him as long as he lived, but no one does so now. The old world has a wonderful knack of thoroughly exposing all false prophets. Time puts everybody in his right place.

And yet false prophets still flourish, and are brazen-faced as ever. On January 29, 1913, the *North Mail* reported an address delivered the previous evening at Newcastle-on-Tyne by the Rev. J. B. Meyer, in the course of which this loquacious man of God said:—

> "There is going to be a great revival in England. I know it is coming before many months are gone, and our nets will be so full of fish that they will burst."

That was a year and five months ago, and the great revival still delays its coming. There is no sign of its advent, though the President of the Wesleyan Conference says that it is of all things the one of which the Churches stand in greatest need.

The Mundesley Conference, founded and presided over by Dr. Campbell Morgan, is a theological orgy indulged in once a year. It furnishes a splendid opportunity for certain men of God and their followers to go an annual religious spree; and they go on it with a vengeance. Every day for a week or more is filled to overflowing with lectures, sermons, prayers, hymns, and when the evening arrives the majority of the people are emotionally so elevated that they scarcely know who or where they are. And how vile the stuff is that they imbibe, and how pernicious its effect upon them. The ostensible object of the Conference is to deepen the spiritual life of all who attend it, and to strengthen their loyalty to Jesus Christ, with the result that most of them lose whatever sense of justice and fairplay they may once have had. One of the commonest notes sounded at all such gatherings is, that Jesus came in the very nick of time, when the world was rapidly lapsing into utter chaos and ruin, and that immediately he began to lay the foundations of a new and nobler order than that which was passing away. As all impartial students of history well know, that contention is utterly false, and no one can advance it without deliberately and culpably ignoring facts that cannot honestly be set aside.

At the last meeting, just concluded, of the Mundesley Conference, the Rev. W. Souper, M.A., Presbyterian minister at Clapham, delivered a lecture on "Christ and the Scriptures in the Life and Thought of To-day," in which occurred the following wild assertion, namely, that from Christ's time there had been progress, marked by three features, a new ethic, a new standard, and a new life. This is a hoary-headed old lie which has been nailed to the counter a thousand times; but it is repeated to-day as unblushingly as ever, and we are determined, every time we meet it, to confront it with the truth. The truth, in brief, is that for many centuries after Christ became supreme in the Roman Empire, there was no progress at all, but a steady and lamentable intellectual and moral retrogression. If we compare the Pagan emperors with their Christian successors, we shall find that, whilst out of thirty of the former only eight or nine were bad, the overwhelming majority of the latter were cruel, corrupt, and unprincipled. Christians bid us think of Nero, with his silly vanity and unmentionable vices and crimes; but we reply that Nero had his redeeming qualities, to which our opponents seldom, if ever, allude. Among his good points mark this, that he appointed a judge to listen to the complaints of slaves, and to punish masters found guilty of ill-treating them. In return, we invite Christians to bear in mind that Constantine, the first Christian emperor, was directly responsible for the murder of a brother-in-law, a nephew, a son, and a wife; that Constantine marched to the throne knee-deep in the blood of uncles and cousins; that Valentinian I.

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kept two bears near his chamber, and amused himself by having them fed with human flesh, and that he got rid of his wife in order to marry a beautiful woman; that Valentinian III. murdered Aetius with his friends, and ravished the wife of Maximus. But why continue a tale to which there is no end, and which Mr. Souper may find told by believing as well as by unbelieving historians? Is he not aware that popes and emperors alike were ambitious and tyrannical, loving wealth and power more than everything else? Has he forgotten that Baronius, Dean Milman, Gibbon, Lecky, and many others, pronounce the tenth Christian century the lowest and most degraded period in all history? As a matter of plain fact, Christ introduced no new ethic, no new standard, and no new life. What came into the world in his name was intolerance, persecution, insane exclusiveness, the glorification of eternity at the expense of the crucifixion of time, the enthronement of an imaginary God at the cost of depreciating real Man; and from this reversion of the order of Nature we are suffering to this day.

A wealthy trinity have been staying at the Carlton Hotel, comprising citizens Vanderbilt, Wanamaker, and Gould, of the U.S.A., and their wealth is said to total £25,000,000. That beats the famous firm of Jehovah, Son, and Co., the managing director of which was sold for thirty shillings and afterwards "hanged."

A silver "apostle spoon" was sold recently at Christie's salerooms for £70. If it had been used by the Ever-Blessed Wielder of the Jack-Plane at the Last Supper, it could hardly have fetched more money. But, maybe, he used his sacred fingers.

A discussion in the press concerning the employment of dogs, as on the continent, reminds us of a delightful story of Sidney Smith, to whom it was suggested that Landseer, the great animal artist, should paint his portrait. The witty parson quoted Scripture in his reply, "Is thy servant a dog that he should do this thing?"

"People of Two Worlds" is a startling title to an article in a daily paper. Another false alarm! Not a word about a post-mortem existence, only an American's view of Eastern Europeans.

The Buckingham Territorials have taken to singing on route marches, and the *Daily Chronicle* reminds us that "The Watch on the Rhine" was warbled during the Franco-German War. That does not exhaust the list, for the sacred strains of "Come Where the Booze is Cheaper" have been heard in English lanes.

In a review of a book, *Florence Nightingale to Her Nurses*, the *Times* Literary Supplement says "the Agnostic nurse may be as good as the religious nurse, but she is not likely to be better; and she is not unlikely to be the least bit too business-like." The curious thing is that Florence Nightingale herself was heterodox—and there's the rub!

"In the past there was no hatred so intense as that of beauty scorned. But in our day there is a wilder and more savage enemy than any woman. It is the hatred of money when it is attacked." So says the *Daily Sketch*. Freethinkers know this only too well, for they are always attacking people who earn thousands of pounds for teaching lies.

Sir Horace Plunkett, one of the most distinguished of present-day Irishmen, in announcing his conversion to Home Rule, gives many reasons for the change. Amongst them he notes the fallacy of the old idea that Home Rule would mean Rome Rule. His view of this matter is very much like our own:—

> "Such cases of intolerance as are cited are usually found—if true—to have a social or political and not a religious basis. Considering both the example of other countries and the peculiar circumstances of Ireland, I anticipate that under Home Rule the people will retain their faith and the Catholic Church all its legitimate influence. But Catholic laymen throughout Ireland will be led by their new political duties to draw distinctions between the ecclesiastical and political spheres which they do not at present recognise. They will thus gradually relieve the priesthood of a class of responsibilities from which all the more judicious priests will be very glad to escape."

The last sentence may sound somewhat ironical, but with that exception we regard Sir Horace Plunkett's opinion on this point as practically unassailable. Ireland, under Home Rule, would be a new Ireland. The patriotic sentiment would cease to be allied to the Catholic sentiment. They would often be opposed to each other, as they have been in France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Belgium. And history shows that the patriotic sentiment always triumphs eventually. Protestantism won where the secular power was with it. The same may be said of Catholicism; and the division effected at the time of the Reformation has never been seriously disturbed since.

The *Church Times* asserts that "Mediæval nations never forgot that the Catholic religion was extra-national and universal." Of course they never forgot it, because they had been forced to believe it at the point of the sword, and knew that, if they denied it, or acted as if they did not believe it, they would be persecuted, imprisoned, tortured, and, possibly, put to death. The dogma of the universality of Christianity has been the supreme curse of the West, and would become, if Christians had their way, the supreme curse of the East. One comfort that we have is that Christianity is less universal in Europe to-day than it has been since the doleful days of Theodosius the Great.

A Sunday Defence Council for London is to be formed, apparently with the Bishop of London at its head. Defending the Sunday means preventing other people from making any other use of the day than the Bishop and his ecclesiastical friends please. The cheek of these people! It is evident from his lordship's preparatory speech that he would shut all the Sunday Picture Shows in London if he could. He is mistaken, though, if he fancies that closing them would fill the Church Syndicate Shows. Totally different publics are involved.

Fifty-three children were killed or injured in a tramway smash at Westport, Conn., U.S.A., the little ones being members of a Sunday-school excursion. Providence is as hard-hearted as in the good old Gospel days of the "slaughter of the innocents."

"A Crop of New Fiction" is a title used in a literary paper. For the dog-days, too! Isn't there enough fiction in "God's Holy Word" to fill the vacancy during August?

Mr. Bart Kennedy, writing in *T. P.'s Weekly*, says "the Golden Rule is at present but the most pious of pious opinions." Just so! And, like most pious things, it is hypocritical, for it is always the people who boast of loving their enemies who libel their neighbors—especially if the latter are Freethinkers.

Mr. G. H. Mair, in his recent book on *English Literature*, complains of the lack of appreciation of poetry, and asks who was the favorite after Edward Fitzgerald. "Not Swinburne certainly—partly because of a suspicion bold of his moral and religious tenets." What pitfall is this? There was little, if any, difference between the theological opinions of either of these two great poets.

According to that delightful family periodical, the *Daily Telegraph*, polygamy "was, indeed, long recognised, more or less overtly, by the Christian Church." This may partially explain why the clergy run after the petticoats to-day.

"Joseph Chamberlain in America" runs a headline in a leading paper. Dear, dear! Another illusion gone. We thought that Unitarians went to the same post-mortem retreat as Freethinkers.

"Mrs. O'Rooney," said the Reverend Father McMurphy, "why do I never see Patrick at church now?" Mrs. O'Rooney shook her head sadly. "Is it anarchism?" "Warse than that, your riverence." "Is it atheism?" "Warse, your riverence." "What is it, then?" "Rheumatism."

Country Rector: "My boy, it is a sad thing your father never comes to church. I am afraid he doesn't fear God."
Boy: "Yes, he does, sir. He always takes his gun with him."

"Father," began the prodigal son, as he knelt at his parent's feet, "are you going to kill the calf?" "I ought to," the father replied, "but you are such a fool I'll forgive you this time."

Missionary: "And how did you like my predecessor, King Totem?" King Totem: "He was very nice—very nice, though just a little stringy."

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To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £179 17s. 6d. Received since :—H. C., 5s.

WALTER STEWART.—There is no "serious blunder" about it. Matthew Arnold did call history "that Mississippi of falsehood." We cannot accept "many years ago" as an adequate reference to its having been quoted otherwise in the *Freethinker*.

W. MARSHALL.—We don't profess to give all, or anything like all, the Christian clergy who leave more money than is implied in "Blessed be ye poor." Thanks for your reference to one we had not noticed.

ROBERT BROWN.—Calling Protestants good citizens and Catholics lazy scoundrels is a short and easy way with Home Rule. The real truth is that the religion of either side is a pure accident—the result of birth and early training. You seem to think it all right for Protestants to govern Catholics, but all wrong for Catholics to govern Protestants. "A plague on both your houses!" After all, what was it we said? Simply this. We declined to discuss Home Rule as a political policy in these pages. We denied that Home Rule meant Rome Rule, and argued that those who opposed it on *that* ground were mistaken. A reply to this must consist of something more than mere abuse of Irish Catholics—as, for instance, that they "do nothing but lean against a wall and spit in the Liffey." Surely it is time that such vulgar bigotry were dead and buried—on both sides.

E. B.—Thanks for cuttings. Will write you on the other matter.

G. H.—See paragraph. Thanks.

WALTER DAVIDSON.—Your lively letter has had to be summarised. We admire your courage and pertinacity and wish you all success.

JOHN RATCLIFF.—Your order is passed over to our shop manager and will be attended to.

H. C.—Sorry to hear of your losses. Hope to hear a better report soon.

C. MITCHELL (New Zealand).—Pleased to hear you found Mr. Scott Bennett so good a lecturer with so good an audience. Your report will be a good introduction if he pays the old country a visit. We note your statement that he paid us "a very graceful compliment." We are not so pruriently modest as to pretend that such things are not agreeable.

JULIUS ALLMANN.—We can't trouble Mr. Cohen with your letter while he is holidaying. Besides, your question is an ancient one. And the answer is simple,—we were going to say obvious. Every living thing is wasted and repaired along the lines of its own nature. Your big toe keeps your big toe just as your brain keeps your brain. And you keep yourself just as London (say) keeps herself. But the change in both cases is gradual, and the organised old matter impresses its character upon the organised new matter as it enters into the general body. You are yourself, and London is London; but the London of to-day is not the London of twenty years ago, neither are you the Julius Allmann of twenty years ago. You think so, but you are mistaken; as you would find if you had our experience of comparing present memory with the written memory of years ago. Perhaps it is not memory at all, as a mental fact, which puzzles you. But memory is not a human mystery; it runs through all nature; it begins in form and develops in consciousness. And how does consciousness begin? Of this question, like all others, we know the *how* but not the *why*! There may be no why. Nature may require no explanation. We require it. And, as Shelley said, Human pride is skilful to invent most serious names to hide its ignorance.

FREDERIC WALSH.—Thanks for the *Saturday Review* article on Mr. Salt's revised *Life of James Thomson*. It is rather slap-dash work, but it will help to draw attention to the worthy biography of a poet who will always need such advertisement, being "caviare to the general" by reason of his merits as well as his defects. By the way, Thomson's two "Sunday" poems are not biographical; they are poetry of observation, not experience. We had it from his own lips.

W. FRENCH.—The Middlesex County Council could not legally issue a seven days' licence for picture shows or any other public entertainment. Its action, therefore, *against* Sunday entertainments is also illegal. We hope the matter will be taken to the High Court. The "Sunday, Christmas Day, and Good Friday" humbugs, on the Bench as well as off, would certainly be taught a lesson.

R. OGILVIE.—We hope the Freethought meetings in Jail-square, Glasgow, will be properly supported. Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner's little book, *Penalties Upon Opinion*, will supply you with what you require.

C. HELLER.—Robert Moreland has not, to our knowledge, written any such book as you suggest.

R. POPPER.—We don't think you have the least idea of the cost of a daily paper. "Saladin" has been dead some years. We spoke at his funeral.

T. RENNOLLS.—We don't understand it, and our readers would probably be no luckier.

L. M. HOSSACK.—If reading one copy of the *Freethinker* makes you a more earnest Christian, you should buy a copy and read it weekly.

CLARA GUNNING.—You state that Mr. E. Baker, a Christian Evidence lecturer, was charged with using insulting language in Hyde Park, but you don't state the result. Surely the magistrate didn't fine a Christian,—did he?

H. BRITTEN.—See paragraph. Thanks.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid :—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote contemplates the resumption of lecturing in October, beginning in London and afterwards visiting Glasgow, Birmingham, etc.

Mr. Heaford's articles on the Balkan Atrocities have attracted attention abroad—as we see by an editorial reference in *L'Echo de Bulgarie*. We understand that they are to be translated officially and inserted in the principal journals of Sofia.

We have just received a welcome letter from Mr. M. M. Mangasarian, who is privately our very good friend, and publicly lecturer to the Independent Religious Society (Rationalist), Chicago, as well as the author of some well-known books, including a Secular Catechism which has found its way (often by translations) all over the civilised world. We are very sorry to hear that Mr. Mangasarian, who congratulates us on our own recovery from serious illness, has been himself sick and had a sick son to nurse. ("Sick" is good Bible (that is, Tudor) English; it was taken over to America and has been kept there ever since.) We hope his health is thoroughly restored. He is looking forward to the possibility of meeting us in England this summer. It cannot be a greater pleasure to him than it will be to us.

The last number of the *Examiner* (Christchurch, New Zealand) to hand seems to imply that Mr. W. Collins is recovering from his bad breakdown, but the information on this point is neither extensive nor precise. Apparently travelling to regain health, Mr. Collins could not officiate at the funeral of an old friend and supporter, whose death is referred to in the *Examiner* as follows :—

> "It is with very great regret that we record the death of another stalwart Rationalist—Mr. B. Burland, of Amberley, whose funeral took place at Linwood Cemetery on Monday, April the 13th last. For more than twenty years Mr. Burland had been connected with the New Zealand Rationalist Association, and was esteemed by its members for his consistency to Rational principles, as well as for his genial personality. By dint of hard work Mr. Burland had built up a substantial business at Amberley, but the cares of business in no wise diminished his enthusiasm for the Freethought with which he had in early manhood become associated as a member of the National Secular Society, England. He held Mr. Bradlaugh in reverence, and regarded Mr. Foote with high admiration as his worthy successor."

It is pleasant to find that Mr. Foote is held in worthy remembrance by Freethinkers at the antipodes.

Mr. W. H. Thresh replies to our reference to himself, though we can hardly see what *he* has to reply to. We said nothing against *him*, as he admits; quite the contrary. We objected to his being described as "a new speaker." We cannot see it is Mr. Thresh's right or duty to explain or defend other people.

The Edmonton Branch is starting a new N. S. S. Branch at Ponders End. The "End" is all right; it is pretty well the "End" of everything in the way of civilisation. But there is very little "pondering" about the place. The first Secular meeting seems to have had a stunning effect on the local orthodoxy; the second roused them up a bit; the third brought out the usual meekness of Christians who find

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themselves "insulted" by opposition. The Secularists managed to take good care of themselves, and the disturbance was confined to "language" until the meeting was closing. Then the followers of the meek and lowly one "came on like an avalanche." Mr. Walter Davidson says, "the platform rose and fell like some trophy of battle, and straw hats were strewn on the ground like Highland bonnets at Culloden." One girl member of the Branch was brutally attacked by a male Christian and thrown to the ground, but Mr. Davidson rejoices that the said male Christian was immediately "crumpled up with one under the jaw." Mr. Davidson laughs at those who say that "the battle is over"—meaning that Christianity is *dead* if not *gone*. It may be so where they live, but not at Ponders End, and many other places; and if they want a job it can be found them, with plenty of work to do. Mr. Davidson's address is 131 Warwick-road, Edmonton. The Ponders End meetings are held on Wednesday evenings.

Rev. Dr. Linton Smith, vicar of St. Nicholas' Church, Blundellsands, has been preaching a series of sermons on "The Fools of the Old Testament." Another series on "The Rogues of the Old Testament" would be a desirable addendum. Meanwhile we may note the reverend gentleman's statement that "Many Agnostics and Atheists put Christians to shame by the exemplary lives they lead." Confession is said to be good for the soul. An improvement may be looked for, therefore, in the Christian character of that neighborhood. We quote from the *Crosby and Waterloo Herald*.

Mr. B. T. Hall, treasurer of the Ramsey Testimonial Fund, Club Union Buildings, Clerkenwell-road, E.C., sends us a Third List of Subscriptions since the Two Lists published in the *Freethinker* of June 7 and June 21. He says that any difficulty has arisen through our "accepting notification of amounts from other sources than" himself. This is precisely what we have not done. Lists sent to us, inserted or not inserted, have all been in the same handwriting, and ostensibly from Mr. Hall. We hope it will be straight sailing now. Mr. Hall informs us, and we are glad to learn it, that the total amount of the Fund to date (July 22) is £52 6s. 6d.

We take the following from the *Advertiser's Weekly* :—

> "That the *Freethinker* notes that in a religious contemporary the advertisements include notices to the ruptured, toothless, paralytic, baldheaded, half-blind, flat-footed, and the cancerous and dyspeptic."
>
> "That the lively little agnostic journal adds: 'We always thought Christians were on the down grade; we are sure of it now.'"

Now we shan't be long.

Opposition was offered to the prosecution of Mr. Frank Kennedy, a native of West Africa, for using "improper language" in a Freethought lecture at Clapham Common on Sunday afternoon, June 28. No doubt the language was not in the best of taste, but bad taste is not yet a crime; although it seems to be made one for the occasion when displayed by a Freethinker in the presence of a Christian—especially when a Christian gentleman with very acute "feelings" sits upon the Bench. Mr. Drummond, the magistrate at the South-Western Police-court, kept on saying that England was a free country; you may think what you like, but you must be careful what you say. If an ex-policeman is listening and hears what would shock everybody at the little bethel he attends, and your "improper" language is brought up before a Christian magistrate with still more sensitive ears, you might just as well have no freedom at all. Your adversaries decide your guilt. Mr. Kennedy was fined £5, which is the maximum fine under the Act, and 2s. costs. The amount was paid by his friends, who took up his case, and who consulted Mr. Foote as to the line of defence. Mr. Foote recommended that the solicitor for the defence should press for a prosecution for "blasphemy" rather than "improper language," for the language could not be considered improper, and would never be prosecuted as such, except in relation to religion. But it appears that London magistrates have been warned against this pitfall since the Boulter case. It will be remembered that Mr. Asquith was emphatic about no "blasphemy" prosecutions being conducted by the Government through the Treasury lately. Mr. Drummond wouldn't be caught by the "blasphemy" bait. He insisted on proceeding on the summons before him. And his sentence on Mr. Kennedy was perfectly vindictive. The Christian magistrate gave the Freethought speaker all the punishment he could, even though a first offender, for a crime which is really no crime at all. What happens is this. The upper dog makes it a crime on the part of the under dog to bark. That is the "blasphemy," the "improper language," and all the rest of it, under these hypocritical acts and proceedings.

Mr. Le Maine, Mr. Saphin, Mr. Beale, Mr. Kennedy, and other speakers are "holding the fort" at Clapham Common on Sunday afternoons and evenings. Their policy is to repeat the words complained of, and challenge the Christians to continue playing the part of persecutors. There will be little use in this, however, if the Christians prefer to lie low; or if they cannot be driven into the common honesty of prosecuting "blasphemers" for "blasphemy." "Improper language" is the meanest of charges. It is worthy of savages who are also cowards.

The following letter from one of our readers is worth publishing:—

> "Wadesmill, Ware, Herts, 28th July, 1914.
>
> "Dear Sir,—Mr. Pawle, the prospective Liberal candidate for East Herts, is holding open-air meetings in the villages of the constituency, and at one of the meetings held last evening at the village of Wadesmill, I asked him what his attitude was regarding the abolition of the Blasphemy Laws. He replied that he had not gone into the question, and did not think it an important one. I pointed out to him that this old law ought to be taken from the Statute Book, as it placed a barrier in the way of freedom of speech. He then said some people might think it was a matter of importance, but that he believed there was also a law still in existence which made it a crime, punishable by imprisonment, not to go to church. He felt sure that nobody wanted to say anything which would grate on the ears of other people.
>
> "I thought this might be of some interest to you.
> —Yours sincerely, HY. BRITTEN."

This "Liberal" gentleman thinks it a matter of "no importance" that men could once be burnt, and can now be imprisoned like common thieves, for "blasphemy"—that is, annoying their orthodox religious opponents. We don't know whether he thinks it of any importance that Jesus Christ was arrested for "blasphemy" and would have been stoned to death for it if the Roman authority had not interfered. Nothing seems to be of any importance to Mr. Pawle unless it affects him personally. Perhaps the truth is that the wrongs of men who are not numerous enough to decide the representation of East Herts at the next election are not worth troubling about at present. He has not "gone into the question," but Mr. Asquith has, and has also promised to give all the aid he can to a Bill for the Abolition of the Blasphemy Law. Pawle is one thing—Asquith is another: as might be expected.

EXORCISM.

The belief that the air is peopled by a variety of beings called angels, or demons, is very naturally associated with the idea that these essences can enter into the body of a human being, and produce therein a series of strange phenomena. When a man, previously quiet, and differing in no appreciable manner from other mortals, suddenly takes to preaching, prophesying, starving himself, and scolding other people, it is very natural for him to assume, and for other people to believe, that he is in reality divinely possessed; nor can the modern physician wonder at this, for his experience of insanity shows that many of its victims see visions of the Almighty, and hear utterances from his lips, which have no real existence. Such men have a profound belief that they are in reality that which their diseased brain leads them to suppose. Again, when either man or woman is affected with mania, and rages more like a wild beast than a human being, tearing into shreds every article of clothing which he or she possesses, not abstaining even from murdering others, injuring himself or herself, or yelling out day and night the most horrible blasphemies or obscenities, it is equally natural that the idea should prevail that the victim is possessed by an evil spirit. The former have been canonised as saints, the latter have been subjected to the most ingenious system of religious exorcism.—*Dr. Thomas Inman.*

It is astonishing how a conception of original sin or total depravity, which transforms God from an object of adoration and affection into a hideous and detestable being, could at any time, however barbarous, have been found acceptable, or how the casuistries by which people strive to modify its hardness could ever have been listened to with common patience.—*Strauss.*

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Christian Apologetics.

XI.—THOMAS COOPER (No. 3).

IN his fifth chapter on the "verity" of the Gospel miracles the great "lecturer on Christianity," Thomas Cooper, refers to the "Old English Freethinkers, as they are called," amongst whom are mentioned Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Thomas Hobbs, the Earl of Shaftesbury, Charles Blount, Toland, Anthony Collins, Thomas Woolston, Dr. Matthew Tindal, Dr. Morgan, and others, "many of whose books are now forgotten." To these he adds: the historian Gibbon, Dr. Middleton, Lord Bolingbroke, and David Hume. The "numerous and persevering attacks of these Freethinkers," he says, called forth a long list of replies from "Christian Ministers and Christian scholars," the most notable of whom he names and comments on. "These able and laborious men," he adds, "did not write in vain: English society lost its avowed sceptical tendency under the influence of their efforts." In his sixth chapter our "lecturer on Christianity" comes to Hume's *Essay on Miracles*, which, he says, "is held by sceptics to be the heaviest and most fatal blow ever dealt against Miracles by the hand of unbelief." He then quotes the following extract from that Essay:—

> "A miracle is a violation of the laws of Nature and, as a firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against a miracle, from the very nature of the fact, is as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined. For, as there is no such uniform experience of the truth of human testimony, as there is of the uniformity of the laws of Nature, the one experience must always be stronger than the other; and no testimony therefore, can ever render a miracle probable."

This reasoning, as it stands, is unanswerable; but Hume, to illustrate his meaning, added:—

> "Why is it more than probable that all men must die; that lead cannot of itself, remain suspended in the air; that fire consumes wood, and is extinguished by water; unless it be that these events are found agreeable to the laws of Nature, and there is required a violation of these laws, or, in other words, a miracle to prevent them?"

There can thus be no mistaking what Hume meant by "experience"; but our lecturer pounces upon this word, and proceeds to found an argument upon it. He says:—

> "The boasted 'argument' of Hume, as sceptics call it, is really no argument at all. Experience teaches us! But *what* experience? A miracle was contrary to David Hume's experience. But his experience was confined to what he saw, felt, touched, and so on. His experience was confined to his own life.....He had no experience of what occurred before he was born..... Yet he learned a good deal of what occurred before he was born. How? By human testimony. Past history to David Hume was what it is to us all—*not* experience, but testimony.....and so he failed, with all his acuteness, to see that his 'argument' was no argument at all."

Thus is Hume's argument blown to atoms, and all that remains is to gather up some of the fragments. A miracle, we are told, was only contrary to Hume's limited experience during the short period of his own life. His statements that all men must die, that lead cannot remain suspended in the air, that fire consumes, etc., were matters of testimony, not experience—or if the latter, only of his own experience. This is simply apologetic quibbling. The term "experience" may, of course, include *testimony*; but thousands of undoubted facts are believed and known, and are acted upon, without any special testimony. By "experience" is meant the ascertained results derived from repeated trials or experiments, by long-continued use or practice, or by a lifelong series of observations, made or carried out by the cleverest and most enlightened men of all nations, both of the present day and of preceding generations. A pupil coming to a public school has given to him, let us say, a text-book of Geography, containing facts connected with all parts of the earth; an Atlas, giving the names and positions of thousands of places on the globe; and text-books of Ancient and Modern History, recording the principal events of the past. Are these to be thrown aside as untrustworthy because the scholar had never gone outside his own country, and had not lived in past ages? Are the eclipses, yearly predicted in our Almanacs, to be accepted as correct only by the few who are able to work out the astronomical calculations by which the results were reached? Are the facts stated in works on Physiology to be believed only by those who have themselves dissected the human body? In these and other matters—Geology, Sound, Light, Heat, physical phenomena, etc.—we do not depend on the testimony of any single individual; we act on the accumulated knowledge of the present day, derived in a large measure from past ages—in other words, on "experience."

As an example of "testimony," we find it stated in 2 Kings vi. 5 that the prophet Elisha caused an iron axe-head, which had fallen into the river Jordan, to rise to the surface and swim like a cork. Now, if we had the sworn testimony of an historical Elisha, and of all who are said to have been present, to the actual occurrence of this miracle, it would be far more probable that the prophet and his friends were mistaken, or even that they lied, than that the law of gravitation was violated. For men—even religious men, including clergymen—have been convicted of lying and deceit; but we have not one authenticated case of iron, or of any other substance whose specific gravity is greater than water, being found to swim. The explanation in the case of Elisha is that the story was fabricated after his time.

In commencing his seventh chapter our lecturer represents a sceptic among his imaginary audience as saying:—

> "You seem to have forgotten, all along, that the Bible ascribes miracles to the Devil, as well as to God. Do you not perceive that this renders all you have said in defence of the verity of Christ's miracles utterly worthless?"

To this question Mr. Cooper replies that he was not surprised to find that the author of *Supernatural Religion* had "put this forth as one of his earliest and strongest arguments"; and then he quotes several paragraphs from that work, which conclude with the following:—

> "Even if the reality of the Miracles could be substantiated, their value as evidence for the divine revelation is destroyed by the necessary admission that Miracles are not limited to one source; but that there are miracles Satanic which are to be disbelieved, as well as divine and evidential."

This "bold language," our lecturer says, he read "with sorrow, but without surprise," and he then refers to the reasonings on this subject of "the great Samuel Clarke," of Bishop Fleetwood, and of "other great divines." The "reasoner," however, whose "thinkings" seemed to him most sound was Hugh Farmer, who wrote "a little more than a hundred years" before his own time. Farmer's *Dissertation on Miracles* our lecturer considered far sounder than one written by Archbishop Trench, of his own day. According to Cooper and Farmer, "Miracles are the peculiar works of God.....Whether God works the miracles Himself alone, or whether He enables and commissions others to work them, there is equally a divine interposition." These two great thinkers flatly deny that miracles are represented in the Bible as wrought by the power of Satan. Says Mr. Cooper:—

> "In the compass of 260 pages of rich scholarship and clear reasoning, Farmer disposes of all sorts of objections of a minor description, and then comes to the three crucial cases—The Magicians of Egypt, the Witch of Endor, and our Lord's Temptation in the wilderness."

How Farmer "disposed" of these is not stated; but Cooper disposes of two out of the three at once. "We will reserve," he says, "all discussion respecting Christ's temptation until we get farther on." Of the Witch of Endor he says: "She was an impostor, and therefore was affrighted when she saw Samuel,

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who miraculously appeared to Saul—not by her power, but by God's own appointment."

The consideration of the Magicians of Egypt forms the subject of the eighth chapter, in which Mr. Cooper professes to look "fully and fairly at the scripture history of the Plagues of Egypt, and of the deliverance of the Israelites from their Egyptian bondage." It is almost needless to say that both these events are assumed to be historical. As to the Bible statement that the Magicians of Egypt, in the first two plagues, "did so with their enchantments," our lecturer asserts that this means that they "did so with their juggleries"; for, he says, "they were not assisted by Satanic power: all they did was to play the part of low, paltry dissemblers and jugglers." And in proof of this assertion he quotes the following extract from Sharpe's *History of Egypt*:—

> "The magicians of Egypt, when they opposed Moses before Pharaoh, attempted to work whatever miracles he worked, and in some cases with apparent success. And at the present day their successors are still performing the same curious trick. The Egyptian juggler takes up in his hand the Naja, a small viper, and pressing a finger upon the nape of its neck, puts it into a catalepsy, which makes it motionless and stiff, like a rod; and when it regains its power of motion, the bystanders fancy that the magician's rod has been changed into a serpent."

Just so; and now we know how Moses and Aaron did the trick—or were supposed to have done it. For, assuming Sharpe's story to be true, no one can deny that Moses and Aaron, who had lived at least forty years in Egypt, would be able to do the trick quite as cleverly as Pharaoh's magicians. In concluding this portion of his "verity," Mr. Cooper says: "We have considered earnestly, and I trust conclusively, the unfoundedness of the aspersion that the Bible ascribes miracles to Satan as well as to God"—which statement, he assumes, ought to settle the matter. But in this he is mistaken. We have first to take into consideration passages like the following:—

> Job ii. 6, 7.—"The Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; only spare his life. So Satan went forth.....and *smote Job with sore boils* from the sole of his foot unto his crown."
>
> Rev. xii. 9.—"And the great Dragon was cast down, the old Serpent, he that is called the Devil and Satan, *the deceiver* of the whole world."
>
> Rev. xii. 15.—"the Serpent *cast out of his mouth water as a river* after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the stream."
>
> Rev. xiii. 4, 13.—"And they worshiped the Dragon *which gave power* unto the beast.....And *he doeth great wonders*, so that he maketh the fire come down from heaven upon the earth in the sight of men. And he deceived them.....by *the miracles which he had power to do*."
>
> Rev. xvi. 14—"for they are spirits of demons *working miracles*," etc.
>
> 2 Thess. ii. 9.—"he whose coming is according to the working of Satan, with *all power and signs and lying wonders*," etc.
>
> 2 Cor. xi. 14.—"for even Satan himself *transforms himself* into an angel of light."
>
> Acts xvi. 16—18.—"a certain maid having *a spirit* of divination.....Paul said to the spirit, I charge thee .....to come out of her."
>
> Matt. xxiv. 24—"There shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show *great signs and wonders*; so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect."
>
> Luke xiii. 11, 16—"a woman which had a *spirit* of infirmity.....bowed together, and could in no way lift herself up.....whom *Satan hath bound*.....lo these eighteen years."
>
> Matt. ix. 32, 33.—"a dumb man possessed with a *demon*. And when the demon was *cast out*, the dumb man spake."

From the foregoing, and many other passages, there can be no doubt that Satan and his army *are* represented as working miracles. In the last two examples the evil spirit within the woman had the power to keep her in a crouched position; in the second case the demon, by the exercise of his power, was able to prevent the man speaking: in each case the casting out of the "unclean spirit" restored the possessed persons to their normal condition. It should also be stated that the Greek word *semeion*, translated "sign" in some of the foregoing passages, is used in describing miracles of Jesus in the Gospels (*e.g.*, Luke xxiii. 8; John iv. 54; x. 41).

What, now, are we to say of "the *unfoundedness* of the *aspersion* that the Bible ascribes miracles to Satan as well as to God"? The passages here adduced were, of course, among those which Hugh Farmer "disposed of" in his 260 pages of "rich scholarship and clear reasoning." One paper more, and I have done with Thomas Cooper.

ABRACADABRA.

Bible Makers.—I.

EMERSON says that "the sacred books of each nation express for each the supreme result of their experience." This is undoubtedly true. By reference to the sacred writings of a people we can, to a very large extent, form a correct estimate of their intellectual and moral advancement. A Bible, in fact, should be the result of the joint labors of the best scientist, moralist, historian, poet, dramatist, and novelist of the time in which it is written.

Not that these eminent personages should collaborate to produce a book, as dramatic authors do, nowadays, a play—one supplying the plot, another the dialogue, and, in some instances, a third being called in to compose some music for a song or two for the low comedy artist to display the versatility of his talent, and in some degree to relieve the heavy character of the play; but each writer supplying, independent of the other, essays on those subjects with which he feels himself most conversant, sometimes venturing an opinion on matters upon which his knowledge is of the scantiest kind.

Moses, or whoever the author of the Pentateuch may have been, belonged to that class of versatile writers sometimes to be found on the staff of our daily journals, who feel themselves competent to write on all subjects in heaven above and earth beneath; who can, with ease, polish off an article to refute Darwin, turn Mill's logic inside out, expose its many weaknesses, and, as a light diversion, pulverise the arguments in the latest speech of Mr. Lloyd George into the most minute particles of rubbish it is possible to conceive, and with one whiff of journalistic wisdom scatter all that remains to the four winds of heaven. Accordingly, we find Moses figuring first as a scientist, then as an historian, then as a biographer; next, after bringing the children of Egypt safely through the Red Sea, as a poet; and lastly, as a great moral teacher.

Of course, it would be unreasonable to expect Moses to write ahead of the times in which he lived, whatever they were, unless, like the theologian, we credit him with being divinely inspired—a claim which, as far as I can judge, he never put forward on his own behalf.

When Moses, on his own responsibility, made Jahveh create the earth in six days, throw into the infinite expanse the sun, moon, and stars, and finally make man and woman after his own image, he merely reflected the current beliefs of the best informed persons of his time. Had he done more than this he would not have succeeded in pleasing the people for whom he wrote, and to be a successful man even in one's own day is no small task; it is indeed to gain a position after which many strive very arduously, but which few manage to attain. To be successful through the ages, to win the admiration of the people as they increase in wisdom and goodness, is given only to a few men of rare genius, whose works shed imperishable lustre upon the nation in which they are born, only that it may spread through various sources to all the peoples of the earth.

"Sufficient for the day is the success thereof" is the motto of most men of the world. A popular dramatist of my acquaintance, upon being spoken to by a friend, some time ago, upon the unenduring

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character of his work, and asked why he did not consider the judgment posterity would pronounce upon it, caustically replied: "What do I care for posterity? Posterity does not pay me." And Moses and others among the Biblical writers regarded posterity with the same air of supercilious disregard, having seemingly much more care for the certain popularity of the hour than the enduring regard of subsequent generations. Not alone in his unscientific disquisitions did Moses show that he did not possess an idea above the common prevailing sentiments of the Jewish people, but he told them to act towards slaves and blasphemers in precisely the way we may fairly suppose they would have chosen to act when left to be guided by their own uncultivated feelings and judgment. He told them to buy slaves "of the heathen round about them," and to brutally ill-treat them if it pleased them so to do. He commanded them not to "suffer a witch to live" and to barbarously stone blasphemers to death.

Mahomet, in establishing a new religion, many years later, was equally careful in the Koran (chapter entitled "The Cow") to warn his followers of the fate of unbelievers, who, he said, would not believe, whether they were admonished or not.

In his poetical efforts Moses was singularly tame; he sang not the song of love or labor, but of strife and warfare; it lacked the true poetic ring. But if his poetry was bad, his history was worse. When he records the doings of the Israelites, even though he himself is Commander-in-chief, priest, and deliverer, he writes a comedy of errors which at last degenerates into the broadest of farce. His tragic seriousness is drily and unconsciously humorous; so much so that I can fancy the late Mr. Compton causing shouts of merriment over the solemn delivery of Moses' inimitably grotesque account of the plagues.

Even when he is describing such a sad and shameful occurrence as the Flood—a God-wrought crime unparalleled in the world for its vindictiveness and cruelty—he gives Noah the stupendous task of collecting all the animals prior to packing them as "close as herrings" in the ark, and the tragedy is unnecessarily delayed while this unspeakably comic business is enacted.

As to Moses' biographical sketches, they are sadly wanting in many important respects. He does not give us a particle of information concerning the earlier life of Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob, though we should be much better able to estimate their qualities if we knew how they were trained, who were their instructors and companions, and what were the social conditions by which they were surrounded. He gives us an account of such unimportant affairs as the quarrels of Abraham's and Lot's servants, of Jacob's dream, and the angel's acrobatic performances on the ladder; but of the career of the magnanimous Esau he supplies us only with the faintest possible outline.

As a writer of unconsciously grotesque and amusing narrative, Moses was, perhaps, the equal of any of the Biblical writers. Nothing can surpass in this respect the story of Balaam's visit to Balak on the talkative donkey, except, perhaps, the account of his own death and burial. But, taken altogether, in spite of its many imperfections of style and its ludicrous stories, its tales of vice and crime and bloodshed, the Pentateuch is exceedingly interesting reading, especially to the Freethinker, who, discarding the silly notion of Divine inspiration, is better able to estimate its true value as indicating the moral and intellectual advancement of a people who, though they plume themselves on being "the chosen people of God," have been the most unfortunate among the races of men.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

Little Clarence: "Pa!" Mr. Callipers: "Eh!" Little Clarence: "Pa, does a woman preacher kiss the bride or the groom after marrying 'em?"

A MIRACLE DEFINED.

There's Mick M'Brierty, he has bothered the life out of ould Priest M'Guire for an explanation of how a miracle can be wrought; and he couldn't have come to a better hand, for it's his raverence that has got the larning, the logic, the metaphysics, the faith, and a big share of the practice that's necessary to distinguish between what's natural and what's supernatural. And, in troth, it's no child's play a clargyman has when he begins to chop up logic to a boy with a head on him like a hatter's block, and that doesn't know a B from a bull's fut; it's just another case of dropping your pearls in the pig market. But his raverence took a good, old-fashioned homely way of explaining to Mick; for you know there's a deal of people in the world whose feelings are more to be depended on than their judgments. So his raverence told Mick to stand up and step to the door, and, as he moved off, he gave him a tight lifter with the toe of his boot, asking him at the same time if he felt that! Mick turned round, with a lip on him like a motherless foal, and said, "Begorra! I rather think I do." "Well," said his raverence, "it would have been a miracle if you hadn't." So Mick's faith is confirmed, but he says he'll study no more at the seat of larning.

The squire's son had just been ordained, and on the following Sunday he was to take the morning service in his native village. He was a young man, and very nervous; however, he did his best, and returned to the vestry, having accomplished the service to his own satisfaction. "I think I got through the service without a mistake, John," he remarked to the old clerk, who was helping him off with his surplice. "It was first rate, Master Dick," said the old man, with enthusiasm; "I don't know as I ever heard it better done." After a pause he added: "But the old parson, he never gives us the evening service of a morning!"

One fine Sunday morning a tourist arrived at a kirk in Argyleshire, intending to enter for the English service as soon as the Gaelic was over. "Is the Gaelic service over?" he inquired of the beadle. "No; but it will not be very long." So the tourist strolled on into the churchyard, where the tombstones lay deep in the long grass. By-and-bye he was recalled by the shouts of the beadle, who stood at the door waving to him. "But is the Gaelic service over?" he asked once more. "Oh, ay! it will be over." "But I have not seen the congregation; which way did it go?" The beadle directed his attention to a solitary figure slowly wending his way up the hill, and said, "That's him."

A sky-pilot, seeing a carpenter at work, who boasted of his skill, said, "Do you think you could make me a devil?" "Why, yes," said the man. "Put up your foot; you want the least alteration of any man I ever saw."

Rev. Dr. Primrose: "This is the first time I've seen you in church in over a year, Sambo. I'm glad you have reformed this blessed Thanksgiving season."

Sambo: "Yis, sah, I'se feel thankful to de Lord that he didn't let dat spring-gun go off las' night."

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CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 6, A. D. Howell Smith, B.A., "Christianity, the Slave, and the Worker."

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.30, a Lecture. Derby-road, Ponders End (opposite "Two Brewers"): Wednesday, August 5, at 7.30, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, Mr. Hope, "What is Religion?" 7.30, R. Miller, "Charles Bradlaugh's Fight in the House of Commons."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Finsbury Park): 11.30, Mr. Rowney, a Lecture. Parliament Hill: 3.30, Mr. Minton, a Lecture. Regent's Park (near the Fountain): 3.30, Mr. Hope, a Lecture.

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THE
Freethinker
Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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The poet's verse slides into the current of our blood. We read them when young; we remember them when old.
—WILLIAM HAZLITT.

The War of Wars.

"What fools these mortals be."
—SHAKESPEARE.

"And all our yesterday's have lighted fools
The way to dusty death." —SHAKESPEARE.

THE first common characteristic of men is their mortality. A genius like Shakespeare's could not miss this fact. But one could imagine even the Master hesitating about the next attribute that marks them all. With his usual felicity he hit upon the absolutely right word. It was their folly. They were fools. The exceptions were not numerous enough to justify any qualifications. And even the wisest men have *some* folly in them. Most men are far from being wise, but the wisest men are to a certain extent fools. So the one description that fitted *all* men was "fools."

It is human *folly* that keeps war going at this time of day. Carlyle said all sorts of things in his later years, but he saw the facts clearly enough in the first flash of his young genius, when he wrote *Sartor Resartus*:—

> "What, speaking in quite unofficial language, is the net-purport and upshot of war? To my own knowledge, for example, there dwell and toil, in the British village of Dumdrudge, usually some five hundred souls. From these, by certain 'Natural Enemies' of the French there are successively selected, during the French war, say thirty able-bodied men. Dumdrudge, at her own expense, has suckled and nursed them; she has, not without difficulty and sorrow, fed them up to manhood, and even trained them to crafts, so that one can weave, another build, another hammer, and the weakest can stand under thirty stone avoirdupois. Nevertheless, amid much weeping and swearing, they are selected; all dressed in red; and shipped away, at the public charges, some two thousand miles, or say only to the South of Spain; and fed there till wanted. And now to that same spot in the South of Spain are thirty similar French artisans, from a French Dumdrudge, in like manner wending; till at length, after infinite effort, the two parties come into actual juxtaposition; and Thirty stands fronting Thirty, each with a gun in his hand. Straightway the word 'Fire!' is given, and they blow the souls out of one another; and in place of sixty brisk useful craftsmen, the world has sixty dead carcases, which it must bury, and anew shed tears for. Had these men any quarrel? Busy as the Devil is, not the smallest; nay, in so wide a Universe, there was even, unconsciously, by commerce, some mutual helpfulness between them. How then? Simpleton! their Governors had fallen out; and instead of shooting one another, had the cunning to make these poor blockheads shoot."

Where there are plenty of flats, of course, there will be a numerous supply of sharpers. Man's natural taste for fighting has been fostered, not only by his governors, but by his "spiritual" advisers. Priests have been among the loudest beaters of the war-drum. Even poets, (a much higher species), when under the influence of religion, have been known to utter the most blatant nonsense. Wordsworth (but not in his youth) dared to address "God" in this fashion:—

> "But thy most dreaded instrument
> In working out a pure intent
> Is man—arrayed for mutual slaughter;
> Yea, Carnage is thy daughter."

This was splendidly answered by Shelley in "Peter Bell the Third," but the pithiest comment was made by Byron:—

> "Carnage—so Wordsworth tells us, is God's daughter;
> If *he* speak truth, she is Christ's sister."

[By the way, we suspect the accuracy of this quotation, but we have not a Byron by us at the moment, and cannot check it—though we are sure it does not misrepresent the original.]

Christianity has governed Europe for ever so many centuries; governed it by something stronger than physical force,—by moulding the child's mind, and practising upon the future hopes and fears of adults. And this is what it has brought us to! The great Christian nations are flying at each other's throats. It is something like the prophesied Armageddon. And their "God," if he answers their mutually antagonistic prayers at all, may act upon one of the promises in his own book, which they appear to have forgotten:—

> "I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind.....then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer" (Proverbs i. 26-28).

Anyhow, here we are, after nearly two thousand years of "peace on earth, and good will towards men," with nearly all the foremost nations Christian, and most of them hating each other, and rushing into a ghastly war of such colossal proportions as the world has never hitherto seen.

Meanwhile the "unspeakable" Turk drinks his coffee and smokes his cigarette or hookah, and smiles at the Christians who were always reading him lessons or interfering more practically with his business. He looked forward to this. He knew them better than they knew themselves. He understood the worth of their fine maxims and the value of their noble professions. They were always putting *his* house in order. Now it will take them all their time to look after their own.

"There's to be war" shouted a crowd of fools gleefully at the bandstand on the front of a popular seaside town on Monday evening as the strains of "Rule, Britannia!" the "Marseillaise" and "God Save the King" streamed on the summer air. They rejoiced! But those who know what war is, and were shocked at the prospect of all Europe being engaged in it, felt almost inclined to cry with Shakespeare's Northumberland:—

> "Let heaven kiss earth! Now let not Nature's hand
> Keep the wild flood confined! Let order die!
> And let this world no longer be a stage
> To feed Contention in a lingering act;
> But let one spirit of the first-born Cain
> Reign in all bosoms, that, each heart being set
> On bloody courses, the rude scene may end,
> And darkness be the burier of the dead!"

Christianity is at once too good, so to speak, and too bad for mankind. Its evil teaching has filled the world with humiliation and misery. Its good teaching is of the impossible kind. It aims at too much and hits nothing. "Love your enemies" is an impracticable maxim. Confucius taught the better plan of giving them justice. G. W. FOOTE.

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Liverpool and the Slave Trade.

THE stock claim that Christianity abolished slavery is still urged by all classes of Christian apologists, and in other directions many writers in the course of their historical or sociological studies repeat the claim, obviously without ever having troubled to test its accuracy. The mere persistence of slavery in Christian countries until a very modern date should alone be enough to show the falsity of such a statement. True, vague generalisations concerning the equality of mankind may be cited from Christian writers, but as the same may be cited from non-Christian writers and pre-Christian writers, the honors are here equal. True, also, that slavery existed in pre-Christian times contemporary with teachings that, apparently, made for the destruction of slavery, but it also continued to exist in Christian times—and under worse conditions—so that the claim that Christianity either abolished slavery or bettered the condition of the slave is again negatived. Moreover, wherever Christian people went they carried slavery with them, as, for example, the early North American settlers, who established slavery in a land where it was previously non-existent. And, finally, it has to be always borne in mind that the modern African slave trade, which most people have in mind when they talk about slavery, was of Christian creation. It was begun by Christians, carried on by Christians, and if some Christians at last worked for its abolition, it was the opposition of other Christians that made their work necessary and difficult.

Some years ago I wrote a couple of articles in the *Freethinker* dealing exclusively with the relations of the Methodist Church to slavery, in which I showed that its members were among its most enthusiastic supporters. On the present occasion I purpose dealing exclusively with the Christian City of Liverpool, one of the strongest centres of the British slave trade. This has been suggested by a recent article in the *Syren*—a journal devoted to the shipping interests. The anonymous writer of the article appears to have derived his information—although he fails to make due acknowledgment—from a work on *The Liverpool Slave Trade*, by a writer who veils himself under the pen-name of "Dicky Sam." But both writers leave much unsaid that deserves to be said, and it is partly to make these necessary additions that I am now writing.

It must, of course, be borne in mind that the English slave trade did not originate with either Liverpool or the other slave port, Bristol. The buying and selling of slaves has existed in all stages of English history. Green, in spite of his obvious Christian bias, is compelled to record that the Church promoted emancipation on all estates but its own, and there was a very obvious policy in the Church advising other landowners to liberate their slaves. So also he points out that in the time of Henry the Second, Ireland was filled with Englishmen that had been kidnapped and sold into slavery, while more than one great English noble during the Middle Ages added to his wealth by breeding slaves for the market. No one felt that in so doing he was outraging either the spirit or the letter of Christian teaching, and whatever the Church may have advised as a matter of policy in particular cases, it never denounced slavery as un-Christian or anti-Christian.

The English participation in the Black Slave Trade—inaugurated after the discovery of North and South America—dates from the time of Elizabeth. A monopoly of the slave traffic had originally been granted to the Belgians; but it was afterwards acquired by the Genoese, who shared it with other nations. All this was with the direct sanction of the Christian Church. "She," says Lecky, "reorganised the accursed institution of slavery on a gigantic scale, and in a form that was, in some respects, worse than any that had before existed." Sir John Hawkins was the first Englishman to engage in the traffic. One of his ships was supplied by Queen Elizabeth, who eagerly pocketed her share of the profits, while salving her conscience with advice concerning the traffic which she perfectly well knew was unheeded.

The next important step in the history of the English slave trade came with the revocation of the monopoly of Assiento Company in 1698, which threw open the African trade. From that date the traffic advanced by leaps and bounds, and it was evidently considered of great importance, as it was specially stipulated in the treaty of Utrecht (1713) that England should be allowed to supply her own colonies with slaves, and also the Spanish-American colonies. For some years the two ports engaged in the slave trade were London and Bristol. Gradually, Bristol—always a very pious city—took the lead over the metropolis. At the commencement of the eighteenth century, London had over a hundred vessels in the African slave trade. About five years later only fifty, and a little later only thirty. On the other hand, from 1701 to 1732, the number of ships that left Bristol for the slave coast, annually averaged about sixty.

The first slave vessel that left the Mersey was in 1709, and carried only fifteen slaves from Africa to the West Indies. But the profits—judging from the rapid increase in the traffic—must have been very great, for by 1714, only five years later, more than half the vessels engaged in the trade belonged to Liverpool, and it was calculated that Liverpool ships imported three-sevenths of all the slaves carried by Europeans. The following figures were soon after officially laid before the House of Commons, detailing the number of slaves imported from Africa by the subjects of various European States—Great Britain 88,000, Holland 4,000, Portugal 10,000 Denmark 2,000, France 20,000—thus giving slightly more than half to Christian England. Later in the century, the figures appear to have undergone an increase. Thus, in 1795, one-fourth of the ships belonging to the port of Liverpool were engaged in the slave trade, the actual increase being from 15 ships in 1730, to 136 in 1792. The traffic underwent a still greater increase prior to its abolition. From January, 1806, to May, 1807, no less than 185 Liverpool owned slave vessels left Africa with a slave-carrying capacity of nearly 50,000.

I have said above that the traffic yielded enormous profits. The actual cost of a slave on the West Coast of Africa—the cost, that is, to secure; because a very large part of the business was pure kidnapping—ranged from £15 to £35. The selling price would be anything from £50 to £100, depending upon the age, health, and general condition of the "goods." The net gain on the slave traffic appears to have been upward of 60 per cent. From a contemporary calculation, cited by "Dicky Sam," we learn that in 1786, "The own of Liverpool returned a net profit of £298,462 sterling, and that during eleven years the gains on 303,737 slaves was £2,361,455 6s. 1d., or, on an average, two hundred and fourteen thousand, six hundred and seventy-seven pounds, fifteen shillings, and one penny per annum." It is small wonder that G. F. Cooke, the tragedian, on being hissed by a Liverpool audience, retorted "I have not come here to be insulted by a set of wretches, of which every brick in your infernal town has been cemented by an African's blood."

At the commencement of the British slave trade there does not appear to have been any regulations concerning the carrying of slaves. It was, on the face of it, to the owner's interest to lose as few slaves as possible by death, and to get them to their journey's end in as good a condition as possible. But the obviously sensible course in such matters does not appear to have been always—perhaps not generally—followed, and legislation on the subject appears. A ship of 300 tons was allowed to carry 600 slaves, with a crew of 50. But these regulations seem to have been only nominal. Thus the work from which I have already quoted gives the actual dimensions of a famous slave ship, the *Brooks*, with a large folding plate illustrating the stowing of the slaves. The

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vessel was of 297 tons, and was allowed to carry 450 persons. As a matter of fact, she had carried 351 men, 127 women, 90 boys, and 41 girls—a total of 609. The length of the lower deck on which the slaves were carried was only 100 ft., and in this space the slaves were packed without regard for health or decency. It was customary, says the writer in the *Syren*, to allow 6 ft. by 1 ft. 4 in. for a man, 5 ft. by 1 ft. 4 in. for a woman, 5 ft. by 1 ft. 2 in. for a boy, and 4 ft. 6 in. by 1 ft. for a girl. Had they been measured for coffins, not much less space could have been allowed; and coffins these ships often were. In fact, in some cases it was only possible for the slaves to lie down to sleep by arranging them alternately head to feet.

> "So close were they, you could not walk without treading on them; but they were only slaves. One kind-hearted sailor, when passing over them, would remove his shoes, so as not to hurt them. So close and foul was the stench arising from the negroes, they have been known to be put down the hold strong and healthy at night, and have been dead in the morning. A trader stated that, after remaining ten minutes in the hold, his shirt was as wet as if it had been in a bucket of water."

In the case of one Liverpool ship, the *Thomas*, carrying 630 slaves, 100 died on the voyage; but as the remaining 530 sold at Jamaica at £60 per head, the owners were doubtless well satisfied with the trip. In some cases, however, the mortality was much greater—running to fifty out of every hundred. All the slaves were not sold abroad; some were disposed of in Liverpool. Thus, an old *Liverpool Chronicle* advertises:—

> "A fine negro boy, to be sold by auction. He is eleven years of age; the auction will take place at the Merchant's Coffee House, Old Church Yard. By order of Mr. Thomas Yates, who hath imported him from Bonney."

The *Liverpool Advertiser* (of 1765) also announces:—

> "To be sold by auction, at George's Coffee House, betwixt the hours of six and eight o'clock, a very fine negro girl, about 8 years of age; very healthy."

Also, under date of September 8, 1766:—

> "To be sold, at the Exchange Coffee House, Water-street, at one o'clock precisely, eleven negroes, imported per the *Angola*."

In the colonial papers long lists of runaway slaves were advertised, most of them branded like so many cattle. The following will serve as specimens: "Robert, R.P. on each cheek, and Kingston, marked *Yorke* on each shoulder and breast." Another is branded with "a cattle mark." "An old woman with her two sons and two daughters, one of them very big child." One man is to be recognised by his having had "both ears cropt"; another by having had "his nose and ears cut off." Another advertisement runs, "Escaped on Sunday last with a chain and collar round his neck a negro man, marked T.Y." Another, after carefully describing a runaway slave girl, concludes by saying, "Whoever will apprehend the said wench, alive or dead, receive two moidores reward from Joseph Charles Howard."

C. COHEN.

Tutiorism.

STRANGE terms, expressive of strange opinions, abound in Christian theology. Tutiorism, for example, is by no means a pretty and attractive word, nor is the doctrine for which it stands morally reliable; and yet Tutiorism has the official sanction of the Holy See. The word is formed from *tutior*, the comparative of *tutus*, which means safe, sure. A man may believe that a certain action is morally right, and yet may refrain from committing it if convinced that the commission will lead him to the brink of danger or disaster, or he may be of opinion that a specific line of conduct is in itself bad, but that in some circumstances he may pursue it without incurring any real guilt. Equivocation is never indulged in except for the purpose of deceit, but Liguori taught "that it is lawful for a just cause to use equivocation, and to confirm it with an oath." If a lie will serve the good cause better than the truth, then it is permissible to lie. If the motive is noble, almost any deed that springs from it is justifiable. A criminal makes a full confession to a priest, who may deny on oath that he possesses any knowledge whatever of the crime. An accused or a witness, if irregularly questioned by the judge in court, may swear that he knows nothing of a crime of which in truth he has intimate knowledge. If a man is needy, he may make away with property due to his creditors, and assure the judge that he has nothing. We are informed that "men and women servants may secretly pilfer from their employers to compensate themselves for their work, which they account as of more value than the wages they receive." This proposition was censured by the Pope, but the casuists managed to safeguard in various ways the principle therein enunciated. A promise is binding only when confirmed with an oath or a formal document, in the absence of which it may be considered a mistake or a jest.

The above are a few of the casuistical cases discussed in Liguori's *Moral Theology*. This divine flourished in a period (1696-1787) when multitudes of people were alienated from the Church, and maintained an attitude of utter indifference and coldness towards religion itself. It was Liguori's belief that the teachings of the rigorists were calculated to drive the laity further away still from what he regarded as the truth of God. He wanted to win them back by means of gentleness and leniency. As Mr. Littledale puts it:—

> "He professed to steer a middle course between errors of laxity and severity in moral teaching, and fully believed himself to have done so, yet in fact such a treatment was impossible to one who viewed the question as he did. For, while he regarded errors on the side of laxity as pardonable mistakes committed through excess of zeal in winning over penitents, contrariwise he looked on the stricter method of the rigorists, who upheld a loftier morality, as not merely inexpedient, but as positively and intentionally evil, as designed to make religion odious by making it impossible, and so to prepare the way for the triumph of unbelief. He identified all teaching of the sort with Jansenism, and Jansenism, from its resistance to various pontifical decrees, seemed to him all but equivalent to Atheism" (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. xiv., pp. 635-6).

It follows from the above extract, as Mr. Littledale himself points out, that the line Liguori "draws is not, what he probably thought it, an intermediate one between rigorism and laxity, but between a greater and a lesser degree of laxity." What, then, is Tutiorism? In the same gentleman's words, this:—

> "When a doubt arises as to the binding force of some divine or human precept in any given case, it is permissible to abandon the opinion in favor of obedience to the law—technically known as the 'safe' (tuta) opinion, for that which favors non-compliance, provided this laxer opinion be 'probable.'"

Thus we see that Tutiorism was a device to make the confessional a centre of attraction, and so draw the people back into the Catholic Church, which had been so seriously weakened by the Protestant Reformation. It was an attempt to accommodate the moral law, as conceived by the ecclesiastical authorities, to the requirements of the new times with their altered conditions. The Jesuits felt that no stone should be left unturned in the endeavor to recover the ground already lost. Opinions were, of course, most important, but it was given out that a layman could not be disciplined for following any opinion that had the sanction of even one doctor of divinity. Indeed, the confessor was instructed to assure him that he was guiltless, and would receive the heartiest welcome on his return to the Holy Mother Church. It is a well-known fact that Christianity is the most accommodating of all religions. Her rites and ceremonies, as well as dogmas, are amazingly adaptable. She makes herself all things to all men in the hope of securing their allegiance.

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Reconstruction is a process that she is perpetually undergoing. The interpretations of the so-called sayings of Jesus are countless, and scarcely any two of them agree. If Jesus were to return to life he would be completely astounded at the extraordinary statements made in his name by those who call themselves his servants. Her champions are not aware, however, that Christianity, like everything else, is subject to the law of evolution. For many centuries she kept slowly ascending towards the zenith of her power, where she remained for a long period, ruling with a rod of iron over every department of human life, and then, with the revival of letters and the birth of modern science, she began, very slowly at first, to descend towards death and the grave. She is now in a state of senile decay, tottering to her end, a fact which her professional defenders are exceedingly loath to recognise.

In the *Church Times* a series of articles has recently appeared on the validity of clerical orders, or holy orders as Anglicans call them. Among the writers are the Revs. T. A. Lacey and Dr. Wotherspoon, the former representing Anglicanism and the latter Presbyterianism. Dr. Wotherspoon has "no hesitation in assenting to the validity of Anglican Orders," while Mr. Lacey has the hardihood to declare that "there is no sufficient certainty that Presbyterian ministers are validly ordained." But what connection is there between the validity of ordination and Tutiorism? Here is Mr. Lacey's answer:—

> "Tutiorism is the judgment that some things of doubtful necessity must be done for the sake of assurance.....There are two reasons for the judgment. In the first place, the thing in doubt may be required by Divine appointment. In the second place, a sacrament being a pledge of assurance, the thing in doubt must be provided because some will not be assured without it; we must do what seems to be necessary. So only can we have that certainty of the bestowal of grace which a sacrament is intended to convey. It follows that a thing which theologians know to be not strictly necessary may rightly be required by the practical judgment of the Church for the sake of the less instructed."

Now, what is the thing of doubtful necessity which must be required to have the certainty of the bestowal of grace through a sacrament? The celebration of the sacrament by a validly ordained minister. Mr. Lacey fails to find "sufficient certainty that Presbyterian ministers are validly ordained." That is to say, they lack episcopal ordination, with the result that if Mr. Lacey were to receive the communion from one of them no Divine grace would flow into his heart. This is the reason why there can never be intercommunion between the Anglican and Scottish Churches. Well, is there sufficient certainty that Mr. Lacey is validly ordained? We challenge him to produce it. Was St. Paul validly ordained? It is not on record that he was ordained at all. There is ample certainty that he was not episcopally ordained. Furthermore, the largest Church in the world is fully convinced that there is no sufficient certainty of the validity of the ordination of Anglican ministers. The controversy is irresistibly laughable, the fact being that all religious ordinations are alike farcical, and the bestowal of grace through a sacrament a figment of the fancy. The reverend gentlemen are engaged in a vain controversy over mere shadows. The Pope denies the validity of all non-Catholic ordinations, the Archbishop of Canterbury admits the validity of Catholic orders, but repudiates that of the ordination of Nonconformist ministers, while we regard all ordinations as deceitful ceremonies. Such is our position, and neither the Pope of Rome nor the Archbishop of Canterbury is in possession of a single fact that discredits it. All religious rites and ceremonies are nothing but vain shows, doing nobody any good whatever.

Tutiorism is a theological absurdity which has never been of service to any Church. Whether we take the word in Mr. Lacey's sense, or whether we apply it to the moral teaching of Liguori, it has no use at all for us. As Mr. Lacey admits, it would be difficult to invent an uglier word, or one formed etymologically on a worse model, and without a moment's hesitation we dismiss both it and what it stands for.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Origin of Supernatural Ideas.—III.

(*Continued from p. 486*)

> "Not only is Fetish or Shamanism the real religion of criminals, but of vast numbers who are not suspected of it. There is not a town in England or in Europe in which witchcraft is not extensively practised. The prehistoric man exists, he is still to be found everywhere by millions, he will cling to the old witchcraft of his ancestors, the only form in which he can realise supernaturalism will be by means of superstition. Research and reflection have taught us that this sorcery is far more widely extended than any person dreams. It would seem as if by some strange process, while advanced scientists are occupied in eliminating magic from religion, the coarser mind is actually busy in reducing it to religion only."—C. G. LELAND, *Gipsy Sorcery* (1891), p. 13.
>
> "In civilised society most educated people are not even aware of the extent to which these relics of savage ignorance survive at their doors."
>
> "If we examine the superstitious beliefs which are tacitly held by many of our fellow-countrymen, we shall find, perhaps to our surprise, that it is precisely the oldest and crudest superstitions which are most tenacious of life, while views which, though also erroneous, are more modern and refined, soon fade from the popular memory."—PROFESSOR J. G. FRAZER, *Psyche's Task*, pp. 169-170.

AS Professor Leuba remarks:—

> "It is well known that long before a child asks 'how?' he wearies his guardians with the question, 'what for?' He wants to know what things are good for, and, in particular, what *he* can do with them before he cares for an understanding of their origin and of their mechanism."*

In like manner, primitive man was more occupied in finding out what things were good for, than the origin of them. We picture primitive man, says Guyau as "perpetually endeavoring to satisfy a restless curiosity. Unhappily, if we are to trust our experience of the lower races of man, it appears that the sentiment of curiosity decreases directly as one approaches the savage state."†

As Mr. Edward Clodd remarks, in his valuable little book on *Animism*, "We are beset behind and before with the impossibility of putting ourselves in man's place at the period when, of necessity, he looked on nature with other eyes than ours."‡

There was no natural, or supernatural, for primitive man. We know that things do not happen by chance or haphazard. We know that there is a natural explanation of a storm, or an earthquake, or an eclipse of the moon, and so forth. But primitive man, like the animal, knew nothing of this. He had no idea of natural causation. Anything might happen, and he would accept it just as the animal does. If it was alarming, he would fear it, in the same manner. To cite Mr. Clodd again, who, dealing with the "barbaric intelligence," observes:—

> "A Zulu well expressed its limitations to one of the most sympathetic and discerning of missionaries, the late Bishop Callaway, in these words: 'Our knowledge does not urge us to search out the roots of it, we do not try to see them; if anyone thinks over so little, he soon gives it up, and passes on to what he sees with his eyes, and he does not understand the real state of even what he sees.'"§

Although the animal, like man, as we have seen, has a sense of the uncanny, and the fear of the unknown, which is the germ of the supernatural, yet the limitations of its reasoning powers and the absence of language to express abstract concepts, prevents it from evolving any definite supernatural ideas. As Mr. King justly remarks, "As far as we can judge, no animal has any idea of luck, or ill-luck, as abstract conceptions; certainly, no animal utilises amulets."‖ It is here that man begins to

* J. H. Leuba, *The Psychological Origin and the Nature of Religion*, p. 59.
† Guyau, *The Non-Religion of the Future*, p. 51.
‡ Clodd, *Animism*, p. 48.
§ Clodd, *Animism*, p. 29.
‖ J. H. King, *The Supernatural*, vol. i., p. 89.

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diverge from the animal, and takes the first step towards the evolution of those supernatural ideas that have been, and are now, a curse and a hindrance to his progress. We believe that Mr. King is right when he contends that the idea of luck was the first form in which primitive man arrived at the idea of the supernatural. He speaks of it as "an inherent organic, or if we will, mental attribute," and declares "A man, as ordinarily formulated, can no more withhold the sentiment of luck from an object than he can the image of its visual presentation."* And, further:—

> "Forms of luck, therefore, are the earliest germs of religion; they are the basis of all religions."
>
> "Baal had his thousands and Yahveh his ten thousands, but luck reigns triumphant in the souls of myriads. It was so in the past, it is so in the present, it is denoted in the attire, it is indirectly indicated in trifles, in amulets, in objects for seeming use, but really retained as bringing good luck."
>
> "The concept of luck might have existed had no ghost presentation ever occurred, no spirit sentiment been ever evolved, or the capacity to conceive the ghost theory been ever dormant in the human mind. .....It is the only form of faith that is essentially individual; it knows no church or priest, its only temple the mind of its presenter, to which all things and all thoughts may be ministering powers" (pp. 91, 99, 97).

In opposition to Dr. Tylor, the same writer points out:—

> "No one ever prays to an amulet, no one treats the lucky stone as having a will, no one supposes that the curative material, whether a medicine or a charm, has any choice in the matter. Yet all these impersonal powers or attributes are classed by Dr. Tylor with, and as, ghost manifestations."

Lubbock and Spencer, as the same writer complains, also ignore the priority of luck. For them, the beginning of religion is the birth of the ghost. There is no indwelling spirit in a charm, amulet, or lucky stone; as Mr. King points out, "like a piece of coal it might lie inert in the earth to no end of time and only exhibit its active or presumed virtue when man utilised it." But when man had evolved the idea of luck, his feet were on the road leading to fetishes, idols, and gods. To cite Mr. King again, "Luck never needs the help of medicine-man or priest, it is only a self-influence; it was so when the savage had no spiritual concepts; it is so now. The man who turns the peak of his cap, changes his seat, or calls for a new pack of cards, expecting thereby to change his luck, is his own high priest in the oldest faith in the world. Such men rarely conceive of ghosts, never see apparitions, and have no knowledge of the interposition of Providence." And he cites St. Chrysostom as saying:—

> "This or that man was the first to meet me when I walked out, consequently innumerable ills will certainly befall me; that confounded servant of mine in giving me my shoes handed me the left shoe first; this indicates dire calamity and insults. As I stepped out, I started the left foot foremost; this, too, was a sign of misfortune; my right eye twitched upwards as I went out, this portends tears."

And, again, "Equally pregnant sentiments of luck influence all savage people." Dorman, in his *Primitive Superstitions*, writes:—

> "Among hunting tribes, the cawing of a crow at night would cause a large party of warriors to run for home and give up an expedition. The Comanches said the wolf warned them of danger: if one sprang up before them in their journeys and barked or hooted, they would turn aside and travel no more in that direction that day."†

"Among the northern tribes," says the same writer, "the march is regulated by a sorcerer, according to good or bad omens." The savage, through his ignorance of the uniformity of law, is continually making wrong inferences. Among ourselves, as our education proceeds, we get to know, more or less, "what sort of things may be inferred and what may not," says Professor Clifford:—

> "An observer of scientific mind takes note of just those things from which inferences may be drawn, and passes by the rest. If an astronomer, observing the sun, were to record the fact that at the moment when a sun spot began to shrink there was a rap at the front door, we should know that he was not up to his work."*

These are the kind of errors primitive man is always falling into. And not only primitive man, but ordinary common sense, practical, level-headed men make the same errors to-day.

I remember hearing, in a branch of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, a society which contains the flower of the skilled workers in this country, and reckons a Cabinet Minister† among its members, a member telling us that his son was being taken by the local football team, who were paying his expenses, as a mascot, to see them play their next match, *because he had never seen them beaten*—the inference being that as he had never, through some accident or another, been a witness of their defeat, therefore the team would always be victorious while he remained a spectator. And not a member present asked in what manner that could possibly affect the result!

I have just finished reading an article in this evening's paper, entitled "Is Superstition Reviving?" in which the writer mentions the story "of a famous American lacrosse team, who for many years maintained the orphan child of a deceased player under the belief that his presence ensured them victory." And, again, "One would think that motorists of all men would rise superior to such ideas. Yet the chassis is as often as not surmounted by a 'golliwog,' a 'bilikins,' or a 'teddy-bear.'" The same writer also mentions the fact that he knew a miner "who, if he met a cross-eyed woman on his way to work, would return home." The belief in the influence of the "evil eye" still flourishes. Dr. Haddon—Cambridge Lecturer in Ethnology—observes:—

> "'Eat not the bread of him that hath an evil eye' is just as much a maxim to-day as it was in the time of Solomon, and Mr. Elworthy says‡ in Naples, at the appearance of a person having this reputation, a cry of 'Jettatore!' is passed, and even in a crowded street it causes an instantaneous vanishing of everybody—a rush up entries, into shops, or elsewhere. Ever since the establishment of the religious orders, monks have had the special reputation of possessing the fatal influence. The last Pope but one, Pius the Ninth, was firmly believed to have had the evil eye. A Roman would candidly say: 'Nothing succeeds with anybody or anything when he wishes well to it.' When he went to St. Agnese to hold a great festival, down went the floor, and the people were all smashed together. Then he visited the column to the Madonna in the Piazza di Spagna, and blessed it and the workmen; of course, one fell from the scaffold the same day and killed himself."§

His Holiness appears to have been in the painful position of those unfortunate human typhoid germ-carriers who bring the disease to others without experiencing any ill-effects themselves. As Dr. Haddon remarks, "The belief in the evil eye is not only widely spread, but extremely ancient" (p. 33). Along with luck and magic, it existed long before any of the now dominant religions were evolved, or thought of; and will survive, among the ignorant and uneducated, long after the reigning religions are as dead as the myths of Egypt and Babylon. As the microscopic foraminifera, whose tiny shells formed the vast accumulations of chalk, uncounted ages ago, still exist, active as ever, in spite of all the changes of evolution, so do these deeply rooted forms of the supernatural survive, in spite of the progress of civilisation and science. Therefore, in reply to the journalist's question, "Is superstition reviving?" we should reply "No, it has never been dead yet."

* J. H. King, *The Supernatural*, vol. i., p. 90.
† J. H. King, *The Supernatural*, pp. 97-98.

* W. K. Clifford, *Lectures and Essays*, p. 310.
† Mr. John Burns.
‡ F. J. Elworthy, *The Evil Eye* (1895), pp. 18, 107, 23, 25.
§ A. C. Haddon, *Magic and Fetishism*, pp. 34, 35.

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Nor will it ever receive its death-blow from religion, for the same ideas flourish together in the minds of millions without the slightest contradiction.

Science is the real and only antidote to superstition. There is no foothold for superstition where science reigns, in spite of the fact that some scientists profess a belief in the supernatural. For instance, an analytical chemist may be a religious man, but not through any knowledge he has gained by chemical analysis. His belief is as purely a matter of faith as that of the lowliest Salvation Army tamborine player. When the chemist enters his laboratory and closes the door, he leaves all idea of the supernatural, of luck, and magic behind him. He knows that none of these things will affect the trembling balance weighing, in vacuum, to fractions of a grain. In like manner, the astronomer who tells us to a second, years in advance, when there will be an eclipse of the sun, knows that the most fervent prayer, or the most piteous supplication will have no effect on the issue. It is this knowledge of the inevitable reign of law which kills the spirit of superstition. It sterilises the soil from which the weeds of superstition spring.

W. MANN.

(*To be continued.*)

Renan the Rebel.

Fragments Intimes et Romanesques. Par Ernest Renan. (Paris: Calmann-Levy; 1914.)

AT that magnificent collection of French art which was shown at the Franco-British Exhibition, there was one portrait which left an ineffaceable impression upon the memories of the onlookers. It was Bonnat's portrait of Ernest Renan, a masterpiece which presented the man with absolute sincerity. The picture was a triumph of genius, for the great Freethinker lived once more upon the artist's canvas. Renan was seated, clad in the black broadcloth of the scholar, unrelieved save for the red button of distinction, and the long, unkempt, grey hair. The heavy face, the pendolous cheeks, the glassy eyes of the dreamer of dreams, the long finger-nails, all formed a perfect portrait of a rare genius.

Renan never cared for the applause of the world; but he would have smiled his kindly smile if he had known that he was the subject of a great artist's finest masterpiece. And it is pleasant to think that we have a perfect presentation of the most accomplished author and scholar of his time.

Renan's influence has been continuous since the publication of his world-famous "Vie de Jesus," in which he attempted to write the life of the young Jew whom he had served in his childhood. What a tempest the book provoked! For years it rained pamphlets. Fifteen hundred replies were published within a few months of its appearance. Whether men applauded or criticised, none could deny its power. Priests might rail and the pious might sigh, but they both have had to reckon with it. Not even the most hidebound of the commentators on the Gospel legends have written as they would have written had Renan's book never been published. It was a famous victory, for Renan's method is as fatal to religion as Strauss's analytical thoroughness. Airily and daintily the scholarly Frenchman explained away the wonder and the glamor of the Christian fables. The result was as deadly as the frontal attack of the German scholar, although Renan does with a kindly smile what Strauss does grimly. Always under the velvet glove was the gauntlet of steel. The result was decisive, for it sapped the faith of tens of thousands:—

"While we believed on earth he went
And open stood his grave,
Men called from chamber, church, and tent,
And Christ was by to save.
Now he is dead. Far hence he lies
In the lorn Syrian town,
And on his grave, with shining eyes,
The Syrian stars look down."

The man who could alter the faith of thousands was a great writer as well as a complete scholar. In many hundreds of pages Renan showed the sarcastic power of the French language in hands that can evoke its subtleties and wield its trenchant blade. In his hands it was as effective a weapon as that handled by Gibbon, although many tracts in his thousand years of history seem as if they had been made to suit the great historian who wrote amid the acacias of Lausanne. With his scientific bent on the one side, and his clerical training on the other, Renan was still at heart Voltairean. He even suggests that Jesus in Gethsemane may have looked back with a sigh to the young maidens of Galilee who, under happier circumstances, might have made his bliss. The sentiment was popular, for many sympathetic lady readers of the Gospels have lamented that the hero was not a marrying man.

Renan's own pilgrimage from Rome to Reason is told in his own incomparable language in the volume before us. "Ernest and Beatrice" is a mere outline; but in it he tells the story of the suffering he endured as he shook off his beliefs; and the series of letters addressed to his young friend, the Abbe Liart, show step by step how he lost hold of his faith. In the final struggle, he is driven to the Bible and to Pascal. In Pascal he finds that "the greatest brain that ever existed hardly dared to affirm anything." How Renan's heartstrings were tugged, for his mother was looking forward to his ordination in happy security. As he afterwards tells us in the "Souvenirs," this was the most difficult knot to unravel. "I exerted all my ingenuity," he says, "in inventing ways of proving to her that I was still the good boy as in the past. Little by little the wound healed. When she saw me still good and kind to her, as I had always been, she owned that there were several ways of being a priest, and that nothing was altered in me but my dress, which was indeed the truth."

Renan was helped, too, by his brave sister Henriette, and the touching dedication of the "Vie de Jesus" expresses in a few sentences what he owed to her. The story of his mental development he afterwards retold in "Souvenirs," but that is the memory of a man looking back upon the past, with the sadness and fragrance of the days that are no more. Even in that book the most important episodes are those referred to in the present volume. For one thing emerges from all his writings, and that is his stern honesty. Truthful in his own despite, it was this quality that laid the foundation of his maturer influence and universal understanding. The real importance of such a man as Renan will be found not so much in what he discovered, but in the processes of his quest.

In all the little ironies of literature there are few things more interesting than that Renan's favorite subjects are chosen from a race of men, as he himself remarked, as different as possible from himself. But where his theme is one of the heroes of philosophy, Marcus Aurelius or Spinoza, his eye kindles and his smile is graver. For Renan was imperturbable. Through all the charlatanisms and deviltries of superstitions he went his way humming softly to himself. Far off, the murmur of the great world sounded but dimly; but the scholar wrote his books and brought his dreams within the realm of realities well content, for he knew that he worked at the looms of the future.

MIMNERMUS.

A CANDID CLERICAL CRITIC.

The Church is at best a schoolmaster—and a snobbish schoolmaster at that, for it only whips those who are found out. It has no bearing on life; is in no sort of touch with man's inward joys. The Church of England is excessively worldly; it is birdlimed by the world, awfully social, very respectable, without an ounce of blood—only a certain amount of red ink for its parchments. In this inhuman condition it is hopeless for it to appeal to man, who, after all, is a combination of mud and angel.—*Rev. Hugh Chapman to the "Standard."*

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Acid Drops

When the Tsar called the first Peace Congress at the Hague we said that it reminded us of a Congress of Burglars considering how to diminish the costs and risks of the profession. Our view was soon justified by the Tsar's going to war with Japan. There was to have been a Peace Conference in Vienna in September, and the Emperor of Austria has anticipated it by declaring war against Servia. And they are all Christians; *all* Christians—the Turk being out of it this time; and, as a matter of fact, the Turk was the one moderating influence in the late Balkan war.

"I trust in Austria-Hungary's brave and devoted forces, and I trust in the Almighty to give the victory to my arms." Thus ended Emperor Francis Joseph's manifesto "To My People." The Tsar of Russia on the same day, looking forward to being on the opposite side in the same war, addressing some of his Army officers, said: "Trust in God and have faith in the glory and greatness of our mighty country." What bunkum on both sides! They fight each other and God fights for all of them. And whichever wins will give God some of the credit, and whichever loses will say nothing about his share in it.

The Kaiser made a similar pious appeal to the Almighty. If he were forced to draw the sword he would win "with God's help." He asked his people to "go to church, and kneel down before God and ask him for help." Poor God! with his impossible task. The old man and his ass was nothing to it.

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York have made an appeal for "suitable prayers" during "this European crisis." "We are sure," they add, "that in this grave hour all Christian citizens will be at one in the fellowship of prayer." They are all at one in the fellowship of fighting. If the Christians didn't fight there would be no peace to pray for.

Dr. John Clifford says that "the tiger and the ape are still strong within men and women." Maybe that is why Christians are fond of the hymn, "There is a fountain filled with blood."

The *Daily Chronicle*, in its war notes, says that the Austrian National Anthem is "the only national anthem composed by a great musician. The words, too, of national anthems are as a rule written by mediocrities, the one outstanding exception being the Norwegian." Where does the *Chronicle* scribe expect to spend eternity?

This journal has persistently condemned foreign missions, believing that they are productive of many injurious results. Impartial travellers have been almost unanimous in their denunciation of them. We are exceedingly delighted to be able to state that Sir Henry Norman has spoken on the subject with no uncertain voice. In a book of travels, just out, he says:—

> "I believe it to be strictly within the limits of truth to say that foreign missionary effort in China has been productive of more harm than good. Instead of serving as a link between Chinese and foreigners, the missionaries formed a growing obstacle."

Though himself a Protestant, Sir Henry does not think highly of the Protestant missionary in China. Unlike the Catholic missionary, "he has, in most cases, his comfortable home, his wife, his children, his servants, and his foreign food, and his stipend increases with each addition to his family."

The Rev. Usher Greer is a bright star in the Protestant sky. He advocates temperance with great zeal, and recommends boycotting as a religious exercise of high merit. He preached an "Orange Sermon" at the Seapatrick Protestant Church, in which he is reported to have warned his hearers in the following eminently Christian fashion: "There was one public-house owned by a person who did not belong to them, and why should they spend their Protestant money to uphold the people of the opposite Faith? If they were loyal, they would keep away; and if they were disloyal, they would go into it." After all, how these Christians *do* love one another!

Unfathomable is the ingenuity displayed by men of God when confronted with disagreeable facts. Nothing is more incontrovertible than that religion is slowly losing its hold upon the multitudes, churches and chapels being more and more deserted every year. The Rev. Mr. Rees, Principal of Bangor Congregational College, preached a sermon the other day, in which he enumerated five notes in the life of to-day which are making for the kingdom of God, though *we* regard them as making for the kingdom of Man. They are these: the present unrest, expressing itself in strikes and revolutions, as well as in the overthrow of creeds and traditions; the spirit of inquiry; the contents of the thought of the age; the philosophical attitude of mind to the world as a whole; and the effort for social betterment. In reality, these are notes in the life of to-day which make for the complete disintegration of supernatural religion, and which account for the growing abandonment of places of worship.

"Blessed be ye poor!" Here are a few of them—culled from three days' issue of the *Times*: Venerable Edwin Price, Rectory, Sedgfield, Ferryhill, Durham, left £3,397. Rev. Canon Peter Halbed Moore, Chadkirk Parsonage, Romley, Stockport, left £17,383. Rev. Henry James Fase, of Canfield, Upper Tooting, left £1,000. Rev. William Harpley, of Clayhanger, Devon, left £2,102. Rev. W. J. Tollemache, Grosvenor-road, London, S.W., left £6,281. Rev. John Wallace, of Tilford, Surrey, left £21,883. "Follow me!"

Rev. William Bryant, vicar of Stoke Lyne, has been found guilty of an aggravated assault on his wife and fined £10 or two months' imprisonment. He has also been bound over in £100 to keep the peace for six months, and a separation order has been granted to Mrs. Bryant.

"G. B. S." was once the idol of Socialist-Freethinkers. They worshiped him blindly. He had even brought in a new kind of Freethought; other kinds of Freethought belonged to the past and were thoroughly played out. Nobody would stand up to him on any subject; the fear of him—for all worshipers fear their idols—was overwhelming. Shaw was then at the top of his influence and reputation. He was nearly infallible. He was too big and clever for criticism. But there was one paper, edited by a *real* Atheist, who acknowledged no gods in heaven or on earth, that just criticised Mr. Shaw as it would anybody else; criticised him with respect and politeness, but with thoroughness and firmness. That journal was the *Freethinker*. We did our work when it was wanted, and we have not felt called upon to do it over and over again since. But Socialist-Freethinkers, who did not see where Shaw was driving, or were too afraid to say so, are now falling upon him tooth and nail on the question of religion, which is the only one, of course, that we felt called upon to touch in *our* pages. It looks as though falling upon him is the actual object of this attack, and that his religious errors—which are by no means new—are rather the pretext than the reason.

We do not propose to join in the present attack on Mr. Shaw. We prefer humor to savagery in criticism—especially in criticising one who is himself a humorist. And ours is not the courage which depends on something else than the call of sense and honor.

By Socialist-Freethinkers we mean those who put Socialism first and Freethought afterwards. We do not discuss Socialism at all in the *Freethinker*—we do not put it anywhere—we have no concern with it at all. We put Freethought first—and second—and last. Nothing is any good without it—not even Socialism—and not even its opposite—nor anything in between. You cannot make up a wise society of fools, you cannot make a sane society of superstitionists, you cannot make a self-respecting society of intellectual dupes, you cannot make a happy and prosperous society out of people who are taught cowardice and thoughtlessness from their very cradles. Swinburne was well-inspired in coupling "the blood on the hands of the king" with "the lie at the lips of the priest."

We fully expected that Mme. Caillaux would be acquitted. Women do not take part in politics in France and they should not be dragged into it. What can be worse than striking a man through his wife? To publish her private letters to him is infamous. They are first stolen, and then printed in defiance of her clearest moral rights. And if the law gives her practically no protection, who can wonder if she seeks redress in the only way that is open to her? The real criminal is the one who gives the unbearable provocation.

"All-Round Insurance" is a new scheme to cover all risks. The promoters had better keep clear of the clergy, who have long specialised in next-world fire insurance.

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"We came into the world with nothing," the sentimental song informs us, but does not add that the dear clergy start the rolling of the financial ball with a small charge for christening, and that they stay with us until we turn up our toes to the daisies, with funeral fees as per tariff.

The heroine of modern fiction has "no isms, no retrospections, no introspections," says a writer in *T. P.'s Weekly*. Just so; but the fair damsel always takes a whole chapter to kiss the curate.

"The mystic makes no pretensions," says the Rev. H. E. Sampson. Sometimes it happens that the billposters do it for them—for a consideration.

The *Daily Mirror* has been discussing the brainy subject "Is a Man or Woman ever too old for Romance?" Remembering the number of Christians who like plenty of "romance" in their religion, we should respond in the negative.

The Rev. Edward Shillito tells us that "Christ has come in his own meekness and humility and love to turn the world upside down." All we can say is that he is taking a tremendously long time to do it. Mr. Shillito himself admits that what we have now, after nineteen hundred years of his meek, humble, and loving reign, is "a welter"; and common sense assures us that, after so long a period of commotion, confusion, and turmoil under Christ, it is perfectly idiotic to predict that out of "the present welter," the ideal order is soon to emerge. Christ has had more than a fair innings, and "total failure" must be written across his record, and we ask, why not judge his future by his past, as we do in every other case?

Methodism has lost its "pristine glory," and the President of the Conference indicated how it can be brought back. To achieve that result, Mr. Young said, every minister must make this resolve: "Whatever else I preach, I will preach the atonement." Well, if Methodism will prosper by putting all possible emphasis on the doctrine of the atonement, which is the most immoral doctrine in the world, we shall lose faith in the progress of the world. To return to the eighteenth century, or even to the first half of the nineteenth, however, is naturally impossible, and in consequence Methodism, as well as every other religious "ism," is doomed. At the recent Conference decreases were reported in almost every department, and one speaker stated that "all their meetings that were distinctive of Methodism showed signs of shrinking." In fact, the Nature of Things has given every religious sect notice to quit, which notice is being gradually put into execution.

The necessity for a strong chairman at meetings, open-air and otherwise, is often shown; but a recent example at a seaside resort, when a debate on "The Existence of God" degenerated into a wrangle on the price of beer at Gibraltar, is surely a record.

"Lost, stolen, or strayed a good old English motto, 'Fear God and honor the King.'" Thus the *Referee*. If true, Atheists are concerned with the earlier part, but the King's honor lies at his own door.

Mr. Keir Hardie once published a pamphlet, *Can a Man be a Christian on a Pound a Week?* We give it up, frankly; but the Archbishops and Bishops do not appear to succeed on much larger salaries.

The Rev. Bob Jones, a Southern evangelist, agrees with another hot-gospeller, the Rev. Billy Sunday, that New York is "past saving." Bob, indeed, told the reporters that New York is "dancing on the brink of hell." Fortunately for the New Yorkers, their town is entirely surrounded by water.

Writing in the *Optimist*, Mr. St. John Ervine says "The Christian religion died in England on the day that Arkwright invented the spinning-jenny." It seems appropriate that a religion brought in by Mary should go out with Jenny.

The Rev. Stanley Parker asserts that "Christ was the greatest revolutionist that ever lived." Marvellous beyond description are the achievements of Christianity, he informs us. His words are: "Christianity had turned the world upside down. Think how it had undermined Paganism and idolatry and slavery." It is true that Christianity undermined Paganism, but how? Not by winning the hearts of the Pagans, but by making their profession of Paganism a crime against the State; not by preaching the love of God, but by the execution of what was declared to be the Divine wrath. Pagans could hold no offices in the State; both their secret and their public sacrifices were forbidden and suppressed; under Theodosius the Great all their temples were razed to the ground, and all forms of their worship absolutely prohibited. Yes, Christianity undermined Paganism by physical force, by passing the sentence of death upon anyone who dared to celebrate its rites, a sentence which, whenever passed, "was universally applauded in the Christian Church." Does Mr. Parker approve of that brutal method of undermining Paganism?

Every student of history is aware that Christianity did not condemn slavery until the twelfth century. During the first nine centuries not a single Christian writer ever said a word against the institution. The idea of abolishing it did not enter any Christian head. Indeed, the Church did not abolish slavery, but merely transformed it into serfdom of the most contemptible type, which Lord Bryce, in his *Holy Roman Empire*, thus describes: "There is no more appalling feature in the whole Christian world than the serfdom of mediæval Europe." Men of God seem to have a perfect genius for ignoring facts.

Billy Sunday's Gems.

[Billy Sunday was once a pugilist, but you can't keep on that game for ever, so he has turned revivalist, and earns piles of money by his classic eloquence. The New York *Truthseeker* gives the following samples.]

"I wish I had been in heaven last night to hear the hallelujahs over the great manifestation of the spirit here in this tabernacle, and I wish I could have gloated over the groans and mutterings in hell."

"God knew the first time your mother kissed you that you were going to hell."

"I can see him [the Devil] begin to wrap his thongs about a soul and drag them shrieking to hell.....into the nethermost recess of the dark abyss of hell, and from the inferno below will belch the sulphur fumes and the hopeless wail, 'Lost!' We have no advocate with the Father in hell. 'Lost!' Oh, you can walk the streets and say I am crude. When the last day comes what will you do then? O Infidel, I've got you beat!"

"A Unitarian has never been born again, and he will go to hell whoever he is."

"To hell with that kind of a minister."

"To hell with personal liberty."

"I say to hell with the Unitarian idea that strips Jesus Christ of his divinity."

"To perdition with such fools [envious ministers]. They make me sick!"

"Stand up there, you bastard evolutionist. Stand up with the Atheists and Infidels and w——mongers and adulterers and go to hell."

"Aaron Burr is in hell to-night."

"There goes old Darwin. He is in hell sure."

"If Bob Ingersoll isn't in hell, God is a liar and the Bible isn't worth the paper it is printed on."

"Talk about Ralph Waldo Emerson being a good man; or Oliver Wendell Holmes; or Bill Taft. They are in hell or are on the road to it."

"If you want to go to hell, go to hell."

"I'm going to heaven, you can go to hell if you want to."

"The Bible puts up religion without attempting to explain it. If you want to believe it you can. If you don't believe it, you can go to hell."

"God says faith in the blood of My Begotten Son or you go to hell."

"If you want to be a progressive, be a Christian. If you want to be a mossback, go to hell."

"Any person who says there isn't a hell is a liar."

"Some one says: 'Don't you know the scholarly ministers have given up their belief in hell?' What do I care about those old lobsters?"

"To me the world replies: 'I want your truth but not your Christ.' I say to the world, 'Then go to hell.'"

"Away with your hellish, damnable Unitarianism..... You'll go to hell before I accept your doctrine."

"They say a fellow who doesn't believe in eternal damnation is a liberal preacher. I say he is an old fool."

"Hell is just as much a manifestation of the love of God as is heaven."

"Let the old Unitarian go to hell if he wants to. Oh, they try to get saved by culture.....They're big fools!"

"A man says to me: 'Then you believe in an eternal literal hell?' Yes, sir. I have never got so damnably low down as to have the audacity to put my mediocre asinine reason up by the side of an infinite God's word."

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To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £180 2s. 6d.

D. BAXTER.—Glad to hear the police case against you for selling Freethought literature on the Jail-square has been dropped. No doubt your bold front had something to do with that. With regard to the *Bible Handbook*, it is impossible for the Pioneer Press to supply the trade at a lower price than at present. We say this for the information of all concerned. The book is only *sold* by the Pioneer Press on terms of commission which leave a very narrow margin of "profit," and no charge is made to the Secular Society, Ltd., for housing stock or for the lavish advertisements it gets in the *Freethinker*, neither is any royalty paid to Mr. Foote on the sales of the present edition of 5,000 copies. The issue of the book under these conditions is a propagandist effort, and we have done our share in it.

A. B. MOSS.—Pleased to know you are enjoying a few weeks' rest and recreation at Ramsgate, where you get some of the very best air in England, and a sky that Ruskin called the finest in Europe. As for water, one might talk of that *ad infinitum* and still be as fresh as itself.

P. HERTZ.—Money spent on advertising a thing likely to be in general demand may be a good investment; otherwise it is very problematical. We have dealt with this question before. The sale of the *Freethinker* cannot be forced like the sale of (say) spirits or tobacco. A million pounds would not make a successful appeal for it to the mob. The best advertising can be done by our readers, and by them only,—introducing it to the attention of friends and acquaintances who might take an interest in such a paper if they only knew of its existence. As for getting paid advertisements in the *Freethinker*, it is impossible. We speak from experience. Thanks, all the same, for your advice.

ADMIRER.—June cuttings are of no use in August.

E. B.—Thanks for useful cuttings.

H. W. THURLOW.—Under consideration. Its length is rather against it. The "opposition" you refer to is childish and not too well-intentioned.

W. P. BALL.—Your cuttings are always useful.

J. W. ARNETTE.—Cuttings are always welcome if they are up to date and solid enough to serve as a peg for a paragraph.

F. PENLINGTON.—For years we have notified that Tuesday morning is too late for paragraphs in the new *Freethinker*, but we seem to have made not the slightest impression on those concerned. We strain a point for the lecturer's sake this time. It is hard that she should suffer for the fault of others.

T. RENNOLLS.—What you have to say, then, is that "the future of Freethought lies with the young folks." Very well, then; but the future of everything lies with them; so what is the weight of your discovery? We hold the field while the younger generation is arriving: what more can *we* do? It is to be hoped that the new-comers will respect English. "Folks" is bad English. "Folk" is itself plural.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

One of our oldest and best readers, who has been trying to give us good advice about the possible cause of our insomnia—which, by the way, has abated somewhat lately—gives a plain reason for his "great interest" in the state of our health. It is "my sincere conviction," he says, "that your personality is indispensable to the vigorous progress of Freethought." There may be some truth in this just at present, but there is another truth, we think, that ought not to be overlooked. Great ideas find their instruments or make them; or, as Burke expressed it in a different way, "When the heart is sound it finds a way or makes one." When the hour strikes the man generally appears. That is one of the consolations of loss. Otherwise the death of a leader would be "the end of all things"—and the last bitterness of mortality.

The August *Humanitarian* contains a delightful article on "The Humanities of Virgil," and a powerful satire entitled "Sixty Years Among Savages"—both, we take it, from the pen of the editor, Mr. H. S. Salt. The satire is at the expense of our noble selves, the people of England.

Miss K. B. Kough lectures to-day (Aug. 9) in connection with Two Services at the Secular Sunday School, Failsworth—at 2.45 on "Playtime Poets," and at 6.30 on "The Origin of the Belief in Gods." A collection for the School Funds to be made at the end of each Service.

Perhaps the most interesting thing in the August number of the *Positivist Review* is Mr. Frederic Harrison's article on the fifth month, devoted to "Military Civilisation," in the Positivist Calendar. This is followed by Mr. J. F. Green's "Closing Words at the National Peace Congress." There is a satirical sound (now) in the statement that the Congress had been "very successful and useful." Mr. Green would have been less jubilant if he had known that Armageddon was coming.

A Mild Rebuke.

IMPERTINENT! you call me Atheist,
What is it, then, oh hasty one, you wist
So well, that you can misbeliever call
Your fellow insect on the hither wall?
Have not I eyes to see as well as you?
Organs, dimensions,—ponder Shakespeare's Jew.
That sun, these clouds, you lakes of azure spread
Breathe equal benediction on my head.
What, then, the great artificer of all
Thee and narrow sect alone must call
His chosen ones, the sole repository
Of truth divine, heirs of eternal glory.
Impertinent, presumptuous little elf,
The god you worship is your little self,
Or some such being, puny in the vast—
Some meagre shadow on the Outward cast.
Your god, my friend, is man, a human form:
God is a man, and "man is but a worm."
Thus god, and man, and worm, have chances even,
Since heaven is earth and earth the only heaven.
Or if such doctrine suit you not too well,
Seek hell on earth, or make the earth a hell.

ANDREW MILLAR.

A SONNET.

Here swords are wrought from cups of sacrament,
The holy blood of Christ is given for gold,
For lance and buckler, cross and thorns are sold:
The patience of the very Christ is spent!
Let him within our borders come no more,
Since Rome, who in her Savior's blood doth trade,
Will sell His flesh for any price that's paid;
And hath to every virtue closed the door.
If by my work, the offspring of my mind,
I too with treasure would my coffers fill,
I see in Peter's chair Medusa throned.
Though poverty in Heaven do favor find,
What recompense shall be of earthly ill,
If earth's defeat undo the life beyond?

—*Michel Angelo.*

The Ramsey Testimonial.

(FOURTH LIST OF SUBSCRIPTIONS.)

[The first two subscriptions in this list were the last two in the previous list. This bears out our former complaint. The reader can judge for himself now.—ED.]

J. Richards (Eleusis Club), 10s. 6d.; Neil Corbet, 5s.; W. H. Harrop, 2s. 6d.; Political Council Paddington Radical Club, 10s. 6d.; W. McMillan, 2s.; A Few Members (per A. J. Barnes), 2s.

B. T. HALL (Treasurer), Club Union Buildings, Clerkenwell-road, London, E.C.

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Ferrer's Monument in Brussels—The New Crusade.

LESS than five years ago the Clericals in Spain murdered Ferrer, the Rationalist founder of the Escuela Moderna, in the sombre trenches of Montjuich, but they have not yet succeeded in burying him. The blood of Ferrer chokes the gloomy and morose Maura, and his name, with that of the odious hyena, La Cierva, his accomplice in the crime, is today, and has been ever since the fateful October 18, 1909, pursued with infamy not only in Spain but throughout the civilised world. The Spanish democracy is prepared to go to any extremes—from assassination to revolution — rather than see the return to power of Maura and La Cierva, with all the mediæval tyranny and judicial murder which their advent to power would imply, and even King Alphonso has had to recognise the sentence of Spain and civilisation upon the assassins of Ferrer by refusing to entrust the reins of political power into their hands at the recent formation of the present Moderate-Conservative ministry with Senor Dato as its head. In a word, the blood of Ferrer cries out for vengeance upon the Cains that slew him.

The monument in Brussels, erected to the memory of Ferrer, is more than a tribute in stone and bronze to a brave man; it is also reminiscent of the martyrdom which Freethought and its heroes, teachers, and apostles have had to suffer throughout the ages at the hands of bigots, and a reminder of the martyrdom which may in future be inflicted upon Freethinkers if and whenever reaction raises its head as of yore. To the bigots this memorial is an eyesore; and standing as it does in face of the church of St. Catherine, it is a perpetual reminder to the world of the natural ferocity of religion in any country and under any regime in which, as in Spain during the Clericalist reign of terror in 1909, it may have the power to act with impunity in repression of Freethought. It is because Ferrer symbolised in his death not only the meanness and cruelty of Christianity, but the dignity and fortitude of the Rationalist ideal, that he so powerfully gripped the imagination and sympathy of the whole civilised world; and thus his name became the more hated by the obscurantists of all creeds precisely because the world-wide manifestations of sympathy which his assassination evoked revealed to the astonished soul of the priests and the priestly minded the depth and unanimity of the world's repugnance for their chosen methods of brutal repression.

Just now, the partisans of Senor Maura are anxious to reverse the verdict of civilisation and to destroy the Brussels monument erected in honor of the Founder of the Modern School. A movement is actually on foot in Spain to urge the Belgian Government to remove the peccant monument. The present Belgian ministry is a Conservative one, and Clericalist at that, but it is too anxious to save its political soul—especially in view of the narrowness of its majority—to attempt to affront the dignity and self-respect of the Belgian democracy by listening favorably to such an extravagant appeal, compliance with which would imply the abdication of the Belgian Government in slavish deference to the solicitations of the Vatican.

In order to put pressure in anti-Ferrer sense upon the Belgian Government, an excursion has been organised from Madrid of parliamentarians, professors, journalists, etc., who propose to journey to Brussels in order to shout "Long live Maura!" and "Down with the Ferrer monument!" in the streets of Brussels. The fantastic proposal is due to the initiative of a Spanish senator, Senor Luca de Tena, the proprietor of the Madrilene paper, *A B C*, which distinguished itself from the first by the violence of its diatribes against Ferrer. On the other hand, the Madrid radical organ, *Espana Nueva*, will organise a counter demonstration, also to take place in Brussels. I am not sure whether it is wise on the part of *Espana Nueva* to interfere with the festive excursion of the self-appointed glorifiers of assassination. The exported Maurists may, I think, be safely left to the tender mercies of the Brussels Freethinkers and Socialists, who are constitutionally incapable of turning the other cheek to the idolisers of Ferrer's murderer. A nobler revenge may more profitably be taken by rallying later on at Paris, where it is proposed to erect another monument to the memory of Ferrer. Be that as it may, another journal, *El Mentidero*, approves the idea of *A B C*, and suggests that the Maurist demonstration in Brussels should be heralded by a deluge of postcards upon the Belgian Prime Minister, imploring him to order the demolition of the monument. As *El Pais* very pertinently remarks, unless Spain is prepared to renew her old wars in Flanders the monument will remain for the glory of human solidarity and as an imperishable record of the triumphs of internationalism.

El Pais approves and endorses the proposition of *Espana Nueva* to organise the counter demonstration in Brussels. It wants to see the Freemason Lodges, the Socialist Party, the Rationalist and Freethinking Schools and Centres represented by hundreds of delegates, in order that their presence may be accepted as the offering of Spain's love in homage to the memory of the much-hated and feared Ferrer. Perhaps while the spectacle of courage thrills the human heart with its transports of love and devotion, enthusiasm will continue to build its monuments and undertake distant pilgrimages to the shrines of heroes. Certainly, not too much faith is required to believe, with *El Pais*, that in the process of time a monument to Ferrer will be erected at Montjuich, and that the name of Maura will be as universally execrated as is the name of the vile torturer of Maura's Jewish ancestors, Torquemada, who, by-the-bye, was himself of Jewish race.

The monument erected to Ferrer's memory in Brussels is not intended as an insult to Spain, but for the opprobrium of her evil genius—the spirit of fanaticism as incarnated in Maura. It is the protest of International Freethought against the political murder of a hated Rationalist whose crime consisted in endeavoring to raise the educational level of the Spanish nation and to impart to the democracy some generous ideals of civic duty and social morality. If Spain is ever to renew her former greatness amongst the nations it must breed more men like Ferrer and fewer bigots of the Maura stamp.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

Christian Apologetics.

XII.—THOMAS COOPER (No. 4).

THE self-styled "lecturer on Christianity," Thomas Cooper, having set aside, as he imagined, every kind of "infidel objection" to the Gospel miracles, commences in his ninth chapter to demonstrate "the verity" of those ascribed to Jesus Christ, and continues to deal with them to the end of the book. As there is nothing to be learnt from any of these, I take but one example of Mr. Cooper's methods. In Mark viii. 22—26 we have the following account of Jesus healing a blind man: "And they come unto Bethsaida. And they bring to him a blind man..... And Jesus took hold of the blind man by the hand, and brought him out of the village; and when he had spit on his eyes, and laid his hands upon him, he asked him, Seest thou aught?.....Then again he laid his hands upon his eyes; and the man looked steadfastly, and was restored, and saw all things clearly." After quoting this narrative, Mr. Cooper says:—

> "The disciples could not fail to be convinced by the miracle. There was no ostentation or display. The miracle was performed slowly, that they might observe it completely.....There could be no imposture in the case. Was the man bought or hired? How could Jesus hire the man out of his poverty?.....St. Mark only relates this miracle, and he had the account of it

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> from Peter's own mouth—being Peter's interpreter, and writing down the substance of Peter's preaching. Peter had a strong memory for facts; and he was sure to remember these facts clearly."

It is by arguments of this childish character that our great Christian Evidence lecturer has attempted to prove "the verity" of the miracles attributed to Jesus Christ. The miracle "was performed slowly," so that all the onlookers might observe it carefully—that is to say, it is so represented in the Gospel story. There was "no ostentation or display"—according to the Gospel story. Jesus certainly did something which appeared to restore the sight of the blind man—in the Gospel story. We thus arrive at the very remarkable fact that if the Gospel story is true, "there could be no imposture in the case"—which everyone not a resident in Bedlam will admit. Hence, the only thing now left for Mr. Cooper to do is to prove the truth of the Gospel story. When this has been done, no rational person can deny that the event is really historical. But our "lecturer on Christianity" has not attempted to do so. He seems to have thought that repeating and emphasising certain portions of the story would make the narrative as a whole appear more credible. But it has not; the story remains, as at first, manifestly incredible. Our lecturer has assumed, without rhyme or reason, the narrative to be historical without a scrap of corroborative evidence. Mr. Cooper appears to have been under the impression that unbelievers were bound to admit that Jesus went about professing to heal, as narrated in the Gospels; and that the only element of doubt that could be raised was, as to whether the man had been bribed. This is not so; the rational contention is that the story is merely one of a large number of fictitious narratives that were fabricated by the credulous, primitive Christians several decades after the death of Jesus. It is to this question that his arguments should have been chiefly addressed.

Mr. Cooper says "St. Mark *only* relates this miracle"—which is true, the healing of the blind man being, perhaps, the only event in Mark's Gospel which is not recorded in the other three. But the statement that the miracle was wrought at a village called "Bethsaida" proves the story to be a fabrication; for the little fishing village of that name had been enlarged to the dignity of a city—and its name changed to "Julian"—twenty years before Jesus is said to have commenced his ministry in Galilee. Every adult inhabitant of Galilee would, of course, be aware of this fact, and, within a year or so of its renaming, would have got accustomed to speaking of the place as "the city of Julian"—as does Josephus.

Mr. Cooper says again that Mark had the account of the miracle "from Peter's own mouth, being Peter's interpreter, and writing down the substance of Peter's preaching." This statement is repeated by Christian apologists of the present day, who endeavor to make it appear that the Second Gospel is practically the Gospel of an eye-witness—the apostle Peter. Their authority for doing so is drawn from Mr. Cooper's favorite authors—Irenæus and Eusebius. Irenæus (A.D. 185) repeats, as an historical fact, a statement he had read in a book written by Papias (A.D. 140), but without naming his authority, though he quotes Papias on another subject. Eusebius (A.D. 330), who had the books of Irenæus and Papias before him, quotes what the latter said about Mark, apparently because it was the earliest mention he had seen of Mark's Gospel. And how did Papias come to know this story? It was told to him, he says, by a presbyter of his acquaintance named John. We have no evidence that Papias ever saw Mark's Gospel; he was merely informed of its existence and of how it came to be written. Now, in the Book of Acts, the apostles (including Peter) are represented as receiving the Holy Ghost, which, it is stated, gave them power to speak all known languages. Had Peter received this power, he would not have needed an "interpreter" to explain to his non-Jewish listeners what he had said to them in his native Aramaic. Clearly, then, the "Acts of the Apostles" was not known to Papias or John the Presbyter—a fact which lends confirmation to the theory that Luke wrote later than A.D. 140. The story of Mark and Peter, as related by Papias, is pure nonsense. The apologetic contention that Mark's Gospel was derived from the preaching of Peter can be seen to be baseless by merely comparing some of its narratives with those in one of the other two Synoptic Gospels, as in the following paragraphs:—

MATT. XXIV. 15—20.	MARK XIII. 14—18.
"When therefore ye see the Abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let him that readeth understand), then let them that are in Judæa flee unto the mountains: let him that is on the house top not go down to take out the things that are in his house: and let him that is in the field not return back to take his cloak. But woe unto them that are with child and to them that give suck in those days! And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter."	"But when ye see the Abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not (let him that readeth understand), then let them that are in Judæa flee unto the mountains: and let him that is on the house top not go down, nor enter in, to take any thing out of his house: and let him that is in the field not return back to take his cloak. But woe unto them that are with child and to them that give suck in those days! And pray ye that it be not in the winter."

The foregoing paragraphs are taken from a long discourse, placed in the mouth of Jesus, which fills three columns in the Gospel of Mark, and a few lines more in that of Matthew. They are selected from near the middle of the oration, chiefly because they contain a parenthesis. Now, according to the Gospels, this discourse was uttered but once; Matthew and Peter heard it spoken but once: it was not written down at the time. We are asked to believe: (1) that many years afterwards Matthew committed to writing what he remembered of the discourse; (2) that Peter in his preaching recited to the multitude what he could remember of it; (3) that Mark, who accompanied Peter, having heard it recited several times, also committed it to memory; (4) that in Matt. xxiv. and Mark xiii. we have these two versions of this grand oration.

Now, anyone acquainted with writing or composition will know that, under the foregoing conditions, there would not have been two sentences in the whole speech that were in exact verbal agreement. After hearing it but once, neither Matthew nor Peter could have had anything more than a confused remembrance of some of the matters mentioned—and these would be set down in different words, as well as in a different order, as they happened to think of them. In the Gospel accounts, the verbal agreement is continuous throughout, varied only here and there by a few words added or omitted by each editor; while the various subjects spoken of are recorded in the same order *in both*. The nature of these subjects will be seen by the following detached phrases:—"As he sat upon the mount of Olives..... Tell us when shall these things be.....Jesus answered.....Take heed that no man deceive you..... Many shall come in my name.....the end is not yet .....Nation shall rise against nation.....These are the beginning of sorrows.....They shall deliver you up.....the gospel must be preached to all nations .....ye shall be hated of all men for my sake.....the Abomination of desolation.....flee unto the mountains.....him that is on the house top.....him that is in the field.....Woe unto them that are with child .....that it be not in the winter.....tribulation such as was not from the creation.....except those days had been shortened.....Many will say unto you, Lo, here is Christ.....after the tribulation of those days .....then shall they see the Son of man coming..... Now learn a parable of the fig tree.....This generation shall not pass away till all these things be accomplished.....but of that day or hour knoweth no man.....Watch therefore, for ye know not when the Lord cometh."

When it is stated that both Matthew and Mark give the whole of the Savior's long discourse, as indicated by the foregoing catch-phrases, in the same order, and often in the very same words—then we know beyond the smallest possibility of doubt that

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they simply copied from a pre-existing account. Moreover, the first primitive account could not have been composed until after the destruction of Jerusalem; for its unknown writer, whoever he may have been, had no foreknowledge of what was about to happen, and the destruction of Jerusalem and of the temple is recorded as an undoubted historical fact. In the two paragraphs from Matthew and Mark, notice should be taken of the parenthesis in both—"Let him that readeth understand." This denotes that the primitive writer believed that the "abomination of desolation" in the book of Daniel was written as a prediction of the Roman army desecrating the Jewish temple—which, of course, was not the case.

Returning to Mr. Cooper, that Christian Evidencer tells us that "Peter had a strong memory for facts, and was sure to remember these facts clearly"—that is, the alleged healing of the blind man. As a simple matter of fact, we know nothing whatever about Peter's memory—or whether he had any worth mentioning. This is one of our lecturer's tarradiddles.

Looking back at the Gospel account of the miracle, I really cannot see where the "moral perfection, beauty, and dignity" of the Savior come in—unless these qualities are indicated by spitting on the eyes of the blind man. Rather, I think, the latter act would denote long practice in spitting at a mark. Probably the early Christians were good hands at this interesting pastime, and thought it in no way derogatory to the sacred character of their Lord to represent him as practising it. It has even been stated that they imagined human saliva to be good for sore eyes, and so described their Savior as employing it, either by spitting direct on the eyes, or by spitting on the ground and smearing the moist dirt on the eyes. But this filthy practice could not, of course, affect in any way the actual healing, and was not always employed. It was inserted, probably, merely to make the cure appear more dramatic.

ABRACADABRA.

The Partnerships of Plants and Animals.—II.

(Continued from p. 476.)

INTO the hollows of these trees the female ant deposits her eggs, and in a short time the entire interior of the tree swarms with an ant population, which rushes forth to do battle whenever its tree is disturbed. This in itself, however, would not save the tree's leaves from the devastating ants. But a curious contrivance has been evolved which supplies this want. The resident ants wander over the outer surface of the tree, precisely in that part where its insect enemies would prove most dangerous—at the stalks of the tender leaves. At the bases of these leaves grow soft hair cushions, from which arise egg-shaped corpuscles, upon which the friendly ants not only feed themselves, but also nourish their larvæ. In this instance, writes Weismann, "a particular organ offering special attractions to ants has been developed by the plant at the places more especially threatened; while as regards the ants, it is probable that only the instinct of feeding and habitat require to be modified, since courage and thirst for battle are present in all ants."

Only one species of candelabra tree has set up this partnership with ants. Schimper describes various other species of Cecropia in whose hollow stems ants are never seen. But these latter species, although hollow-stemmed, are all unprovided with the hair cushions which play such an important role in the partnership which has been so successfully established in the species we have dealt with. The origin of these cushions is as yet unknown, but, given the simplest beginnings, their evolution would follow from the ascertained laws of life.

An aspect of Symbiosis which is presented by the partnership of single-celled algæ and simple animals has given rise to an animated scientific discussion, but the leading facts of this amazing union have now passed beyond the pale of controversy.

Hydra viridis is a green freshwater polyp, and its verdant color is caused by the presence of chlorophyll, a substance which was looked upon as essentially vegetable in nature. That an animal organism should evolve a material which gives to plants their characteristic green color was regarded as utterly anomalous. But wonder was transformed into astonishment when Braun and Entz demonstrated that the green substance was no animal product at all, but was due to the presence of those unicellular plants, the algæ, in the endoderm cells of the hydra polyps. Further study showed that the alga cells liberate oxygen, and thus render a useful service to the polyps. This much is certain, and that the plants also furnish food to their polyp partners appears probable. In any case, the polyps have been kept in pure water for several months at a time, and despite the absence of animal food, the polyps have flourished exceedingly. In the light of this experiment, it appears practically proved that their algæ inmates supply the polyps with all the nourishment they need.

So far as the green algæ are concerned, they seem to be comfortably and securely housed within their animal dwellings, and their association is so close that through all the stages of their joint lives they are coupled and inseparable. These algæ (Zoochlorellæ) do not pass from the water into the hydra's interior, but—

> "are carried over as as a heritable possession of the polyps from one generation to another, and in a very interesting manner, namely, by means of the eggs, and by these alone. As Hamann has shown, the zoochlorellæ migrate at the time when an egg is formed in the *outer* layer of the body of the polyp, from the inner layer outwards, piercing through the supporting layer between them and penetrating into the egg. They make their way only into the egg, not into the sperm-cells, which in any case are too small to include them. Thus they are absent from no young polyp of this species, and it is easy to understand why earlier experimental attempts to rear colorless polyps from eggs could never succeed even in the purest water."

Similar unicellular green algæ have entered into union with single-celled animals such as amœba viridis, and one of the infusoria. To the kindness of Professor Wilder, of Chicago, the Freiburg Zoological Institute is indebted for its colonies of the two compound organisms. Their place of origin was stagnant water in Massachusetts. Researches conducted by Gruber demonstrate that the zoochlorellæ—the lowly green algæ—confer invaluable benefits upon the animal organisms they inhabit. The plant-cells supply their amœba and infusorian hosts with indispensable oxygen, as well as with food materials. Gruber cultivated the two species—the green amœba and the verdant infusorian—for seven years in clear water that contained no particle of animal matter upon which they could feed, but they flourished like the green bay-tree. The experiments prove that—

> "They only die away when they are kept in the dark, where the algæ are unable to assimilate; then one green cell after another wanes and disappears, and, in consequence, their hosts also die from the double lack of oxygen and the lack of food."

Marked modifications have resulted from these organic associations. The algæ have evolved the power to resist the absorbing influences of animal secretions. They are apparently entirely immune to the dissolving energies of the digestive juices, a quality which is quite foreign to ordinary algæ. No visible change has occurred, however, with the animal partners. Infusorian, amœba, and polyp alike remain unmodified. Their general conditions of life show no signs of transformation, and although they are able to live and multiply in the presence of the oxygen and food supplied by their plant partners, they continue to feed on other substances when these are accessible, so that in natural surroundings they are not absolutely dependent upon the friendly succors of the algæ. But they have no more choice in the selection of their associates than a sheep, whose woolly covering provides a permanent residence for loathsome ticks, despite the decimating labors of the insect-loving starling.

Plant-cells similar to those of the algæ, but which depart from the customary green color to that of a

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distinct yellow, people the endoderm of several sea-anemones and occupy the soft substance of various radiolarians. These yellow plant-cells are capable of breaking up carbon dioxide and releasing the oxygen, an office very acceptable to the anemones and the radiolarians alike. These yellow cells are only known in the symbiotic state, and their remarkable color is probably the consequence of the prolonged period through which their partnership with animal organisms has existed.

We will now survey an association of two distinct classes of plants which provides a very instructive illustration of symbiosis. Until some thirty years ago, the lichens, which in innumerable forms grow on rocks, stones, and the trunks and branches of trees, were regarded as lowly plants related to the ferns and mosses. Some thousand or so of species were classified by lichenologists as simple green flora without any botanist suspecting what their microscopic study held in store. Then Schwendener and De Bary staggered the biological world with their discovery that lichens were not single organisms, but the blended products of two dissimilar plants, algæ and fungi, which were so intimately interwoven, and so mutually dependent, that their union invariably compelled them to assume the same specific state. The framework of the supposed single organism, which decides a lichen's structure, is formed by the fungus. Dull-colored fungus-threads arrange themselves in various ways, according to their particular species, and on the network formed by the fungal growth the green alga cells are embedded singly, in lines, or in crowds. The fungus may reproduce itself by means of multitudes of microscopic spores which are scattered by the bursting of the sporangia, and are driven away on the breeze-like clouds of dust; the alga, on the other hand, may procreate its kind by simple cell division, but in common with its fungal companion, the alga can resist desiccation and propagate itself by means of invisible spores.

Although this partnership is one of mutual advantage, the fungus derives the greater profit from the union. In this curious association, the fungus, like all other fungi, is incapable of elaborating chlorophyll, and is, therefore, unable to decompose carbon-dioxide or manufacture its own nutrient material. These necessaries of its life it receives ready made from its partner, and the entire dependence of the fungus on its companion is demonstrated by the fact that it perishes apart from its alga associate. But, although the alga not only gets its own living, and lavishes its surplus wealth on its fungal partner, it does unquestionably derive valuable compensatory advantages in return:—

> "The alga has in the network of the fungus a safe shelter and basis of attachment, for the fungus is able to bore into the bark of trees and even into stones; besides which it absorbs water and salts, and supplies these to the partner alga. We see here the mutual advantage derived from the partnership.....Fungus spores, sown by themselves, spring up and develop some branches of fungoid hyphæ, a so-called mycelium, but without the requisite partner alga these remain weak and soon die away. The alga can, in some cases, though not in all, survive without the fungus if the necessary conditions of life be supplied to it, but it grows differently and more luxuriantly in association with the fungus."

The double plants which form lichens are not necessarily compounded of any two specific species of alga and fungus. One species of alga may enter into combination with many different fungi, with the consequence that the resulting lichens are very unlike in appearance, and are classified as of separate species. Stahl brought into being new species by artificially uniting the spores of the lichen fungus with the cells of algæ. This biologist was a real creator, inasmuch that his creations have never been discovered in a natural state.

A very striking feature of these fungal and algal partnerships is the evolution of joint procreative bodies, which is a modification of a very remarkable kind. At certain periods, reproductive corpuscles arise in the lichen's substance, the soredia, which consist of a single, or possibly several alga cells, encircled and bound together by fungus threads. When these are plentifully produced, they "form a floury dust over the maternal lichen, which 'breaks up' and leaves them, like the spores of the fungus, to be carried away by the wind." If these corpuscles reach a suitable resting-place and the other requirements of ordinary vegetable growth, they soon develop a new colony. This compound procreative process is of immense advantage to the lichen in perpetuating its species, for in the normal production of fungus spores, even when these secure suitable soil they cannot develop unless they happen—and there are a thousand and one chances against this—to meet their alga partners. The belief, therefore, is amply justified that the mutual benefits bound up with the associations of fungi and algæ, extend even to the common advantages derived from their composite methods of reproduction.

Numerous other plant partnerships between widely separated floral species are now known, and a comparatively large number of these are formed by fungi with other vegetation. Fungi are always partly parasitic, and usually entirely so to the higher organisms on which they prey. But in several well-determined cases fungi furnish their hosts with an equivalent, or something approaching an equivalent, in return for what they receive, and when this occurs true symbiosis, as in the instances afforded by lichens, may be said to take place.

Taken as a whole, the fungi are possessed of a property which enables them to absorb the tiniest trace of moisture in the earth, and with this water they absorb those salts that are so important to higher plant life, and therein resides the service they supply even to the monarchs of the forest. The roots of many of our noblest trees, the oak, beech, silver poplar, and many others; and those of heaths and rhododendrons among bushes, are entwined with a network of symbiotic fungoid filaments. In these instances a system of reciprocity has been set up. The fungi feed on the superfluous foodstuffs of the trees and shrubs, to which they in return render tribute in the form of water and salts, which are of priceless value to leaf-bearing vegetation, more especially in the season of sunshine and drought.

With one other example of symbiosis we will conclude. There exists a highly interesting union between algæ of the family Nostocaceæ and the aquatic fern, Azolla. This water fern bears some resemblance to duckweed as it floats on the surface of the mere. The under-surfaces of its leaves are provided with small openings which lead into a larger hair-lined cavity, which invariably houses a blue-green single-celled alga, surrounded by a jelly-like substance. "The cavity is present in every leaf, and the alga is present in every cavity, making its way in from a deposit of alga-cells, which is found in the incurved tip of every young shoot."

No sooner does the young frond of the fern unfold than it becomes the habitation of the invading cells. No part of the azolla foliage appears to be free from the presence of algæ, but the advantage derived by the fern from its algæ associates has so far escaped detection. Some mutual benefit in all probability exists, as the plant partnership is of extreme antiquity, and that a purely vestigial organ should persist through immense periods without bestowing some advantage on the organism possessing it, is entirely out of the question.

Four species of azolla exist, and their geographical distribution is very remarkable. Two of these species are extensively distributed in America; a third is found in Asia, Africa, and Australia; while the fourth has its habitat in the district of the Nile. All of these four species carry cavities in their leaves, and each species of azolla is tenanted by the same species of alga. We are, therefore, forced to conclude that the partnership is of very old standing, and are fully justified in the anticipation that future inquiry will clear up the difficulty which at present surrounds its symbiotic arrangements.

T. F. PALMER.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15 and 6.15, James Rowney, Lectures.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 6, A. J. Minton, M.A., "What Secularism Owes to the Churches."

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.30, J. W. Marshall, a Lecture. Derby-road, Ponders End (opposite "Two Brewers"): Wednesday, August 12, at 8.30, W. Davidson, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): E. Burke, 11.30, "Christian Brotherhood"; 7.30, "Luther and Sir Oliver Lodge as Christian Reformers."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Finsbury Park): 11.30, R. H. Rosetti, a Lecture. Parliament Hill: 3.30, Mrs. Rosetti, a Lecture. Regent's Park (near the Fountain): 3.30, F. Schaller, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

FAILSWORTH (Secular Sunday School, Pole-lane): Miss Kough, 2.45, "Playtime Poets"; 6.30, "The Origin of the Belief in Gods."

PROPAGANDIST LEAFLETS. New Issue. 1. *Christianity a Stupendous Failure*, J. T. Lloyd; 2. *Bible and Teetotalism*, J. M. Wheeler; 3. *Principles of Secularism*, C. Watts; 4. *Where Are Your Hospitals?* R. Ingersoll. 5. *Because the Bible Tells Me So*, W. P. Ball; 6. *Why Be Good?* by G. W. Foote. *The Parson's Creed*. Often the means of arresting attention and making new members. Price 6d. per hundred, post free 7d. Special rates for larger quantities. Samples on receipt of stamped addressed envelope.—Miss E. M. VANCE, N. S. S. Secretary, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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By C. COHEN.

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The fear of genius is the beginning of taste.
—VICTOR HUGO.

Thoughts on War.

THE man-eating monster of fiction is terrible enough to romantic young minds under the spell of the story-teller, but he is almost genial and harmless in comparison with the real Ogre of war. Generation after generation this frightful monster gorges himself on human flesh and blood, solacing his intervals of satiety with the wine of human tears. And every time he prepares for a fresh repast he demands a larger provision for his ravenous appetite.

Awful as the Ogre's blood-tax is, his impositions between meals are even worse. In the palmy days of the Roman Empire, less than four hundred thousand troops sufficed to preserve the peace of the world; and, if we except petty frontier tussles with barbarians, they often did so for thirty or forty years together. But Europe has now its standing armies, whose total is reckoned in millions, and the peace is broken several times in a generation. Let it also be remembered that the Roman soldier was a worker as well as a fighter, helping to carry the practical civilisation of Rome wherever her eagles floated. Our high roads, the arteries of pedestrian and vehicular traffic through England, were first made by the imperial legions, who used the pick and the spade more frequently than the sword. But the armies of modern Europe are all idlers. Their sole business is destruction. In peace they consume without producing, and in war they devour like the locust and the caterpillar. They are not the lame, the blind, the maimed, and the imbecile, but the young flower of the male population, withdrawn from productive industry, and supported by the labor of others while they "learn the art of killing men."

The British Army is in one sense voluntary, as it is filled by enlistment, and not by conscription. But, for all that, it is not democratic. The "masses" supply the rank and file; the "classes" supply the officers. Tommy Atkins has nothing to do with any war except risking his life; all the direction, and all the glory and profit, rest with his superiors.

Go through the Peerage and see what an enormous number of military and naval posts are held by its scions. They command our forces, they get the lion's share of pay, they shine in the Gazettes, and they receive all the honors and rewards worth having. Poor Tommy Atkins dies unannaled and unknown, or, if he survives, has to content himself with the reflection that virtue is its own reward. His wife and children (if the celibate rule of the army *for privates* allows him those luxuries) are left to semi-starvation or vice or crime, unless they gravitate to the workhouse. Tommy had much better be at home earning an honest living, as he himself generally knows; but he goes abroad to fight the battles of the upper classes because their villainous laws have starved him into the able-bodied citizen's last resource.

Much has been written of late about the "great truth" that war cannot be avoided, and is indeed often beneficial in the present condition of human society. We admit that peace at any price is as mad a policy as war at every opportunity.

John Bright once said that without declaring all wars unjustifiable, he would like to see a single war justified. It was a request very difficult to comply with. Every war we enter upon is perfectly righteous, but somehow the historian afterwards writes them all down as crimes or mistakes. Self-defence is a natural instinct; it never can be eradicated, and it never should. But it implies an aggressor; and consequently all justification of war on the one side only serves to heighten its guiltiness on the other. A great conqueror is only another name for a great criminal. Nature quietly buries and conceals every trace of his ravages. Would that the world could as soon forget him, or remember him only to condemn.

Great Britain may, as the world goes, be technically right in the present war with Germany. It is difficult to see, on the face of it, at the climax of negotiations, how this nation could have avoided a conflict. It may be that the Kaiser has gone mad, and is dragging as many nations as he can with him into the abyss. But what went on *before* war became inevitable? Any fool can fall into a pit. Any simpleton can get into a row. Any ninny can cause mischief. Statesmen should prove their wisdom by keeping the peace where it is possible. They are placed on an eminence, as Burke said, to command a wider prospect than their fellow-citizens. If they cannot see more, or judge better, they are unworthy of the positions they occupy.

The Churches' only prescription is prayer. They pray for peace beforehand, but when war breaks out they remind "God" that he is bound in honor to give the victory to his old friends the British. And the clergy of all other Churches in all other lands pursue the same policy.

Priests may consecrate our banners, without regard to the merits of the side on which they are ranged, or the awful scenes over which they float; every regiment may carry its chaplain for ghostly succor; and the Church may solicit God's blessing on every bloody enterprise we engage in. But the teachers of religion cannot decree right and wrong, nor have they any magic to transform crime into virtue. "The primal duties shine aloft like stars" beyond the reach of chance and change, however momentarily obscured by clouds of incense from a thousand altars. And if the ministers of the Prince of Peace cannot see the monstrous wickedness of war, there happily remains enough instinctive justice and mercy in the breasts of heretics to brand it as a capital crime against humanity.

Religion never was, and never could be a friend of peace. The word "religion" is said to be derived from the Latin *religare*—"to bind back." Certainly religion binds men together; it bound the Thugs together; but it only binds them together in opposition to all other religions than their own. The one kindling and unifying word is Humanity. It is better even than the Balance of Power, which Mr. Bernard Shaw offers as the ideal of European diplomacy.

G. W. FOOTE.

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Liverpool and the Slave Trade.—II.

(*Concluded from p. 499.*)

MOST of the old Liverpool families were more or less steeped in the slave trade, and their enterprise made Liverpool the greatest slave town in Europe. Some of its "brands" were famous, particularly that of "D.D." Many of the slaves were sold openly on the Custom House steps, and the announcements of the sale and the descriptions of the slaves differs in no respect from those of cattle. Indeed, they were so much cattle. They were branded exactly as cattle are branded. The slave was made to kneel down, and the red-hot branding-iron was placed on the bare flesh—usually on the buttock. No one, for a long time, seems to have seen anything unusual or cruel in this. It was just part of a commercial transaction. And, what with the horrors of the passage on board ship and the treatment afterwards, it may safely be said that the slave trade as organised by Christian merchants far outdid, in deliberate cruelty, anything that ancient times could show.

I referred in my last article to the slave-ship *Thomas*. Here is a copy of one of its bills of lading:—

> "Shipped by the grace of God in good order, and well conditioned, by James Dodd, in and upon the good ship *Thomas*, master under God for this present voyage, Captain Peter Roberts, and now at anchor at Calabar, and by God's grace bound for Jamaica, with 630 slaves, men and women, branded D.D., and numbered in the margin 31 D.D., and are to be delivered in good, and well conditioned, at the port of Kingston (the dangers of the seas and mortality alone excepted) unto Messrs. Broughton & Smith. In witness whereof the master and purser of the ship *Thomas* hath affirmed to this bill of lading, and God send the good ship to her destined port in safety, Amen. October 31st, 1767."

This unctuous piety was made to cover the most villainous traffic that the world has ever seen. African villages were burned, and the inhabitants—men, women, and children—marched to the coast, branded, pushed into the holds, and carried away to Kingston or elsewhere for sale. Parties of negroes were invited on board ships to trade, and were seized and made slaves of. Slaves that fell sick were so much useless lumber, and were often thrown overboard out of hand. Some attempt to keep them in health was made by bringing them out of the hold in batches and compelling them to jump about the decks under the persuasive influence of a cat-o'-nine-tails. The deaths of a few slaves more or less, however, roused no comment so long as the dividends remained high.

In the latter half of the eighteenth century voices began to be raised, first for the humanising of the traffic, and later for its abolition. But as late as the Parliamentary election of 1761 the speeches of all the political candidates were unanimously in favor of resisting attempts to restrict the trade in "black ivory." Had there been a readiness to permit an increase of regulations concerning the slave traffic, it is possible that it might have continued for more years than was actually the case. But resistance to reform paved the way for abolition, although to the last, Liverpool put up a strong fight for its perpetuation. As late as 1790, in the Parliamentary election, the Gascoyne party enforced their claims in the following doggerel:—

> "Be true to the man who stood true to his trust,
> Remember our real situation we must;
> When our African business was near at an end,
> Remember, my lads, 'twas Gascoyne was our friend;
> If our slave trade had gone, there's an end to our lives,
> Beggars all we must be, our children and wives;
> No ships from our ports their proud sails e'er would spread,
> And our streets grown with grass, where the cows might be fed."

The ruin of Liverpool was freely predicted if the slave traffic was to be abolished. When the Bill for its abolition was finally before Parliament a petition was drawn up, signed by over 2,000 Liverpool merchants and citizens, demanding the withdrawal of the measure. This petition was signed by no less than eight ex-Mayors of Liverpool, and set forth:—

> "That many of your petitioners having, under the protection of the legislature, embarked a considerable part of their property in that trade, will be very materially injured if the said Bill should pass into law. That such abolition, in your petitioners' judgment, would not only be a great detriment to the town of Liverpool, but in its consequences produce great distress to the extensive manufactures of the County of Lancaster, and to many of the other rich, opulent, and industrious manufacturing towns in the kingdom, and would in no way answer the benevolent purposes of humanity, but only serve to remove the advantages of this trade to foreign States. Your petitioners, therefore, most humbly pray that the said Bill may not pass into law, and that they may be heard by their Council at your Lordships' bar."

As a matter of fact, the number of ships entering and leaving Liverpool fell off considerably with the abolition of the slave trade, and dock dues fell by about a third. In a few years, however, outlets were found in other directions, and the port continued to grow steadily. But it must be recorded as an indication of the state of opinion in Liverpool, that when, in 1788, the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade published its list of members, only two Liverpool names were found in it—William Rathbone and Dr. Binns.

As in America at a later date, the defenders of the traffic fell back upon religion and the Bible as authority for slave dealing. It was argued that the Bible had instituted slavery, and whatever abuses might occur in particular cases could not be urged against the institution. This, it must be remembered, was the line taken by W. E. Gladstone in his first address to the electors of Newark. There is nothing whatever in either the Old or New Testaments against slavery. The Old Testament recognises its legitimacy, and lays down laws for its regulation. It even lays down the cash value for men, women, and children at different ages (Lev. xxvii.). And in the New Testament the advice given to "servants" to obey their masters, to render all obedience, to suffer wrong treatment, etc., is really directed to slaves, "servant" being a mistranslation in the interests of Christian apologetics.

Foremost amongst those who gained fame in Liverpool as a champion of slavery was the Rev. Raymond Harris, a clergyman of the Church of England. In 1788 he published a pamphlet with the title, "Scriptural Researches on the Licitness of the Slave Trade, showing its conformity with the principles of Natural and Revealed Religion, delineated in the sacred writings of the Word of God." He points out that slavery was sanctioned by God, and so remains unless explicitly cancelled. He draws a number of illustrations from the Bible, and concludes that those who do not believe the slave trade to be a "licit" occupation, really do not believe their Bibles. There were other clerical champions of the trade, and it is worth while noting that the Rev. John Newton, friend of Cowper, author of the *Olney Hymns*, and Rector of St. Mary's, Woolnoth, actually commanded a slave-ship during the time he was studying for the ministry. Many years later, a clerical defender of slavery in the United States wrote:—

> "If slavery be a sin, and if advertising and apprehending slaves with a view to restoring them to their masters is a direct violation of the divine law, and if the buying, selling, or holding a slave for the sake of gain is a heinous sin and scandal, then, verily, three-fourths of all the Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians in slave States of the Union are of the Devil. They hold, if they do not buy and sell slaves; and, with few exceptions, they hesitate not to apprehend and restore runaway slaves when in their power."

With a slight variation of terms this would seem to voice the opinions of Liverpool Christians at the end of the eighteenth century.

In 1776 the question was raised in the House of Commons by Mr. David Hartley, M.P. for Hull. His motion was, however, defeated. In 1789 Pitt intro-

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duced a Bill against the African Slave Trade, which was followed up by Wilberforce. The first motion of Wilberforce was rejected by 163 votes to 88. Three times it met with the same fate, and when it had passed the Lower and went to the Upper House it was rejected on an equal number of occasions. One member of the House of Commons said it appeared to him "to be the intention of Providence that one set of men should always be slaves to another." The incapacity of Parliament to deal with the matter was generally asserted. General Gascoigne fell back upon the Bible in opposing the measure, and argued for slavery on the ground that it opened up to the Negro the blessing of Christianity. Later, when Clarkson's Bill for the Abolition of the Slave Trade was before the House of Lords, Lord Thurlow denounced the measure as contrary to the spirit of the Bible. "Slavery," he said, "had flourished in the early ages when men communed with God, and to attack its legality was an insidious and heretical attack on the principles of religion."

It is a matter of history that the Abolitionists eventually gained the day; but is also a matter of historic truth that while it obtained it had all those sanctions of established Christianity that vested interests have never failed to find. With the Bible in their hands, with Christianity in full possession of the field, Christians created a traffic that for sheer cold-blooded brutality holds the world's record. They established it in places where it had been hitherto unknown. Even in Africa, Livingstone asserts that slavery was unknown until Europeans introduced it. They made it a penal offence for a slave to learn to read and write, and then when the growth of a more enlightened opinion had made the continuation of the traffic impossible, turned their backs upon the Bible and upon Christian history, and declared it to be contrary to both. The truth is well put by Finlay, the historian of Greece, that "no Christian community of shareholders has ever voluntarily abolished slavery," and that "slavery had, in fact, ceased to exist in most European countries while many Christians still upheld its legality, and maintained that its existence was not at variance with the doctrines of their religion."

C. COHEN.

An Oft-Repeated but Worthless Argument.

JESUS is reported to have said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Mark xiii. 31); but the authenticity of the saying is exceedingly questionable. However, the generality of divines accept it as a genuine saying of Jesus, and expatiate upon its truth. The teaching of the Galilean, they tell us, is imperishable. The Rev. A. C. Hill, of Tollington Park Congregational Church, London, recently preached an eloquent sermon, entitled "The Eternal Words of Jesus," which was thought worthy of publication in the *Christian World Pulpit* for August 5. Of course, taking the Gospel Jesus as historical, which comparatively few now do, we admit that the title of Mr. Hill's discourse is quite legitimate. In the verse just quoted the Gospel Jesus claims eternity for his words; but we contend that it is an utterly groundless claim. The words of the Gospel Jesus are no more eternal than they are original. Mr. Hill spends a good deal of time in telling us what he fancies the Gospel Jesus knew and thought about himself and his words, as well as what he knew and thought of the world in which we live. According to this preacher, the Gospel Jesus was sure of two things, namely, "that the material world, to most of us the only world, in the long run will pass away," and "that civilisations do rise and fall." Yes, he "knew that there are civilisations lying underneath the sand," which are "the material out of which the new and better world is to arise." Then Mr. Hill adds:—

> "Jesus saw this with the eye of the seer. He recognised alterations going on around him. Yet he dared to say that there was one thing that did not change—'my words shall not pass away. Everything else is under the law of mutability, but the words that I utter shall abide.'"

Such is the claim of the Gospel Jesus as expanded by a twentieth-century pulpiteer. Now, what proof is adduced, or what facts are advanced in attestation, of the truth of such unique claim? Having stated the claim at length, Mr. Hill keeps on repeating it. What is the use of asserting over and over again that the words of Jesus "enter into the soul and become the property of a spiritual being"? Does it prove anything to declare that our inventions, our palaces, our motor-cars, and our aeroplanes are but the things of a day, and, if looked at from Sirius, "may be no more than the fluctuations of a fly's wing"? We incline to the opinion that the things just enumerated, looked at from Sirius, would not be seen at all. In any case, we are perfectly sure that a man who thinks that the movements of an aeroplane, looked at from the height of the Dog Star, "may be no more than the fluctuations of a fly's wing," cannot bear a very reliable witness to the eternity of the words of Jesus. A man who can see an aeroplane from the height of Sirius, though appearing no bigger than a fly on the wing, can see anything he wishes. From him will naturally issue such an irrational statement as the following:—

> "Whatever enters into the life of the soul, whatever becomes incorporated in the spiritual essence of a man, that remains; even when his body has turned to dust, when every one of his bones and members has been gathered up into the material of the world, the man himself still abides, a living creature, having come from God and going back to God."

It is amazing how easy it is for ignorance to strut about in the guise of knowledge. Mr. Hill's cocksureness on subjects concerning which absolutely no knowledge is obtainable marks him out as the biggest dogmatist it is possible to imagine. He does not know, it is not possible to know, that "the man himself still abides" when his body has turned to dust. What he offers us is a superstitious belief, uncorroborated by a single ascertained fact.

The words of Jesus shall not pass away, we are told, because "they always find that within us which is nearest unto God." Here is the dogmatist again in the fullness of his audacity. Again: "The words of Jesus are founded upon what is permanently Divine. They speak to us precisely as we believe in our best moments God himself must speak." We do not know "what is permanently Divine," we have no means of discovering how God speaks, or that he ever speaks at all; but we do know, and make bold to proclaim, that the words of the Gospel Jesus are practically of no account whatever in the world. And on this point Mr. Hill agrees with us. He takes the saying, "Blessed are the poor in spirit," and says:—

> "It is a word that contradicts the precepts and practice of ninety-nine out of every hundred of human beings. It runs against the general philosophy of every age that has tried to improve its position in the world. It contradicts everything that is said in the House of Commons and the Chamber of Deputies and the American Senate. Because, wherever you meet with men who are, as they say, practical men and accustomed to the handling of affairs, who deal with the concrete things of life, you meet with men who believe, whether they actually express it or not, that it is force that finally rules, that the Almighty is on the side of the great battalions, that unless your ships are larger and stronger, and your guns of a heavier calibre than those of other people, you may preach until your audience is deaf, and pray until you are dumb from exhaustion, but it makes no difference to the result. In this world it is not true that the poor in spirit are blessed."

That is entirely true and extremely well said. Poverty of spirit is a greater curse than poverty of pocket, though it is probable that in its earlier form the saying had reference only to the latter. Poverty in any form has never been a blessing. Neither has meekness. And yet Mr. Hill says he is certain that Jesus is right, "that in the long run it is the meekness,

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the piety, the humility of the soul that wins the day in the battles that are the real Armageddons of the world." Will he be good enough to name one great battle in which the victory was won by means of those so-called passive virtues? In the long run, they are said to conquer; but they have never triumphed yet. The reverend gentleman alludes to Bismarck in terms of admiration; but does he really mean to imply that Bismarck was a man in whom the Sermon on the Mount found exemplification? And to what is Europe making its supreme appeal at this moment? To poverty of spirit, meekness, piety? Eight Christian countries have resolved to unsheathe the sword and plunge it into one another's blood. We have had the long run of nigh two thousand years since Jesus spoke on earth, and at this very hour Christendom pays no practical heed whatever either to him or his words.

It is a radical error to call the words of Jesus words of liberation. Not one of them can be quoted as having in the slightest degree made for freedom. Was not Guizot right when he described the Christian Church of the eighth and ninth centuries as "a population of slaves"? Christians have never been lovers of liberty, except their own. The Buddhists did love liberty and grant it fully to all who differed from them. They have never played at the evil game of persecution. Christianity has never taken the part of the poor against the rich, nor of the proletariat against the privileged classes. Mr. Hill is either ignorant or does not desire to be fair when he refers to Aristotle's views on slavery. It is true that the illustrious philosopher approved of that wicked institution; but it is false to jump from him to Jesus, saying that it required only that the latter should teach his doctrine of the eternal value of the soul to prove that doctrine wrong. If he had taken the trouble to consult Harnack's *Expansion of Christianity* (vol. i., p. 24) he would have seen how essentially unjust his observation is. Harnack is a famous theologian, and yet in this work we find this: "The Stoics had passed the word that all men were equal, and had spoken of brotherhood as well as of the duties of man towards man." Pliny saw in slaves his serving friends; and it had been plainly taught that slavery was contrary to the law of nature and ought to be abolished.

We have meditated on the words of Jesus quite as much as Mr. Hill has done, and we have carefully examined them in the light of history, with the result that we now regard them, in so far as they are true, as having been afloat in the world, in one form or another, for hundreds and thousands of years before Jesus was ever heard of; and in so far as they are not true, as having originated with himself in his *rôle* of a would-be reformer of Judaism. But whether true or false, the point is that in Christendom nobody ever dreams of putting them into practice. It is a minister's profession to eulogise them in the pulpit, but minister and people alike ignore them in the practical conduct of life.

J. T. LLOYD.

An Ideal Holiday Book.

The Best of Lamb. Compiled by Mr. E. V. Lucas. (Methuen; 1914.) 1s. net.

CHARLES LAMB is the most lovable of writers, and, despite his own quaint jest that he wrote for antiquity, he becomes every year a more popular writer with his posterity. "A fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy," it could not be otherwise, for much that he writes awakens a sense of personal affection in the reader. Writing of youth, of death, of familiar faces, of homely things, he keeps marvellously close to life. It was, we feel, just so with us in childhood, at school, in this sad or glad experience. This power, together with the humanist temperament of getting at the heart of things, makes him keenly alive to life.

This little volume, though its title will jar upon Vegetarians, does give us the quintessence of Lamb's unique genius. For Mr. Lucas, who has given his nights and days to the study of Lamb, has brought together a number of the most entertaining, most beautiful, and, in the case of the letters, most amusing of his writings, and it is certain to drive the reader to Lamb's complete works, the output of a rare and delightful genius.

The man himself was well worth knowing. What would it not be worth to have a few hours of his company? In his buoyant humor or in his more serious vein, it were all one. Suppose we could have dined with him that day when the dish was the sucking-pig that Farmer Collier sent him, and heard the good wishes wafted to the giver:—

> "May your granaries be full, and your rats empty, and your chickens plump, and your envious neighbors lean, and your laborers busy, and you as idle and as happy as the day is long."

Or imagine we had been present when the stately Coleridge asked him, "Charles, did you ever hear me preach?" and he replied in his stuttering way, "I never heard you do anything else." Or what if we had taken a hand at whist when Burney was his partner and he called out, "Martin, if dirt were trumps, what a hand you'd have." Or, better still, had been with him that Saturday night when he brought home the folio Beaumont and Fletcher that he had coveted for weeks, while he saved the price of it, and he could not think of going to bed till the loose leaves had been pasted in, and he had read his favorite passages. Or, best of all, had we been among those to whom his door was open on the famous Wednesday evenings in the Inner Temple Lane. Wordsworth was one of the number when he was in town, and Coleridge, Haydon, Hazlitt, Barry Cornwall and Talfourd. It must have been a rich memory, an abiding delight, to have been with Lamb at times like these. It must have been a festal evening like those ever-memorable nights at Frederick's palace when the nimble wit of Voltaire challenged the best brains of Europe, or those suppers at the "Mermaid" when rare Ben Jonson exchanged quips and cranks with the smiling Shakespeare.

Carlyle was the only man of note who misunderstood Lamb. His austerity, his want of humor, his dogmatism, shut the doors of sympathy. When they met the atmosphere was electric. On one occasion, while they were waiting for their host, Carlyle looked out of the window, watching the flight of some pigeons. Lamb, hurt perhaps at his silence, went up to him and asked, "Mr. Carlyle, are you a poulterer?" Another time, as they were together in the hall, preparing to leave a party after the sage had monopolised the conversation, Lamb handed Carlyle his wide-awake hat with the remark, "Is this your turban?" Accordingly, we find the philosopher writing in his journal: "Charles Lamb I sincerely believe to be in some considerable degree insane! A more pitiful, rickety, gasping, staggering, stammering tomfool I do not know." Carlyle was as wrong with regard to Lamb as he was in error concerning Heine and Voltaire. Lamb's jests often contained shrewd observation, as in his ironic expression of regret that the Royalists did not hang Milton, for then we might have laughed at them.

The other men of genius who knew Lamb realised his worth. They saw the good nature under the uncouth exterior. He was ready both with sympathy and help, generous and unselfish. Like Dumas, he had pensioners on his bounty, among whom were an old teacher of his own, and a cripple whose only claim was that he was recommended by his friend, Southey. Barry Cornwall tells a characteristic story. He was in Lamb's company one day, in low spirits, which Lamb thought due to want of money. Turning suddenly, Lamb said, "My dear boy, I have a quantity of useless things, including a hundred pounds in my desk, that I don't know what to do with. Take it."

Lamb was a hero, modest, and unobtrusive. There was insanity in the family, and Lamb never married

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His sister Mary killed her mother in a fit of frenzy. A few weeks' restraint restored her to her right mind, but insanity recurred at intervals ever afterwards, and a retreat was provided in a private asylum. There was warning of their coming, and a friend has related how he met the brother and sister at such a time, walking hand-in-hand across the fields to the asylum, both in tears.

If Charles Lamb waged an unequal war against fate, he was, at least, a happy soldier. When his turn came he yielded up his broken sword to fate, the conqueror, with a brave and a humble heart.

> "Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
> Or knock the breast, no weakness, no contempt,
> Dispraise or blame, nothing but well and fair;
> And what may quiet us in a death so noble."

MIMNERMUS.

Alfaro and the Ecuadorian Bigots.

> "Eloy Alfaro was an Eagle who had the heart of a dove; that is why his wings were burnt in the flames."—VARGAS VILA in his new poem, *La Muerte del Condor*, p. 45.

IN the *Freethinker* of March 8, 1912, I related the terrible story of the atrocities which crowned the triumph of reaction in the Republic of Ecuador, and my subsequent article of March 17, of the same year, set out in fuller detail the fiendish work of the Ecuadorian clericals as displayed in the murder of the ex-President, Eloy Alfaro, and his associates. The Ecuadorian papers which at that time came to my hands left no manner of doubt in my mind that the indecent mutilation of these victims, the cutting out of their tongues and the infliction of wounds upon the most sensitive parts of their bodies, the tearing out of Flavio Alfaro's heart, its slicing into pieces to be publicly eaten by a bigoted and priest-maddened populace, were atrocities committed in Quito and Guayaquil only two years ago under the holy auspices of the Archbishop and other mild but mitred men of God who were glad of the opportunity of letting loose the tiger of religious intolerance upon the old, freethinking Eloy Alfaro and his friends.

The murderers in high places who wrought these abominations have not yet been brought to account, and the Ecuadorian Republic still continues under the stigma, which any civilised community would refuse tamely to bear, of allowing these crimes against humanity to go unpunished. The almost incredible record of these infamies stands fresh and unrefuted in the pages of the *Freethinker*, in the *Daily News* of March 16 and 20, 1912, and in the issue for June, 1912, of *Hispania*, a well-known South American review in the Spanish language, which hails every month from our cosmopolitan London.

But although the avenging hand of justice—Ecuadorian justice—remains for the time being limp with paralysis, all memory of the horrid crime is not yet obliterated. In flaming words of indignation, a distinguished South American writer, Vargas Vila, has just published a superb prose-poem* which nobly vindicates the character of the murdered Eloy Alfaro and brands with infamy the men who compassed his death. For the story of this man's heroic life and the tragedy of his fateful death, to be framed with the laurels of these splendid pages, is perhaps the most brilliant apotheosis that this stricken martyr of noble ideals, foully murdered in his eightieth year, could obtain. The throbbing pathos, the poetic beauty, the Olympian grandeur of this Homeric poem-tragedy, should secure immortality, if not to the illustrious victim, at any rate to his cowardly assassins.

Senor Vargas Vila calls his vindication "A Poem, a Tragedy, and a History." Few poems of recent years have soared to such heights of sublimity or plumbed such depths of pathos. It is not, however, a poem in the conventional sense of the word; it is rather a combination of fervid poetry and heroic prose such as Victor Hugo, Thomas Carlyle, and Walt Whitman would write in their most characteristic moods. If Vila had written his poem of vindication in orthodox poetic lines, or framed his tragedy—a tragedy, alas! in real life and in our own times—in the conventional mode, or had he tamely pamphletised a matter-of-fact history of his hero, most likely he would have bored a public which lives so near to the lingering echoes of the awful tragedy of two years ago. But the martial grandeur of these majestic lines, which at times soar to the highest peaks of Parnassus, fascinate and enthrill according as they dazzle our imagination with their rugged splendor of beauty, or strike awe within our soul by the colossal force and daring of the mental pictures evoked. I have seen no specimen of Vargas Vila's art other than this wonderful prose-poem, but I am satisfied that he shows himself here with the poet's stride, with the bardic voice that rings clear, with the seer's eye that penetrates and reveals the essential facts with lightning flashes of intuition.

Nothing more Jove-like in its thunders of invective, in the corrosive vehemence of its poetic fervor, than the three opening chapters in which the poet describes the tyranny of "the inferior Cæsars," who tyrannise over the Republics of Central South America and over its various tribes, "who filled the terrible abyss with their lamentations during their crucifixion between heaven and earth, as though transfixed between two infinites bereft of mercy." Amongst these tyrants we read of Archbishop Merino, the recent President of San Domingo, who in one day shot forty innocent students who were accused of the *crime* of conspiring against him. Vargas Vila calls him the "mitred panther, whose mantle, bathed in blood, showed him to be a sinister purple-robed minister of death, in whose hands the elevated Host became red....." The moving spectacle, as here disclosed, of anarchy in these despoiled unfortunate lands, should stir up the torpor of the Central American Republics and shame its public men into getting in closer conformity with the underlying principles of true civilisation. If only for that reason, the apocalyptic terrors which this tragic poem foreshadows as the ultimate doom of the neo-Latin Republics, unless they mend their ways, should serve for warning and admonition to the nations concerned.

In my *Freethinker* article of March 12, 1912, I gave particulars of the secularising spirit which animated the drastic and much-needed work of social reform in Ecuador carried on by President Eloy Alfaro and by the Liberal (*i.e.*, the Radical Freethinking) party which he represented in the country. I now find that Vargas Vila, in his poem, confirms this view and points out how the enmity of the Church against Alfaro was aroused to savage fury by his zeal for secular education and ample religious toleration. This is how Vila describes the situation preceding the advent of Alfaro:—

> "The night that had reigned over these skies was that profound night, starless and merciless, the night of fear and dismay, beneath which the nations disappear in a silent orgy, during which they are devoured by all the vultures that spring from the frozen heart of the abyss—it was the Night of Religion!
>
> "What think you would bubble forth from that unshapen chaos in which during an interminable succession of years the Priest and the Executioner, those twin brothers of Death, reigned supreme like absolute Gods?
>
> "The reign of the priests had been in Ecuador, as in all the countries of Latin America, a feast of jackals."

Vargas Vila glorifies his hero, and perhaps over-idealises him. For Vila, Alfaro was the Hero of the Sword, the Hero of Ideas; the Liberator, the Soldier who was dreamer as well. Chapter xi. describes his creative work of social reorganisation, the scheme of which (page 105) was apparently too vast for immediate realisation amidst a backward people with whom "a slavish and religious sediment" found favor, "whose policy consisted in putting one hand

* *La Muerte del Condor*. Barcelona: Casa editorial Maucci; 1914. Pp. 260. 2 pesetas.

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into the public treasury without withdrawing the other which was slimy with the waters that surged in the baptismal font." But the great constructional works of Alfaro still remain, although his enemies literally lopped off the hands of the man whose public spirit contrived them.

Vargas Vila, who is evidently a Freethinker, holds the view that when reaction took its revenge upon Alfaro its instrument was Carlos Freile Zaldumbide, whom Alfaro had appointed Vice-President of the Republic; who, as he tells us, had the "soul of a priest and of an executioner." It was Zaldumbide's hand that released the storm that overwhelmed Alfaro, and he it was who, acting as "the bacillus of assassination," organised the butcheries that made the name of Ecuador a by-word of reproach to South American civilisation. When the incomplete documents concerning these atrocities reached me two years ago I had my suspicions of the treachery of Zaldumbide. The terrible eighteenth chapter of *La Muerte del Condor* which gibbets him as "a slimy and corrupt Jesuit who presided over a band of assassins," sheds new light on the problem. But the moving spirit amidst these horrors, which will for ever darken the memory of January 28, 1912, was, we are assured, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Charles R. Tobar. He it was who repudiated the act of capitulation by which the lives of the defeated Alfarists were to be spared; and who hypnotised Zaldumbide into compliance with an act of odious public treachery, which soon gave birth to scenes of nameless barbarity (see Cap. xxii. *et seq.*). All the horrors described in the *Freethinker* two years ago, and many additional touches, are shown with terrifying vividness in these later chapters. The obscene mutilation of Eloy Alfaro by a monk, if you please, is described on page 239, and we learn on page 240 that these mutilations and tortures were inflicted to the cry of "Death to the Freemasons; Long live Religion; Death to the heretics; Long live the Sacred Heart of Jesus."

It is well, if horrors of this nature are still to go on to the disgrace of our common humanity, or if revivals of mediævalism are to be inaugurated to-day and blessed and perpetrated in the sacred name of religion, that some indignant pen, like that so splendidly wielded by Vargas Vila, should flash forth like an avenging sword in the pale faces of the holy assassins and of their would-be imitators. Already *La Muerte del Condor* is in its second edition—an augury, we trust, of many more editions to come. Let us hope that the flaming pen of the indignant poet will brand his lightning words deep into the consciences of the Ecuadorian people and of the South American Republics generally, in order to warn them of the danger that lurks for them in the unquelled spirit of fratricidal strife which ignorance engenders and which religious bigotry fans into devouring flames.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

The supposition, that the terrors of hell-fire are essential or even conducive to good morals, is contradicted by the facts of history. In the Dark Ages there was not a man or a woman, from Scotland to Naples, who doubted that sinners were sent to hell. The religion which they had was the same as ours, with this exception—that everyone believed in it. The state of Europe in that pious epoch need not be described.—*Winwood Reade.*

Were half the power that fills the world with terror,
Were half the wealth bestowed on camps and courts,
Given to redeem the human mind from error,
There were no need of arsenals or forts.

—*Longfellow.*

THE "AMPHION."

Poor souls, they perished.
Had I been any God of power, I would
Have sunk the sea within the earth, or ere
It should the good ship so have swallowed, and
The fraughting souls within her.

—*The Tempest*, i., 2.

Acid Drops

It is rumored that the Kaiser has been induced to postpone his ultimatum to Almighty God.

The Kaiser's last words to his Army were "God help us." Looking backward, he might very well exclaim "Oh my prophetic soul!"

The papers inform us that the Prince of Wales has joined his regiment for active service. He motored down to where it is stationed, near Brentwood. We have not heard that the Germans are in strong force in that locality, but it contains a famous lunatic asylum.

Mr. Arnold White, writing in the *Referee*, says that "The British National Anthem assumes that the Most High is British in sympathy and hostile to all aliens opposed to the King of England." Just so! And the priests of the Government religion bless the battleships and consecrate the colours of the regiments in the name of "The Prince of Peace."

A few years ago a well-known member of the House of Lords exclaimed in the course of a public speech, "Damn the consequences." Dr. Campbell Morgan wouldn't for the world use a swear-word, but the other day he said in effect, "Damn the facts; whatever happens, whether peace or war, we must not allow ourselves for a single moment, whatever tragedy may be awaiting us, to question the truth of the text, 'The Lord sitteth King for ever.'" Then God is the direct cause of what Dr. Morgan himself called "the weird and devilish situation" in which Europe finds itself at this hour, and it is he who must be held responsible for the awful deluge of blood and misery which will soon overwhelm us. But, be the facts what they may, we must not permit ourselves to doubt his sovereignty.

Dr. Morgan made a sillier observation still. He said, "What is our duty at this hour? First, that of courage; second, that of co-operation with God." According to this clinical wiseacre, Atheists cannot have courage, because "true courage is born of certainty of God." What sheer nonsense! Then, how can we co-operate at this hour with him who "sitteth King for ever," except by doing our utmost to promote war, as he has so successfully done? Of course, these men of God conveniently ignore the obvious implications of their own foolish teaching.

Ministers of religion, in particular, are just now placing God in a most awkward position. All parties to the present European conflict are his peculiar people, who believe that he is a prayer-hearing and prayer-answering Father, and passionately implore him to grant success to opposing arms. In the circumstances, how on earth can he act with impartiality? Germany believes that she is fighting in a just cause, and fervently prays for victory; but as all her enemies do the same, God must find himself in a peculiarly unenviable quandary. Do his ordained servants never think of this?

The Archbishop of Canterbury considers the military situation "the work of the Devil." There's £15,000 worth of wisdom for the devout believer. A colored medicine man would have given the same advice for a bottle of fire-water.

"When old King William of Prussia was on his death-bed he sent for his grandson, the present Kaiser. His last words to the future ruler of the German people were, 'Keep in with the Czar of Russia.' And now—well, well! I wonder what grandpapa, looking down from above, thinks of the situation." This gem was written by Mr. George R. Sims in the *Referee*. But what if grandpapa is sweating tallow candles in the other place?

The Bishop of London is going to accompany the London troops while the war is on. We wonder what the soldiers will think of it. On board a ship the presence of a man of God is deemed unlucky. Perhaps it is a reminiscence of Jonah.

When we went to America in 1896 on the old *Germanic* with the late Charles Watts, a well-known artist, Mr. Harry Furness, was a fellow-passenger. Talking about the weather with an old sailor, he was told that the voyage could hardly be a smooth one with so many clericals on board. Mr. Furness told him that there were two Atheists in the saloon.

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and asked him what he thought of the prospect with that fact in view. The old sailor replied that in those circumstances it ought to be *middling*, or rather better. And middling or rather better it was. The Atheists were not lightweights. They kept the scale down on their side. Some days were positively beautiful.

The Rev. Edward Shillito says that "if ever it has been easy to doubt the rule of the holy God over his world, it has been easy this week." Does the reverend gentleman verily believe that there is a holy Ruler of the world? Can he look history in the face and honestly say that "the moment, in all its sinister meaning, is arrayed against the experience of the past, and against the faith tested in other ages?" We boldly affirm that the belief in a holy Governor of the world has never been justified by the facts, and that the facts of to-day give the complete lie to it. Mr. Shillito knows, as well as we do, how utterly useless and senseless prayer is in such a deplorable state of things, or in any other state for that matter.

The organ of the New Theology that was, informs us that on Sunday, August 2, prayers were offered for the nations in the crisis through which they were passing. Now we see the answer—WAR. He who "knows and cares and guides," as the Archbishop of Canterbury said, to whom the prayers were supposed to ascend on the wings of faith, has seen fit, in his infinite wisdom and love, to send fire and sword, death and destruction, pain and sorrow. And yet the very people who admit that this is a fact aver that he "doeth all things well." On August 2 we saw a nation *at prayer*, and three days later we saw, and still see, the nations *at war*.

The Government doesn't seem to understand its own Post Office work. The following happened in one and the same office in a few minutes. A young lady tried to get a *bonâ-fide* postal order cashed, and the lady clerk refused to cash it. She merely wanted to buy some stamps, by means of a Government order (duly paid for), which the said Government declined to honor. That is to say, the Government refused its own currency. After a lot of haggling, the stamps were passed over and the change given in the form of another postal order. So much for transaction number one. Transaction number two was as follows. A gentleman wanted to buy a postal order to send away as a remittance, and the lady clerk refused to supply him. He tendered coin of the realm, and she wouldn't take it. Surely this is chaos come again. We always knew that the Post Office was the silliest and most impudent institution in England, but we hardly thought it would come to this.

The Government should interfere with the currency as little as possible. Stopping a panic run on banks on a declaration of war is sensible and quite easy. That is all that needs to be done. The currency was enough before the panic began, and it will be enough (perhaps too much) when the panic is ended. Bank notes for smaller sums than £5 are right enough: you meet them everywhere and every day in Scotland, for instance; but to try to make postal orders currency is madness or fraudulency. It means that the Government takes our money, and gives us none of it back. Gold is still hoarded, but the Government itself does the hoarding.

And that list of prices which the Government *recommended* to buyers and sellers in shops! Fancy the economics of fixing prices without fixing wages and the food supply! A poor man who had paid a shilling a pound for butter could not pay one and sixpence, unless his wages were raised proportionately. He would buy two pounds instead of three. In this case it was easy to see that Germany, the only people we were fighting, could not seriously interfere with *our* food supply, which would soon settle down to normal when it was recognised that the panic had nothing real to rest upon.

The interests involved in the Austrian-Servian trouble are of a very mixed character, but amongst these it is impossible to overlook the part played by religion. And, as usual, it only serves to accentuate bitterness that already exists, creates a new one, and does nothing whatever to foster the possibilities of friendly intercourse. Pan-Slavism stands for the supremacy of the Greek Church in South-Eastern Europe, just as behind Austria is the force of the Roman Catholic Church. The composite nationality of the Austrian Empire has its internal animosities sharpened by religious differences, and these, with a people like those of South-Eastern Europe, tend to create troubles where none would otherwise exist. It is thus a curious fact that in both the great political questions of the moment—the Home Rule question and the European war, religious belief is the most disturbing factor. In Ireland, but for religious belief the whole problem would be fairly easy of solution; and in the near East, for generations the great trouble has been how to get people of rival sects and religions to live peaceably together.

A United Council Sunday Defence Committee for London has been formed with the Bishop of London at its head. It is curious how the various sects can agree when it is a question of enforcing their opinions upon others. No one in London has the least desire to prevent any members or supporters of the committee attending church or chapel, or to force them to go to secular places of entertainment. All other people ask in this matter is freedom; what the Defence Committee demand is compulsion—the power to force its own ideas of Sunday on the rest of the community. The Bishop of London said that the number of cinema palaces open on Sunday had increased, and thought it was hypocrisy to pretend that they are opened for charity. Very likely. But hypocrisy in some form or another is the usual result of religious legislation. And we quite fail to see the justice in insisting that the proprietors of cinema palaces, if they open on Sunday, shall give their profits to charitable institutions. If the picture palaces have any bad results these are quite independent of where the profits go. And it is passing strange to find religious people winking at these consequences so long as the proprietors do not make a profit.

The truth is that all the hypocrisy lies with the Sabbatarians. They do not want the picture palaces open at all. They hope that if the proprietors are prevented making a profit they will not open. Moreover, the sheer hypocrisy of the religious party has been exposed by reports received from the police from all parts of the country. There are no reports of bad behavior or evil pictures. There is a general agreement that they provide clean, healthy entertainment, and that the behavior of young people about the streets has undergone an improvement. One would have thought that religious leaders with their loudly expressed desire for the moral betterment of the people would have welcomed the appearance of anything that would keep the rising generation from the attractions of the public-house and the hooliganism of the streets. But they keep people away from Church. That is the really unforgivable offence of the picture palaces. The talk of a seven-day working week is only additional hypocrisy. That could be easily enough prevented. The community may be justified in demanding that every employee shall have one day's rest out of seven. It is certainly not justified in demanding that everybody shall rest on the same day. And one could imagine that as working-men were able to win the Saturday half-holiday, and a shortened labor week-day, they might be trusted to guard themselves against being compelled to work seven days a week.

What a frightfully low opinion of the Christian Church the *Church Times* entertains. In its issue for August 7 it says that, though nearly two thousand years old, she has not yet learned "to draw a sharp distinction between the forces of truth and error." We are familiar with the popular adages, "It is never too late to mend" and "One is never too old to learn"; but when one has arrived at the state of decrepitude one is much more likely to forget things already learned than to learn new ones. The Church is now too busy trying to put off the dying hour to be able to devote any time to the acquisition of fresh knowledge. Any lines she draws to-day are the opposite of "sharp."

Great Britain is decidedly on the downgrade. She is rapidly losing the things she ought to value more than life. She is becoming reckless, parting with her ideals, turning its back on the sterner virtues, selling her birthright for a mess of pottage, treating sport as if it were the end of life, and flinging her ancient piety and reverence for the things of God down the wind. Hence the present "weird and devilish situation." So says Canon Newbolt, who speaks in the name of God, and who consequently must be right. God has sent the present war as a chastisement for our sins. It comes as "a call to prayer, but even more as a call to mend our ways. In spite of former chastisements we have grown careless and indifferent. We are becoming the Godless nation which tries to live without God in the world." What horrible claptrap! This is one of the very few wars we cannot truthfully accuse of being religious wars. It is a war of ambition, undertaken solely with the object of gaining additional territory and power, though it is claimed that God is actively on the side of all the parties to it.

At the Wesleyan Methodist Conference the Rev. W. H. Armstrong bade his fellow-preachers take courage, because

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of late Rationalists themselves had been doing something to advance the Christian faith. This "something" turned out to consist in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle having affirmed the presence of design in the universe and an alleged statement by Professor Gilbert Murray that psychology was against "Rationalism." We believe that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle has never ceased to affirm design in the universe, and we are not seriously alarmed at his statement in any case. Very much greater men than Sir Arthur Conan Doyle have said the same thing, but it has never affected the facts, nor has it prevented a growing number giving up the belief as unjustifiable. Besides, if there is design in nature, it should be quite independent of whether any particular person believes in it or not, the *facts* should be there to convince anyone who cares to examine them. The idea of so important a belief as the existence of God depending upon whether a popular novelist believes in design or not is really laughable. It is clear evidence of the straits to which religionists are reduced, that they should find comfort in such a circumstance.

As to Professor Gilbert Murray saying that psychology is against Rationalism, we seriously question the accuracy of the statement. In any case it is not true. Some psychologists—mostly of the variety that call "psychology" anything that is labelled "occult"—may, but the science of psychology is dead against the religious position. It will be instructive to any Christian to only glance down the index attached to any acknowledged text-book of psychology. In the vast majority of cases he will either not find the "soul" mentioned at all, or he will find it dismissed as having no scientific value. Yet psychology began as the science of the soul. But in course of time, as the study of mental functions became more accurate, it was found that not only was there no evidence for the existence of a soul, but even as a working theory it had no value whatever. Even the late Professor James was forced to admit this much, and Professor McDougal—who does argue for a real "soul"—practically admits that he is a free-lance fighting the great body of modern psychologists. Psychology, in fact, has followed the course that every one of the sciences has taken. It began with a host of theological and animistic conceptions, and it shed them just as soon and just as certainly as it reached positive results.

As soon as war was declared between Great Britain and Germany, a lot of Christians, who cared more for the meat which perisheth than for any patriotic virtue, rushed off to the shops in a disgusting panic, and bought large supplies of food, which act, of course, helped to raise the price of provisions for all their poorer fellow-citizens. A lot of Christian shopkeepers played up to this contemptible game, and helped to rob (that is the real word for it) their poor fellow-citizens who could least afford to pay from 50 to 100 per cent. higher prices for all the necessaries of life. The Christian shopkeepers (most shopkeepers are Christians) were simply taking a mean advantage of their fellow-citizens in a time of national distress. It was so like them.

We heard of one curious case. The morning after the declaration of war an angler at a seaside town went to the usual place to buy worms. To his surprise he found the price doubled. It was *on account of the war.*

Mr. Harold Begbie lets the truth out now and then. The following passage occurred in his article in the *Daily Chronicle* (Aug. 5) on "The War of Civilisation":—

> "And where are Good Manners gone? Look for them in Asia, but not in Europe. At every Christian frontier you can pick up a broken treaty and a dishonored bond."

On the same page of the *Daily Chronicle* there is an editorial article in which a half-hearted plea is put forward for such prayer as the Archbishop of Canterbury is (professionally) recommending to the English people. Some other ecclesiastic looks after this sort of thing for the Scotch, Irish, and Welsh. We ask our readers' attention to the following passage:—

> "Clever ridicule is sometimes poured on the prayers which opposite combatants offer to the same God; but the scoffers forget something, which simpler people know. It is that in this world of unplumbed mysteries, where frail, short-lived, short-sighted humanity gropes amid unmeasured forces, conflicts arise that are past our solving or averting or reconciling. Human wisdom is sorely limited at its best, but we believe that there is a Wisdom beyond it; and to that in the tremendous hour when the resources of human prudence have all been tried and tried in vain, we humbly commit our destiny, our lives, and the lives of our nearest and dearest."

What connection has the end of this passage with the beginning? What resemblance is there between rival combatants asking the same God for victory, and begging his assistance when one or the other of them has got a good licking? The latter prayer may or may not be answered; it is simply a question of probability. The former is a clear absurdity.

Mr. Coulson Kernahan is sometimes original, and, occasionally, antediluvian in his suggestions. His latest idea is that the best solution of the European crisis is for us to "humble ourselves before God in prayer." Perhaps some of his friends will provide him with some velvet knee-caps, but we hardly think he will set the fashion.

The Rev. Hugh Chapman, of the Savoy Chapel, London, says man is "a combination of mud and angel." We must not call this a dirty mistake; but it is altogether wrong scientifically.

Lieut.-Gen. Sir R. Baden-Powell, distributing prizes at a Hammersmith Girls' School, said "a lady was one who wore silk stockings. If cotton gloves were worn she was a woman, and if she did not wear gloves and had a dress of calico she was a person." How would the witty warrior describe Eve in the Garden of Eden?

The authorities of Atlantic City—the Brighton of New Jersey, U.S.A.—have been trying for some time to put a stop to Sunday bathing and dancing on the sands on the Sabbath. Municipal bands play on Sunday, and in order to stop the dancing the musicians were ordered to play none but hymn tunes. The dancers, however, were equal to the occasion, and the tango and other freak dances have been carried on to the accompaniment of "Abide With Me," "Rock of Ages," and "Lead Kindly Light." The next move, we presume, will be either to stop the bands altogether or to turn the show into a religious service by opening with a prayer and ending with a collection.

"Gladness enters largely into the religion of the Christ," says the Rev. F. W. Turner, of the Baptist Church, Evesham. Then why is it that male Christians wear their chins on the fifth button of their waistcoats, and the girls look as if they were fresh from a funeral?

With regard to Mr. Lucas's *The Best of Lamb*, the title tempts one to ask "Welsh or New Zealand?"

Here's an advertisement from a West Country paper:—"Wanted, capable Farm Laborer, hedger, buttermaker; active Churchman, regular communicant, with good tenor voice, and family of musical boys, play cornet or violin; change ringer preferred. High wages; light work." This is an extreme example of Christian "cheek." Not only must the laborer be a man of extraordinary ability; but he must provide a family of musicians.

From the agony column of a contemporary:—"Christian gentleman, lonely, tired, seeks friendship with sensible, sincere, Christian lady. Write Rev. ——." A parson ought not to be lonely when he is in constant communion with two gods and a ghost. Apparently this one, like so many of his profession, prefers female society.

Puritanism has always been associated with cant, and its modern preachers seem determined that its association shall continue. Rev. D. B. Fraser, of Pembroke Chapel, Liverpool, lecturing on "Puritanism v. Pugilism," said that "Puritanism in this country was a genuine attempt to place the emphasis on the higher side of man's nature." We do not believe that Puritanism is, or was, anything of the kind. It was an attempt to emphasise the *religious* side of man's nature, which is *not* necessarily the higher side. Macaulay's epigram that the seventeenth century Puritans objected to bear-baiting, not because it hurt the bear, but because it pleased the onlookers, is eternally true of the type. And whether in England, America, or elsewhere, the prevalence of Puritanism has never succeeded in inducing a permanently healthy, social life. It creates a standard of value that is essentially jaundiced and unhealthy. And while it has encouraged, during its seasons of power, a thoroughly unhealthy type of character and tone of public mind, the reaction against it has usually been of a depressing kind. One need go no further than the history of the seventeenth century in England to prove this. When Mr. Fraser says that "Puritanism arrested England in her headlong plunge into prurient artificiality," and created "a new type of strong man," he is talking arrant nonsense. Puritanism did not arrest pruriency and artificiality at any time or anywhere. There are only three occasions on which it has been in power—in England, in Geneva, in parts of North America. And in each case, instead of preventing evil, it brought about disaster.

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To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £180 2s. 6d. Received since:—H. M. Ridgway, £1.

Per F. Rose, Bloemfontein:—N. M., 10s. 6d.; H. M., 10s. 6d.; E. W., 10s. 6d.

S. ALMAN.—Colonel Ingersoll did not recant on his deathbed. He had no deathbed at all. His doctor had told him that he had heart trouble, and might die suddenly at any moment. This information he kept to himself, in order not to upset his wife and daughters and other persons attached to him. One day, after a bad night, he was sitting on a chair in his house at Dobb's Ferry, with Mrs. Ingersoll standing by him. She expressed concern about his looks, and presently asked, "Are you better now, dear?" "Yes," he replied, with a pleasant smile, "better now." And in a sense he was, for death took him that very instant, the pleasant smile remaining stereotyped upon his face. You see what time he had to say "how sorry he was he could not burn all he had written against religion." The same story, by the way, was told of Thomas Paine, and, before him, of Voltaire. There is very little variety in the performance of these Christian liars.

E. BURKE.—(1) Pleased to hear from you again; also to see such a good report of the debate between yourself and a Christian Evidence speaker. (2) The N. S. S. does not distribute Freethought speakers over London; they are engaged by the Branches. (3) You are right about our "enormous correspondence." And we have no one to help us; no secretary, no clerk, no assistant of any kind; one pair of hands is all we have to rely on.

W. BRADBURN.—Some attention of the kind should certainly be shown to old or feeble Freethinkers who are driven to reliance on public charity. That is the common name for it, we believe. A copy of the *Freethinker* weekly would be most acceptable. We will put the matter before the next N. S. S. Executive meeting.

"ABRACADABRA."—We are waiting to hear from you.

E. B.—Thanks for useful cuttings.

G. O. MCDONALL (Montreal).—Thanks for cutting from your *Daily Star*. When the editor quotes from a letter of George Meredith's in 1872 as giving a true view of his attitude towards religion, he is playing the fool or something worse. Meredith lived 37 years longer and broadened all the time. He denied the supernatural.

W. P. BALL.—Your cuttings are always welcome.

F. LONSDALE.—We can quite understand that Glasgow was "war mad" when you wrote. We hope it has settled down a bit by this.

J. F. TURNBULL.—Had to make it very short, for insertion this week.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and not to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Many newspapers have had to reduce their size, and we may have to do the same. We make no definite announcement, but we warn our readers of what is at least "on the cards" in order to guard them against a possible surprise.

We are publishing in this week's *Freethinker* a first instalment of an address on the woman question by Mr. M. M. Mangasarian, of Chicago, who is the leading Freethought propagandist in America at the present time. We do not mean as an editor, of course, for he is not connected with any journal; and the first place on *that* side of the movement over there belongs to George Macdonald, of the *Truthseeker*. Mr. Mangasarian's "church" at Chicago gives him the widest latitude as to the subject he selects for treatment every Sunday morning, and it publishes his discourses in large pamphlet form. This woman question is suited to Mr. Mangasarian's genius. It requires insight, sympathy, delicacy, and also mental firmness. It will not satisfy fanatics on either side, but it gives suggestions as to nature's *vis media*, and it is nature that will have the last word on these matters, after all. Anyhow, we think Mr. Mangasarian ought to be heard, as he desires, on this side of the Atlantic, as well as the other, on any important topic he chooses to speak upon.

Just as we go to press we receive a message from Mr. Mangasarian stating that he has arrived in London. We shall be delighted to meet him again. And, by the way, when is George Macdonald going to pass this way? We hope, at least, to hear from our Chicago friend that our old New York friend is well.

"The Unmarried Mother" is, perhaps, the most important article in the August *English Review*. Its author is Mrs. W. M. Gallichan. It is ably written and full of humanity. But one wonders, after all, if the disadvantages of illegitimacy *can* be done away with as the writer suggests. The sins of the parents ought not to be visited upon the children, but all through life they are, and Nature will always have *her* way in the long run! Mr. Norman Douglas contributes an informing and entertaining article on "Southern Saintliness." Mr. Alister Crowley contributes some clever "Chants Before Battle." There is another of Henri Fabre's delightful (though sometimes awful) entymological articles—this time on "Parasites." The editor's article on Ulster would be well worth reading if the great War had not snowed all other politics under.

INDIAN MISSIONS.

A report on the work of the Forman Christian College, at Lahore, has been issued by the Principal, the Rev. Dr. Ewing. If judged by its staff, he says—thirteen Christians and five non-Christians—the college is largely a Christian college; but, if judged by its students—582 non-Christians and 28 Christians—then it is largely a non-Christian institution. The proportion of non-Christian to Christian students in a Christian college certainly seems a trifle paradoxical; it is, however, ingenuously pointed out by the learned Principal that it is the *fees* of the *non*-Christian students, and the grant which the Government is justified in giving on their account, that has made the development of the college possible.

The well-equipped institution that now represents the Forman Christian College could never have been built and kept up from the funds forthcoming from the *Christian* students. Dr. Ewing compares what he terms two "mass movements" in the Punjab—the movement of the low castes towards Christianity, and that of the higher, and better educated, classes. It is easy to baptise, but hard to educate, the former; it is easy to educate, but hard to baptise, the latter.

Last year, of the 582 non-Christian students only *one*, a Mohammedan student in his second year, became a Christian.

—*The Pioneer*, India, July 4, 1914.

Give up material fire, and you lose the bodily resurrection. Renounce the bodily resurrection, and away goes the visible coming of Christ to a general judgment, and the climacteric completeness of the Church scheme of redemption is wanting. Mar the wholeness of the redemption plan, and farewell to the incarnation and vicarious atonement. Neglect the vicarious atonement, and down crumbles the hollow and broken shell of the popular theology helplessly into its grave.—*William Rounseville Alger.*

SECOND THOUGHT IS BEST.

"Every time I see grandfather's sword I want to go to war."

"Well?"

"But every time I notice grandfather's wooden leg I cool down."

"You say man is a vapor?" "Yes; so the Bible says." "Well, I'm downright glad to hear it." "Why, what difference does it make to you?" "Well, it backs up a remark I made to the parson last night. I told him he was all gas."

Mrs. Bowers: "I do wish you would go to church with me occasionally. How are people to know that I am married if they never see you with me?"

Mr. Bowers: "Easy. Take the children with you."

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The Origin of Supernatural Ideas.—IV.

(*Continued from p. 502.*)

"We cannot forbear pausing for a moment to note the vast mental schemes that have resulted from his first supernal concept of luck and his after-elimination of the dream-ghost. In these original conceptions lay hid all the possibilities of the spiritual world—fate, destiny, the spirits, the godheads, heaven and hell, all the religions of the past, all supernatural schemes for the future, every test-power to divine the unknown, every evil influence that crushes humanity, every transcendental power, a lost world, and a saved humanity.....Of the great Egyptian faith, how small now seems the heritage of humanity, and the thunders of Jove and the cognate Olympian deities exist as mere school-boy rhapsodies. So all the great mental forces that have been expressed in dynasties, empires, faiths, now remain as mere blotches on the escutcheon of time. There has been nothing eternal in human thought save the early fetish deductions man made from his supernal concept of luck and the presence of the dream-ghost. These early deductions of the mystic are ever-living, men conceive and re-conceive them, and to most men they have the same nature and express the same sentiments as when the pre-glacial man bowed in awe before the silent concepts of his own soul. From their long persistent immortality, we are bound to expect they will outlast all the divine schemes that now encumber the human soul."—J. H. KING, *The Supernatural: Its Origin, Nature, and Evolution*, pp. 181-2.

"The doctrine of Evolution has no 'favored-nation clause' for man. It admits no break in the psychical chain which links him to the lowest life-forms, be these plant or animal. It finds no arrest of continuity between the bark of the dog and the orations of Demosthenes, or between the pulsations of an amœba and the ecstasies of a saint."—EDWARD CLODD, *Animism: The Seed of Religion*, p. 14.

CLOSELY allied to the idea of luck is the idea of magic. It is a further step towards the evolution of religion, but it is not religion. As Frazer remarks:—

"The theory that in the history of mankind religion has been preceded by magic is confirmed inductively by the observation that among the aborigines of Australia, the rudest savages as to whom we possess accurate information, magic is universally practised; whereas religion, in the sense of a propitiation or conciliation of the higher powers, seems to be nearly unknown."

"Similarly," says the same writer,

"among the Fuegians, another of the lowest races of mankind, almost every old man is a magician, who is supposed to have the power of life and to be able to control the weather. But the members of the French scientific expedition to Cape Horn could detect nothing worthy the name of religion among these savages."*

Sir John Lubbock (Lord Avebury) holds that "magic is not only not religion, but the very opposite of religion," and points out that the tedious, and almost interminable, magical ceremonies which occupy a large part of the lives of Australian savages contain no prayers or sacrifices, no appeals for help to any superior power, but are "an attempt to control nature and secure material advantages—mainly rain and food."†

In this stage, as Mr. Clodd remarks,

"Man and brute alike tremble before the unusual; they fear, but know not why, or what, they fear. As yet man has no conception of body as home of an indwelling spirit, and no conception of surroundings as natural and supernatural; therefore no idea of an after life, no idea of heaven and no dread of hell."‡

"This," he continues, "to all intents and purposes, is Naturalism; or, as Professor Flint calls it, Naturism: a stage antecedent to Animism, or the belief in spirits everywhere, in the non-living as well as in the living." "Naturism" is a far better word than "Naturalism" in this connection, seeing that Naturalism has already a definite meaning, and its use would only lead to misunderstanding. The word also has the approval of Professor Leuba, who says: "The word *naturism* should be adopted as a name for the pre-animistic and pre-religious stage of culture, a stage corresponding to the one through which a child passes before he inquires into hidden causes and mechanisms."§

"Most forms of magic can be performed by anybody, provided he knows what to do," says Dr. Haddon;* the practice of it requires no churches, temples, or priests. But just as we have specialists in medicine, or science, or art, so the savage has his specialist in magic, known as the medicine-man or witch-doctor. Intelligent people are surprised that anyone can believe in such puerile and foolish ideas as magic and witchcraft; but, as Professor Tylor remarks, "they are intelligible if one can only bring one's mind down to the childish state they belong to."† He explains the principle of it as follows:—

"The practical knowledge of nature possessed by savages is so great that it cannot have been gained by mere chance observations; they must have been for ages constantly noticing and trying new things, to see how far their behavior corresponded with that of things partly like them. And where the matter can be brought to practical trial by experiment, this is a thoroughly scientific method. But the rude man wants to learn and do far more difficult things—how to find where there is plenty of game, or whether his enemies are coming; how to save himself from the lightning, or how to hurt someone he hates but cannot safely throw a spear at. In such matters beyond his limited knowledge, he contents himself with working on resemblances or analogies of thought, which thus become the foundation of magic" (p. 339).

He gives as an illustration the action of "The North American Indian, eager to kill a bear to-morrow, will hang up a rude grass image of one and shoot it, reckoning that this symbolic act will make the real one happen," and that "The Zulu who has to buy cattle may be seen chewing a bit of wood, in order to soften the hard heart of the seller he is dealing with" (p. 340). As he remarks, a volume might be filled with accounts of such practices. When rain is wanted by the Wara tribe of Australia, a native goes secretly to a pool, "bends over and 'sings' to the water; then he takes some up in his hands, drinks it, and spits it out in various directions. After that he throws water all over himself, and, after scattering some all round, he returns quietly to his camp, and rain is supposed to follow."‡ Nor do we see how those among us who believe that because a man has never seen a certain football team defeated, therefore that team will never suffer defeat while he remains a spectator, can afford to smile at these savages.

The logic of the belief is this, says Dr. Tylor:—

"Things which are like one another behave in the same way—shooting this image of a bear is like shooting a real bear; therefore, if I shoot the image, I shall shoot a real bear. It is true that such magical proceedings, if tested by facts, prove to be worthless. But if we wonder that nevertheless they should so prevail among mankind, it may be answered that they last on even in our own country among those who are too ignorant to test them by the facts—the rustics who believe a neighbor's ill-wishing has killed their cow, and who, on true savage principles, try to punish the evil doer by putting a heart spitefully stuck full of pins up the chimney to shrivel in the smoke, that in like manner sharp pangs may pierce him and he may waste away."§

We now come to that stage in the evolution of the supernatural known as "Animism," a name applied by Dr. Tylor, in his very valuable work, *Primitive Culture*, to denote the belief by primitive man that inanimate objects, such as trees, rocks, and rivers, are possessed with a soul or living principle. From Animism has sprung all the brood of spirits, gods, angels, and devils which have afflicted mankind for uncounted ages.

Primitive man, like the child, could not clearly distinguish between what psychologists call the "objective" and the "subjective"; that is, he was unable to distinguish what went on inside his mind (the subjective) from what happened outside (the objective). As the very young child is unable to distinguish between his dreams and the realities of life,

* J. G. Frazer, "The Beginnings of Religion and Totemism Among the Australian Aborigines," *Fortnightly Review*, July, 1905.
† Lord Avebury, *Marriage, Totemism, and Religion*, pp. 142-3.
‡ E. Clodd, *Animism*, p. 22.
§ J. H. Leuba, *The Psychological Origin and Nature of Religion*. Note to page 65.

* A. C. Haddon, *Magic and Fetishism*, p. 50.
† E. B. Tylor, *Anthropology*, p. 339.
‡ A. C. Haddon, *Magic and Fetishism*, p. 44.
§ E. B. Tylor, *Anthropology*, pp. 340-1.

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so primitive man in like manner is unable to distinguish any difference. With the savage, seeing is believing; and when he sees his friends, or enemies, or relatives, some of whom may have been dead many years, he believes he really has seen them. And when his squaw tells him that he has not moved from his place during the night, then he believes that something went out of him while he slept to meet those he had seen and spoken with.

"To what other conclusion," asks Mr. Clodd,

> "can the barbaric mind come than that everybody has *another self*, as it has been called, which does the things dreamed of, which leaves a man for a time when he is asleep or in a fit, which leaves him altogether when he dies, but comes back, and seems the very man himself to the dreamer? The Malays do not like to wake a sleeper, lest they should hurt him by disturbing his body while his soul is out. When the Greenlander dreams of hunting or fishing or courting, he believes that the soul quits the body. The Melanesians say that the soul 'goes out of the body in some dreams, and if for some reason it does not come back, the man is found dead in the morning; when a man faints, his soul really starts on the way to Panoi [the underworld], but is sent back; the other ghosts hustle him away from the mouth [of Panoi], or his father or friend turn him back, telling him that his time is not yet come.'"

Mr. Clodd cites the personal experience of Sir Everard im Thurn, who, in his book, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, says:—

> "The morning when it was important to me to get away from a camp on the Essequibo River, at which I had been detained for some days by the illness of some of my Indian companions, I found one of the invalids so enraged against me that he refused to stir. For he declared that I had taken him out during the night and had made him haul the canoe up a series of difficult cataracts. Nothing could persuade him that this was but a dream, and it was some time before he was so far pacified as to throw himself sulkily into the bottom of the canoe. At that time we were all suffering from scarcity of food, and, hunger having its usual effect in producing vivid dreams, similar events frequently occurred."†

It has been observed that the dreams of primitive man are probably much more realistic than ours. Fasting and over-eating both cause vivid dreams; and savages, especially hunting tribes, often have to fast, which is followed by a gluttonous feast after a successful hunt.

Having arrived at this idea of a soul, or spirit, he carries it to its logical conclusion. Says Dr. Tylor:—

> "It may have occurred to some readers that the savage philosopher ought, on precisely the same grounds, to believe his horse or dog to have a soul, a phantom-likeness of its body. This is, in fact, what the lower races always have thought, and think still; and they follow the reasoning out in a way that surprises the modern mind, though it is quite consistent from the barbarian's point of view. If a human soul seen in a dream is a real object, then the spear and shield it carries and the mantle over its shoulders are real objects too, and all lifeless things must have their thin flitting shadow-souls."‡

This idea of another self, which could come and go from the body, was reinforced and confirmed when the savage, kneeling to drink from the water, beheld a shadowy reflection of himself, which disappeared upon his trying to grasp it. Also of his shadow thrown by the sun, and the echo of his own voice mocking him from the rocks.

W. MANN.

(*To be continued.*)

Bible Makers.—II.

THE VERSATILE JOSHUA.

IT is now admitted that what Freethinkers have been saying about the authorship of many of the books of the Bible is quite true; that nobody knows when they were written, or by whom; and I think there can be no doubt in the mind of any thoughtful person that Joshua was no more the author of the book that bears his name than Moses was the author of the Pentateuch. For the purpose of having names to refer to as the accredited authors of the various books of the Bible, it will be convenient to assume that these persons were in reality responsible for the books of which they are the alleged authors. And it may at once be said that the contents of the book of Joshua show that that personage entertained not only a very good opinion of himself but a very poor one of everybody else.

When an author is writing reminiscences of his career as a General, and describing in vivid language the rapine and murder of which the soldiers under his command are guilty, is it not positively in bad taste to say a word in his own behalf, as though pleading for promotion or a pension, and to declare that "his [Joshua's] fame was noised throughout all the country"? Joshua seemed to think that fame and notoriety were much the same. In this, however, as in most other things, he greatly erred. Any murderer may get notoriety if he only displays enough brutality or callousness in the execution of the deed; but fame can only be achieved by meritorious conduct, and we have no evidence that Joshua understood what that meant.

Being the successor of Moses, he thought it incumbent on him to imitate, as far as possible, the deeds of wanton cruelty, deceit, and villainy which characterised his predecessor. Or, supposing that Joshua did not do these things, but merely recorded them as having happened for the edification of future generations, then he must have imagined that the people would be satisfied with stories of bloodshed or of the wonders wrought by the Lord for the special behoof of his chosen people. He must have thought, too, that the credulity of his readers was practically unlimited, and that it did not matter much how stupid the event was that he recorded, so long as something similar was said to have occurred before, or that nobody could doubt that such and such a miracle had been performed, if only the Lord could be placed in the background—behind the curtain, as it were—to act as the performer.

As an historian, Joshua was a dead failure. He was too ignorant to understand even ordinary events, and extraordinary occurrences simply bemuddled what little reason he may have possessed. Like all careless students of nature, he was prone to exaggerate the things he saw, and to exaggerate still more monstrously the things he did not see, but only heard spoken of by his friends and co-workers. He would have done very well for the war correspondent of a sensational Ha'penny Daily; for his special telegrams of one day could have been very easily contradicted on the day following by some other correspondent who was an "eye-witness" to the event, but did not see it "in the same light" as the gentleman who did the special.

In point of truth, Joshua was one of that class of writers who could have done his correspondence and appeared to have been on the field, just as well as in the back parlor of a Fleet-street restaurant, or in a rude tent near the seat of war. Indeed, his services during the great war that is now raging all over Europe would have been specially valuable to the proprietors of illustrated journals, who, no doubt, would have offered special terms to such a highly imaginative writer.

When Joshua wrote the account of the sun standing still upon Gideon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon, he forgot for the moment in which department of the literary staff of the said journal he was engaged, and thought that his views on astronomical phenomena would be quite as acceptable to the Jewish public as his opinion on the best method of decapitating the Midianites. It was as though the sporting correspondent of a paper had ventured to send in a descriptive account of an archbishop's last sermon, or the musical critic had supplied an article on the "germ theory of disease." If Joshua meant

* Edward Clodd, *The Story of Primitive Man*, p. 113 (1895).
† Clodd, *The Story of Primitive Man*, p. 114.
‡ Tylor, *Anthropology*, p. 346.

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that the sun stood still in order to allow him to win a battle, he must have been joking; for, as every little boy now knows, the sun, so far as this earth is concerned, never moves. I once heard a parson—the Rev. J. Wilkie—say that what the writer really meant was *that the earth stood still*. But that would only make the matter a good deal worse; for if the earth, which is travelling along in space at the rate of hundreds of miles an hour, were suddenly to come to a standstill, the people and all the movable objects would be precipitated into space, and leave not one person alive to record the tale.

But what about the moon? Was not the light of the sun enough? Did Joshua imagine that a night-light would be of assistance to the daylight—a rush-light an important auxiliary to the sun? If we suppose that Joshua tried to be poetic in referring to the sun and moon, his figurative language must have got slightly mixed—he made too much of the moon. As Thomas Paine pointed out, as a figurative declaration, Joshua's is inferior to one by Mohammed, who, when a person came to expostulate with him upon his doings, retorted: "Wert thou to come to me with the sun in thy right hand, and the moon in thy left, it should not alter my career." For Joshua to have eclipsed Mohammed, he should have put the sun in one pocket of his waistcoat and the moon in the other, and used them as watches—one to time his doings by day and the other to regulate his conduct by night; or, as Paine remarks, carried them as Guy Fawkes carried his dark lanterns, and taken them out to shine "as he might happen to want them." In addition to being special reporter, historian, poet, and commander of the Israelites, Joshua varied these occupations by occasionally acting as Lord High Executioner. Among his many achievements, I find that he burned the city of Ai, and hanged the king, and performed the office of executioner (without special request) to five other crowned heads. I will not question the wisdom of this last performance; he may have got rid of some awful pests by this method, and established a precedent for similar action on behalf of outraged humanity in subsequent ages of the world's history.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

The Radical Woman.

A Public Address by M. M. Mangasarian, to the Free Religious Association (Rationalist), Chicago.

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WHAT other people call us, or what we call them, is of little importance. Names and labels have no more to do with ideas than the chips which float on the surface of the sea have with its weight or depth. We are as little interested in the word *radical* as in the word *conservative*. What we should conscientiously cultivate is reasonableness in everything. There are times when to be rational we have to be conservative; and then there are times when conservatism would be cowardly. The important test at all times is whether we can command for our views or acts the full support of the facts.

What is a radical? Without entering into its etymology, the word radical may be used in either a commendable or an objectionable sense. Anyone who goes to the roots of a subject, for example, or is thorough in his investigations, or follows his premises clear to the end, is a radical. In that sense of the word, I wish we were all radicals. But I am using the word this morning to designate the extremist—the man or woman who swings too far, either to the right or to the left, from what Aristotle calls "the golden mean."

In music the dividing line between harmony and discord is a very fine one. A trifle above or below the right key is discord. The right pitch alone is music. It is so in everything else. Morality is moderation. Too much, or too little, spells moral, as well as musical discord. I am using the word radical this morning to describe the out of tune man or woman—who, instead of singing, screams. The radical, in this sense of the word, is the person who though he sings much, does not sing *true*, or though he thinks a great deal, does not think *true*.

Why do some people scream instead of speaking or singing? Perhaps it is because they have no ear for harmony and do not know that they are pitching their voices too high. In the same way there are those who have no sense of proportion, which accounts for the extravagance of the intellectual or moral notes they strike.

There are, of course, other reasons for the lack of harmony. To sing true, one must have one's voice *placed*. It requires time and patience to find out whether one has a soprano, or a contralto voice. In the same way there are thinkers whose thoughts are not yet *placed*. Drifting or floating on the waters is not navigation. Having ideas or opinions, is not reasoning. Not all well informed people are *educated* people. If I may mention still another cause for lack of musical harmony, it is that it is not enough to possess a splendid singing voice; the voice has to be trained to get the best results from it. Likewise, it is not enough to have knowledge or an abundance of data—to think *true* one must have an intellect that has been schooled.

But one may have all the qualifications for correct reasoning or singing, and still *scream*. In a class of children studying music, for example, when any one of them purposely raises his voice higher than the notes warrant, he does so, as a rule, to attract attention. The radical thinker is often actuated by the same motive. He is so eager to let the whole world know he is thinking, that to make sure of it he thinks *loud*. The desire to attract attention is very deeply rooted in us all, and is more responsible for eccentricity than we are, perhaps, willing to admit. Why does a man dress as a dandy, or why is a woman overdressed, or the other way? The loud dress, the loud voice, the loud ideas prove the *penchant* for attention. To be singled out, to be observed, to make people see us, to talk about us, wonder at us, tempts us to ignore the limitations imposed by the evidence, or by good taste. When men or women wear bizarre mental costumes, it is to satisfy an itching for notoriety.

Of course, there is a legitimate use for the desire for distinction. If we did not care to be pointed out and looked up to, we would lose one of the most effective inducements to great and brave deeds. It is fortunate that we do seek praise, since seeking praise encourages the effort to merit it. This criticism is directed against those who, not willing to pay the price for fame, try to steal it. To be able, for example to weigh the sun and describe the movements of the planets is knowledge, which justly honors its possessor; but the man who attracts notice by offering to communicate with the dead, or to introduce us to the society of ghosts, steals the attention of the public instead of deserving it. The witch-doctor gains notoriety by *imitating* a Darwin. Notoriety is imitation fame. Peculiar, startling, or sensational ideas and theories are often advocated for the sake of emerging from the obscurity to which our talents or character condemns us.

We never quite cease to be children. Everybody knows how very anxious children are to be observed. And what capers they play in order to occupy the centre of the stage! It is the desire to have interested and wondering auditors which causes the little boy or girl to see five hundred cats in the yard. If they saw only their cat and another, who would stop to listen to the tale? To compel attention the child resorts to exaggeration. That is often the infirmity of the *radical*.

The child nature is at least as strong in woman as it is in man. Yet a radical woman is a much more uncommon phenomenon than a radical man, and is, therefore, more likely to attract attention and to arouse interest. The average woman is hyper-conservative, which is also a form of radicalism. It is the other extreme. The objection against being too forward, or too backward is that it disturbs what

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we call balance. If some women are now pitching their voices too high, the majority of them still strike a note which is too low to rhyme with modern scientific thought. In the case of the radical woman the pendulum has swung from one extreme to the other. Of the two "pitches" the low pitch is really the more alarming. The woman who screams is less of a menace than the woman who is dumb. The scream is a sign of life and lung power, as well as of will power. Muteness is a sign of intellectual anæmia. The emancipated scream; the captives are tongue-tied. But between the loud woman and the subdued, there is the *rational* woman.

The present mental qualities of woman are largely the result of her past education or miseducation. What we call *mind* is not an entity, a something ready made, or made to order, and deposited somewhere in the human frame. Mind is a record of experience. The experience makes the mind, just as climate makes the complexion. The question, Are women as gifted as the men? is a vain question, for the reason that gifts are acquired only when necessary to survival. If men are, let us say, mentally stronger, it is not because they are men, but because, for their self-preservation, mental vigor and resourcefulness were indispensable. The experience of the male was of such a nature as to friction the brain into activity and expand the faculties. If women, on the other hand, have been deficient in intellectuality, it is not because they are women, but because another set of qualities was needed for *their* self-preservation.

In primitive times, a mentally virile woman would have had scant chance for survival. The intellectually indifferent, not to say, mediocre, woman survived, because she was better adapted to the then existing environment. In those days the quality which a man admired in his wife was weakness. I am not thinking of the exceptions. The more dependent a woman, the more flattering it was to man's vanity. It gave him an opportunity to play the role of protector. The primitive husband did not ask for an equal or a rival in his wife, but for a subordinate. How could an intellectual woman have survived in a market, if I may so express myself, in which there were no bids for brains in a woman? The intellectual woman necessarily died childless, and her weaker sisters became the mothers of men. I am trying to explain that what we call mind is a product of experience—a supply created only by the demand. Men and women have not had the same experience; that is why they have not the same minds.

It was the woman whom man selected that survived. To express the same idea differently, it was the woman who pleased man that had a chance to live. Man also picked out the qualities which the average woman possesses to-day. To find out what were the mental and moral traits which the husband desired in his wife, we must ask what kind of a husband was the primitive man? He was a warrior—autocratic, aggressive, domineering. Only the woman who could please him became his wife, and to please him meant to submit to him, to agree with him in everything, to let him rule without conditions, to allow him his way in every instance—to let him think for her, choose for her, and decide for her. The woman, therefore, who consented to efface herself completely and to become an echo, a copy, a *thing*, so as to give all the honor and the glory to her warrior husband, became a mother, while the strong-minded woman died without issue. It pleased the husband to call his wife "the weaker vessel," which was at the same time a suggestion to her to be delicate, dependent, fragile, timid—leaning upon his strong arm for protection.

Of course, woman herself contributed to the subjugation of her sex by selecting for husband the kind of man who could defend her against the equally big and brutal men of other and hostile tribes. Thus it will be seen that what we call mind, is a product of circumstances. As woman's environment changes, her mentality changes too, and the improvement in her mentality in turn becomes a new and better environment for her. The environment or experience fashions the mind, and the mind, as soon as it begins to function, becomes itself a factor in diverting or modifying experience. The parents produce the child, but the child in turn affects the character of the parents. In the same way, mind as the product of circumstances, becomes in time, not only the moulder of circumstances, but the chief circumstance.

The life of the mind is practically a new experience for woman. In view of this fact, it is not at all strange that feminine thinking, generally speaking, should still be in a formative or even chaotic stage, even more than man's, since man too is comparatively a novice in reasoning. To show their ability to think, as already explained, beginners are apt to think *loud*, hence out of tune. The newness of the experience tempts them to overplay their minds, as a child does with a new weapon.

(To be continued.)

Shall I ask the brave soldier who fights by my side
In the cause of mankind, if our creeds agree?
Shall I give up the friend I have valued and tried,
If he kneel not before the same altar as me?
From the heretic girl of my soul should I fly
To seek somewhere else a more orthodox kiss?
No, perish the hearts, and the laws that try
Truth, valor, or love, by a standard like this.
—*Thomas Moore, "Come, Send Round the Wine."*

The doctor sees the weakness of mankind, the lawyer its wickedness, and the theologian its stupidity.—*Schopenhauer.*

In Memoriam.

AN old reader of the *Freethinker*, and, before its advent, of the *National Reformer*, Senor Adolfo de Maglia, has just sent to me the announcement of the death of his widowed mother, the Senora Ana Galbis y Tudela de Maglia.

Like her son, the deceased was a staunch Freethinker, and in her will gave the following directions (cited textually from the document itself):—

> ".....That the interment of her body is to be in a purely secular way, that is to say, without the presence of any priest or the use of any rite or emblem of religion, in conformity with the Freethought ideas and convictions which the testatrix practised, and as an energetic and fervid protest against all dogmatic religions opposed to reason, truth, and justice."

This decided attitude of an old Spanish Freethought lady of over ninety summers is an example worthy of record and emulation. Some ten years ago I had the pleasure of receiving her kind hospitality in Paris, and noted at the time the energy and fire of her devotion to Freethought.

The veteran of Spanish Freethinkers, José Nakens, who knew her well, speaks of the Senora de Maglia as one "who never wavered in her honest convictions." One of the provisions of her will, as stated in *El Motin*, is especially sane and sensible. She directed that her funeral should be simple and inexpensive, and that the difference in expense between a costly funeral and the cheap one which she desiderated was to be distributed in charity for the relief of necessitous Freethinkers. Her son, Adolfo de Maglia, faithfully carried out these directions.

The deceased lady, Senora de Maglia, was born on December 24, 1823, and died in Barcelona on July 10 this year, beloved of her son and admired by all who knew her.

WM. HEAFORD.

Obituary.

We regret to report the death of Mrs. Jones, of Bearsden, daughter of Mrs. Turnbull, of Raeberry-street, Glasgow, which occurred on August 4. She bore long suffering with great fortitude. It was something of a release when this devoted wife and loving mother passed to her rest. As a sterling Freethinker she was buried at the new Kirkpatrick Cemetery with Freethought rites.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Mr. Banham's, 56 Richmond-road, Barnsbury): Monday, August 17, at 8.30, Business Meeting—Finance, etc.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15 and 6.15, E. Burke, Lectures.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 6, Mr. Schaller, a Lecture.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.30, J. W. Rowney, a Lecture. Derby-road, Ponders End (opposite "Two Brewers"): Wednesday, August 19, at 8.30, W. Davidson, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, E. Burke, "The Evolution of the Solar System"; 7.30, Mr. Davidson, "Christianity and War."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Finsbury Park): 11.30, Mr. Davidson, a Lecture. Parliament Hill: 3.30, Miss Kough, a Lecture. Regent's Park (near the Fountain): 3.30, Mr. Davidson, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, Miss Kough, a Lecture.

PROPAGANDIST LEAFLETS. New Issue. 1. *Christianity a Stupendous Failure*, J. T. Lloyd; 2. *Bible and Teetotalism*, J. M. Wheeler; 3. *Principles of Secularism*, C. Watts; 4. *Where Are Your Hospitals?* R. Ingersoll. 5. *Because the Bible Tells Me So*, W. P. Ball; 6. *Why Be Good?* by G. W. Foote. *The Parson's Creed*. Often the means of arresting attention and making new members. Price 6d. per hundred, post free 7d. Special rates for larger quantities. Samples on receipt of stamped addressed envelope.—Miss E. M. VANCE, N. S. S. Secretary, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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Let us believe that the whole of truth can never do harm to the whole of virtue.—WENDELL PHILLIPS.

God and the War.

TO Freethinkers war is a most illuminating calamity. Dr. Campbell Morgan frankly admits that to him, as minister of the Word, as prophet of the Lord, the task of delivering a message on this mournful subject is, on the whole, the most difficult that has ever fallen to his lot in all the years of his public ministry. Unbelievers in God experience no such difficulty in approaching the subject, because to them war is a wholly intelligible thing. They know that, in the majority of instances, it originates in fear, ambition, greed of territory, jealousy, and the instinct of self-defence; verifying the fact that civilisation is only a thin veneer that can be washed off in a moment. War implies a return to the primitive savagery of human nature. All wars can be explained on this principle, even religious wars being no exception to the rule. The object of the present article, however, is not to investigate and interpret the causes and aims of the regrettable war now raging so fiercely, but, rather, to contemplate it in the light of Freethought. Now, it is impossible to meditate upon the existing situation, with any degree of sincerity, without discerning, more clearly than ever, *the utter absurdity of the God-idea*, in whatever form it may be held. Dr. Campbell Morgan exhorts us to pray, but confesses that "it is not easy to pray to-day." It is difficult to pray simply because it is beyond our capacity to believe in a God worth praying to. Of course, men and women of faith must pray, the reverend gentleman informs us, but even to them, in this hour, it is the most arduous undertaking in the world. The divines are perplexed and confused because they cannot hide it from themselves that war is absolutely irreconcilable with any Christian doctrine of the Diety, and because in their teaching on the subject they are bound to contradict themselves. For example, Dr. Campbell Morgan assures us that "no one wants war." "I affirm that," he adds, "of the whole of Europe." But, if no one wants war, why on earth has war spread like wildfire all over Europe? Again, if no one wants war, it follows of necessity that war is of God; and that this is a rational inference appears from the reverend gentleman's assertion that the Divine Being "is now reigning and ruling, not in spite of the storms, but by having the storms themselves under his control." Let us pay special heed to the words:—

> "Yea, the Lord sitteth as king for ever: there is no possibility of his dethronement, not the remotest chance of his defeat. Though cedars crash and fall, and forests are stripped bare, and desolations and devastations be everywhere, the Lord is king. It is the language of magnificent, triumphant faith."

So it undoubtedly is, and if it is true, there is no possible escape from the conclusion that God is the author of the present war, the Kaiser being merely the instrument in his hand. This is exceedingly good theology, but the moment Dr. Morgan begins really to face the facts he forgets all about it, and speaks thus:—

> "Suppose, for a single moment, that to-morrow morning the news were given to the world that there would be no war, think of the gladness that would sweep over every country, even those which, for the moment, seem to be clamoring for battle. Here is the devilishness of the situation. Some force, impalpable, spiritual, devilish, seems to be attempting to compel war, confusing the issues, paralysing our counsels, stirring our animosities. As the heavens look down upon Europe to-day they see great nations mobilising, marching, preparing for that which, in their deepest hearts, they hate; preparing, like men in a dream, under the mastery of some giant evil spirit, from which they cannot escape. That is the devilishness of the situation."

Theologians had much better leave the subject of war alone altogether than make fools of themselves in that fashion. God's absolute sovereignty is nothing but the vainest of dreams, as they very well know and implicitly confess when face to face with the awful facts of human life. These impel them to allude to "some force, impalpable, spiritual, devilish," which successfully opposes and defeats the God in whom they believe. He who is supposed to be doing "according to his will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth" cannot prevent his righteous purposes from being set at defiance and frustrated by some mysterious evil powers which he himself brought into existence. In this connection, another explanation of the war is suggested which makes the case for God much worse. Dr. Morgan says:—

> "The nations of Europe decided to secure their individual safety by physical force. They decided that it would be well for them to make certain of the absence of war by federations on the ground of suspicion. The reigning God has compelled them to work out their own choices to their ultimate issue, and men who have looked upon war, and preparations for it, as characterised by pomp and pageantry, are probably to be brought within the next few months face to face with the ghastly reality. Nations that have based their friendships upon their suspicions of others, and have made treaties with these in order that those may gain no advantage, are finding the hopelessness and the helplessness of their cleverness. God is compelling humanity to work out its own choices."

After all, God *is* the author of the war, and he has brought it about out of revenge on the nations for their devilish cleverness. This is very bad theology and an atrocious explanation; or, rather, travesty of the facts. The truth is that the facts politely bow the Deity out of court.

In the *British Weekly* for August 13, the leading article, presumably by the editor, Sir William Robertson Nicoll, is entitled "The Christian Community and the War." It is replete with pious platitudes such as the average Christian finds so palatable. These are admittedly trying times, and Sir William is on the hunt for some things that will help his public to keep the faith. Of course, the chase is a successful one, though the value of the "finds" is highly questionable. One is God's alleged power to bring good out of evil. Are we, then, to understand that God causes evil in order to display his ingenuity by bringing good out of it? If God is supreme, that is exactly what he is guilty of just now. But what is the good brought out of the present evil war? "We have seen this," says Sir William, "in the

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sudden arrest of all internal strife in the country. Parliamentary faction and industrial unrest are in suspense for the time being: the common cause commands the undivided loyalty of the people." Surely, the lesser evil vanishes at the advent of a greater; but, as Sir William observes, only for the time being. Granting that this is a good secured by the presence of a European war, it most certainly required the intervention of no God to bring it about. The laws of Nature are supreme in all such matters. What is the use of reminding us that the horrors of war are often greatly exaggerated? If war is an evil, as all the divines declare, no consideration can ever convert it into a good. Sir William maintains that "war is elevated by sacrifice, by the mixed effect of glory and grief, and in this aspect of it is not the enemy, but the ally, of faith"; but is not the reverend knight aware that it is also degraded by the cruel looting, sexual licence, and other wickednesses indulged in by soldiers on entering a conquered city or town? The long abstinence, the terrible privations, the numerous sufferings, more or less cheerfully endured during the march, are now at an end, and a great reaction naturally ensues. Sir William forgets that there are two sides to the shield, and that he who has only seen one side cannot give an accurate and full description of it. In any case, St. Paul was quite right when he said that sin should not be encouraged in order that grace might abound; and the great apostle's successors should follow his example.

Towards the end of his article Sir William expresses his sympathy with those who shall be subjected to great suffering and losses during the present conflict, and says:—

> "Not to pray for all this mass of care and sorrow is the sure way to lose faith. Who can bear it but God? Who could bear to think of it except with God? O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come."

The curious fact is that God, if God there be, *does* bear it all without melting sufficiently to put an end to it. There are noble-minded men and women in abundance who will do their utmost to alleviate the various evils attendant upon battles, but God will remain absolutely silent and inactive through it all. Dr. Morgan confidently assures us that "we are at the end of the devilish heresy that God is on the side of the big battalions." Are we, though? The reverend gentleman may ignore the numbers and efficiency of armies, and decline to calculate, cooing his fears to sleep with "God is going to win"; but that is empty rhetoric, tolerated alone in the pulpit. In the circumstances, the war may have been inevitable, and its result is as yet an unsolved, and, with our present knowledge, insoluble problem; but all the armies implicated proceed on the assumption that the issue will be determined exclusively by the strength and efficiency of those engaged in it.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Bankruptcy of Christianity.

THE Society of Friends has just issued a manifesto "To Men and Women of Goodwill in the British Empire." It is concerned with the present crisis, and aims at pointing out the duty of Christians in the face of a state of affairs such as the present. And one must admit that if any Christian sect has the right to lecture others on the evils of war, it is the Society of Friends. Alone amongst Christians they have protested against the use of brute force in either public or private life. And the appreciation of their attitude by other Christians may be seen in the fact that the Society of Friends is a dwindling body, and has never represented but a small minority of believers. From one point of view the policy of the "Quakers" may be said to show the impossibilist character of Christian teaching. Unqualified non-resistance is a sheer absurdity. Qualified non-resistance only means in effect not resisting more than is necessary. In practice it means the substitution of one form of resistance for another. It was possible for the Society of Friends, individually or collectively, to disclaim the use of force, because they were living in a society which applied the measure of force needful for their protection. They did not resist in person, but, so far as force was needful for their protection, they did resist vicariously. The police, the courts, the whole organisation of society, apply the force necessary to individual protection.

There are some things in this "Message" with which all Freethinkers will agree. This war, we are told, "spells the bankruptcy of much that we have lightly called Christianity." Certainly it spells the bankruptcy of Christianity, not lightly so-called, but properly so-called. The war proves—if proof were needed—the utter worthlessness of Christianity as a civilising factor. The nations engaged are not fighting non-Christian Powers; it is so far a family quarrel. Germany, Russia, Austria, England, Servia, are professedly Christian nations. They all worship the same God, profess what is fundamentally the same creed. They are all brothers in Christ, but that does not prevent their cutting each other's throats on the battlefield with the utmost goodwill. Nor can their common religious faith be counted on to render the combat less bitter or less bloody. On the contrary, one can safely say that, so far as religious feelings enter into the quarrel, they will only serve to prevent a lasting peace being secured. In the Near East the quarrels of the followers of the Greek and Latin Churches are as fruitful of trouble as are those of Catholics and Protestants in Ireland.

Intellectually, Christianity is manifestly bankrupt. What the present war does is to emphasise its social bankruptcy. I am not concerned with a Christianity that *might* have existed in the primitive ages, or with a Christianity that may exist in the very distant future. The only Christianity we have to bother about, and the only Christianity that is worth bothering about, is that which meets us as an historic fact. And that Christianity is bankrupt in every conceivable direction. It has not alone failed to bring people of different nations and races to the point of living together peacefully, but, through its official representatives, it has never ceased to provide excuses for national iniquities, and to cover them with a cloak of moral and religious justification. When the European nations wanted a religious justification for their buccaneering expeditions in Africa, in China, and elsewhere, the Churches supplied it. When excuses were needed for the wholesale exploitation of the "lower" races, the Churches found all that was needed. The war in Europe is not a war for the maintenance of national possessions or liberty in Europe; it is very largely a war for the control of races outside Europe, and for purposes of sheer exploitation.

It is a plain truth that if the Christians of the world could only live at peace together, war would be a thing of the past. A Mohammedan power such as Turkey could not threaten the peace of Europe. There is little to dread from Japan—if other nations treat her fairly and decently. And, at any rate, it was only the cupidity and bullying of Christian powers that compelled Japan to become a great military and naval power. China has centuries of peaceful traditions behind, and is only showing signs of breaking away from those traditions because of the action and influence of the Christian powers. It is the Christians of the world that have taught mankind the meaning of the "mailed fist," and that the only way to prevent aggression is to be able to apply sufficient physical force to make successful aggression impossible. And when mutual suspicion and the competitive exploitation of heathen races have made a disastrous war inevitable sooner or later, there is much talk of the justice of this nation or of that nation in joining in the conflict. Of course they are justified. If one burglar attempts to take from another his share of the "swag," the one attacked is justified in resisting. But it would

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have been far better had they both been brought up in a different school, and so acquired tastes that would have turned their energies in a quite different direction.

Christianity is bankrupt because it never possessed the capital needful to run the business of civilising humanity. Its brotherhood of man never meant, even in theory, more than a brotherhood of believers, and in practice it did not always mean that. It recognised duties and obligations between members of the same church or sect, but outside these boundaries it applied a different code of ethics. What kind of brotherhood did Christians bestow on Jews and heretics for hundreds of years? Christians in their hey-day of power would have looked with amazement on anyone who claimed consideration for either. What kind of brotherly attention did the inhabitants of ancient Mexico and Peru receive from their Christian conquerors? How fared the Redskins of North America, the Maoris of New Zealand, or the inhabitants of Africa at the hands of their Christian brothers? In practice nearly always, and in theory often, Christians have shown that their doctrine of brotherhood meant little more than the mere brotherhood of a gang. Within the gang rules must be observed. Outside the gang they might be broken with impunity.

What is there about Christianity that would teach people of different nations or races to live harmoniously together and so make warfare impossible? Is it the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God? When and where has it shown the slightest influence in this direction? There is no doctrine that Christians have been more ready to fight about. Christianity has no social doctrine, no theory of social life or of the nature of human association that would bring a more rational spirit into affairs. Its business from the outset has been to save souls. Not to make useful citizens but to fashion candidates for the New Jerusalem. It was this that led it to neglect the splendid civilisation of antiquity, and to allow its institutions to fall into decay. One must admit that it has pursued this work with a certain amount of earnestness. And its very earnestness in this direction has spelt disservice to civilisation. It directed energy into unfruitful channels. Had the energy that Christianity expended, generation after generation, in the attempt to prepare mankind for a mythical heaven, been spent in teaching the merest rudiments of a sane social life, Europe to-day might have been a gigantic commonwealth instead of an aggregation of armed camps.

"To many will come the temptation," says the Friends' manifesto, "to deny God, and to turn away with despair from the Christianity which seems to be identical with bloodshed on so gigantic a scale." Certainly there are a number of people in the world who seem to need something startling to occur before they will exercise what intelligence they possess, and it may well be that the present war will lead some to inquire as to the value of religious beliefs in general and of Christianity in particular. We are told that we ought to "seek the forgiveness of Almighty God." The position seems to me the other way about. If there is an Almighty God, he should be seeking our forgiveness for not fashioning man better than he has done. Either God made man or man made God. If the latter, then religion may be dismissed as a myth. If the former, then the responsibility for man's conduct rests with him, and we surely have no need to ask God's forgiveness for our being as he made us. In any case, things could not be worse without the belief in God. That they are as they are with it is certainly good ground for questioning its value.

All Freethinkers will agree that "the only possible permanent foundation" for European culture is "mutual trust and goodwill." But that mutual trust and goodwill cannot be based upon religious belief, about which people have always differed, and concerning which they will never cease to differ. It must be built upon something deeper and more inclusive than religion, something that appeals to men and women of all nations and races. Even in such a thing as warfare it is not religious belief that binds people together. The differences of religious belief remain what they were during the progress of a war, and the British soldier or sailor who finds himself at one with all around him in carrying out his duty, separates from him when it comes to religion. Catholic and Protestant, Methodist and Episcopalian, soldiers will fight side by side; but, if they can, they will separate when it comes to a religious service. In war, as in peace, it is the common, unextinguishable, social needs that drive people together, while religion serves to separate them.

Let men put ideas of religion on one side, let them give their whole energies to social affairs, and they will the more quickly realise that the cause of human civilisation is never advanced by warfare, however inevitable it may be. And if warfare has become repugnant to a larger number of persons all over the world, if it is denounced as a crime against humanity and against civilisation, it is surely because of the growth of a secular philosophy that has taught people to fix their minds upon fundamental facts, and to substitute the idea of a common humanity for that of a body of devout believers in a religious doctrine. Whatever may be the shortcomings of Freethought, it has at least never failed to hold up the ideal of a common human brotherhood that overleaps all barriers of sect, nation, or race. I am no believer in the gospel of expansion as applied to nations. But I am a devout believer in the gospel of expansion as applied to man. From the tribal state until to-day man has grown by the expansion of his feelings, his obligations, and his duties, over an ever-widening area. From the horde to the tribe, from the tribe to the nation, from the nation to the race, is the true direction of human growth. And if the aftermath of the present war only serves to drive home the lesson how ill the course of human progress is served by the most lavish expenditure of blood and treasure on the field of battle, it will not be without its benefits.

C. COHEN.

Bayonets and the Beatitudes.

"In religion,
What damned error, but some sober brow
Will bless it and approve it with a text."
—SHAKESPEARE.

"Uplift thy cross and go. Thy doom is said."
—ROBERT BUCHANAN.

EUROPE has been hurled by the ambitions and rivalries of its Hohenzollern, Hapsburg, and Romanoff dynasties, and jealousies of its emperors who govern by "divine right," on to a slope slippery with blood. On that awful down-grade the nations are launched, and the voice of reason is but a whisper against a hurricane. The countrymen of Moliere are cutting the throats of the countrymen of Goethe, and the compatriots of Kossuth are disembowelling the brothers of Tolstoi. The women of Europe, "like Niobe, all tears," are mourning their dead. Think of it! Whole nations, professedly Christian, engaged in wholesale murder. Yet who can deny that, if the commands of Christianity had penetrated in the least degree beneath the surface of human life, to make weapons of destruction would be viewed as an awful crime? Yet the flower of the manhood of the Christian nations is spilling human blood like water. From the Spree to the Elbe, from the Seine to the Neva, Europe is a slaughter-house. The death-moan of tens of thousands is drowned in the *Te Deums* of the victors, and the regimental standards are blessed in the name of "The Prince of Peace."

The mockery of it all! It is a complete indictment of Christianity, which has proved itself the most powerless thing on earth. The millions who profess to be followers of Christ are, practically, wholly unaffected by his teaching. When passion or self-interest is aroused, every precept is forgotten. Even in times of peace in every Christian country, side by side with the hypocritical pretensions of

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orthodoxy, will be found codes of legislation which violate every injunction of Christianity and resembles only the *lex talionis* of the old Pagan jurisprudence.

The effect of this divergence is seen when a few obscure individuals are treated as criminals for attempting to take the Christian religion seriously, as with the Peculiar People in England and the Stundists and Tolstoyans in Russia. So far as the prelates of the different Christian Churches are concerned, the profession of Christian ethics is a damnable farce. Whether they be Catholic cardinals, Anglican bishops, or priests of the Greek Church, the fact is the same. The professed followers of the poor carpenter of Nazareth enjoy princely salaries and live in palaces. Even the Nonconformist leaders get what they can, and follow their Savior laboriously on the salaries of Cabinet officials. Not one amongst them is better than the other. Some wit has said that "singing psalms never yet prevented a grocer from sanding his sugar." This jest expresses in a happy form what may be said in all seriousness of the impotency of Christianity to affect ethical conduct.

The Christian religion is not only a failure, it is a priestly robe covering a skeleton. Mohammed has a direct influence over his professed disciples; Buddha still colors and controls human life; Brahma affects the lives of millions; even the followers of Joseph Smith carry out Mormon teaching; but where in all Christendom is the Christian? The God of the Christians is not the sad-faced Nazarene, but the rubicund, self-satisfied form of Mammon, with the leer of the miser. There is no crown of thorns, and no spear-wounds in his side, but in the jewelled hands of the new deity are the money-bag and the sword. The purple robe covers the huge imposture of an organised hypocrisy. Could the pale shade of the poor carpenter that slinks past the costly altar-rails, but speak, it would bewail an agony of spirit deadlier than that which drenched Gethsemane in blood. The dethronement of Christ is complete, and men now worship Mammon:—

> "A wondrous God! Most fit for those
> Who cheat on change, then creep to prayer;
> Blood on his heavenly altar flows,
> Hell's burning incense fills the air,
> And death attests in street and lane
> The hideous glory of his reign."

MIMNERMUS.

The Origin of Supernatural Ideas.—V.

(*Continued from p. 523*)

"I remember discoursing with a very charming French official on the difficulty of eradicating fetish customs. 'Why not take the native in the rear, Mademoiselle,' said he, 'and convert the native gods?' I explained that his ingenious plan was not feasible, because you cannot convert gods. Even educating gods is hopeless work. All races of men, through countless ages, have been attempting to make their peculiar deities understand how they are wanted to work, and what they are wanted to do, and the result is anything but encouraging."—MISS KINGSLEY, *Travels in West Africa*, p. 346 (1898).

"The faith of the Greenland Eskimo is of great interest towards the elucidation of the questions above touched upon. It is so primitive that I doubt whether it deserves the name of a religion. There are many legends and much superstition, but it all lacks clear and definite form; conceptions of the supernatural vary from individual to individual, and they produce, as a whole, the impression of a religion in process of formation, a mass of incoherent and fantastic notions which have not yet crystallised into a definite view of the world. We must assume that all religions have at one time or another passed through just such a stage as this."—FRIDTJOF NANSEN, *Eskimo Life*, p. 224 (1894).

"But if the aborigines of Central Australia have no religion properly so called, they entertain beliefs and they observe practices out of which, under favorable circumstances, a religion might have been developed, if its evolution had not been arrested by the advent of Europeans."—J. G. FRAZER, *The Belief in Immortality and the Worship of the Dead*, p. 92 (1913).

WE have seen how primitive man, having arrived at a belief in a soul or spirit, through dreams, shadows, and reflections, also came to the conclusion that everything, living and not living, possessed an indwelling soul or spirit.

It seems extraordinary to us that any human being could believe that stones and trees and such things can be possessed with a soul. Nevertheless, that is the belief of a very large proportion of the primitive races, as we shall see. And it follows logically enough; for if the savage believes that he has seen the soul of his dead father or brother in his sleep, then he must logically believe that the weapons and clothes, etc., he sees with them must also be the souls of the things, and not the things themselves.

Before scientists began to study and compare the beliefs and modes of thought of primitive man, these beliefs were looked upon as stupid and unreasonable—of the same substance as a tale made up by a child. How they could believe such rubbish passed all understanding. But science here, as elsewhere, brought order out of chaos, and we now know—through the researches of Tylor, Lubbock, Frazer, and others—that primitive man simply could not help arriving, in the absence of science, at the conclusions he did regarding the supernatural.

As Miss Kingsley points out:—

> "The more you know the African, the more you study his laws and institutions, the more you must recognise that the main characteristic of his intellect is logical, and you see how in all things he uses this absolutely sound but narrow thought-form. He is not a dreamer or a doubter; everything is real, very real, horribly real to him."

"This," continues the same writer, "may seem strange to those who read accounts of wild and awful ceremonials." But "It is this power of being able logically to account for everything that is, I believe, at the back of the tremendous permanency of Fetish in Africa, and the cause of many of the relapses into it by Africans converted to other religions."*

But, however logical you may be, you cannot arrive at right conclusions if you start from wrong premises, any more than you can give the correct answer to a sum if you start with wrong figures; and, as we have seen, primitive man started wrong by mistaking a subjective impression—namely, a dream, which had no existence outside his own mind—for an objective spiritual existence.

Nor has this error been confined to one tribe; it is found among savages as wide apart as the African from the Eskimo, the South Sea Islander from the the North American Indian—tribes who have never come in contact, who are not aware of one another's existence. They have not caught the idea by contagion; they have arrived at it naturally, inevitably, as if impelled by some malignant power.

As this phase of primitive thought is very important in considering the evolution of the supernatural, it will be as well to produce some evidence in support of it. Those who have read Tylor's *Primitive Culture* will not require any more evidence than that work of genius contains; but we do not propose to draw upon that great work here. Many books, by travellers, anthropologists, and ethnologists, describing the beliefs of primitive peoples, have been written since *Primitive Culture* was first published, and we propose to cite a few to the point.

Dr. Fridtjof Nansen, the famous Arctic explorer, observes:—

> "The Greenlanders, like all primitive races, originally conceived nature as animate throughout, every object—stone, mountain, weapon, and so forth—having its soul. We still find traces of this belief. The souls of tools, weapons, and clothes follow the dead on his wanderings to the land of shades; therefore they are laid in the grave, that there they may rot and their souls may be set free. Gradually, however, this belief has, in the confused and illogical way peculiar to primitive races, mixed itself up in a totally different one: the belief, to wit, that the souls of the dead can take up their abode in different animals, objects, mountains, and the like, which they subjugate to themselves, and from which they can issue from time to time, even

* Miss Kingsley, *West Indian Studies*, p. 125 (1889).

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showing themselves to the living. There has thus arisen the belief that in every natural object there dwells a particular being, called its *inua* (that is, its owner)—a word which, characteristically enough, originally signified human being, or Eskimo. According to the Eskimos, every stone, mountain, glacier, river, lake, has its inua; the very air has one. It is still more remarkable to find that even abstract conceptions have their inue; they speak, for example, of the inue of particular instincts or passions. This may seem surprising in a primitive people, but it is not very difficult to explain. When, for instance, a primitive man, suffering from violent hunger, feels an inward gnawing, it is quite natural that he should conceive this to be caused by a being, whom he therefore describes as the inua of hunger or appetite. As a rule, these inue are invisible, but when they are seen, according to Rink, they take the form of a brightness or fire, and the sight of them is very dangerous."*

Speaking of the West African negro, Miss Kingsley says:—

"One of the fundamental doctrines of Fetish is that the connection of a certain spirit with a certain mass of matter, a material object, is not permanent; the African will point out to you a lightning-stricken tree and tell you that its spirit has been killed; he will tell you when the cooking-pot has gone to bits that it has lost its spirit; if his weapon fails, it is because someone has stolen or made sick its spirit by means of witchcraft. In every action of his daily life he shows you how he lives with a great, powerful spirit-world around him. You will see him, before starting out to hunt or fight, rubbing medicine into his weapons to strengthen the spirits within them, talking to them the while; telling them what care he has taken of them, reminding them of the gifts he has given them, though those gifts were hard to give, and begging them in the hour of his dire necessity not to fail him. You see him bending over the face of a river, talking to its spirit with proper incantations, asking it when it meets a man who is an enemy of his to upset his canoe or drown him, or asking it to carry down with it some curse to the village below which has angered him, and in a thousand other ways he shows you what he believes if you will only watch him patiently."†

Mr. Williamson, the anthropologist, in his book on the South Sea savages, dealing with the beliefs of the Solomon Islanders, says "they have no notion of a single Supreme Being"; but the idea underlying all his beliefs is in a power called *mana*.

"This is a power or influence, not physical, but in a way supernatural, and manifests itself in physical force, or in any kind of power or excellence which a man possesses; it is *mana* that works to effect everything which is beyond the ordinary power of men, outside the common processes of nature; it is present in the atmosphere of life, attaches itself to persons and to things, and is manifested by results which can only be ascribed to its operation."‡

Mr. Williamson continues:—

"If a man has been successful in fighting, this success is not the result of his own physical powers; it is because he has got the *mana* of a spirit or of some deceased warrior to empower him.....The possession of *mana* is not, however, confined to spirits, ghosts, and human beings. It may be immanent in animals and plants, and even in inanimate objects" (p. 27).

And, he concludes, the fundamental underlying principle of their religious practices and superstitions "is the desire and effort of the people to get the power of *mana* for themselves, or secure its direction for their benefit" (p. 73).

Mr. J. H. King, in his book on *The Supernatural*, gives many instances of this belief among primitive races. He cites Hind's *Labrador* (ii., p. 103) for the fact that "Many of the North American Indians, as the Nasquapees of Labrador, believe in the future shadowy existence of every material thing," and Im Thurm's *Indians of Guiana* (p. 355) for the statement that the Indians of Guiana "hold that not only many rocks, but also waterfalls, streams, and natural objects of every sort, are supposed to consist of a body and a spirit."

Markham's *Cuzco* (p. 129) is cited for the ancient Peruvians, who "held that every created thing had its *mana* or spiritual essence," and Marina's *Tonga Islands* (ii., p. 122) is given as authority for the statement that the same belief prevailed "among the Fijians, who held not only that the souls of men, women, beasts, plants, stocks, canoes, houses, but all the broken utensils of this frail world, tumble along over one another into the regions of immortality." The same conception of the double nature of all substances was entertained, according to Captain Cook, in Tahiti.*

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

The Doctor.

NATURE had fitted the doctor well for the profession his father and circumstance had opened for him. He was small, wiry, and possessed endless energy. On the dark background of human pain and suffering he flung the colored lights of a natural optimism. His sympathy was of the rich type that is crystallised in deeds. It came spontaneously; and one always felt that the surface roughness of it imparted a strength which sympathy generally lacks.

In action, in speech, in thought, he was quick. Seldom did he hesitate in his decisions. He was self-sufficient in an admirable way. You could rely upon the man's power without having experienced it, just as you were, in some strange way, convinced that you could depend upon his word without having tested it. His breezy personality, full to overflowing with brusque mannerisms, his confident smile, his incarnadined expletives, all irradiated a strength of character that seemed contagious. You felt stronger in body and brain. His visit was like a gust of heather-scented mountain air.

Morning, noon, and night the doctor's motor whirred over the country roads. All day long the doctor worshiped at the feet of the goddess of humanity. All day long he poured out ungrudgingly his accumulated stores of knowledge. All day long he expended physical and mental energy in the service of humanity.

To me, this is worship. Regardless of the many associations the mind introduces to bring that idea of mind down into religion and commercialism, I cannot help adhering to it. There are other ways of worship than by genuflexions. There are other methods of doing one's duty than by preaching. Action is more wonderful than speech. Practice more worthy than prayers. The doctor worshiped humanity; for a man's service to his fellows is the real gauge of his righteousness; and a man's service is that which he does.

When the doctor renounced the horse for his country rambles, as he called them, and purchased a car, he gave it the name of his old companion; and there was not a lane in the big district that had not been covered by the wheels of Beauty. The most atrociously wicked farm-road was made more wicked by the little Beauty; and the doctor enjoyed the rush and struggle in boyish delight.

Dashing about, here, there, and everywhere, was his life. Smoking innumerable cigarettes was his luxury. Giving health and happiness, and easing the sorrows of death, was his mission. Being the friend of everyone was his privilege and pleasure. And the laurel-leaf of close fellowship was his reward. The schoolmaster said it was bound with gold; for he had no bad debts.

But there was another facet to the doctor's character, one that the country eye never saw, nor the country mind ever imagined. He kept it for his library and the hours of slippered ease, lamp-light, and pipes. The falling curtain of the library door, dropped between the eager, tireless, brisk little doctor and the sentimentalist. Beside his books he became reserved, thoughtful, philosophic, a man

* Fridtjof Nansen, *Eskimo Life*, pp. 224-5 (1894).
† Miss M. Kingsley, *West African Studies*, p. 129 (1899).
‡ R. W. Williamson, *The Ways of the South Sea Savage*, p. 71 (1914).

* J. H. King, *The Supernatural*, pp. 182-3.

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who liked to look upon and wonder at all the nuances of ordinary life. Here, in the quietness, in the low, friendly light, with the blue smoke-clouds curling around his grey hairs, his mind would return to the day's work; not with the joyful animation that characterised it then, but with a sensitiveness that oftener brought tears than smiles.

Pictures would arise before him, pictures such as one could imagine the mind of the artist would see in his dreams; and all were tinged with the sadness of suffering. Incident after incident of the day's experience would slowly emerge from the corridors of memory; and the doctor's mind would see in each of them a chapter of human woe. He drew near, at these times, to sorrow as a poet approaches grief. The feelings of those who toiled in physical pain, and of those who endured mental anguish, were his feelings. Experiencing them, he could understand; and the heart of him became like a tender flower, whose nature knew every degree of love and hate in sunrays, in rain, in wind.

He liked, too, to speak of the happenings of the day. He liked to paint the gold and the grey of commonplace life. The wonder of it never dimmed in his eyes. It enthralled him. He was fascinated by the marvellous intensities of the pleasures and pains of the life we all live. Rich and poor, good and bad, strong and weak, the doctor saw them all in the shadows of sorrow. Amidst the darkness and gloom of the pain that never passes us by we lose our social distinguishments, our varying potentialities, our prejudices, and our different beliefs. We become like our fellows. To the doctor we were all of the same family. There were no favorites. Sorrow left no room for choice. Across every life there drifted the darkness of tears. Every heart was but as a grain of sand in the human Sahara, whose scorching sun was an inevitable sorrow; and the tears blinded our eyes to the rays, and shut from our sight the other grains; and in our sad loneliness we forgot there were laughter and light in the world, we forgot there were other hearts enwrapped in the same dark egoism; and often we forgot we were human.

And so the doctor would speak softly, as if more communing with himself than with us who were honored by the privilege of being with him. His grey eyes would glow with a misty light as he told us of some vaguely comprehended sorrow that had fallen upon lives little able to bear it. His bronzed face would deepen in color as he described the effect of a child's suffering on the mother-heart. His voice would sink as he pictured the coming of a grief he alone saw. And into his words would fall the quiet and rich pathos that tells of a sympathy felt only by those amongst us whose minds have taken intelligence behind the dark veil of human grief. At these times the doctor seemed to become a strange weird instrument, every nerve a string vibrating to the slightest appeal of affliction, every voice-tone an echo of the music that flooded his being. He forgot his skill as a doctor; forgot his own part in the great tragedy; forgot himself and his surroundings: he was a poet-artist living in the suffering heart of humanity.

Once a friend, after listening for a time, and taking the opportunity of one of the doctor's silences, made some remark relative to the consolations of religion. Instantly the mist-enshrouded eyes of the doctor cleared. He returned with the sharp characteristic movement from the land of his thoughts to the world of his actions. A quick nervous tremor seemed to shake his body. Smartly he struck a match; and as he lit his pipe he looked steadily at our companion, with a critical observancy in his eyes. Then he laughed the long, low chuckle of a man thoroughly but quietly amused.

ROBERT MORELAND.

Sunday-school Teacher: "What is faith?"

Little Boy: "Faith is believing in the superintendent's stories."

Acid Drops

"Dagonet's" three columns in last week's *Referee*—mainly about the war—is just the usual piffle that he has fallen into in his early old age. His subjects now are all reduced to three—Mr. G. R. Sims, God, and Old England. Although his paragraphs are chiefly about the war, the name of France never occurs in them. The name of Belgium occurs because the Kaiser's troops got unexpectedly hung up there. "England Above All!" is Mr. Sims's opening sentence. The war, as he considers it, is really a war between England and Germany. All other nations are in the "bloody business" accidentally. Yet when these words were written, Belgium and France had been fighting desperately for many days against the Kaiser's army, whose loss was thousands in killed and myriads in wounded—while "Old England" had hardly struck a blow. We have got to save Europe "under God," and don't forget the "aid of our allies" from "the brutal domination of the bandit of Berlin." The bandit of Berlin, however, sees the matter differently. His "task" is to save Europe from the domination of the pirate of London. "Dagonet" cries out "England Above All!" The Potsdam patriot cries out "Germany Above All!" And both of them talk a lot about "God," who, we believe, would disclaim any acquaintance with either of them.

This reminds us of the description of "orthodoxy" given by the famous and plain-spoken Bishop Warburton. "Orthodoxy," he said, "is *my* doxy; heterodoxy is *another man's* doxy."

There are well-informed people who might remind "Dagonet" that the real thought in the minds of William, Nicholas, and Francis Joseph, is the future headship of the German and Sclavonic races. Others might remind him that, after all, as a matter of fact, Germany did not declare war against England, but England declared war against Germany. As a matter of fact, we say; we are not discussing the rights and wrongs of the case.

Now and then Mr. Sims has a lucid interval. We might say, perhaps, that the old Mr. Sims turns up again and insists on being heard. There was an instance of this in the following paragraph, from last week's "Mustard and Cress":—

> "Here is a pathetic incident of the war. I know an English lady who married an officer of high rank in the German army. Some years ago she divorced him, and later married an officer in the British Army. She has a daughter by her first husband, and the daughter remains in her custody. She has a daughter by her second husband, and now the fathers of the two children are both at the front. The two little girls say their prayers together every night. But while Evelyn says 'Please God, don't let Sybil's daddy kill my daddy,' Sybil says 'Please God, don't let Evelyn's daddy kill my daddy.' And the mother listens, and knows that the fathers of her children may at any moment face each other in the deadly fray."

This is modern pathos, English pathos, Christian pathos; we were tempted to say *Referee* pathos. The very essence of it is a mixed paternity and a lunatic asylum idea of "God." Here is another kind of pathos, old pathos, Greek pathos, Pagan pathos. In a battle going forward to defend Greek civilisation against the hordes of barbarism, messengers came to the General with the news that the son he loved and was proud of was slain. He looked at the messengers calmly, and said, "I knew that my son was mortal." What a grand answer! Men don't speak like that now. We must go back to antiquity to find it.

The British and Foreign Bible Society reports that it circulated "no fewer than 8,958,283 copies of the Scriptures." This year all Europe is at war. Comment is needless.

Nothing better illustrates the dense ignorance of large masses of the Emperor of Russia's Christian subjects than the following. There will be a total eclipse of the sun on August 21, visible in Western Russia, where large bodies of troops are moving, at mid-day. It is expected that Russian officers will inform the men of the nature of the phenomena, in order to prevent panic when they find themselves in darkness in the middle of the day.

The *Church Times* is naturally delighted at the Day of Intercession ordered by the heads of the English Church. It is a consolation, it thinks, at this crisis "to find how Christian at heart the country remains." It *may* be; but

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one cannot consider as evidence the fact that a Day of Intercession is ordered. The heads of the Church could do no less. It is their business to keep religion to the front; but judging from the general run of people, religion seems to play a small part in their considerations. It is easy enough to *pray* for victory, and they are doing that as energetically in Germany and Austria, as in England. We may safely take it that superiority in fleet and army, and in tactics and courage will play a much larger part in deciding the issue than the prayers of the clergy. And ordinary men and women seem far more concerned about the rise in prices, the increase of unemployment, the dislocation of trade, and the general result of the conflict, than about God's opinion of the matter.

The *Times*, in its Sunday edition, has a far more pertinent observation. It says that "for a moment at least the religious reading of life seems to lack even the substance of a dream." And it adds:—

> "Where in this return to chaos are we to discern the workings of any 'Power making for righteousness'? Through all the world men and women are invoking the aid of the God of battles. Priests and peoples of every nation are crying to their God that He is the Lord of Hosts, and that they alone are His Chosen People; and to-day in every temple throughout Christendom the prayer goes up that the Prince of Peace may incline the scales of war."

This is only what we have been saying all along. In the face of grim facts all the fairy tales embodied in religious phraseology become almost ghastly. There is no power, outside of human nature, that makes for righteousness; and there is still too much of the barbarian and the beast left in human nature to make the movement for righteousness certain, or to even place it beyond the possibility of disaster. Thousands repeat the religious formulæ in times of stress from mere force of habit, but their doing so is really one of the conditions that gives the barbarian its chance. Were they in the habit of reflecting more clearly and more deeply, the game of war would soon be impossible amongst civilised nations.

The divines cannot deny the active existence of evil, and their chief work has always consisted in trying to account for it without implicating the Deity. The task has been entirely beyond them, and to-day the majority of them admit that evil exists by Divine permission. Mr. R. J. Campbell has often hinted that there is a sense in which God is the cause of evil. Now, whether God causes or merely permits evil, the question remains, Why does it exist? Well, be it well observed, Professor David Smith, the all-wise theologian, answers that question in the *British Weekly* for August 13 thus:—

> "God uses the powers of evil as the instruments of his judgments. He makes the wrath of man praise him, and girds upon him the residue of wrath (Ps. lxxvi. 10, R.V.).
>
> 'Tis so God governs, using wicked men,—
> Nay, scheming fiends, to work his purposes."

Poor old God, how terribly he suffers at the hands of his servants!

Dr. Campbell Morgan charges us with treating life flippantly. He says that nothing could have been much more appalling than the fact that, when Europe was on the brink of war, "Goodwood was crowded." We beg to call attention to a much more appalling fact, namely, that when Europe, including our own country, is actually at war, "Claudius Clear" contributes an article to the *British Weekly* for August 13 on "Cats." Surely there is nothing more flippant in witnessing horse-racing than in writing about cats. What infinite twaddle these men of God do talk!

Mr. Harold Begbie has written a war poem, "The Man Who Keeps His Head." Most of the other banjo Byrons are singing of the man who breaks other fellows' heads.

"Feeding the Millions" is the heading of an agonised appeal on behalf of war sufferers. What has happened to the Oriental evangelist who fed 5,000 people with a few loaves and fishes?

The professional followers of the "Prince of Peace" are chanting psalms to the "God of Battles." If there were any truth in the efficacy of prayer, they would be more usefully employed in petitioning the Throne of Grace to soften the flinty hearts of the wholesale provision merchants.

Nearly half the priests of Paris have been called to the front. "For this relief, much thanks." We await, prayerfully, the exit of the remainder.

Anyone who has studied the circumstantial yarns of the war retailed in the press, will have small difficulty in understanding how the Gospel tales were disseminated among a vastly more ignorant population. Truthfulness has never been a Christian virtue.

The *Times* has been jubilant over the alleged discomforture of the Peace Party throughout Europe, forgetting that the war itself will be a formidable argument against the continuance of standing armies of enormous size.

"Church and the War" is a *Daily Telegraph* headline. This does not refer to the church of the Levy-Lawsons, but to the Government religion.

In religious art bathos has long taken the place of pathos. A recent example, seen in the picture dealers' windows, portrays a neurotic boy-scout with a shadowy figure of Christ behind him, holding a scout's pole. This masterpiece is entitled "The Pathfinder." A cynic might suggest that the path led to Earlswood.

"Bluff King Hal" will appear shortly at one of the London theatres. If he appears with his seven wives he should prove an instructive piece of Christian evidence.

It is well known that men of God never say anything that may be called original, never deliver a single new message. They are simply repeaters of things they have learned by heart from an old book. They often describe themselves as God's messengers, or the Lord's prophets, but never by any chance do they utter a fresh word. Of the history of the world at large they are afraid, and they scarcely ever appeal to it. They are cowards. Even Dr. Campbell Morgan said the other day, "Perhaps it will be safer and better for me if" I draw my illustrations "rather from Hebrew history than from any other." We agree. They are all Bible-men, and repeat like parrots what they find recorded there.

For example, the Rev. E. G. Thomas delivered a sermon on "The Mind of Christ" the other day, in which he reiterated again and again what Paul says in First Corinthians. Mr. Thomas has not the least idea what the mind of Christ is, but he appropriates the phrase from the great apostle. Of course, the absurdest things said by Paul are accepted as Gospel truths. Mr. Thomas claims that Christians are above criticism, but have a Divine right to sit in judgment upon all others. Mr. Thomas knows quite well how very silly such a claim is, but shielding himself behind Paul, he makes it without a blush. We repeat that the men of God are all cowards, because they say things in his name which they would never dare to say in their own.

Two hundred thousand copies of the following prayer has been printed, and circulated by Bishop Taylor Smith, Chaplain-General, for the use of soldiers:—

> "Almighty and most merciful Father,
> Forgive me my sins;
> Grant me thy peace;
> Give me thy power;
> Bless me in life and death,
> For Jesus Christ's sake. Amen."

There seems plenty of "me" about it; but egotism is always a strong feature of piety.

Rev. J. L. Rees, writing from Llanddowror Rectory, South Wales, says that "the historian of the future will not fail to note that for three years before the Armageddon the Nonconformist bodies of England and Wales had bound themselves together to rob the Church in Wales of all its ancient endowments.....and that just as hostilities were breaking out the robbery was about to be perpetrated." We expected something of the kind. Evidently Mr. Rees thinks the Deity brought about the war in order to rebuke the Nonconformists. What a pity it is that he won't leave things alone!

Ladies are very masculine nowadays. A man entered a railway carriage, mopped his brow, and remarked, "Phew, it's d——d hot." Turning, he observed a lady, and apologised. The lady, herself in a state of perspiration, rejoined, "Don't apologise; it's far worse, it's hellish."

Mr. Edward Hutton in *England of my Heart* says, "Canterbury is dead. Where once swayed the spiritual life of England one sees nowadays the familiar quiet life

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of a cathedral city." Apparently as dead as Canterbury mutton.

"Family life means law, order, discipline, and a sense of a Higher Power—a belief in a God," says the theological "Vanoc" in the sporting columns of the *Referee*. This is enough to wrinkle the face of a funeral-horse with smiles. Presumably, the man who keeps two homes is more religious than a man who has only one; and Solomon would beat both hollow.

Describing an accident to a lady, a provincial paper stated that the doctor "put six inches in a wound in her nose." She must have been of the same nationality as Our Blessed Savior.

"With a sentence of five years in the federal penitentiary at McNeil's Island hanging over him, and a bond of $6,000 posted to obtain his release pending the appeal of his case, the Rev. Albert Dahlstrom, recently convicted in the federal court at Seattle of violating the Mann White Slave Act, has disappeared. This is the admission by Federal authorities and by Charles F. Riddell, who acted as Dahlstrom's attorney. So says the *Spokane Chronicle*. Marriageable females are warned to be on their guard against this preacher of the Gospel. Through the holy bonds of matrimony he has connected up with some three dozen of them during his career as a minister."—*Truthseeker* (New York).

"Music is a great civilising force," says a writer in the *Referee*. In another column in the same issue a song is printed which was the feature in the 1911 Drury Lane pantomime, entitled "The Bulldog's Bark." The chorus runs, "We mean to be the top-dog still—Bow-wow!" The composer and the critic ought to bow-wow to one another.

"The hand that pulled the trigger of the assassin's pistol in Serajero has opened the gates of hell," says "Vanoc" in the *Referee*. Surely there is some mistake. Hundreds of thousands of good, kind Christian clergymen constantly assure us that those gates have never been shut.

We have it at last in all the plenitude of its unmistakable irrationality. Writing in the *Christian World* for August 13, Mr. Albert E. Hooper says that "there is no faith possible to the soul that has proofs." This journal has always advocated the same truth. As Mr. Hooper declares, so have we declared innumerable times, "faith is belief without proof." On this point he and we are in complete agreement; but at this point also our concurrence comes to an abrupt end. Whilst Mr. Hooper regards faith's *prooflessness* as its supreme merit and glory, we are forced to the conclusion that it constitutes its entire condemnation. Faith *imagines* a whole realm of the objective existence, of which there is not a scrap of evidence, and then teaches that this purely imaginary world should dominate our conduct here from day to day. Is this reasonable? Is it common sense? We hold that it is the quintessence of unreason, the very acme of common nonsense.

With that adventuresome supernaturalism Mr. Hooper undertakes to solve all the difficult problems that confront us to-day; but he conveniently forgets that most of these problems are as old as supernaturalism itself, and still remain unsolved, and that whatever solutions have been effected in the past were invariably the outcome of the application to the problems of reason, science, knowledge. Faith has never settled a single question, or wrought anything but harm for mankind.

A daily paper, referring to the Salvation Army Congress, said "the largest halls were filled with interested audiences who listened to speakers from *five* quarters of the globe." Some journalists seem to be as weak in arithmetic as evangelists, who chortle about the Trinity in unity.

American "scientists" claim to have discovered the Tower of Babel. The subject is a "stony" one; but, doubtless, the bricks spoke for themselves.

"Wanted; a Business Religion!" is the heading in our widely read contemporary, *John Bull*. There seems to be far too much business mixed with religion already. As the humorist says, the difference between a theatre and a place of worship is that you pay to enter the one, and you pay to get out of the other.

The Bishop of London does not wish to go down to posterity merely on the strength of his "infidel slaying" exploits in Victoria Park, but aspires to be a muscular Christian. As chaplain to the London Rifle Brigade, he intends to go with the Brigade abroad "for at least six weeks." The Archbishop of Canterbury has piously sanctioned the action of the "six weeks' soldier."

"It should shock no one," says the *Church Times*, "to learn that the Bishop of London has volunteered for six weeks' service with the London Rifle Brigade wherever it may be ordered to go." *Six weeks!* And *anywhere!* The qualification is striking. It can only mean a six weeks' jaunt at home; for it is absurd to imagine that he would be allowed to go abroad with an army and return at the end of six weeks. We can imagine the grim smile on Lord Kitchener's face if he is ever informed of the offer. Altogether, the Bishop seems to be sustaining his reputation for silliness even under the present conditions.

What a man the Bishop of London is! At St. Paul's, the other day, he said that during the war there must be "real sacrifice." "No one, however rich they may be, in any household should have more than, say, two courses at each meal." That is all the Bishop's intelligence is capable of producing. After profound thinking, he discovers that "real sacrifice" will mean to have no more than two courses for dinner—many will be only too glad to get one. We wonder how on earth the Bishop thinks this is going to help? People are not told to eat less, but only to have fewer dishes—which can have no effect whatever on the general food supply. A much more sensible course would be to advise everybody to go on living their ordinary life just as far as possible. By that means panic would be avoided, and all would benefit.

"The cross," said Canon Newbolt, in a sermon the other day, "has no doubtful origin. It goes right back to an event when one Jesus of Nazareth was arraigned before a Roman magistrate on a charge of treason." It is hard to credit that Canon Newbolt believes this to be the origin of the cross as a religious symbol. It is a commonplace to-day to anyone who has the slightest acquaintance with the subject, that Egypt used the cross, in connection with religion, centuries before Christianity was heard of. It was found in South America when the Spaniards first landed there. It is an ancient symbol in India, and its pre-Christian use is admitted even in the New Testament. The expression "Take up thy cross and follow me," used before the alleged death of Jesus, could have no meaning whatever, unless it were already well recognised as a religious symbol.

Canon Newbolt deplores the fact that in some of the law courts of Europe the cross has been replaced by a figure of justice. We think the departure both desirable and healthful. There was one court that always displayed a huge cross above its deliberations. That court was the Inquisition. A sectarian symbol has no proper place in a court of justice. Surrounding legal proceedings with religious formulæ has never secured justice, and has frequently been a means of securing its frustration.

The Church of England officials have issued a form of intercession with "Almighty God on behalf of His Majesty's forces, now engaged in war." It contains no reference to the "King of kings" command, "Thou Shalt Not Kill," nor does it allude to the suggestion of loving one's enemies.

The *Guardian* points out that one consequence of the war will be an increase in the incomes of some of the clergy. Owing to the high price of wheat, there will be an appreciable increase in the tithes paid, and the *Guardian* hopes that this will be enough to cover the increased cost of living. We suggest that they should refund the difference. The clergy talk a lot about sacrifice; this seems the time for them to illustrate it.

Daughter: "What is the meeting for to-night, pa?"

Sky Pilot: "To save the young men of the country, my dear."

Daughter: "I wish you'd save a nice one for me, pa."

Parson (to crippled mendicant): "I would have liked to give you a shilling, my poor man, but I find I have nothing less than a florin." His Poor Man: "S'pose we toss up to see who keeps that."

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To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £182 13s. 0d. Received since:—Robert Stirton and Two (Dundee) Friends (quarterly), £1 5s. 6d.; E. Parker, 5s.

R. STIRTON.—Thanks for your stedfast friendship in the matter of the President's Honorarium Fund.

W. ALLEN.—We cannot possibly find room for long Obituaries reaching us on Tuesday, which we have so often said is too late for the *Freethinker* then preparing for the press. A summary shall appear in our next.

J. H. LANGFORD.—We don't expect you'll get a reply from Bishop Welldon.

S. BURNS (S. Africa).—We don't remember seeing it. Glad you liked our open letter to the clergy. We *shall* "keep on rubbing it in."

L. H. W. MANN.—It is no use talking of publishing anything while the war-fever rages.

A. MILLER.—Copy should be written separately from letters.

ROCHDALE.—We cannot deal with the letters you send us without the consent of the writers.

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LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Notes.

Christianity, thy name is—well, the worst word in the dictionary isn't bad enough. How many good Christian employers have joined the race for publicity in connection with the Prince of Wales's Relief Fund, and at the same time dismissed a lot of their own employees, besides putting others on short commons of work and wages. I really think that while Christianity is the most hypocritical religion in the world, Great Britain is the most hypocritical of Christian nations.

* * *

Why was such an early rush made for money for the Prince of Wales's Relief Fund? From what I have seen and heard of other public funds, I have very little belief in much of this Fund ever finding its way to deserving cases. That the Prince himself has anything special to do with it is not credible *à priori*. Busybodies swarm in times of great excitement, and this is only a case in point. Rather a big one, but not so very big, after all, as will soon be recognised when the excitement has died down a bit.

* * *

Whoever is right, and whoever is wrong, in this European war, they are all Christian nations that are engaged in it, and it will remain so to the end, if the Turk only has sense enough to keep out of it. This is a Christian war if ever there was one. After nearly two thousand years of Christianity the Christian nations of that part of the world where Christianity was first established, and whence it was exported to America, are almost universally engaged in wiping each other out of existence.

* * *

The German Emperor is being covered with fierce denunciation. Some of it is very likely deserved. Some of it is certainly vulgar insolence. The military system of modern Europe is not of his creation. He has played a conspicuous part in it by virtue of his high position and histrionic temperament. But he is only a small figure, after all, when it comes to an estimate of real values. This is a case in which the monarchs and "statesmen" of Europe should receive a general condemnation. "All have sinned." Paradoxical as it sounds, the time to serve peace is *during* peace. As well shout against the northern blast as cry out against a war when it has once begun. Or, to use a metaphor more congenial to the English genius, who can cry off a dog-fight? Arouse the fighting instinct, and everything else gives way to it. Yes, peace can only be served *during* peace. And during the long general peace of Europe what have the Christian nations been doing? Talking about peace, and spending their money on vast preparations for war. That policy was bound to end in Armageddon. The wielders of huge, highly trained armies will always yearn to use them seriously. And there is a significant text in the Christian Scripture, which we would bring to Christian remembrance: "For where your treasure is there will your heart be also."

* * *

One gets sick of hearing so much about the Kaiser being the cause of this terrible war. All who joined in the race of armaments are responsible for it. All who believe in alliances as a guarantee of peace are responsible for it. All who believe in anything but common sense and a peaceful disposition as a guarantee of peace are responsible for it. All who believe in "God" as a sort of international umpire, who sees invisibly and speaks inaudably, are responsible for it. All in whom there is any motive higher than Humanity are responsible for it.

* * *

To speak of "God" as a sort of international umpire may sound "blasphemous" to orthodox ears. But it is the Christian idea expressed with the utmost truth and brevity. The Bishop of London, in the letter to the clergy of his diocese with regard to the day of intercession (August 21), after relating Great Britain's efforts for peace, bears us out in the following manner. "We can then pray with a good conscience for victory, and appeal to God, who knows everything, to decide between us and our enemies." It does not occur to this episcopal simpleton that God, if he knows everything, could play the umpire without a contest. This would save a tremendous lot of bloodshed, economic loss, destitution, and other forms of misery. But to act sensibly is never expected of Gods. Which is doubtless the fault of their worshipers.

* * *

Friday, August 21, is selected as the day of intercession. It is the date of a solar eclipse. Probably this is intentional. The mental darkness of the worshipers will match the physical darkness outside them.

* * *

The docility of the English people is wonderful. It has been known to all the world, including our enemies, but excluding ourselves, that General French has been in Belgium all the time with thousands of English troops. The only people through whom it *could* do no possible harm have been kept without the information. This is the brilliant notion of the censorship entertained by a flashy but stupid person like F. E. Smith, and backed up by a person who is neither flashy *nor* stupid like Lord Kitchener. It shows what imbecilities occur quite naturally under the military system. The English press, which is the most lickspittle in the world, connived at this well-sustained imposture. It really looks incredible, but it is true. Militarism spells every vice and every folly. It is the enemy of all that thinkers and humanists value.

* * *

With regard to the *Freethinker*, there are no "Sugar Plums" in it this week. War upsets

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many things, and this amongst them. I still make no announcement as to how I shall have to economise in the production of the paper. War, of course, hits all journalism but war journalism. The South Africa war ruined many advanced journals. The *Freethinker* survived by a great effort on the part of the Editor and his staff. This bigger war will probably be shorter. On the other hand, it is likely to be more exciting, and to divert attention more profoundly from intellectual objects. Next week, then, I shall have something to say about the paper and the financial position. Meanwhile, I venture to remind my friends that the President's Honorarium Fund exists, and needs their support more than ever it did.

G. W. FOOTE.

Religion and War.

The most religious nations have been the most immoral, the cruellest, and the most unjust. Italy was far worse under the Popes than under the Cæsars. Was there ever a barbarian nation more savage than the Spain of the sixteenth century? Certainly you must know that what you call religion has produced a thousand civil wars, and has severed with the sword all the natural ties that produce "the unity and married calm of States." Theology is the fruitful mother of discord; order is the child of reason. If you will candidly consider this question, if you will for a few moments forget your preconceived opinions, you will instantly see that the instinct of self-preservation holds society together. People, being ignorant, believed that the gods were jealous and revengeful.

—R. G. INGERSOLL.

The Material Basis of Life.

MANY popular misconceptions concerning the nature of "life" would soon disappear were men to study and understand the physical conditions essential to the existence of living matter. Unfortunately, the average metaphysically minded man is rather proud than otherwise of his ignorance, and derives a certain amount of indolent satisfaction from the reflection that "life" is surrounded by a dense fog of impenetrable mystery. To those that offer a natural explanation of the marvels of organic phenomena, he replies that science is dumb when confronted with the involved problems of life and mind. And he never for one moment imagines that before any real comprehension of physiological and psychical phenomena can be arrived at, some slight knowledge of the physics and chemistry of the relatively simple structures from which the higher fauna and flora have been evolved is an indispensable prerequisite.

We cannot run before we can walk. This platitude is realised, and what is more to the point, is put into practice in all rational systems of education. The pupil is led forward from simple truth to less obvious verity, so that by slow gradations he at last attains an understanding of those eternal veracities which constitute the kingdoms of science.

The vulgar fallacy that an impassable chasm divides organic from inorganic nature is smiled at by the contemporary biologist. Nevertheless, it is quite commonly assumed by members of the general public, that certain characteristic chemical compounds are special to living matter, inasmuch that they are never discovered in a non-living state. Yet, as Professor Abbott states in a recently published work:—

> "Thousands of exact chemical analyses have been made of every sort of living thing, and no element or compound has ever been found which is essentially different from what may exist in the non-living world. Long ago a distinction used to be made between 'organic' and 'inorganic' substances — the former being the products of living 'organisms.' *But such a distinction has broken down.* It is possible to synthesise substances in the test-tube identical in composition with those formed in Nature's laboratory—the tissue of plant and animal. Indeed, the ability to artificially reproduce natural products in this way has proved of great value commercially, and artificially synthesised indigo, camphor, etc., now supplement in large measure Nature's meagre store of such things."*

There is, therefore, no chemical distinction between living and lifeless matter. Neither is there any physical characteristic special to organic structures. Organic matter is subject to the same physical processes which operate in lifeless Nature. Plants and animals grow and multiply; crystals and clouds increase in size, and even in that form of growth which is known as reproduction, parallels may be met with in organic substances.

The precise time at which life ceases varies within wide limits. Long after the spirit has departed from the body it is alleged to animate with its life-sustaining powers; it has been experimentally shown that all parts of the defunct organism do not equally share in the benumbing agencies of death. The writer has frequently noticed the twitchings of the muscles in an animal that has been "dead" for several hours. A decapitated testacean, such as a turtle, may be considered for all practical purposes dead. Yet, if the heart of a headless turtle be removed from the body of the animal and hung "on hooks in a moist chamber wet with a weak solution of common salt, such a heart will go on beating rhythmically for days." Obviously, so long as the organ functions thus it cannot be said to be dead. It is, therefore, necessary to discriminate between that mode of death which leads to the speedy dissolution of the entire organism and that local form of death which governs the lives of the tissues of living bodies. As a rule, the decease of an animal is immediately followed by the disintegration and decay of its tissue elements. But experiment demonstrates that by excluding bacterial infection from the tissues of the dead animal, such tissues may be maintained in a living state for a quite considerable period. At all events, such tissues retain the power to resume the functions of life when transferred to a living animal. As Professor Abbott puts it: "In this way sections of blood-vessels and other organs have been cut out and later replaced in the same or other animals without injury. By keeping such a tissue at a trifle above freezing point the period of vitality may be extended to weeks or months." Quite recent studies prove that it is not only possible to retain the life of excised tissues, but that they will actually "sprout and grow like so many plant cuttings." To secure these results all that is required is that the tissues be set in a nutritive medium and that they are protected from the insidious activities of bacteria.

Other instances of restoration to life after apparent death are abundant. After many years of quiescence, various seeds are capable of generation. An extraordinary instance of suspended life is afforded by the "resurrection plant" (Selaginella), which flourishes on the sides of the rocky cliffs of Mexico. This plant "may be pulled up and dried for years, only to uncurl and freshen up again in a few hours when placed in a saucer of water." Various lowly animals that dwell in pools will dry up as their watery medium evaporates, and float about in the air like dust. After long intervals of time a tardigrade in its shrivelled state will fall from the air into its native water, rise from the dead, and resume its active aquatic life.

In the chemistry and physics of the material basis of life—protoplasm, or bioplasm as it is now frequently termed—lie hidden the secrets of the wonderful phenomena of vitality and death. Although this life-stuff is the outcome of a combination of

* Professor J. F. Abbott, *General Biology*, p. 3; 1914.

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specific lifeless elements, its variations are countless. All protoplasm contains carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, and hydrogen, and these elements make up by far its larger mass. Sulphur and phosphorous, again, are invariably present, but these constituents form but a fraction of the whole. Chlorine, sodium, magnesium, calcium, potassium, and iron are usually to be numbered among its chemical ingredients. Some other elements are of normal if rare occurrence in the bioplasm of certain animals and vegetables. Protoplasm varies so considerably that it cannot be viewed as a definite chemical compound like salt or starch. Its modifications are so innumerable that the terms protoplasm or bioplasm must be regarded as including a multitudinous medley of chemical combinations which are as numerous as the myriad-numbered manifestations of organic phenomena in Nature's living domain.

Protoplasm, then, is chiefly composed of a complex combination of oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, and carbon, of which the carbon element usually forms the foundation. But it is to be observed that water is essential to living matter. This liquid which always makes up a heavy percentage of its bulk, is one of the simplest compounds in existence. "Muscles are three-fourths water, even bones nearly one-fourth, and in jelly-fishes of the open sea, that which is not water is but one per cent. or less of the total bulk." So far, then, as this ever-present constituent of protoplasm is concerned, there is little complexity. Moreover, living structures are to be regarded rather as liquids than as solids. The high percentage of water in protoplasm is not without meaning. It furnishes the conditions demanded for the transfusion of solid matter through the body organs of plants and animals, and it in addition provides them with those plastic powers which play so important a part in adaptation to surrounding conditions.

The various combinations of the four elements O, H, N, and C, are very conveniently arranged in three groups, the proteins or albumens, the carbohydrates (starch and sugar), and the fats.

The proteins are present in all protoplasm, and are absolutely essential to the processes of life. They form a great and many-sided group. They depart widely from each other, but all share definite common qualities. O, H, N, and C, are always found in proteids, and the number of atoms forming these compounds sometimes runs into thousands. It is estimated that half their weight is carbon, with 15 to 18 per cent. of nitrogen.

The immense protein molecule, so to speak, is hardly a composite unit; the atoms that form it are so loosely held together that its equilibrium is easily upset. "The atomic groups may freely break away from the protein molecule or be added to it, and in this instability lies the great significance of the proteins in all living matter." Well-known examples of nearly pure protein are such food materials as lean meat and the white of eggs.

The carbohydrates, in company with the fats, contain carbon, oxygen, and hydrogen only; nitrogen is absent, and the oxygen and hydrogen are always combined in the same proportions as in water (H_2O). The carbohydrates are usually more abundant in vegetable than in animal life, although glycogen, which is a carbohydrate, forms a large constituent of the muscles and the liver in higher animals, and is an important factor in their metabolism.

The fats are formed of the same elements as the carbohydrates, but their elements, C, H, and O, are differently proportioned and arranged. They are the invariable result of the combination of an acid with glycerine. "The acids, with few exceptions, belong to the 'fatty acid' series. Three molecules of fatty acid, not necessarily of the same kind, combine with one of glycerine to form a fat."

From its chemistry we will now turn to the physical structure of the protoplasm. Its protein materials do not completely dissolve in water like salt or sugar. Proteins, however, absorb much liquid, and swell enormously in consequence. When placed in large quantities of water they become highly attenuated, and may be permanently suspended in their liquid medium, but unlike true solutions "they *will not diffuse* through vegetable parchment or animal membranes. Such substances are usually known as 'colloids' in contrast to 'crystalloids,' or substances which *do diffuse* through such membranes." Another colloid property is its power to coagulate. This characteristic is easily demonstrated by comparing the semi-liquid white of an egg in its raw state with its semi-solid condition when cooked. The colloidal character of proteins meets its physical explanation in the magnitude of the protein molecules. As already stated, these molecules are aggregated in a highly unstable form, and when proteins are utilised as food, they are broken up in the course of digestion until they are reduced to a size sufficiently small to enable them to be absorbed through the lining membranes of the intestinal (alimentary) canal.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be concluded.)

The Radical Woman.—II.

A Public Address by M. M. Mangasarian, to the Free Religious Association (Rationalist), Chicago.

(Continued from p. 525.)

IT is a very difficult matter to decide which ideas or practices are proper in a woman, or in a man, to speak more generally, and which are not. It must have occurred to most of you that nothing in itself, or *per se*, as the Latins expressed it, is either proper or improper. The character of an act as well as of a word is determined by circumstances. Taking another's property is not theft if it is done to prevent its being used against the public good, or to prevent its being squandered, or to satisfy a judgment. Taking another's life is an innocent and highly proper act if it is done in self-defence, or to prevent a crime, or to defend the country. It is interesting to observe how dependent upon time, place, and circumstances is what we call morality. I am unable to think of anything which, while it may be proper or right in one place and at one time, may not be quite improper and wrong at another time and in another place. Circumstances break all rules.

Morality is no more *fixed* than is life. What we fear as radical to-day, may become dangerously conventional to-morrow. The institutions which the whole world supports to-day were at one time denounced with equal unanimity. It is highly probable that we shall cast off in the near future certain portions of the mental costume which is considered quite the fashion to-day. In the age of Washington or even Lincoln, if a woman asked to sit on a jury, or to be appointed a police detective, she would have been considered out of her mind. But to-day no one is very seriously alarmed to find woman in all the walks of life. What would have shocked the world as very radical a hundred or even fifty years ago, is in our day welcomed as signs of a world-wide awakening. Indeed, we are shocked when we meet, in the twentieth century, a woman of the times of ignorance and slavery.

However hard we may think, it will be impossible to discover anything which is not subject to this law of change. The other day certain reformers calling themselves Socialists or Anarchists went to a church in New York City, known as the "Rockefeller Church," and deliberately interrupted the proceedings by an attempt to usurp the privileges of the hour, which belonged to the officiating clergyman. That, certainly, was radical conduct. The Anarchist would call it "direct action." Now, can we imagine a state of society which would make such behavior at a public meeting, not only proper, but a duty as well? Speaking only for myself, I condemn the interruption of the church services on last Sunday (May 10, 1914) in New York. There was abso-

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lutely no excuse for it. To go into a hall or a church ostensibly to be one of the listeners, and then force oneself or one's message upon an unwilling audience, is an inexcusable impertinence, under present circumstances. What would you say, if your lecturer were to go to the Cathedral of the Holy Name, on the north side, on a Sunday, during the celebration of the Mass, and, just as the priest appeared at the altar, clap his hand against his mouth and begin to speak in his place and to *his* audience, whether or not anybody wanted to hear him? Nothing could be more extreme and eccentric than such deportment, however honest one's motives may be.

In England the militants claimed the right of free speech in the Westminster Cathedral while Father Vaughan was reciting the Ritual of the Mass. A few Sundays before the incident in the "Rockefeller Church," a woman attempted to address the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Congregation uninvited. People who do that must have either an insatiable passion for notoriety, or an inability to wait for their turn. There are minds that leak. The thought prematurely delivered, that is to say, delivered out of time or place, is an abortion. It is also true that brooding over one's wrongs, real or fancied, unhinges the mind. The social question has cost many a thinker his sanity.

In defence of the conduct of the Rev. Mr. White, pastor of the church of the Social Revolution, and the interrupter of the services in the "Rockefeller Church," Mr. Amos Pinchot, in a letter to the Associated Press, quotes the example of Jesus who whipped the money-changers out of the temple-court. Mr. Pinchot thinks Jesus, too, would have been arrested had he gone to the Fifth Avenue Baptist Church to speak. But Mr. Pinchot is careful neither of his premises nor of his conclusions. Did Jesus do right when he used physical force against the money-changers? Without stopping to explain that these people were not in the temple, but in the *court* of the temple, and that they were doing nothing illegal or immoral, since their services were needed by the worshipers, it will be enough to remark that Jesus' interference cost him his life, while the Rev. Mr. White was only given six months at the Bridewell. We believe in free speech, but a priest must secure our permission before he may speak from this platform, and I must secure the Pope's consent before I may speak in St. Peter's.

And yet this criticism against the conduct of the interrupters would be lamentably unjust if, for example, we lived in a country where free speech was monopolised by the clergy, and no one was permitted to express his views anywhere or at any time without permission of the ecclesiastical authorities. Under those circumstances it would be a solemn duty and a proud privilege to break up every church meeting and to interfere with every celebration of the Eucharist. A regime which resorts to force to suppress liberty of speech, forfeits its claim to respect. It is because our liberators harassed the persecutors that men and minds are free to-day. But we are living in a country to-day where everyone is at liberty to advertise for an audience and to express his views and beliefs without any restrictions except those which the law of equal rights imposes upon all. Therefore, the circumstances being what they are, for anyone to interfere with his neighbor's meeting when he can have one of his own, is treasonable, in the sense that it is an assault upon the glorious right of freedom of speech conquered for us by the pioneers and martyrs of progress.

It will be seen, then, that it is circumstances which give quality to every act or word. During the days of tyranny, to have raised one's voice in church or synagogue against oppression and injustice, uninvited and at great personal risk, was heroic. It was the only way the truth could be spoken in public. But to disturb a Protestant or a Catholic Church meeting to-day, at the risk of bloodshed, when a hundred ways of speaking the truth in public and peaceably have been provided, would prove, I am sorry to say, one's unworthiness of freedom.

There is, then, no getting away from the truth that circumstances are everything. A gold-mine to a starving man in a desert is worthless; a loaf of bread to a traveller dying of thirst is equally useless. Morality is the right thing in the right place—*in the right place*—and *at the right time*. Let me add one more condition—and *in just measure*. The immoral person is the person without sense of proportion, or of the proprieties. To be insensible to the logic of circumstances—of time, place, and balance—is to be eccentric, erratic, and a radical in the most objectionable sense of that important word.

Woman's radicalism or rebellion is largely, though not exclusively, confined to the sex question. I have already expressed myself on previous occasions on the extremists in the "Votes-for-Women" cause. If these "wild women" could have their way, they would create a tremendous prejudice against female franchise. It is the balanced women who command respect for their sex. Women have naturally great fitness for administrative positions. John Stuart Mill, who was a very careful thinker, believed that woman was the born ruler. Even in Asia, where woman has been a slave, it is often the mother or the mistress which is "the power behind the throne." There are competent critics who believe that Isabella, the Catholic, Elizabeth, the Protestant, Maria Theresa of Austria, and Catharine of Russia, were the peers of the most expert rulers. John Ruskin held that in Shakespeare's world it is the woman who invariably saves the situation. Man proposes, woman disposes. In business and financial matters, too, the women have rare qualities for efficiency and economy. One source of the extraordinary wealth of France is said to be the frugality of French women. It is equally true that the German housewife has frequently been the preserver of the family against want and destitution. Many of the cashiers in modern business houses are women. Aside from the fact that they work for less pay, I am of the opinion that even if they asked more, they would be preferred because of their greater economy, trustworthiness, and scrupulous attention to details. Woman has acquired these traits by experience. The primitive husband selected for his wife the kind of woman that could manage his household, take care of his interests, and conserve his estate. It was the woman who could make a little go a great way who pleased her husband. To make a little go a great way has been the profession, we may say, of woman. That is the one thing expected of her by everybody. Naturally enough, that type of woman survived. When we think of the many comfortable and even artistically attractive homes, and of the taste with which most women dress themselves and their children, and when we realise that all this is done, in the majority of cases, on a comparatively modest allowance, we will have no difficulty in believing that experience has endowed woman with the faculty of making a little go a great way.

It is interesting to see how evolution—that is to say, the law of natural selection—explains the mental qualities of both man and woman, as well as their physical development. A course on the philosophy of evolution would be intensely instructive. Darwin helps us to understand the institutions which have grown about us better than any other teacher. Woman's religiosity may also be explained as the result of her experience. Admiring as she did the powerful man, and preferring him for husband because he could protect her, her children, and her home against invasion, she came to have a tremendous reverence for authority. She became worshipful of the arm that saved her, and when her husband died, she built an altar to him and called him "Savior." There is no doubt that this is one of the origins of the idea of a Supreme Protector in heaven, to whom the widowed mother urged her children to look for help. The ghost of the departed husband or tribal chief became the Great

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Spirit of the savage, and later the Jupiter or Jehovah of more modern times.

(To be continued.)

Joseph Priestley.

By G. W. Foote.

(Reprinted.)

Freethought is not a set of definite intellectual conclusions but rather a mental attitude; or, to vary the metaphor, not the goal of the human mind in its pursuit of truth, so much as the path which it must tread to get thither. The positive beliefs of Freethinkers have in all ages necessarily varied, but their method, whether fully pursued or not, has been one and the same. They have all asserted and claimed the right to think freely, to attempt the discovery of truth in their own way, unimpeded by any restrictions, and to announce the result of their investigations without respect to the wishes of temporal or spiritual rulers. And truly this perpetual vindication of Freethought, these incessant efforts to clear the road of speculation, so that earnest men may travel therein uninterruptedly, have been productive of greater good than has resulted from any declaration of positive faith, or from any mere assertion of even unpopular truth. For freedom of thought is the indispensable preliminary to intellectual progress, and given it, the attainment of truth is but a question of time. How erroneous were the opinions of many of that noble band of warriors who did battle with the tyranny of the Church in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and yet how can we be sufficiently grateful to them for their gallant assault on spiritual despotism, and their unwearied ardor in the struggle for that freedom of thought and speech, without which all progress is absolutely impossible? These heroes do not recommend themselves to intoxicated system-mongers, but the great, generous heart of humanity acclaims them as worthy of all praise, justly reckoning nobility of character and invincible courage as infinitely higher than mere intellectual strength.

The hero of this sketch prided himself mainly on his persistent dissemination of that species of theological belief known as Unitarianism; and assuredly everyone must admire his devotion to his ideal, and his sacrifice of everything which interfered with its service. But besides practising a noble self-abnegation, Priestly strenuously and repeatedly maintained his right, and the right of every man, to pursue truth without dictation or interference from others. In following his chosen course of life, he lighted upon truths of the gravest import and consequence. His scientific discoveries have been celebrated in the highest language of eulogy by persons qualified to pronounce on their merits. His philosophical speculations went to the root of some of the most important questions which occupy human attention, and were presented with a force and perspicuity deserving of all admiration and praise. In political matters, also, he was greatly, although not pre-eminently, interested, and the same freedom and independence characterised his treatment of them, as are everywhere apparent in his treatises on other subjects. He was a simple, earnest, loveable man, who honorably forwent the tempting material prizes which assuredly were within easy reach of his perseverance and facile talents, in order the more effectually to apply himself to the investigation of nature and the search after truth.

Joseph Priestley was born at Fieldhead, about six miles south-west of Leeds, on March 13, 1733. His father, also named Joseph, a worthy man but not greatly embarrassed with wealth, was twice married and blessed with a full quiver of filial arrows; having six children by his first wife and three by the second. His first wife was the only daughter of a farmer named Joseph Swift. After bearing him six pledges of love (of whom Joseph was the eldest) in almost as few years, she died, her death being accelerated by the rigorous winter of 1739. Of this mother very little is recorded, but that little is highly creditable. She was, above all, punctiliously honest, and Priestley relates that she once made him carry back to his uncle's house a pin which he had stolen thence, and with which he was innocently playing.

After the death of his mother, young Joseph was taken in charge by an aunt on the father's side, who acted indeed as a mother to him until her decease in 1764. This worthy woman and her husband were theoretical Calvinists, but their abundant milk of human kindness led to grave inconsistencies, and made them vastly better than their creed. However, they were strict observers of religious discipline. They eschewed light literature, and rigidly kept the Sabbath as a day of fleshly mortification. On that day no cooking was permitted, nor even any recreation, however light. The boy managed to read, with fear and trembling, dear old *Robinson Crusoe*, but beyond that he never ventured. He even adds that on one occasion he became so exasperated with his brother's levity of mind that he knocked out of the lad's hands a horrible book on Knight Errantry which smacked overmuch of a pagan love of earth and disregard of heaven. Greatly exercised, too, was Priestley's youthful mind about the abstruser mysteries of theology; *new birth*, and other such fictitious torments. Yet this mental perturbation interfered but little with his progress in carnal knowledge. He successively attended various schools, and especially a large free school under the care of the Rev. Mr. Hague, where he learned Latin and Greek. Hebrew also he acquired during the vacations under the generous tuition of a dissenting minister named Kirby. His aunt intended him for the ministry, and his education was mainly directed to that end, but ill-health and an impediment of speech compelled him to turn his attention to trade. Accordingly, he set himself to acquire French, Italian, and High Dutch, all of which he mastered in a marvellously short time. His indefatigable energy impelled him to further conquests. He learned geometry, algebra, and various branches of mathematics of another dissenting minister, a Rev. Mr. Haggerstone, together with Chaldee and Syriac and a smattering of Arabic. He also read Watts' Logic (a fair performance in its time) and Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding. The result of this metaphysical study with Locke as a guide may be anticipated. The boy's mind took a sceptical turn, and refused continued assent to the repulsive dogmas of Calvinism. This backsliding was quickly detected by the keen inquisitors of the Church which he attended; so that when, in 1752, he desired to be admitted as a communicant, he was refused because of his disbelief in Adam's fall, and the consequent damnation of all his posterity. Fortunately for him, the secular laws permitted no extreme expression of religious disapproval.

At the Daventry Academy, Priestley remained three years with much intellectual profit. The academy was conducted on peculiar principles; not much systematic instruction was given, but the teachers discussed important questions with their pupils, each of whom was required to know the arguments for and against every position; a method of instruction, as Professor Huxley maliciously remarks, "rather calculated to make acute than what are called sound divines, a sound divine being one who never looks at any side of a question but his own." This atmosphere of mental freedom was necessarily bracing to the youthful mind of Priestley. He naïvely confesses in his autobiography that he generally found himself on the unorthodox side. One by one what he considered the irrational excrescences of Christianity were expelled from his mind; and at last, after the reading of Hartley's great work, *Observations on Man*, he gravitated finally towards the Unitarian faith, in which he ever after remained.

(To be continued.)

Salvation Army Apostle: "If you swear at those horses, my good man, you'll never go to heaven." Canal Driver (humbly): "I knows it, mum; but if I don't I'll never get to Tonawanda."

Bobby: "Maw, I read of a man to-day who was one hundred and seventy years old."

Mother: "Oh, what a lie!"

Bobby: "No, mamma, it was in the Bible."

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Miss Kough, a Lecture.

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THE

Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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I am in earnest—I will not equivocate—I will not excuse—I will not retreat a single inch—and I will be heard.—WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON.

The War—and After.

IN some almost unaccountable manner it is generally taken for granted that the present war has decisively disproved the position taken up by Anti-Militarists. The clash of arms, it is said, has silenced the voice of the pacifist, and the outbreak of hostilities has proved the uselessness of his theories. The truth of the first statement must be admitted. To preach when none will listen is little better than waste of time. When a nation is actually engaged in war, and when all minds are filled with thoughts of war and its immediate consequences, a Rationalist would cease to be rational did he not recognise the obvious outcome of such a situation. There is a time to speak and a time to be silent, and wisdom is shown in the recognition of both occasions.

But one may emphatically deny that this war has disproved the theories of the pacifists. On the contrary, all that has happened only justifies all they said. For years the militarist party in every State in Europe has been proclaiming that the way to keep peace is to prepare for war. To the pacifist that has always seemed as sensible as to try to promote temperance by filling one's house with whisky. Every nation in Europe has listened to that gospel and accepted it. All have piled up armaments to a ruinous extent. In times of peace they *have* prepared for war—when else could they prepare for it—and the result is that war is here on a scale such as was never before seen. And, in addition, it is the nation that has most seduously prepared for war during times of peace, the nation in which the ideals of militarism are most nearly realised, that is charged with the responsibility for the outbreak. Who, then, is in the wrong; the pacifist or the militarist? Everything that occurred has, so far, justified the Anti-Militarist. These huge armies and navies are no guarantee of peace; they are a constant incentive to war. Tools are meant for use—otherwise there is no good in having them. And whether our tools be Dreadnoughts or pickaxes, ploughshares or rifles, *that* remains unmistakably true. Pacifists were never silly enough to say there could not be war; all they said was that the European nations were going the right way to ensure it. And if ever prophecy was justified it has surely been so in this case.

After a month of war many are endeavoring to extract some comfort from the situation. The religious press is at it with the usual banality that "our civilisation has merited and needed a purging," the notion being that God has permitted the war for this purpose. A purging of what? It takes a Christian to talk of war, with its brutalities and savageries, its creation and perpetuation of evil passions, as God's method of purging our civilisation. Let there be no mistake about one thing. However inevitable war may be it purges a nation of nothing that is bad. It creates nothing good. The virtues and qualities it utilises are those that are created in civil life. The proof of this is seen in the fact that never in the world's history has a nation been able to perpetuate itself by militarism. The decency and discipline of an army lasts only so long as there is a civil population to feed it with the needful fresh blood.

Some people are—while fully endorsing the evils of war—prophesying good results from the conflict. It is assumed that it will make the people of Europe so disgusted and horrified with the consequences of war that drastic steps will be taken to prevent its repetition in the future. I wish I could agree with them, and, at any rate, hope they are right and I am wrong. Every war has left behind its legacy of suffering and horror. Over and over again Continental Europe has heard the clash of arms and seen the track of armies burning and ravaging. What effect has it had in preventing the recurrence of war? Soldiers themselves see these things in every campaign. Does it make them less ready to engage in another? People can get habituated to sights, no matter how horrible; and one of the complaints of the militarist party has been that owing to the absence of war, people are getting "soft" and "squeamish," and need a war to brace them up. And yet it is the "horror" of war that is expected to cure people of the taste for it!

Such prophecies take no account of all that war leaves behind it, and which act as a factor that make for other wars. One need go no farther back than the Franco-Prussian War for evidence of this. How much did the horrors of that campaign do to foster peace between France and Germany? How much did that war do to bring the two peoples together? It filled one with arrogance, it left the other with an open wound, and caused both to hate each other with an increased bitterness. And if, and when, the German-Austrian forces are defeated, there will still remain on the one side the influence of the militarist element, and on the other hatred for defeat experienced. The militarist element will remain in each country—with the conqueror victory will be counted to his credit, with the conquered the need for more effective militarism will be argued. We shall have won because we were well prepared, they will have lost because they were ill-prepared. The moral will be drawn again, as it has been drawn before, that it is every nation's duty to so arm that it will have nothing to fear from others, and can bring others to terms if it so desires. It is almost certain that the rebuilding of shattered navies and the replacement of depleted armies will receive first attention when the war is over.

Who is to say that there shall be no more wars? Is it England? Is it Russia? Is it France? Is it the three combined? Will any of these trust each other enough to depute the task? Are Russia and France and England in alliance with each other because of their mutual love or because of their enmity to others? Was it love of Russia that drove France into alliance, or hatred of Germany? And with Germany eliminated what bond is there that can unite the autocracy of the Czar and the Republic of France? If not one nation, will the three, combine to secure international peace? That is to assume that the aims of these countries are so mutually reconcilable that they can pursue them without fear of conflict. But does anyone believe

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this to be the case? As the industrialising of Russia proceeds, and if an increase in the Slav power results from the present war, can anyone imagine that there will not be increased opportunities for conflict? Is it quite beyond the bounds of possibility that we may even see an Anglo-French-German Alliance against Russia, like the part played by Austria against the Turks during the Middle Ages? As the world stands, and with Germany eliminated for some time as a possibly disturbing factor, it may mean the emergence of a new source of danger against which militarists will be shrieking for more ships and larger navies.

An international agreement that would secure peace is a laudable ideal, but how is it to be secured? England, it may be assumed, will still demand the control of the seas. It suits us, and we say it is necessary to our existence. Very good; but can we expect every other country to submit to this ownership of the world's highway for ever and with good feeling? Why, this fact alone will drive other nations along the old line of offensive and defensive alliances, the fruits of which we are reaping in the present war. And alliances based upon such considerations as hold the Christian nations of the world together may be broken at any moment. Nor is there any power based upon force too strong to be overthrown. Of course, it may be said that it is to everybody's interest that some international agreement should be reached when this war is concluded, and such outbreaks prevented in future. Quite so; but, on the other hand, it is never to anybody's real interest to go to war. Even to win is to lose. The truth is, that nations do not go to war because it really pays them, but because of misdirected ambitions and mistaken ideals; in other words, because of lack of intelligence and defective civilisation.

How wrongly the lessons of this war are being read, and will be read, may be seen in the newspaper talk about "blotting Germany out," or "wiping Germany off the map." These are the greatest fools of all. If by "blotting out Germany" is meant the destruction of the German Navy and defeat of the German Army, that may be done, and looks like being done—unless our press censorship is keeping us in the dark. But Germany remains, the German people remain, German ambitions remain, and there will also remain the memory of a crushing defeat. And the man is a lunatic, blind alike to the lessons of history and the facts of human nature, who imagines that a nation of seventy millions can be "blotted out." All the power of Russia has not been able to crush the sentiment of nationality in Finland. All the power of Russia, Germany, and Austria has not been able to crush out the sentiment of nationality in Poland. After four centuries, England, in spite of all it could do, finds the sentiment of Irish nationality as active as ever. Short of an absolute, a complete massacre, a nation of seventy millions cannot be "blotted out." They remain, their ideals and ambitions, and their way of looking at life, must always be reckoned with.

Armaments will go on; of that I feel assured, although I should be only too pleased to find myself mistaken. Germany may not realise its ambitions by the present war; but ambitions are not killed by being frustrated—they are only killed when they are replaced by ambitions of another kind. Militarism will awaken to none of its blunders, and diplomacy will continue creating danger centres all over Europe, as Germany scattered mines in the North Sea, and will then profess pained surprise when trouble arises. On the other hand, there should result from the war an increase in the number of men and women in every country who see the futility of war, of its utter powerlessness to solve or settle any problem, of its complete uselessness as an agent of civilisation. That will be the only item on the credit side of the catastrophe. There will be a greater number of people all over the world who will realise the futility of the policy that has led to this outbreak, and those who have recognised this all along will be nerved to greater efforts when the time arrives for cool and reasonable speech. It is not an alliance of several nations against one or other nations, not an increase of armaments, or a balancing of one country against another, nor yet treaties dictated by self-interest and maintained only so long as self-interest suggests their observance, that will lead to a cessation of war. There is only one way to this; and that is the growth of intelligence and humanity.

C. COHEN.

Fatal Implications.

THE religious press is devoting itself almost exclusively to the topic of the hour. Wondrously instructive are even the headings of the articles and paragraphs which fill the various denominational journals. "Dr. Clifford and the War," "Dr. Campbell Morgan on the Perils of the Time," "The Psychosis of the War," "Views on the War," "Prayer in Time of War," "The War and the National Conscience," such are a few of the titles of contributions to last week's ecclesiastical newspapers. Clergymen are well aware that their congregations are puzzled and perplexed by the present bitter conflict between so many European Powers, all of which are distinctively Christian. It is a notorious fact that the Kaiser is a zealous disciple of the Nazarene, and an indefatigable preacher of his Gospel. There is no doubt whatever but that his Imperial Majesty is a thoroughly orthodox Christian; and every one of the Powers with which he is now at war professes the same faith. When a gentleman was reminded of this significant fact the other day, he maintained that they are only *so-called* Christian countries; but his contention is nothing but a worthless subterfuge. If Germany and Great Britain are not Christian countries, then it follows that there is not a single Christian country under the sun. The British clergy, of all sects, describe our cause as undoubtedly most righteous. Dr. Clifford declares that Great Britain has entered upon this war under "an awful compulsion," having been literally "forced into it," because it desires to "do the will of God, which will is to stand up for humanity." Now Professor Harnack is, to say the least, quite as ardent a lover of humanity and righteousness as Dr. Clifford, yet the erudite Professor is reported to have made a speech, in the course of which he alluded to what he called the "treason of England to culture by supporting Byzantine, Muscovite, and Mongolian against German." This only shows how utterly stupid is the appeal to the will of God, because the will of God, in each case, simply means the respective opinions of the individuals who profess belief in it. That is to say, the will of God in Germany and Austria-Hungary is at this hour a radically different thing from what it is conceived to be in Russia, Belgium, France, and Great Britain. Hence it is absolutely impossible, on any known religious principle, to determine which side, in the present sanguinary struggle, represents the cause of truth and righteousness. That is a task which the theologians, *as such*, on either side, are wholly unable to accomplish.

In connection with this general subject of war it is astonishing what a number of damaging admissions the men of God inadvertently make. For example, in discussing the war and the national conscience, Professor Denney, of Glasgow, observes that "one part of the Church's work is to naturalise Christianity in the world." The logical inference from such an observation is that, having been in the world for nigh two thousand years, Christianity is still a foreigner on our globe. At the present moment unnaturalised Germans, who happen to be in this country, are looked upon with suspicion, and carefully watched. They are foreigners whom the authorities find it extremely difficult to trust. So, likewise, according to Dr. Denney, Christianity is an alien on this earth; and we hold that it should be

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very closely watched. It is a religion that has produced innumerable crops of hypocrites, and that is still producing them. The profession of this religion is itself the worst form of hypocrisy. Every adherent of it pretends to be and do what he really never intends either to be or to do. We therefore conclude that it is not within the range of possibility to naturalise Christianity in this world. The genius, the ruling spirit of the race is against it, over which it can never prevail. For nineteen hundred years it has struggled hard to acclimatise itself among us, and it is farther away from doing it to-day than at any previous time.

Again, Dr. Denney affirms that "war is a great leveller." He says:—

> "Whatever the artificial distinctions between them, whatever the inevitable differences of rank, on the field of battle all men stand on the same plane. They are face to face with the same dangers, they can display the same heroism; the humblest can give his life to his country, and the noblest can do no more. A generous spirit acknowledges this without reserve. 'He to-day that sheds his blood with me shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile, this day shall gentle his condition.' But why is it only acknowledged in the crisis of a battle? Why is not the brotherhood acknowledged equally in time of peace?"

Does not Dr. Denney realise that, implicit in the sentences just quoted from his article in the *British Weekly* for August 20, there is to be found the severest possible condemnation of the Christian religion? War succeeds in doing for a time what Christianity has never been competent to achieve. Paul gloried in what he believed to be the complete equality of all in Christ Jesus. In the new religion, as depicted by him, there were neither Jews nor Gentiles, neither Greeks nor Barbarians, neither bond nor free, neither black nor white, all being one in Christ. As a matter of fact, however, the divisions and class distinctions among mankind under Christianity have been wider and characterised by more bitterness and hatred than under any other religion. Not only has Christianity failed to be a great leveller; it has also fostered class animosities and color prejudices. Only twenty-one years ago, Mohandas K. Gandhi, a high-caste Hindu, a man of intellect and culture, and a barrister of the Middle Temple, himself the son of a Prime Minister in his native Indian State, landed in Durban, on his way to conduct a law suit for an Indian firm at Pretoria. Having provided himself with a first-class railway ticket, he entered a compartment. The guard rudely ordered him out, when, on refusing, he was ignominiously ejected. On arriving at Johannesburg he was denied accommodation at the hotels, while at Pretoria he was actually kicked off the pavement. To some this may sound incredible; but we have witnessed many similar exhibitions of the white man's contempt for the blacks. We once heard a Christian minister making the remark that a man of color should be taught with the whip to keep his place, which was in the middle of the street with the animals and the vehicles, not on the pavement with ladies and gentlemen. Dr. Denney admits that such wicked inequalities do exist in Christian countries, and that, although there are, as Lord Bryce tells us, no less than seven applications of the term, it is as certain to conscience as any truth can be that we need more equality in our country. Yes, we sadly need it, but Christianity is powerless to develop it.

Indeed, all along the line Christianity has been a colossal failure. By implication this also is admitted in the Professor's candid paper. He asserts that nothing can justify the existence of the British Empire "but the benefits it confers on the subject populations, its right to rule being measured by the services it renders." But does the British Empire confer benefits upon and render services to its subject populations? Ask the leaders of the native races in South Africa, some of whom are among us now as a deputation to the Government to protest against the injustice of a native law recently passed by the South African Parliament. Dr. Denney admits this, for having referred to the lesson taught at school, namely, "that when a less advanced nation is conquered by one more advanced, the benefits of the conquest in the long run far surpass the immediate losses," he continues thus:—

> "Very likely it is true, but in most cases the long run is very long and the conquered nation, while it may have cause to thank Providence, has no reason to bless its conquerors. There is a very dark side to the history of most of the conquests which have laid the foundations even of the British Empire; again and again our sins have found us out, and they may do so again..... Who can believe that the general influence of contact with what we call Christian civilisation, when that contact has been simply commercial, has been uplifting and beneficial to men of other races? The practically universal testimony of Christian missionaries is that the great obstacle to the spread of the Gospel is the presence and the conduct of men who, because their skins are white, are supposed to represent Christianity."

This is neither the place nor the time to express an opinion on the results of missionary work among savage races. What we wish to emphasise now is that, according to Professor Denney's own confession, Christianity is everywhere a foreign element, forced upon mankind against its will, and ultimately to be cast out as a meddlesome intruder. The reverend Doctor is quite right when he says that "one part of the Church's work is to naturalise Christianity in the world," but that is the part of its work to which the Church is by no means equal. As a matter of fact, the Church and Christianity are rapidly parting company. It is easy enough to blame the philosophy of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche for the present war, as Drs. Clifford and Campbell Morgan do; but Christian Europe has really never been anything but an armed camp. Even the so-called Ages of Faith were dominated by materialistic conceptions and forces quite as fully as is the twentieth century; and the appeal to physical force was the universal practice of the Church of Christ. If we are to judge the future by the past, the time will never come for the triumph of mind over matter so long as the Christian religion endures. Dr. Clifford must have been talking in his sleep when he said that "the conflict now raging was a battle between brutal forces on the one hand and the sovereignty of the teaching of Jesus Christ on the other; a battle not simply for Europe, but for the world and for humanity." Every unprejudiced person is aware that it is simply a conflict between material armies and navies which have been steadily preparing for it for scores of years.

Marvellously illuminating are the implications of the deliverances of the pulpit and the religious press just now. Nominally in defence of God and religion, they virtually undermine both; and in this we greatly rejoice. If people would only calmly think, they would perceive that the war now being waged completely discredits, not only the Christian doctrine of God, but the very idea of a revealed religion centering in an Almighty Prince of Peace.

J. T. LLOYD.

Bible Makers.—III.

BIBLE JUDGES.

THE Biblical writers who called themselves "Judges" gave themselves, unquestionably, a very fanciful name. What these distinguished persons were judges of we have no means of knowing. But it appears that the children of Israel "did evil in the sight of the Lord." "And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them and provoked the Lord to anger." Now, it was always a serious offence for any people to give up the worship of their particular god and transfer their affections to another; and as the Jewish God, Jehovah, was a jealous God, he was very much annoyed when his

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chosen people turned their backs upon him and "went a whoring after other gods." Consequently, his anger waxed wroth against them and "he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them and sold them into the hands of their enemies round about." "Nevertheless, the Lord raised up judges which delivered them out of the hands of those that spoiled them."

But even the judges could not stop the Israelites from running after other gods. With regard to these judges we may again ask what were these persons judges of? Were they primitive students of jurisprudence? If so, they have written nothing on Jewish law; indeed, they have not even suggested any improvements on the laws of Moses. They certainly were not judges of a man's capability, single-handed, of destroying brute beasts or his fellow-creatures, else they would not have favored us with the silly account of Samson's encounter with a lion or his great feat with a jaw-bone.

As a profane wag once remarked, if Samson could have slain a thousand people with another ass's jaw-bone, it is extremely difficult to understand why he could not have done it with his own.

But, seriously, what could these judges have known about a man's capacity for killing his fellow-creatures with no more destructive instrument than the jaw-bone of an ass?

According to these writers, Samson "found a new jaw-bone of an ass, and put forth his hand and slew a thousand men therewith."

And Samson said: "With the jaw-bone of an ass, heaps upon heaps, with the jaw-bone of an ass have I slain a thousand men."

Look at that passage. In imagination we can see Samson—long-haired Samson—taking up the jaw-bone, and, with a flourish, exclaiming metaphorically: "Lay on, Macduff, and damned be he who first cries, Hold! enough!"

Now, these judges could have known nothing about the "knock-out" blow administered by modern professional boxers.

Physiologically speaking, there are only two places that you can hit a man and kill him by the first blow; consequently, we have to imagine a thousand men standing in a row, and each one of them coming up in order, and pointing to the vulnerable spot behind the left ear, and saying, "Just there, please, Mr. Samson." And when Samson had killed one hundred there was only nine hundred left for the invincible jawbone. And Samson would be exclaiming all the time, in his most affable tones, "Now the next, please." Could anything be more ludicrous?

Then there was that other feat of Samson's—tying three hundred foxes tails together, putting a firebrand between the two tails, and sending them into the cornfields of the Philistines to destroy their property. Can you imagine Samson, or any other man, catching three hundred foxes? Talk about going on a wild goose chase! that would be nothing to chasing three hundred foxes, and catching them. And when Samson had caught them, he had still the trifling difficulty of tying them together tail to tail, and then putting a firebrand between them and sending them off full gallop in among the corn of the Philistines. How they would have scampered, and rolled, and pulled, each in an opposite direction, before they reached those fields of waving corn! And what a horrible, what a sickening sight it would have been to see those poor foxes roasting in the terrible conflagration caused by the burning corn!

And this is only one of the numerous stories given under the signatures of the Jewish Judges of Israel. Here is another. Samson went to Timnath, and saw a young woman there that took his fancy. So he went back to his parents and asked them to get this young woman, that he might marry her. But his parents asked: "Is there never a woman among any of the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines?" Samson, however, persisted in his desire, and said to his father, "Get her for me, for she pleaseth me well."

On his way to Timnath with his parents, they encountered a young lion who actually dared to roar at Samson. At that moment the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and Samson took hold of the lion by the two jaws and "rent him as he would have rent a kid"; and, so as to make us understand the marvellous nature of the achievement, the writers add that Samson "had nothing in his hand." So you see there was no deception.

It is not my purpose to examine in detail the various chapters of the Book of Judges. I have given a few samples; the rest must be judged by these.

On the subject of dreams the Judges were authorities.

If any wandering lunatic dreamed a dream, these writers were sure to allow it to come true. Indeed, a very large portion of the Bible is made up of religious dreams; and the Bible-makers, being themselves mostly dreamers, attached great importance to the interpretation of visions which the dreamers themselves had half forgotten. And so, in the seventh chapter, we are told that when Gideon had come into the city of the Midianites, "there was a man that told a dream unto his fellow, and said, Behold, I dreamed a dream, and lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it that the tent lay along. And his fellow answered and said, This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon, the son of Joash, the man of Israel, for into his hand hath God delivered Midian and all the host."

The writers of the book of Judges then proceed to show that the barley-loaf in the dream did really mean the sword of Gideon; and though no tent was overturned by either the loaf or the sword, nor even the walls of the city, the Midianites were put to flight, pursued, and those of them that were unfortunately overtaken were mercilessly slain, even to the princes who were taken prisoners. Judges, with its stories of dreams, battles, and the man whose strength lay in his hair, may be considered very good pabulum upon which to feed religious babes and sucklings; but it is decidedly poor stuff upon which to rear children of a large and more vigorous growth; and of such are the children of earth.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

The Origin of Supernatural Ideas.—VI.

(*Continued from p. 533.*)

"The lowest savages have no idea of a deity at all. Those slightly more advanced regard him as an enemy to be dreaded, but who may be resisted with a fair prospect of success, who may be cheated by the cunning and defied by the strong. Thus the natives of the Nicobar Islands endeavor to terrify their deity by scarecrows, and the negro beats his fetich if his prayers are not granted. As tribes advance in civilisation their deities advance in dignity, but their power is still limited; one governs the sea, another the land; one reigns over the plains, another among the mountains. They require humiliating ceremonies and bloody sacrifices. But few races have arrived at the conception of an omnipotent and beneficent Deity."—SIR JOHN LUBBOCK, *Origin of Civilisation*, p. 515 (1889).

"'God made man,' the preacher saith,
'From a handful of dust, by a whiff of breath.'
'No,' say the sages, 'Man made God
From nothing at all, by creative nod;
Organ for organ and limb for limb,—
In the image of Man created He him.'
. . . . .
Man made God in his image plain—
Cruel, revengeful, jealous, vain,
A Man of War and a Man austere,
A strong bad Giant—a God to fear;
Raw-Head and Bloody-Bones, fierce and grim,
In the image of Man created he Him."
—J. LIDDELL KELLY, "The Making of God."
Heather and Fern.

HAVING thus reached the idea of a ghost or spiritual being within himself, which could leave and return to the body, and—to cite Mr. Clodd again—

"Having once conceived of objects as informed by something corresponding to man's life and will, realising therein that there was a distinction between the thing

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moved and the something that moved it, the idea of a twofold, a seen and unseen, must arise. And in that idea was the germ of the Supernatural, which itself had impetus in the fact borne in upon man that he was at the mercy of powers stronger than himself, that crossed his path, that thwarted his schemes, and played havoc with anything to which he clung. For so long as affairs ran smoothly with him, little heed need be paid to what spirits did; it was when he was worsted in the struggle that he felt himself in the clutches and at the mercy of powers which were *other than, and above, nature*.....In the instinctive cry for help there was the primitive prayer; in the magic and spell a body of practices by which man sought to outwit, or compel to furtherance of his own ends, the dreaded powers; and in the sacrifice the bribe to appease, or the offering to flatter them, or the attempt to enter into commensal relations with them. Sometimes man would use physical force, as did the Guaycuras of Paraguay, who believed that unusually heavy storms were attacks on them by the evil spirits, and who sallied forth brandishing their clubs and shouting their war-cry for the purpose of repelling them."*

In the beginning all spirits were regarded as essentially evil. Mr. Henry Newton, a Church of England missionary in New Guinea, after observing of the natives that "The sorcerer believes in his own power, and the people believe in it too," proceeds:—

"Certainly the New Guinea philosophy of life is that nothing happens to man without some cause, no man dies a natural death, all suffering and sickness is due to evil spirits which people this world, and as, like many of his white brethren, he is quite prepared to take the good things of life unquestioning, and only to look for causes when evil comes, there is no place in his philosophy for good spirits; the good is but the normal state undisturbed by the machinations of evil spirits, and the evil spirits are usually set to work by some human agent."†

Mr. J. P. Thomson tells us of the same people that they offer food on the graves of the dead "to satisfy the hungry soul of the departed or to appease the evil spirits by which the lives of these wretched people are haunted and kept in constant fear and subjection."‡

Sir John Lubbock observes that "savages almost always regard spirits as evil beings," and, as he remarks, it is easy to understand why this should be; for among the lowest savages

"every man of a different tribe is regarded as naturally, and almost necessarily hostile. A stranger is synonymous with an enemy, and a spirit is but a member of an invisible tribe. The Hottentots, according to Thunberg, have very vague notions about a good deity. 'They have much clearer notions about an evil spirit, whom they fear, believing him to be the occasion of sickness, death, thunder, and every calamity that befalls them."§

Sir John also cites the testimony of Schweinfurth (*Heart of Africa*, vol. i., p. 303), who says that among the Bongos of Central Africa "good spirits are quite unrecognised, and, according to the general negro idea, no benefit can ever come from a spirit." Again:—

"The Coroados of Brazil 'acknowledge no cause of good, or no god, but only an evil principle, which..... leads him astray, vexes him, brings him into difficulty and danger, and even kills him.' In Virginia and Florida the evil spirit was worshiped and not the good, because the former might be propitiated, while the latter was sure to do all the good he could."

Sir John gives many other instances of a similar belief among savage tribes. He cites Carver (*Travels*, p. 388) for the fact that the Redskin

"lives in continual apprehension of the unkind attacks of spirits, and to avert them has resource to charms, to the fantastic ceremonies of his priest, or the powerful influence of his manitous. Fear has, of course, a greater share in his devotions than gratitude, and he pays more attention to deprecating the wrath of the evil than securing the favor of the good beings."

According to Artus, the West Coast negroes represent their deities as "black and mischievous, delighting to torment them in various ways."*

To cite Lubbock once more:—

"Dr. Nixon, first Bishop of Tasmania, tells us that among the natives of that country 'no trace can be found of the existence of any religious usage, or even sentiment, amongst them; unless, indeed, we may call by that name the dread of a malignant spirit, which seems to have been their predominant, if not their only, feeling on the subject' (Bonwick, *Daily Life of the Tasmanians*, p. 172).

"'Of a supreme and beneficent God,' says Hunter, 'the Santal has no conception. His religion is a religion of terror and degradation. Hunted and driven from country to country by a superior race, he cannot understand how a being can be more powerful than himself without wishing to harm him' (*Annals of Rural Bengal*, p. 181). The Circassians and some of the Chinese have also similar opinions."†

Mr. Weeks, the Congo missionary, tells us that the tribes of the Lower Congo believe in a Creator "so good that He will not hurt them, hence no sacrifices are offered to Him, no prayers to Him ever pass their lips, and they never worship Him." They also believe in an evil power, or principle, "and because of its cruel, malignant nature, it is necessary to appease it. All their fetishes, charms, medicine-men, together with their sacrifice of fowls and goats, are either to circumvent this influence or to appease it in such a way as to gain its goodwill."‡ Another missionary, Mr. D. Crawford, tells us that the negro thinks "of God as a malignant demon, mocking at his pain, and pouring contempt upon his life,"§ and he tells us of Mushidi, a negro chief, who, while hunting red-buck, and about to fire, was anticipated by a flash of forked lightning striking them dead. "Then it was, rubbing his hands with glee, the noble hunter naïvely said, 'Fancy! God beating me at gun-firing!'" (p. 269).

Burton says of the wilder Bedoins, they "will inquire where Allah is to be found: when asked the object of the question, they reply, 'If the Eesa could but catch him, they would spear him upon the spot; who but he lays waste their homes and kills their cattle and wives?'"‖

Waitz, with his usual clarity and directness, sums the matter up as follows:—

"Ungrateful as man generally is when in luck, he sees, even when in a primitive state, nothing in the success of his plans but the usual course of nature or the result of his sagacity. Thus originally his view of nature, which coincided with his religious ideas, is about this—that among the spirits which direct nature and the fates of man, the evil spirits are either exclusively active, as is asserted of the Indians of Caraccas, who only believe in a wicked original being, or so far predominant that the good spirits are made subordinate. Though the existence of the latter is not altogether denied, they are but little attended to either in thought or prayer, worship or sacrifice, since they are already by their nature friendly to man. All these spirits are, of course, conceived as analogous to the nature of man. The religion of the primitive man is thus throughout a cruel Polytheism, without poetry, even without mythology, or, rather, a gloomy, unconnected belief in spectres and spirits, destroying all faith in the natural course of phenomena."¶

Speaking of sorcery and witchcraft, Lubbock observes:—

"Savages never know but what they may be placing themselves in the power of these terrible enemies. The sufferings and privations which they thus undergo, the horrible tortures which they sometimes inflict on themselves, and the crimes which they are led to commit, are melancholy in the extreme. It is not too much to say that the horrible dread of unknown evil hangs like a thick cloud over savage life, and embitters every pleasure."**

It was not until much later that the idea of benevolent gods arose. In fact, man had to become

* Edward Clodd, *Animism*, pp. 49-50.
† Henry Newton, *In Far New Guinea*, p. 79 (1914).
‡ J. P. Thomson, *British New Guinea*, p. 160 (1892).
§ Sir John Lubbock, *Origin of Civilisation*, p. 224.
* Sir John Lubbock, *Origin of Civilisation*, pp. 225-6.
† *Origin of Civilisation*, p. 227.
‡ J. H. Weeks, *Among the Primitive Bakongo*, p. 277 (1914).
§ D. Crawford, *Thinking Black*, p. 264.
‖ Burton, *First Footsteps in East Africa*, p. 52.
¶ Waitz, *Anthropology*, p. 303.
** Lubbock, *Prehistoric Times*, p. 472.

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civilised himself before he could evolve civilised gods. As John Stuart Mill remarked, "one of the hardest burdens laid upon the other good influences of human nature has been that of improving religion itself."*

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

A Mountain Hour.

WHEN the human bees, their hives, and their slavery, are far behind, when the fresh air is flowing coolingly upon your brow and neck, and your feet yield responsively to the soft mountain grass, it is natural enough that you should be happy. In your happiness you become conscious of a new feeling. A secret door seems to be slowly opening in your heart, and a breath of the spirit of freedom comes out. It is a strange experience; for your nature seems as if to leap towards this new sensation with enthusiastic welcome; but, just as you would rejoice, there comes creeping over your mind the idea that this freedom is foreign to you. At first, you shrink from it. It is unreal, unnatural; it is dangerous; but gradually it wins you, and your heart inclines towards it with a delight you rarely enjoy. You live in a new world; think different thoughts; dream different dreams; for the spirit of the mountain is the spirit of freedom, it is the call of liberty echoing in your own being; and in the influence of it you rise above yourself. You become free.

So it is with me just now. Here, there is freedom from the base tyrannies of God and man. Here, there is freedom from the subtle slavery that emanates from an idea and permeates human solidity, discoloring and tainting it. Here, there is freedom from habits, religious and semi-religious, that are the prisons of all our higher strivings. There is no God, no man, no creed, no custom here to enslave me. I need bow to no priest, nor thwart and cramp my longings at the demand of the money madness. The freedom of which rebellious minds have dreamed down through the long heavily laden centuries, the freedom they have struggled and fought for, and died for, is mine, and mine without effort, and without blemish. The spirit of the mountain is in me. I am happy. Freedom is mine. I am more thoroughly and enjoyably free than the curlew that goes singing and swinging through the shimmering air above me.

A sense of unrestricted individuality is developing within me. What Christians name my soul is rapidly expanding, and reaching higher and higher altitudes of beauty. The dross is falling away. My mind is being purged. I feel as if I would have no difficulty in living as the Utopians say I could and should live. In fact, I am living that life now; and I know it is possible, possible for all men, for I am merely an average man. Strength has come to me, and considerateness, and righteousness. There are elements of ethics in my nature that are eagerly fighting each other for escape to realisation. Purity of life and mind is the plinth of freedom; and I have it. At the present moment freedom has so completely altered my nature that my friends would not know me.

Ah, liberty is a glorious state! What matters it if you only enjoy its delights for an hour or so, lying peacefully supine upon a bed of heather, your nose and toes pointing paradisewards, and your body bathed in gentle, soul-satisfying heat? It is easy to feel free on a mountain shoulder, in glorious sunshine, and with a pipe that tastes sweetly. Sufficient that you do enjoy it. Sufficient that it can be experienced, here and now. Enjoying it, you steal a grain or two of gold from the lucky-bag of futurity. You feel grander possibilities budding quickly in your heart. You feel yourself approaching nearer and nearer to nature; feel yourself becoming, not an alien within her influence, but a sympathetic child whose every nerve responds to the throb of the mother heart.

And so you dream; and the smoke-clouds from your pipe give the dream just the delicious dimness that make dreams so charmingly realistic. It is strange that whenever the dimness disappears the dream becomes a nightmare. Saint John's wonderful revelation is a case in point. It is too clear, too detestably mathematical, for a dream. Perhaps this explains why it is that Christians are so chary in coming to details nowadays. Nightmares are unpleasant, and you are apt to awaken in a cold sweat and with a shudder.

No; I will continue smoking. I want to feel my free mind going out to taste sweeter fruits and pull fairer blossoms from the trees of knowledge and life. Freedom like this is worth fighting for, worth all the buffets of scorn and enmity, all the labor and suffering in which it must be born. Freedom like this gives one —— But the spell is broken, somehow. Realities are crushing back into my brain from their temporary retreat. The mountain slope is not always bathed in sunlight. Larks and curlews do not always mingle their melodies with the same glad rippling emotion. The very heather in which I am couched belongs to a man who would not tolerate the least expression of my innocent desires did he know of it. I might disturb his birds; and he would like that as little as he would a clodhopper sitting in his cushioned pew in church.

The strath is a lovely picture, seen from this distance. Green fields, bronze earth, and black fir forests alternate in rare disorder, touched here and there with the dazzling white walls of farmhouses, and threaded by a gleaming river and dusty winding roads. Behind and around me tower the Grampians. On the far horizon the Ochills sleep peacefully in the sun-mist. Down a cleft between the soft breasts of the mountains sweeps a heather-perfumed breeze. To the north lies a silver-surfaced loch, its sun-kissed bosom gleaming between ranks of guardian firs.

Well might I dream of freedom, of the grandeurs invariably correlated to liberty. Well might I allow my ideas to spread their wings and fly to that enchanted land so often visited by the poets. Well might I imagine men and women living in a state of bodily and mental purity far surpassing that ever pictured by the most imaginative religionist. But down in the lovely strath men and women and children are toiling for hard, close-fisted farmers, and living in dirty hovels that would disgrace a city slum; human beings whose bodies and brains are as coarse as the earth in which they labor, and from whose lives there comes no fruit so refined as the bread they eat. Slaves to their fifteen shillings and less per week, they have no thought of bodily freedom; and, chained from their infancy to worn-out creeds and customs, they cannot even dream of the liberty that is the light of the mind and the herald of bodily freedom.

Scattered here, there, and everywhere, are the tapering spires and square towers of their mental prisons, where, on their plain benches, they worship the God of their fathers, side by side with the men who would rather be in hell than live on the wages they give their brothers in the Lord.

Liberty! Hidden in the foliage of the glen behind the shoulder of the hill stands a little kirk, half o'ergrown with ivy; and hanging above the door of that house of God is an iron ring. Not so many years agone it was used to encircle the necks of malefactors. And the godly worshipers were wont to lift their pharasaic noses still more highly heavenwards as they passed their erring brother and entered the holy door.

The neck-ring hangs above the portal, rusted and a relic, and the wind coming whistling down the glen makes it clank, clank, clank against the wall, makes it tell its old tale of Christian punishment and imprisonment. People pass, shake their wise heads, and thank God we have advanced beyond those barbarous methods; but never a thought is there of those other rusty rings that encircle the brain, rings

* J. S. Mill, *Three Essays on Religion*, p. 36 (1904).

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more lastingly secure, more corroded, more barbaric, than the ugly relic dangling above the kirk door. These rings never strike against the walls of custom with clanging sound. Rarely even do they move to and fro; for the winds of criticism have fallen low e'er they come this length, and the chains and rings, if rusty, are as strong as ever they were.

Liberty! Dreams of liberty! while the country is full of institutions that signify slavery; while the minds of men are content to grovel in the dirt; while hope, and happiness, and health are to be measured only in relationship to present customs; and while the ghouls of poverty and religion come stalking arm-in-arm from out every town, every countryside, to interrupt the peaceful dreams of a man who would be free.

The smoke-dimness has failed me this time. The dreams are lying far behind the realities. After all, it is on the plain, thistle-like facts of nature and life that our dreams are burst. We try to sing of beauties while our weary feet are deep in mud. We try to poetise over a mirage, forgetting that sincerity should be a realisable fact, not a vague ideal. We fleet upwards to the clouds, and try to forget we are drenched with moisture while we remember their distant loveliness. We orate on the glories of man, and try to hide the corner of our brain that whispers the "starved hind" is a man. We stroll through the long grass, and fling words of grandeur over the waving grass-heads, and we try to deceive ourselves we did not trample to death six newly hatched ducklings on our laughing way. We sing of being in the arms of Jesus, and try to forget there is a stair to wash to-morrow morning. We argue in favor of the fatherliness of God, and subscribe to funds for Christianising the heathen, trying to forget our Christian country makes a profit by making the heathen immoral.

We are hypocrites; and it might have been better if I hadn't taken out my pen and paper to write at all.

ROBERT MORELAND.

Acid Drops

A German soldier, very badly wounded, at Louvain, cried continually, "Oh, my poor little children, my poor little children!" That is what it comes to at last. After all the glory and the shouting, his wounds are tended by foreign hands, and the thought of death mixes with the true realities of life. "My poor little children!" What is to become of *them* without *me!*

We cut a picture out of the *Daily Mirror*. A great artist might make the theme immortal. A Belgian girl, with a firm resolute face, holds a little sister on her right arm and a sturdy little brother, trudging by her side, with her left hand. They are orphaned by this horrible war. She is mothering them. It is they three against the world now. You see by her face and the grip of the little ones that she will do *her* share of the family duty. And the sturdy little brother, planting a firm foot on his country's soil, looks as though he will remember *her* when *his* time comes to play the man. And there, O Kaiser of Germany, lies the real life of the world. *Your* part in the world is *destruction:* your activities all lead to *death*. *Her* part in the world is construction: her activities all lead *to life*. You *destroy:* she *creates*. You belong to the powers of desolation: she belongs to the life everlasting. Where you blight the world into a hell, the mother's heart—if only by proxy, as in this case—turns it once more into a heaven.

Friday, August 21, was the date of the solar eclipse. For that reason, no doubt, the clergy selected it for a special day of intercession on behalf of something or other for England—we don't know exactly what. No doubt it was an excellent stroke of business. The King and Queen were caught in the clergy's net, besides a crowd of the "classes" and some of the "masses." Anyhow, it was a good advertisement for the clergy. Even the Free Churches obtained their share of it; proving, of course, that their presence also is indispensable. We have not heard, however, that the intercession has had any effect upon the war except for the worse.

It seems next door to an impossibility for Christians to be straightforward where their religion is concerned. And the puritanic quality of English Christianity makes it essential for the Christian to bamboozle himself as a preliminary to bamboozling others. Thus, Rev. Principal Selbie says, "the spectacle of Christian nations fighting one another, and all calling upon the same God to help them, is one to make devils laugh and angels hide their faces." Why so? What is there unique in the situation? One would imagine that it was something new for Christian nations to fight one another. As a matter of fact, all the wars of any consequence for several centuries have been between Christian nations. The only thing to cause surprise in either heaven or hell would be if Christians ceased to fight amongst themselves.

"We must meet force with force," says the *Christian Commonwealth*. "To act upon the principle of non-resistance to evil, if it involved the disbanding of our Army, the dismantling of our Navy, and the beating of our swords into ploughshares, would mean simply that we are prepared to allow Germany to have her own way in Europe." So much for Christian teaching and Christian mysticism when it is brought face to face with facts. Jesus told his followers not to resist evil, to turn one cheek when the other is smitten. The *Christian Commonwealth*, full of the cant of love and brotherhood, says "we must meet force with force."

The *Christian Commonwealth* denies that the war proves Christianity to be a failure. What the war shows, it says, "is not that Christianity has failed, but that it has never been tried." Well, even that is failure. After eighteen hundred years preaching no one has ever *tried* Christianity. What becomes of its power and its triumphs? What of its immense influence on the world for good? We fancy the *Christian Commonwealth* has often enough dwelt upon these things. But if Christianity has never been tried, how could it have done anything at all? Poor *Christian Commonwealth!* One moment it is shouting out that Christianity is the greatest power in the world. The next it is bewailing that no one has ever tried it—not even the *Christian Commonwealth* itself.

How curiously Christians read history! It was the Christian faith, says the Dean of Christ Church, "that brought something like order" out of the chaos at the decline of the Old Roman Empire, "and it will be so again." What utter nonsense! Christianity was one of the factors that helped to bring about the chaos. And for many centuries the only trace of any genuine order was to be found where there lingered remnants of the old Roman administration. The only "order" that Christianity cared for or worked for was the establishment of a universal church, and that ambition, because it frustrated the development of civic and industrial and scientific life, involved the prolongation of social chaos. Christianity did not save Europe from social chaos, its establishment meant social chaos. And as to the Christian faith saving Europe again, we should imagine that kind of nonsense to be played out, even with intelligent Christians. The Kaiser, whatever else he may be, is at least a very sincere Christian. No one has ever doubted that.

That characteristically Christian perodical, the *Daily Telegraph*, recently published a war-poem by Mr. Rudyard Kipling in which the Virgin Mary is invoked, in addition to other members of the same august family. A cynic might use Hamlet's famous words to Mr. Kipling's muse, "Get thee to a nunnery."

Writing of the national attitude in time of war, *T. P.'s Weekly* says, "Britain will kneel—and stand." Our emotional contemporary does not explain how the two processes are to be done at the same time.

Mr. William Watson, in a poetic frenzy, has been paying sugary compliments to the Autocrat of all the Russias, even calling him "the patient, silent, storm-worn Tsar." The poet's knowledge of the purple East should have reminded him of Siberia, and of the handsome Cossacks with birds-nests in their whiskers.

That sober and restrained publication, the *Evening News*, heads an article, "Truth Unknown in Germany." That is the very place where the veracious lecturers of the Christian Evidence Society should be sent to.

The attempt to boycott German music shows to what lengths people are prepared to go when attacked with war fever. To play "Die Wacht am Rhein" at present to an English audience would be as provocative as to

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render "God Save Ireland" to a Primrose League Gathering, but Wagner, Schubert, and Schumann ought to soothe the savage breasts of tender-hearted Christians.

Hustling journalists, who have to write on any subject at a moment's notice, often do serious mischief by giving publicity to incorrect ideas. Last week a widely read paper had a headline, "British Association Drops Darwin." This referred to Professor Bateson's highly technical paper on "Heredity and Evolution," read before the British Association at Melbourne. Darwin settled the accuracy of the Mosaic cosmogony, and the halfpenny journalists will never reinstate it.

That sober minded and profound publicist, Mr. Hilaire Belloc, has suggested that the present military campaign is a "war of defence against Prussian Atheism." "Prussia," he adds, "is and has long been Atheist." This shows that Mr. Belloc does not read contemporary publications, for he might have heard that the Kaiser is on easy terms with Heaven.

Persons who imagine that education has permeated the masses of the people will be interested to learn that our troops did not march to war singing some time-honored national song, but went singing music-hall lyrics. Our soldiers poured through France singing "It's a long, long way to Tipperary." Quiet persons at places of worship in England sing such restrained verses as "There is a Fountain filled with Blood." How long, O Democracy?

The *Daily Mail* always out-Herods Herod, and it has, among other similar pleasantries, referred to the Kaiser as a "royal blasphemer." The simple fact is that the Kaiser is a very pious man, and the only "blasphemer" in his family was his illustrious ancestor, Frederick the Great. The Freethinkers are not conspicuous among the present European monarchs, and we are heartily glad of it.

Councillor A. J. Fells, Mayor of Bermondsey, received one of the formal telegrams from the Prince of Wales in connection with the National Relief Fund. He seems mighty proud of it, as if it were a personal compliment to himself, and has printed it on the back of a special appeal of his own for the poor of the Borough of Bermondsey. A copy of this appeal has been sent to us, who have no more to do with Bermondsey than we have to do with Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, Glasgow, or Newcastle-on-Tyne.

The Independent Labor Party sends us a circular asking for subscriptions towards stopping the war, and issuing a million copies of a Socialist manifesto. That is the way of the English Socialists. They never can work with others for a common object without trying to gain predominance for their own special principles. And they are not even agreed amongst themselves. Socialist leaders and advocates like Robert Blatchford, G. B. Shaw, H. G. Wells, etc., etc., are praising up this very war as one of the best things that have ever happened for Socialism. What on earth are we to think of it? We had better keep our money and our common sense with it.

There is an ardent English poet who spells his name "Kaufman" and writes in *Reynolds'*, who addresses Mother Britain and Her Sons. "Mother Britain" is not very elegant. It rather suggests a seaport replica of the lady who entertained the Jewish spies at Jericho. But it is just as elegant, perhaps, as "the bally Huns" that Kaufman and other sons of hers are going to teach a lesson in the present war. To the mind and ear of this poet there is an antithesis between "islands" and "highlands," and a dissyllable may be made of "hour." We congratulate *Reynolds'* on its dazzling discovery.

Poor Pope Sarto's death was not well-staged. The war had hold of public attention, and it was his enemy in more senses than one. It may be said to have killed him. The thought of all the men who would be slain, and the women and children who would be starved and tortured, filled him with horror. He tried his utmost to prevent the catastrophe, but he could make no impression on the pious old ruffian who sits upon the throne of Austria.

"Modernism" was Papa Sarto's chief bugbear. He condemned it very properly from his own point of view. His nature was an honest one, and he refused to play a game of half-and-half between truth and falsehood as he saw them.

The Czar's appeal to the Polish people, with its promise of Home Rule after the war, concluded with the hope that the "sign of the cross" would shine upon the country. The sign of the cross is already over all the countries engaged in the war, and, judging by results, it would be as well if in future some other sign were utilised. Judging by consequences none could be worse, and some might easily be better.

"I think it is beyond question," says Mr. R. J. Campbell, "that any man or woman in this congregation, if endued with omniscience and omnipotence, could have succeeded in producing a better and happier world than the one we live in. This is not at all an audacious thing to say; it is simply common sense." Of course it is common sense, but how long it takes religious people to say it—the majority never do say it. It is not merely that actual imperfections exist, but the "plan" of nature seems such that these imperfections are received without compensating advantages. It is not merely the Freethinker who says this. All decent human beings confess it in action. They do their best to correct the imperfections and injustices of nature—civilisation is little more than this. They are always doing what a king of Castile said he would have done had he been present at the creation—suggesting improvements to God Almighty. All reform, all invention, all attempts to check the operation of non-human forces, are, in their way, hints to the Deity that he might have arranged matters on a different plan.

Mr. Campbell states the position with laudable frankness; and, as usual, when this is done, he quite fails to meet it. He falls back upon a version of the old religious plea that God could not transcend the necessities of his own nature, and that we reap "spiritual fruits" from the process. The first surrenders the whole case to a scientific Atheism. If "God" stands for something that is not absolutely self-determining, but is bound to act along definite lines because of its inherent nature, then it does not matter what we call it; the case of the Atheist is, in substance, admitted. At most we have, in place of a universe, the movements of which are determined by the inherent properties of natural forces, a something called God, whose movements are determined by the inherent qualities of his nature. And the difference between the two positions is scarcely worth bothering about.

As to our reaping "spiritual fruits" from the cosmic process, that clearly offers no apology whatever for its cruelty or irrationality. Assuming that the outcome of the process is a better human being, that only benefits the survivor. The last term in the process benefits by all the preceding terms. But what of those who figured in the intermediate stages? Why should they have been used to benefit someone else, and at the same time denied the perfection that is the reward of a remote descendant? For it is not the individual who suffers that reaps the reward; it is someone who has not suffered. And if there be a God, the claims of each one on him are identical. Moreover, if there is a God, why could not the perfect man have been produced at once? None but a fool or a lunatic would go a long, roundabout way to secure a thing that could as well have been secured directly and at once. And if one failed to consider the hypnotic effect of familiar words, one would add that none but a knave would thank God for his own comparative perfection when it had been procured at the cost of the sufferings of millions of others.

Some one has been writing Dr. Lynan Abbott on the question of praying for rain. Dr. Abbott replies that he sees no reason to doubt the *ability* of God to send rain—which is not quite what his correspondent wanted to know. The question is one of fact. Does God send rain in answer to prayer, or not? A clear test would be to establish a praying centre, say in the Sahara, and pray for good, regular rain there. If it came there would be something to talk about. Then Dr. Abbott "hedges" a bit in this manner. "I can see no reason why I may not legitimately ask God for rain, provided that my request is accompanied with a sincere recognition of the truth that he knows better than I, and whether the request should be granted or not." Which being interpreted means—there is no harm in praying for rain so long as you do not expect an answer to your prayer. As if anyone could pray unless they really expected an answer. Besides, if God knows better than us whether there should be rain or not, why trouble to pray for it at all? Does Dr. Abbott mean that God may forget to send the rain unless we jog his memory a bit? On the whole, good storage resources and scientific irrigation seems the better program.

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To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £184 3s. 6d. Received since:—W. R. Munton, £2; Old School, Southbourne, 10s.; W. P. Mann (2nd sub.), 10s. 6d.; E. H. M. Grōm, 10s. 6d.; W. Dodd, 10s.
R. H. Side and Family, Walworth:—R. H. Side, £3; Erla D. Side, £2; Mrs. E. D. Side, £1; Miss B. M. Side, 10s.; Bertram Side, 10s.; Miss A. Harris, 2s. 6d. *Mrs. L. Side and Family*, £1 7s. 6d.—Total, £8 10s.

W. R. MUNTON.—Thanks for your good wishes with subscription. Mr. Foote's health continues to improve.

W. P. BALL.—Much obliged for useful cuttings.

W. J. FENN.—We cannot praise Peter de la Faille for committing suicide, although he was an Atheist and a virtuous and genial character; neither do we blame him; it was his own business, after due consideration of his obligation to others. As for his cursing the Kaiser as "the ferocious human viper of Germany"—many people say the same, with very slight verbal alteration, and are not denounced for it.

C. H. M. GRŌM (Victoria).—Money order to hand and apportioned as directed. Professor Johnson was an able man. He took a cup of tea with us once at our residence, where we had a long chat with him. But he did not succeed in making us more favorable to his theories. The forging of documents is not so difficult, but the forging of medals, monuments, etc., is quite a different matter.

R. H. SIDE.—We agree with most of what you say, only we can't discuss it in the *Freethinker*. We must keep to the Freethought side of human progress, of which you have always been such a generous supporter.

J. HECHT.—Thanks for the cutting. It is impossible to reckon up all the sad details of war. The world is turning the wrong way, and all sorts of awkward things must be expected.

E. C. COMATT.—The newspapers have themselves complained that secrecy was carried too far. General French was pictured in Paris. How is it he was not pictured *landing* in France or Belgium? The only answer is that it had to be kept "dark." The *Daily News* reckoned that the secret was known to some fifty thousand people in England. There is no need to tell how *we* knew it. The fact is admitted now.

W. DODD, subscribing again to the President's Honorarium Fund, writes: "I wish to remark that on August 14, 1910, this Fund exceeded £240." He wishes us "good health and better days." What our old friend says is true, but the £300 total was made up in 1912 and 1913 by December 31.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

War broke out after Mr. Foote had arranged a tentative lecture-list for the fall of the year. He is half-afraid, now, that most of these engagements will have to be cancelled. London halls won't allow any "reference" even to the war. We suspect a similar restriction at Birmingham—also at one or two others. A definite announcement for October, etc., must therefore be postponed, at least for a week.

We have had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Mangasarian in London, and we are glad to hear from his own lips how well his Association is doing in Chicago. The quality of his addresses may be judged by our own readers who have perused some of them that we have reprinted from time to time in the *Freethinker*. Mr. Mangasarian has had to stay in London longer than he intended, the continental portion of his holiday being cut away by the European war, in which everybody seems to be claiming a share, though only the soldiers and the victims seem able to get near it. Time and not very robust health have told a bit upon Mr. Mangasarian since we first met him at Rome, but his intellectual power has not abated, and his eyes are as light and bright as ever. Here, or elsewhere, we wish him all success.

Mr. Mangasarian talks of getting an assistant when he returns to America. We hope he will be able to do so. He will be a lucky man if he gets the right one. Democracy has its merits, but it has some disadvantages. There is truth in the old proverb about "Jack" being "as good as his master." So he is, in some things; but not where his master *is* a master.

It is said that Japan's ultimatum to Germany is couched in the very language of Germany's ultimatum to Japan in connection with the cession of Port Arthur. It appears to be tit for tat, one good turn deserves another, or Pagan imitation of Christian example. Another good title would be the biter bit.

Personal.

FOURTEEN years ago premises were being sought for the publication of the *Freethinker*. We were bandied about from pillar to post, but at last we found a place that would have suited us admirably. This, however, is what happened. I quote from my article in the paper at the time:—

> "Christian bigotry has once more been too many for us. I am sorry to say that we have, after all, lost the premises I spoke of last week. They were in a capital position, and very suitable for all our purposes. The lessor had no objection to our using them for our special business; the lease was ready, and, indeed, the keys were handed over to us; but we had to hand them back again, for at the last moment the Duke of Bedford's steward refused to sanction the lease being assigned to Mr. Hartmann, as he considered the contemplated business was 'an unsuitable one.' I may add that the leases on the Bedford estate are terribly stringent covenants, such as the law ought never to permit. They make the Duke's steward the absolute master of everything that goes on. All the legal right the tenants have is to pay rent and discharge other obligations. So the great ground-landlord's great man rules out Freethought from the whole area. It was maddening after all the trouble we had taken; and I beg all Freethinkers to note whether religious intolerance is really dead. To me it seems strong and active in many directions. There is a pretence of fair play, but when it comes to the 'sticking place' Freethought is still treated as a pariah."

We were luckier afterwards in finding a shelter. Then we were luckier still in finding the premises at 2 Newcastle-street, where we have been ever since, always paying our way, and never causing a complaint of any kind from anybody. Fortunately, the late Mr. Charles Chancellor accepted all the tenant-responsibilities for the first three years. That set us going.

We have to leave these convenient premises. We were their first occupant and we shall be their last. They are to be pulled down to make room for a big corner block. We cannot be pushed out till next March, but we don't want to wait till then if it can be helped. Nothing suitable is yet in view, and the one place that would have done was refused to us on the ground of our "abominable business." More of this hereafter.

Meanwhile, my thoughts are all for the paper. Some thirty London weeklies are gone or half-sunk already. Publishers and printers are groaning. Men are put on half-time. Papers that survive are diminished. I have made no change on the *Freethinker*. But I am thinking it over. I shall have to do something.

I say I at this point because all the responsibility rests with me. Things of that kind have a way of getting upon my shoulders. And as I am getting nothing out of the paper myself, I think I have a right to ask that the President's Honorarium Fund should be completed as soon as possible. The example of the Side family (see this week's list) might be promptly imitated.

Burdens come to him who has borne them. So I do not complain. Nor do I suggest that the *Freethinker* is going under. "I am here," is one guarantee of that. And we are not nearly as badly hit yet as I expected.

G. W. FOOTE.

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The Radical Woman.—III.

A Public Address by M. M. Mangasarian, to the Free Religious Association (Rationalist), Chicago.

(Concluded from p. 541.)

BUT I said that it was the institution of marriage against which the radical woman directs her criticisms. In a publication which has been very highly recommended by a woman whom the police have helped to make notorious—Emma Goldman—we find the program of the radical woman, or the woman rebel, as she calls herself. A number of demands are announced, as it will be seen by the following from its pages:—

THE REBEL WOMEN CLAIM:

The right to be lazy.
The right to be an unmarried mother.
The right to destroy.
The right to create.
The right to love.
The right to live.

The same paper, with a boldness that is at least original, offers the following for an ideal to American women:—

A WOMAN'S DUTY:

To look the whole world in the face with a go-to-hell look in the eyes.

It also seems to be the purpose of this same publication, claiming to represent the rebel woman, to teach the gentle sex a new song—"The Song of the Bomb."

Moreover, according to the "Rebel Woman," the immigrant is the savior of the nation. It is the immigrant from south-eastern Europe, from Italy and the Balkan States, as well as from Russia and Germany, who is to introduce "courage, vision, and idealism" into our America. The Rebel Woman is going to break the world's machinery which enslaves woman "by sex conventions, by motherhood and its present necessary child-bearing, by wage slavery, by middle-class morality, etc." Revolution, not evolution, is the word "The Woman Rebel" has inscribed upon its banners. As it may be inferred from the program which I have just read to you, when Emma Goldman and her disciples have finally remoulded the world closer to their desires, they will confer upon woman the following new blessings:—

FIRST: *The right to be lazy.*

Well, who prevents her from being that now? Ah, but she must eat to live! Why does she not also claim the right not to eat, or the right to eat without working? What shall we think of women who look forward to the time when they shall enjoy the right to be lazy? What charms has indolence for them? Why is work distasteful to them? What are the pleasures of laziness? What is it productive of? Formerly the right to work was the universal cry, but evidently that right is not radical enough to please the rebels among women. Instead of the right to work they demand the right to be lazy!

SECOND: *The right to be an unmarried mother.*

But women have that right now. The law does not interfere in the relation of the sexes until there is a complaint, which generally comes from the deserted woman, with a child to provide for; and even then the State deals with her, as it should, very gently, and tries to find the other party to compel him to contribute to her support. In all civilised communities the law recognises what is known as "common law marriages." Besides, if a man and woman have been living together as man and wife without any ceremony or licence, or public announcement of the fact, and the man dies, the woman is protected in her claim for a share of his estate. What more could the radical or rebel woman ask for? A distinguished tragedienne, Sarah Bernhardt, though unmarried, is a mother and a grandmother. No one has interfered with her right to be an unmarried mother. The French Government recently conferred upon her the Legion of Honor. It is also true that when a distinguished publicist—Maxim Gorky—came to this country a few years ago, with a woman companion, while he had a wife in Russia, certain hotels in New York City refused them as guests; but then, if Mr. Gorky demands the right to do as he pleases, why has not the hotel-keeper the right to do as *he* pleases? Moreover, there are other hotels. "Oh, but the public should not discriminate against Gorky, or the unmarried mother; Society should respect the woman travelling with Gorky as much as it does his deserted wife." But why should the radical woman, with a "go-to-hell look in her eyes" bother herself about the respect of Society? With that sort of a look in her eyes, the radical woman should not care in the least what people say or think. In the meantime, the law allows you to do as you please with yourself, provided you allow others to protect themselves against you.

Really, the radical woman has no grounds for complaint as far as marriage is concerned. She is not compelled to marry; she need not marry except for love; she is free to marry for money if she wants to; and if she finds that she has made a bad choice after marriage, she is at liberty to secure a divorce and marry again. What more could the new radicalism secure for her? Besides, the State does all it can to compel the husband to support the wife even after they have ceased to live together. Indeed, I am proud of the protection which civilisation throws about a woman who becomes a wife or a mother, whether in or out of wedlock.

But the day on which free motherhood prevails, woman will be the great sufferer. She will become a mere plaything, the sport of the hour, to be picked up and cast aside according to the whim or the caprice of the hunter. Under "free love" woman will become a tramp. Why is woman willing to sacrifice the home for what she calls free motherhood? But is not marriage slavery? Of course it is. Duty spells slavery. I am a slave; you are slaves; the President of the country is a slave. Have you a child?—you are a slave! Have you a business?—obligations to meet, wages to pay—you are a slave! Have you ideals, scruples, a conscience?—you are a slave! If we cannot play fast and loose with duty, we are all slaves. But obedience to the will of civilisation is slavery only to those who prefer the wild to the city, the tavern to the home, the street to the school,—appetite to love.

THIRD: *The right to destroy.* What?

FOURTH: *The right to create.* Go ahead!

FIFTH: *The right to love.* That is tautology, because it is included in the right to be an unmarried mother.

SIXTH: *The right to live.* That also is repetitious, since the right to be lazy implies the right to live. Only those who are alive can enjoy the right to be lazy.

Association with women who demand the right to be lazy, etc., is bound to be degrading. Let me say that the most dangerous enemies of society are not the politicians, the trust-barons, or the popes, but the mediocre—the men and women of low mentality. There should be neither priest nor tyrant but for the masses who support them. On the other hand, the masses have been the worst persecutors of reformers. Indeed, the intellectually common people wither everything they lay their hands upon. Like locusts or grasshoppers, whatever field or crops they alight upon they destroy. The menace of the ordinary! No pest, plague, or panic can compare with this scourge. Let me explain myself:

There is a movement for a nation-wide prohibition of alcoholic beverages in this country. Why are we afraid of alcohol? What makes alcohol a menace? Why do we want legislation to suppress its manufacture and sale? Simply because the people of common mentality and morality—rich or poor—do not know how to partake of wine or beer without making sots of themselves. Yet this class is going to deprive the man who can restrain his appetite from the legitimate use of alcohol. The weaklings are going to

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deprive the temperate man from drinking when he wants to because they themselves need the police, the courts, the church, the whole nation, to help keep them sober. It was from similar motives that the publishers of Voltaire, Darwin, Thomas Paine, were persecuted and imprisoned. Because the mediocre could not read these books without committing moral shipwreck, the heretical books had to be consigned to the flames! This is the tremendous tax which mediocrity imposes upon civilisation! And the disorderly drinking-places, or the unscrupulous brewers or distillers who encourage drunkenness for personal profit—who speculate in the vices of men—do as much, if not even more, to help convert a free people into slaves, or a free country into a gaol, than the drunkards themselves.

Let me give you another illustration: Free speech is one of the greatest gifts of civilisation. But the people of low mentality, whose name is legion, make such use or abuse of this right that we are likely to have someone advocate a national prohibition of free speech. The market-place is always a menace to the study. The study brings to the street, let us say, a great truth; and the street forthwith becomes drunk on it. Then everyone denounces the philosopher for giving mental intoxicants to the people. "Stop it! Shut down the study! To the fagots with the philosopher!" becomes the universal cry. I am of the opinion that never a scientist would have been stoned to death, nor a pioneer burned at the stake, but for the fear that the herd would go astray or stampede if awakened from its sleep. And that is a real fear.

Let me give you still another illustration: The ancient Athenians and Romans possessed magnificent institutions and enjoyed great privileges, but when the barbarians took possession of these countries everything was lost. Everything the barbarian touched, died. The people of low mentality descended upon civilisation, and Europe became a wilderness. In the same way, everything the present-day barbarians touch they debase.

I was in Hyde Park, London, listening to a Freethinker. He made me blush at the manner in which he spoke of the Bible God, the Virgin Mary, the priests, the nuns, etc. Free speech to him meant freedom to be vulgar. Rationalism in the hands of a mental plebeian becomes an offence. We have heard of the search for the Philosopher's Stone, which shall transmute base metal into gold. Whether that quest will ever be rewarded with success I am not in a position to say, but the commonplace man has found a way of transmuting gold into base metal. When the Goldmanite declares that a woman's duty consists in looking "the whole world in the face with a go-to-hell look in the eyes," she thinks she is giving expression to a wonderfully original or clever idea. I am of a different opinion; I call it a piece of vulgarity. There are "Billy" Sundays in Rationalism as well as in orthodoxy, and the moment they lay hands on it they blight it.

There is published in this country an anti-Catholic paper by a Protestant. It is not necessary to mention the paper by name. The publication I have in mind has not a word to say against the absurdities of Protestant theology, or the efforts of the Calvinist clergy to fetter the human mind; but it pours a very volcano of weekly fire upon the abuses of the Catholic Church. I have little sympathy with one-sided propagandism. An inconsistent or an illogical position never fills me with enthusiasm. I am willing to admit that such publications are useful in many ways. It is their method, tone, and language that drags a worthy and noble cause to the level of a cat-and-dog fight. The moment Rationalism passes out of the hands of the sober into the hands of the "drunkards," it, too, will go to the gutter. The Catholics publish many papers which are equally abusive, vulgar, and even more untrustworthy than any publication against them, but if such publications have not honored that Church, how can similar efforts by liberals help the cause of progress? Why should a teacher of science stoop to use the language of a priest? Leave *cursing* to the men dressed in black! The sentence, "And he that believeth not shall be damned," is not proof of divinity but of a lack of refinement. Any cause that takes on the crowd, goes to the bottom. Is it not alarming? Let an idea descend and it dies. Going down is the way to the grave. When the sun sinks it is night. When the sun rises it is day. Civilisation is not a descent. It is an ascent. When politics descends it becomes corrupt; when religion descends it becomes a superstition. What is the cause of the distress of the Church to-day? The brains have left it. The plebeians—the mental inebriates—whether in furs and feathers or in rags, have swooped upon it. A similar invasion would prove fatal to the best of causes even. The Goths and the Visigoths that pulled the classical world to the dust would do the same to Rationalism.

And why has politics become corrupt? Because, as already suggested, the ordinary man dominates it. The yellow hosts have dislodged the elite and are now having things their own way. Every department of public life suffers and is lowered by this invasion. I have been watching some of the criminal trials in our courts. In his address to the jury, one of the assistant State attorneys used language, the other day, that clearly betrayed the barbarian in politics. If the defence had resorted to such tactics there would have been some excuse for it, since he was representing a murderer and an outlaw. But why should the people's representative the agent of civilisation, stoop when he thinks or speaks? The stoop is a surrenderer. Pointing to the man on trial, this mouthpiece of the people, this representative of the majesty and dignity of the law, cried, "He has the instinct of the beast!" and again, "He is two hundred pounds of worthlessness!" and once more, "He is a snake!" and, "Send him to the gallows, hang him, let him hang!" This is the style of the market-place, not of the study. Whatever the ordinary mind touches it degrades. Eloquence becomes coarseness, argument becomes abuse, and violence of language takes the place of forceful reasoning. Literature becomes gossip, business becomes a gamble, art degenerates into caricature, medicine into quackery, and science into charlatanism in the hands of the commonplace man or woman. This is also the revenge of mediocrity.

What is the explanation of this rebellion of church and crowd against reason? Human nature is the battle-ground between instinct and reason. Instinct is older than reason. Though a new comer, reason has slowly pushed instinct off its seat of authority. At one time instinct monopolised the man. It had no rivals. When instinct reigned man pursued his desires with the quickness of a flash and the blindness of an arrow. He did as his instincts prompted him. Deliberation, selection, restraint—a check or a curb upon desire, were not yet invented. There was as yet no government of the appetites. Then came reason with a bit for the passions. But do you think that instinct or the passions surrendered willingly to the new master? On the contrary, they rose up in arms; they rebelled; they conspired to overthrow reason; they clamored for their ancient licence; they coveted the wild life of the forest which reason had taken away from them. Even in our day the rebellion against reason breaks out, every now and then, in all its aforetime fury and rage. What is the meaning of the propaganda launched under such innocent-looking phrases as "Free Motherhood," "Sex Emancipation," "Marriage is Slavery," etc., but the rebellion of instinct against the check or curb or bit or—I shall say—the grip of reason upon the passions? That is why Henry Bergson's *Creative Evolution*, in which he supports the superiority of instinct to reason, is so popular. The capitalist, the labor unions, the rebel women, and the theologians welcome Bergson's gospel of Instinct. He is come to restore the fallen dynasty of Instinct. "Unhand us!" is the cry of his followers to Reason. In the same way, "Down with Reason!" cry the sentimentalists, the emotionalists, and the

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theologians. "Hearken to the call of the Wild!" urge the apostles of appetite. "Bring back to us the Past!" is the chorus in which all join. But high above the shriek of the rebels may be heard the brave and tuneful song of the disciplined soldiers of Progress: "Rule, Reason!" "Reason shall rule the world!"

Joseph Priestley.—II.

By G. W. Foote.

[Reprinted.]

(*Continued from p. 541.*)

On leaving Daventry, Priestley accepted the office of assistant minister to a congregation at Needham Market, Suffolk, at the miserable salary of forty pounds a year, on which he found himself by no means "passing rich," especially as it was never paid in full. In this retired situation the chief occupation of his leisure was the compiling of a multitude of Scripture texts antagonistic to the doctrine of the Atonement. The manuscript was confided to Dr. Lardner and Dr. Fleming, on the occasion of a journey to London, and portions of it were published by them under the title of the Doctrine of Remission. By this time Priestley had relinquished his belief in the plenary inspiration of the Scripture writers, and in the idea of supernatural influence except for the purpose of miracles.

On quitting Needham Market, in consequence of theological differences with Mr. Meadow's congregation, Priestley attempted to earn his bread as a teacher of mathematics, but the rancor of his religious enemies prevented his success. Pupils would not come to be taught even mathematics by a professor of questionable orthodoxy. The heretical poison might be conveyed even in doses of exact science. The unfortunate mathematician was, therefore, obliged to accept another engagement as preacher for one year to a congregation at Nantwich in Cheshire. There he remained no longer than the stipulated term, at the expiration of which he removed to Warrington, where he resided for a period of six years as a preacher and teacher. In the second year of his ministry at Warrington, he married a daughter of Mr. Isaac Wilkinson, an ironmaster of Wrexham, Wales. This union appears to have been productive of mutual happiness and comfort.

While residing at Warrington, Priestley composed his Essay on Government, a liberal and philosophical production, in which it is emphatically maintained that the end and sole duty of government is to promote the happiness of the governed. The spirit of the work is Republican enough and it is boldly asserted that peoples have an unquestionable right to depose evil rulers by revolutionary means if no others will avail; but the author considered a government by King, Lords, and Commons as most consonant with the traditions and prejudices of the English people. Not until his emigration to America was he convinced of the practicability, as well as of the advantages of Republican Government.

In the Autobiography he mentions that at that time he read a deal of polite literature, and practised the composition of verse himself, as well as enjoining it upon his pupils, as a great assistance to facility in the composition of prose. Also he mentions that the reading of some of his early verses induced Mrs. Barbauld to commence writing poetry, and thus, says he, "England is indebted to me for one of the best poets it can boast"; after which critical deliverance we may safely affirm that Priestley's mind was by no means of a poetical cast.

Priestley's scientific proclivities were already strongly pronounced. He had been experimenting more or less for some years, and had always contemplated science with the fondness of a lover. But it was not until meeting with Franklin, the great American philosopher and electrician, on the occasion of a visit to London, that his attachment to scientific pursuits was stimulated to an ardent devotion. Induced by Franklin, he soon after published his History of Electric Discovery. His experiments in electricity also procured for him an introduction to the Royal Society; and in addition to that honor, he had conferred upon him, through the generous interest of Dr. Percival, the degree of Doctor of Laws from the University of Edinburgh. In September, 1767, Priestley removed to Leeds, where he engaged himself as minister of Mill-hill Chapel. While resident there he commenced his famous experiments on air, and in 1772 he issued his first publication on the subject. His fame was by this time rapidly spreading in the scientific world; so much so, indeed, that a proposal was made for his accompanying Captain Cook on his second voyage; but the scheme was frustrated by the objections of some powerful clergymen, who had taken umbrage at the Doctor's boldly declared heresy.

After spending six years at Leeds, divided between professional avocations and scientific pursuits, Priestley accepted a generous offer from the Earl of Shelburne, afterwards Marquis of Lansdowne, of the post of Librarian to his Lordship, at a salary of £250 a year, with the promise of an allowance for life in case of his patron's decease. The duties of the situation were very trifling, and the Earl treated the Doctor more as a confidential friend than as a servant; allowing him also occasional gratuities for the purchase of costly instruments and appliances necessary to the finer practice of his chemical experiments. In the second year of his residence with the Earl he made his famous discovery of oxygen gas, which marks an era in the history of chemical science, and with which his name will be for ever associated. In 1774 he travelled with his patron through Flanders, Holland, and Germany. Naturally, he met and conversed with the chief scientific and philosophical celebrities of the various places through which he passed; and in other respects also the journey was advantageous, for his experience of mankind was thereby widened after a fashion which never can be wrought by any amount of mere reading. On returning to England he published his Miscellaneous Observations on Education, Lectures on Oratory and Criticism, and the third part of the Institutes of Natural and Revealed Religion, the two first parts of which had been published many years preceding. In the last work he maintained, with remarkable force and ingenuity, his doctrine of the immateriality of the soul, of which we shall have hereafter to speak at length. So bold a theory, running, as it did, directly counter to the orthodox teaching on the subject, excited much animosity among the "sound divines." The cry of "Atheist" was immediately raised, and lustily vociferated, until at length the poor Doctor, who deemed the existence of Deity capable of being substantiated by irrefragable arguments, found himself pretty generally regarded as a horrible heretic, who actually denied the being of God. Such a man, says Huxley, is ordinarily looked upon as a person with whom a cash-box is not quite safe; and, therefore, it is no matter for wonder that the Earl became desirous to part company with his overbold librarian. Shelburne agreed to grant Priestley an annuity of £150 a year, and the amount was always punctually paid. It was, however, inadequate to meet all the philosopher's requirements, for, in addition to his very costly experiments, there was the burden of a somewhat numerous family that had grown up around him. Offers of court pensions were made, but were honorably refused. Probably Priestley recollected what Johnson himself subsequently forgot, that a pensioner is "a slave of State." Nevertheless, he accepted private subscriptions from friends to science who desired a continuance of his chemical researches—in particular that of Wedgwood, always honorably distinguished for ready assistance to indigent genius, and whose generous and unsolicited aid to Coleridge and Wordsworth will long be remembered by all lovers and students of English poetry.

Priestley now settled at Birmingham, where he joined a Mr. Blyth as minister of a Unitarian congregation. Here he continued his scientific, philosophical, and religious labors, and published amongst other works his History of the Corruptions of Christianity, History of Early Opinions Concerning Jesus Christ, and Disquisitions on Matter and Spirit. He also became a member of the Lunar Club, so called because of its meetings being held near the full moon, which comprised most of the advanced thinkers of the district. At Birmingham he might have remained in quiet and comfort until his death if he had not, unfortunately for

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his personal peace, associated himself with a political club consisting mainly of Dissenters, who openly avowed their sympathy with the revolutionists in France. That great political and social convulsion had startled all Europe out of its apathy, and at the mighty roar which announced the advent of Democracy, reactionary and obscurantist powers stood abashed and terrified, while the reformers took further heart of grace and prognosticated great results from the revolutionary movement. Party passion ran high; and every man was compelled to take a side. One party prophesied a coming millennium, and the other foretold the approach of final chaos. Both parties erred, but the latter the more egregiously. Some men of sterling character and splendid ability, blinded by passion and prejudice, ranged themselves on the side of despotism and retrogression, and loudly denied that men had even any rights at all; and their feelings were the more exasperated by the exuberant, triumphant audacity with which their opponents pointed out the tyrannical slough into which their foolish arguments would inevitably precipitate them, if logically followed. Even the glorious genius of Burke quailed before the misapprehended apparition of democracy. All his magnificent powers of eloquence and matchless invective were employed to assail the revolution, and to heap reproach and contempt on its human instruments. So carried away was he by a tempest of passion that he degraded himself to the use of expressions concerning Priestley worthy of a political lampooner. He even called upon the Government to crush the rising spirit of rebellious liberty, not knowing that material agencies of persecution were as unavailing against it as the harmless weapons of midnight sentinels against the majesty of buried Denmark.

In Parliament, and outside it, everybody was in a state of unprecedented excitement. The masses of the people, ignorant and superstitious, were artfully stirred up against the English sympathisers with French Republicanism; and Church and State mobs in all towns were prepared, whenever called upon, to vindicate the outraged honor of their glorious constitution, which apparently they regarded, like Cæsar did the honor of his wife, as mortally injured even by suspicion. At Birmingham, political passion knew no bounds; the turbulent populace was prepared for any measures, and the responsible guardians of law and order were by no means reluctant to urge it on to deeds of violence. The political club already alluded to, held a meeting on the 14th of July, 1791, to celebrate the anniversary of the capture and destruction of the Bastile. This insult to the British constitution was too much for the patience of the insurgent mob and its secret impellers. Priestley was not at the meeting, but most of those who were present were Dissenters, and so was Priestley himself. The poor philosopher was conspicuous, and discrimination was not easy. The mob, therefore, politely burned his meeting-house wherein he preached and his dwelling house, as a sign of its disapprobation, and would have served him with the same sauce if he had not prudently made himself scarce. The merry rioters smashed his experimental apparatus, and burned his library and all his manuscript records; and with indescribable glee ground sparks of fire out of the victim's own electric machine to assist in the work of demolition. The houses of many of Priestley's friends were burned or greatly damaged. Nearly all whose property was so served were Dissenters, and Priestley asserts that the clergy of the Established Church instigated the riot and directed its operations. The injured philosopher brought an action against the authorities for damages, alleging that they had neglected to suppress the riot. Fortunately, he obtained a favorable verdict, but he received £2,000 less than his claim, the jury refusing to admit the value of his apparatus and manuscripts.

Birmingham was, of course, no longer a safe residence, and Priestley therefore repaired to London. The members of the Royal Society shamefully gave him the cold shoulder, and assiduously shunned his company; but the congregation of Dr. Price, at Hackney, requested him to become their minister, and he gladly accepted the invitation. Many of his friends gathered around him at this crisis, and tendered pecuniary assistance, in particular, his brother-in-law, John Wilkinson who presented him with £500, and transferred to him £10,000 invested in the French Funds, which, however, never brought in a penny. From France numerous flattering messages were received; some ardent cosmopolites even desired him to become a candidate for membership in the Convention. This offer he declined, but his son visited France, and was not only well received, but was also invested with the rights of French citizenship. In England, however, Priestley and his family dwelt in insecurity. Threatening letters poured in from all quarters, some merely promising damnation in the life to come, but others more than insinuating the possibility of more terrible an certain chastisement in this. Frequently he was burnt in effigy along with Paine, whose political writings he publicly and emphatically approved, although he utterly dissented from his opinions on other subjects. His son was obliged to dissolve partnership with a Manchester merchant by the pressure of religious prejudice. At last, reluctantly and sorrowfully, the persecuted philosopher resolved to quit his native land, which no longer afforded him a safe shelter. On April 8, 1794, he set sail from London, bidding dear old England a long, last adieu, and on June 4, arrived at New York.

Priestley's reception in the newly adopted land was of the most flattering character, and atoned largely for the insults and reproach cast against him in the country he had forsaken. The nobilities of the day flocked around him, and testified their admiration of his manly independence. The trustees of the Philadelphia University elected him as Professor of Chemistry; and many additional honors would have been showered upon him if he had not declared his intention not to accept them. Only one powerful voice was raised against him—the voice of William Cobbett. The sturdy English spirit of Cobbett naturally inclined him to take his country's side. He was then, as he afterwards confessed, "a mere prattler in politics"; but his anger and combativeness were both aroused by the abundant censure pronounced against England by the American Democrats. Cobbett delighted in a single-handed fight against a host of foes, and therefore was in his element. The men around him were Americans and Republicans, he was an Englishman and a Monarchist. There was no timidity in his composition; he ever loved to tweak his enemy by the nose and pluck at his very beard. Peter Porcupine he called himself, and, like a porcupine, he stood self-collected, with a quill for every comer. He was on the wrong side, and in a woeful minority; but he was a master of style matchless in its vigor and directness. Before his tremendous blows the Democrats reeled, and as they fell he shot them through and through with the arrows of his malicious wit. Priestley and his Appeal fared badly at Cobbett's hands; his grammar, his composition, his logic, were all mercilessly criticised The Doctor might be an angel of light, but he was no match for the polemical vigor of his assailant. Priestley was right, and Cobbett utterly wrong; but nobody with a sense of humor or with a touch of gusto in his composition, can fail to relish the ex-soldier's racy wit and potent mother-English.

(To be continued.)

The Ramsey Testimonial.

(FIFTH LIST OF SUBSCRIPTIONS.)

[The first six subscriptions in this list were the last six in the previous list. This bears out our former complaint. —ED.]

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I will be as harsh as Truth and as uncompromising as Justice.—WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON.

Theology, Genesis, and Science.

MINISTERS of religion tell us that "it is becoming every day more difficult to accept all the stories in Genesis as literally true." Addressing the Students' Christian Union at the Melbourne University, Dean Stephen, Bishop elect of Tasmania, said that "most students believe that in Genesis there are mythical and legendary elements." A myth is defined as a story told to explain a fact or a belief. For example, the fact of the succession of the seasons is explained by the story of Persephone, and the fact of likeness and sympathy between man and woman by the story of the creation Eve out of Adam's rib. As explanations of facts we find myths in Greece, Chaldæa, Egypt, and India, as well as in Palestine. The Genesis stories of creation, of the tree of life, of the fall of man, and of the flood, have parallels in other literature, especially in that of Chaldæa; but Christian divines maintain that there are great differences between them. They assure us that the non-Biblical myths are very numerous, always polytheistic, and sometimes immoral, while the Hebrew myths are few in number, always monotheistic and moral in tone. The former ascribe low and degrading actions to the deities, while the latter attribute high and noble deeds to Jehovah. The Dean said:—

> "At first the early Hebrew records seem to be like all others. Study shows them to be unique. The cause of this difference is what we call inspiration. God taught a few individuals higher truth than their neighbors, awakened their religious consciousness, and enabled them to judge current mythology and tradition, and after judgment to retain only such elements as were compatible with morality and religion. Hence, through inspiration the Jews alone were not hampered with a vast mass of myths which taught false morality and false ideas about God. The few which remained became the vehicles of Divine truth."

Greater nonsense never dropped from human lips. There is not a word of truth in that extract. Does Dean Stephen really believe that the Biblical account of the flood shows God in a favorable light? Does it represent him as the possessor of a highly moral character? Does the reverend gentleman regard the Book of Joshua as a vehicle of glorious truths about Jehovah?

Now, as the Dean frankly admits, the story of creation and man's fall, found in Genesis, is neither science nor history, but a mere myth. Archbishop Lowther Clarke, of Melbourne, recently preached three sermons on "Genesis and Evolution," long reports of which appeared in the *Age*. His Grace is in substantial agreement with the Dean, describing the first chapter of Genesis as being "neither a scientific treatise nor an historical record, but as partaking of the nature of a parable, or vision, or allegory." The curious thing is, that the Archbishop adopts those conclusions of science which do not clash with his own theology, but ruthlessly rejects those that do. He believes in the evolution of all animals below man. He speaks of the vast periods of time "during which there lived and died successions of animals which played their part on the surface of the earth." He says that it is "quite impossible to give even an approximate estimate of the length of time required for these creations to develop and decay"; but he holds the old doctrine that when man appeared "he was created in the image of God, with a mind capable of understanding the thoughts of God, and with a power of speech which enabled him to convey his thoughts to his fellow men." He is reported to have spoken thus:—

> "Evolution was manifestly a method of Divine working, but the application of it to the onward progress of man through lower ape-like forms to his present condition was now shown to be false. In the fossil remains there was no sign anywhere of an ape-man or a man-ape. There were all possible graduations of men from the lowest to the highest limits, but there was not a trace of an intermediate stage through which the ape was passing into man. We could, therefore, without any opposition from modern science, declare our belief in the ennobling statement of Genesis i.: 'God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them, and God blessed them.'"

By whom has the evolution of man through lower forms been shown to be false? The Archbishop gives no authority for his erroneous statement, and we boldly charge him with a deliberate misrepresentation of the teaching of modern science as to man's origin. Has he never heard of the fully attested fact that when the blood of a man is transfused into a chimpanzee there is an harmonious mingling of the two? Man's organism and the chimpanzee's are very closely related. For the evolution of man, then, we have the direct, experimental evidence of blood relationship. This evidence has been brought forward in the most complete and literal sense by such scientists as Friedenthal, Uhlenhuth, and Nuttall. Has his Grace the audacity to deny it? He has a perfect right to prefer Genesis to science, but he has not the shadow of a right to mislead his Australian hearers and readers about modern science.

Let us examine the Archbishop's doctrine of man a little more closely. As reported, he says:—

> "The purport of the whole was to declare that when God created man with a living soul he made him for himself. Duties were assigned to man. He was shown the grandeur of work.....But all this was conditioned by obedience. Certain things we might freely do, while other things were as surely forbidden, because they led to death."

That may be good theology, but not a single fact can be adduced in support of it. The most reverend gentleman deals alone in dogmas, not at all in facts. For example, he seems to believe that man is totally differentiated from all other animals by his possession of a "living soul," but every scholar is aware that in Hebrew psychology "soul" is the common possession of both animals and man. Surely his Grace is not ignorant of the fact that Gen. i. 20, should read thus: "And God said, Let the waters swarm with swarming things [even] living souls." The Hebrew word for "soul" is *néphesh*. Even the beings that swarm in the ocean are called "living souls" in the first chapter of Genesis; and Canon Driver admits, in his excellent Commentary, that "no pre-eminence of man is declared in these words, 'And man became a living soul'" (Gen. ii. 7).

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Again, his Grace quotes the words, "And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed," and adds the comment that "clothing marked man's attempt to hide his shame;" but this is an utterly unscientific and false account of the beginning of the wearing of clothes. His Grace is not entirely blind to the falseness of his statement, for he adds, "That did not wholly account for its use, which was determined largely by climate." Of course, Archbishop Clarke believes in the Fall, for otherwise he would have no Gospel to preach, and his profession would be an absurdity. And yet his explanation of the "initial catastrophe" is absurdly vague. This is how the *Age* for July 6 puts it:—

> "Dr. Clarke invited his hearers to regard the story of the Fall not as an isolated historical fact, but as a perpetually recurring illustration of all human experience.....When man was innocent, he rejoiced in God's presence. When he had sinned against God, he tried to hide himself from his presence."

In reality, that is a flat denial of the old doctrine of the Fall as taught by Paul and Augustine, and as expressed in all the great creeds. The Most Rev. Dr. Clarke preaches what he does not really believe himself, and explains away the fundamental tenets of the Christian Faith. He does not believe that the human race was ever in Paradise in a state of perfect happiness. Listen to this:—

> "What did just and true criticism say to this story? It asserted that man's course had been one of painful upward struggle, that he had never known a state of happiness, though through the ages he had been striving after it. All this was true, and the story gave the reason. It did not assert that races of men lived in Paradise, but in describing the ideal life for which God made man, it related the causes of his fall and spoke unmistakably of the painful upward struggle to which his sin had condemned him."

Most assuredly that is not honest exegesis. That is the scientific version of the struggle for life, in which the strongest survive. It is not the teaching of Genesis. It is not sin that condemns us to this struggle, but our very nature which we share with all the animals. The struggle is universal, and survival is the reward of strength and skill.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Christian Kaiser.

THE other day the *Daily Telegraph*, which is in its way a very Christian newspaper, reprinted the report of a conversation held in 1910 with the German Emperor. In this conversation the Emperor is reported to have said:—

> "I often read the Bible. I like to read it every night. A Bible lies on a table at my bedside. I find the most beautiful thoughts expressed in it. I cannot understand how it is that so many persons pay so little attention to the Holy Scriptures. Can anyone read the Gospels and other portions of the Bible without feeling convinced that the words contain a simple truth established in unquestionable facts? Whenever I have to make any decision I ask myself what the Bible would teach me to do in that particular case. The Bible is to me the fountain from which I draw light and strength. In hours of sorrow and depression I seek consolation therein. I am convinced that many who have neglected religion will regain definite religious belief in our time, and will feel the need of communion with the Almighty. Periods of dangerous doubt have always produced in their wake periods of enthusiastic religious feeling. I cannot understand how life can be lived without real communion with the Almighty."

In the present condition of affairs one may venture to suggest to the *Daily Telegraph* that it does Christianity a decided ill-service in publishing the above. The best thing would have been to have kept this conversation buried in its columns. For while everyone knows Kaiser Wilhelm to be a very Christian man, Christians in this country are not likely to emphasise the fact. So long as he was the villain of the piece, the proper and customary Christian course would have been to refer to his conduct as Atheistical, to say that his mind is governed by secularistic or materialistic ideals, and to point to him as a glaring example of the evil that results when a man loses his hold on the principles of the Christian faith.

As it is, the Christianity of the Kaiser is self-confessed. It is open, even aggressive. It is unmarred by doubts, undiluted by any hesitancy as to the value of the Bible. And, if I remember rightly, at the time when this conversation was first published it was widely reprinted in the religious press for the encouragement of the pious, and the confounding of unbelievers. The Kaiser was a Christian, he believed in the Bible, he could not realise anyone getting on without it. It encouraged him by day; it comforted him at night. Nothing could be more satisfactory. Christianity has long been living on testimonials: here was one of the first value. It had received testimonials from all sorts of people, it had sent round circulars inviting them, and had afterwards published them in book form—just as though the Churches were running a patent medicine, or a new brand of soap. Here was one from a real live Emperor. It was, naturally, made the most of. I wonder how they relish its reproduction now?

Perhaps the *Daily Telegraph* in reprinting this had some notion that it would show up the Kaiser as an arch-hypocrite. In all probability a great many Christians will so regard it. But it really proves nothing of the kind. I do not see there is any reason to doubt that the Kaiser really meant every word he said. There is a childlike simplicity in the question, "Can anyone read the Gospels and other portions of the Bible without feeling convinced that the words contain a simple truth established in unquestionable facts?" that at any other time would appeal most powerfully to the British Christian. Such childlike faith could only go, they would argue, with a nature that is little short of saintliness. There is nothing hypocritical about this confession of faith. The Kaiser *is* a Christian. There is no doubt of that. Of course, it is a little awkward for our Christians for him to come out in that character just as he is being depicted as a monster of duplicity, and his Christian soldiers are charged with breaking all rules of what are facetiously called "civilised warfare." But that cannot be helped. His Christian character remains.

It will be observed that the Kaiser's rule of life is that recommended by many preachers. "Whenever I have to make any decision I ask myself what the Bible would teach me to do in that particular case." Precisely so. That is the rule all good Christians profess to go by. That is the rule they always have gone by. When the Churches taught the divine right of kings they found it in the Bible. When other Christians found it advisable to behead one king and drive out another, they found it in the Bible. When Christians wanted to prove the earth was flat, they found the proof in the Bible. When they wanted to burn heretics or witches, they found justification in the Bible. When the slave owner of America wanted sanction for purchasing human flesh and blood, he found it in the Bible. And if the Kaiser's troops want justification for smiting their civilian enemies hip and thigh, they can find that in the Bible. The great beauty of the Bible is that you can always find *it* in the Bible. It doesn't matter what *it* is, it is there. If you want peace you can read yards about love and turning swords into ploughshares. And if you want war you need only turn the pages to find both precept and practice to your taste. A wonderful book is the Bible! It is the poor man's comfort, and the Kaiser's guide and councillor. Without it the Kaiser would be lost. With it he is—any of the Christian papers of this country will supply a description.

"The Bible," says the Kaiser, "is to me the fountain from which I draw light and strength." Really, a "War Lord" could ask for no better guide. Consider the following:—

> "And when the Lord thy God hath delivered it [i.e., the city] into thine hands, thou shalt smite every

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male thereof with the edge of the sword. But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, thou shalt take unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies which the Lord thy God hath given thee..... Of the cities of these people which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth."

Or these:—

"I will make my arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh."

"The Lord thy God shall deliver them unto thee, and shall destroy them with a mighty destruction until they be destroyed."

"And He shall deliver their kings into thine hand, and thou shalt destroy their name from under heaven; then shall no man be able to stand before thee, until thou have destroyed them."

"If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance on mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me."

Where could the invader of Belgium find a more comforting guide than in these passages? It is quite true that these injunctions have not been literally carried out. *Everything* breathing has not been killed, and the names of the Kaiser's enemies have not been blotted out. Still, something has been done, and, after all, one can very rarely live up to one's ideal. It is enough to aim at the stars, even though one never hits them.

When the German detachment was sent to Pekin, some fourteen years ago, the good Christain Kaiser advised his troops:—

"When you meet the foe you will defeat him. No quarter will be given, no prisoners will be taken. Let all who fall into your hands be at your mercy."

That is certainly a little nearer the Biblical note, and at the time it was uttered it was charitably—and perhaps properly—attributed to excess of Christian feeling. The prayer now ordered by the Kaiser to be said in all public services shows the same commendable piety:—

"Almighty and Merciful God, lead us to victory, and give us grace that we may show ourselves to be Christians towards our enemies as well."

One could expect nothing less from a ruler who "cannot understand how life can be lived without real communion with the Almighty." He feels that at every step of the way he has the Deity on his side. He is carrying out the Deity's wishes. Of course, his enemies have the same conviction, but that is a phenomenon that never disturbs the genuine Christian. The Kaiser is behaving as a Christian. That is, he is acting as Christians have always acted. No good Christian would do anything of which he believed the Lord would disapprove. But, on the other hand, every good Christian believes the Lord will approve anything he does. The Kaiser is no more than an illustration of a very common phenomenon. It was one of his own countrymen who said that the Bible was a nose of wax. By that he meant that it could be pulled this way or that so as to fit any countenance. It pleases the Godly to find all kinds of people expressing their admiration of, and their obligation to, the Bible. But the ungodly may well inquire the value of a book and a religion that can sanction at one and the same time a Torquemada and a John Howard, or can give the same degree of encouragement to rival armies busily engaged in trying to wipe each other out of existence.

The Kaiser is much better as a pietist than as a philosopher. As a pietist he is beyond reproach. As a philosopher he is really not of much account. He is convinced that many who have neglected religion will regain definite religious belief in our time, and will feel the need of "communion with the Almighty." Of course, some may; but it is far more certain that a much larger number will altogether lose their religious belief. A world-movement is not easily or lightly reversed, and the movement away from religion is not in the nature of individual outbreaks here and there, nor is it confined to any special nation or race. It is co-extensive with civilisation, and is, indeed, part of civilisation. It is, of course, conceivable that Europe might return to the Stone Age; but it is not very probable. And it is equally improbable that when large numbers of men and women have *outgrown* religion, they will ever so far degenerate as to revert to it. Mankind may be prevented acquiring knowledge, but once it is acquired nothing can rob them of it. It is theirs. It becomes part of their mental being; it shows its influence in all their thoughts and actions. In spite of "mailed fists" and pious "War Lords," in spite of barbaric warfare and outbursts of primitive superstition, the progress of humanity is, on the whole, towards the light. That progress may be diverted for a time, it may be stayed for a time, but it continues.

C. COHEN.

The Origin of Supernatural Ideas.—VII.

(*Continued from p. 550.*)

"Up to a recent time the sturdiest sceptics as to the truth of revelation were mostly deists or pantheists, and often repudiated atheism with warmth.....Now, the conception of God is freely treated by many of the leaders of philosophical and scientific opinion as a transitory phase of thought, which the growth of knowledge has finally terminated. The natural history and evolution of the idea of God is traced in calm outline from its cradle to its grave—from its nascent form in Animism to its metaphysical presentation as an inscrutable First Cause, the absolute, unconditioned, and unrelated to the phenomenal world. The idea of God has been 'defecated to a pure transparency,' as one eminent writer phrases it; it has been 'denthropomorphised,' to use the language of another. A new and widely-current word (Agnostic) has been invented to designate the large class of persons (mostly of exceptional knowledge and ability) who refuse to entertain any more the idea of a single divine Being, maker of all things in heaven and earth."—JAMES COTTER MORISON, *The Service of Man*, pp. 31-32.

"The dim and shadowy outlines of the superhuman deity fade slowly away from before us; and as the mist of his presence floats aside we perceive with greater and greater clearness the shape of a yet grander and nobler figure—of Him who made all Gods and shall unmake them. From the dim dawn of history, and from the inmost depth of every soul, the face of our father Man looks out upon us with the fire of eternal youth in his eyes, and says, 'Before Jehovah was, I am!'"—PROFESSOR CLIFFORD, *Lectures and Essays*, p. 386.

HAVING arrived at the idea of a ghost or spirit, the next step to the conception of a God or gods was comparatively easy. For, as everything in this world occupied a similar position in the world of spirits—the hunter continuing to be a hunter and the chief a chief—so the spirit of a renowned warrior chief, renowned for his strength, bloodthirstiness, and cruelty, would receive more sacrifices and be remembered longer than the spirit of an ordinary man. "The supposed Gods of the Guiana Indians Im Thurn describes as really but the remembered dead of each tribe, and where there is mention of one great spirit or god, it is merely the chief traditional founder of the tribe."*

And as spirits are always evil and malignant, to the savage, so he would sacrifice his dearest possessions—his finest cattle or his first-born child—to gain the favor or placate the anger of the departed spirit of the ferocious chief. In this way, mainly, arose the machinery of ritual, sacrifice, prayer, and praise; which, in the first instance, was nothing but the tribute of weakness and fear to a malignant power. Even after primitive man has arrived at the idea of good spirits, he pays little or no attention to them. Ratzel says that in Java the evil spirits "get the best offerings, even the harvest thankoffering serves to propitiate evil spirits."† Sir Richard Burton observes that the Mpongue, of South Africa, believe in a good God and a bad God; for the bad God:—

"They have not only fear of, but also a higher respect for, him than for the giver of good, so difficult is it for the child-man's mind to connect the ideas of benignity and power. He would harm if he could, *ergo* so would his God."‡

* J. H. King, *The Supernatural*, vol. i., p. 247.
† Ratzel, *History of Mankind*, vol. i., p. 473.
‡ Burton, *Two Trips to Gorilla Land and the Cataracts of the Congo*, vol. i., p. 99.

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As Dr. Reville remarks:—

> "The gods of savages are necessarily savage gods. They have, for the most part, frightful forms; just as their worshipers think it proper to make themselves look hideous when they go to battle, or even when they adorn themselves. The odd, the grotesque, is to them the beautiful; whatever is uncommon is mysterious; and the unknown is terrible. The poet must pardon us if we assert that the religion of people of this category is simply the adoration of genii or demons of bad repute. When passing from savage people who live solely by hunting and fishing, we come to pastoral and, especially, to agricultural races, this adoration of evil deities is no longer so exclusive. Still, even among these the worship of the terrible gods predominates. Take by way of illustration the simple prayer of the Madagascans, who acknowledge, among many other, two creating divinities—Zambor, the author of good things; Nyang, of evil things. 'O, Zambor! To thee we offer no prayers. The good god needs no asking. But we must pray to Nyang. Nyang must be appeased. O, Nyang, bad and strong spirit, let not the thunder roar over our heads!.....' It would be easy to multiply the facts which show that the large place fear has in their piety, compared with veneration or love, is a characteristic feature of the religion of primitive peoples."*

Moreover the progress of religion follows the progress of society; it does not, as the pious believe, precede it. To the savage, God is only a bigger and stronger man. Palgrave, the traveller, shows that the only possible idea of God formed by the wild Bedouins of the desert was that of an Arab chief, and to his question, "What will you do coming into God's presence after so graceless a life?" replied, "What will we do? Why, we will go up to God and salute him; and if he proves hospitable, gives us meat and tobacco, we will stay with him; if otherwise, we will mount our horses and ride off." Mr. King, who cites the foregoing, observes:—

> "No man can ever conceive the nature of a god other than by the symbols of power present to his soul in the world about him, and in his own social institutions." [Also] "In all cases, if we analyse the sentiments a man's god expresses, we may demonstrate the conditions which have surrounded a man or which have formed the elements of thought out of which he has embodied his divinity."†

And again:—

> "Generally among the lower races of men when chieftain rule was established, chieftain gods were created. In no case was the concept of universal rule ascribed to a deity before the people were elevated to that sentiment by the human rule of a king of kings."

He also points out that the great native races of North America had no idea of a Supreme Being when first discovered by Europeans; they were governed by chiefs and knew nothing of regal pomp:—

> "Yet from contact with the white races their descendants became acquainted with the ethical aspects of the word royal, with Spanish kingly powers, the rule of King George, and, after that, of the great father at Washington. Through their knowledge of these regal powers they came into the habit, like the white men, of speaking of the supernal power as the Great Spirit."‡

Man, while regarding himself as a free agent, has in reality been fashioned and controlled by infrangible natural laws. For instance, why should the Australian aborigines spend a large part of their lives in a round of painful and tedious magical practices to influence nature, while such practices are practically unknown to the savages of Brazil? The answer is, that they live in a totally different environment. As Professor Frazer points out:—

> "Where nature is bounteous and her course is uniform or varies but little from year's end to year's end, man will neither need nor desire to alter it by magic or otherwise to suit his convenience, in order to obtain what he has not got; if he already possesses all he wants why should he exert himself? It is in times of need and distress rather than of abundance and prosperity that man betakes himself to the practice both of magic and religion. Hence, in some tropical regions of eternal summer, where moisture, warmth, and sunshine never fail, where the trees are always green and fruits always hang from the boughs, where the waters perpetually swarm with fish and the forests teem with an exuberance of animal life, ceremonies for the making of rain and sunshine and for the multiplication of edible beasts and plants are for the most part absent or inconspicuous. For example, we hear little or nothing of them, so far as I remember, among the Indians of the luxuriant forests of Brazil. Far otherwise is it with countries where a brief summer alternates with a chilly spring, a fickle autumn, and a long and rigorous winter. Here, of necessity, man is put to all his shifts to snatch from a churlish nature boons that are at once evanescent and precarious. Here, accordingly, that branch of magic which aims at procuring the necessaries of life may be expected to flourish most. To put it generally, the practice of magic for the control of nature will be found, on the whole, to increase with the variability and to decrease with the uniformity of the course of nature throughout the year. Nowhere, apparently, in the world are alternations of the seasons so sudden and the contrasts between them so violent; nowhere, accordingly, is the seeming success of magic more conspicuous than in the deserts of Central Australia. The wonderful change which passes over the face of nature after the first rains of the season has been compared even by European observers to the effect of magic; what marvel, then, that the savage should mistake it for such in very truth?"*

After the heavy rains the arid wilderness is suddenly converted into a vast sheet of water, which soon dries up; then,—

> "as if by magic the desert becomes covered with luxuriant herbage and gay with the blossoms of endless flowering plants. Birds, frogs, lizards, and insects of all sorts may be seen and heard where lately everything was parched and silent."

Professor Frazer continues:—

> "Now, it is just when there is promise of a good season that the natives of these regions are most especially to perform their magical ceremonies for the multiplication of the plants and animals which they use as food. Can we wonder that the accomplishment of their wishes, which so soon follows, should appear to them a conclusive proof of the efficacy of their incantations? Nature herself seems to conspire to further the delusion."†

Commenting upon the low culture attained by the natives of West Africa, Miss Kingsley observes:—

> "The African race has had about the worst set of conditions possible to bring out the higher powers of man. He has been surrounded by a set of terrific natural phenomena, combined with a good food supply and a warm and equable climate. These things are not enough in themselves to account for his low-culture condition, but they are factors that must be considered."‡

Colonel Ellis, probably the best authority on these natives, gives the other factor concerned. After saying that the position of the natives is very low in the scale of civilisation, he observes:—

> "There are, indeed, many reasons why it should be so. Uncultured man is that which the circumstances in which he is placed make him, and it is upon external surroundings that his progress to civilisation in a great measure depends. He is either obstructed or assisted by the influences of surrounding Nature. Of such influences none is more important than that exercised by climate. A hot climate renders physical, and still more mental, labor difficult, and causes every effort to be regarded as an evil. In such climates, too, Nature is usually prolific; the necessity for manual labor scarcely exists, and, as a consequence, mental activity correspondingly languishes. The intense disinclination experienced by Europeans in the tropics to engage in any mental labor is well known; and it is only by a great exertion of will that it can be combated."§

In addition to this obstructing influence, the same writer proceeds:—

> "The West Coast of Africa possesses an extraordinary one, namely, a climate which is most inimical to man.

* A. Reville, *The Devil: His Origin, Greatness, and Decadence*, p. 6 (1871).
† J. H. King, *The Supernatural*, vol. i., pp. 271-2.
‡ J. H. King, *The Supernatural*, vol. i., p. 9; vol. ii., p. 179.

* J. G. Frazer, "The Beginnings of Religion and Totemism among the Australian Aborigines," *Fortnightly Review*, Sept., 1905.
† J. G. Frazer, *Fortnightly Review*, Sept., 1905.
‡ Miss M. H. Kingsley, *West African Studies*, p. 124.
§ A. B. Ellis, *The Ibhi-Speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa*, p. 4.

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and which is commonly believed to be in that respect the worst in the world."

Even among Government officials, who only remain for twelve months' at a time and then return to England to recruit their health, "the death-rate is abnormally high." He further observes:—

> "Now the Negroes, though to a certain extent habituated through centuries of custom to the climatic conditions of West Africa, suffer therefrom in just the same way as do Europeans, though of course in a less degree.....The climate is, in short, unhealthy for them also, and that an unhealthy climate enfeebles both mind and body is very generally acknowledged" (p. 6).

(*To be continued.*) W. MANN.

War and Books.

> "There is delight in singing, though none hear
> Beside the singer, and there is delight
> In praising, though the praiser sit alone
> And see the praised far off him, far above."
> —LANDOR.

WAR tramples into the dust delights of the imagination as well as the beauty of the earth, and one of the effects of the European contest is that it is keeping the book-trade in a state of suspended animation. Books on the War are being hurried to the press by hustling publishers, and until the present tension is relieved there will be little else published, save the necessary publications such as works of reference and the like.

Despite the multiplication of Free Libraries, every one who cares for books likes to be his own librarian. A town council, mainly composed of successful, but uneducated, shopkeepers, seldom has the necessary culture to lay down the law as to books that even the most inexperienced readers should attempt to peruse. There are books which no lover of literature can afford to be without; classics, ancient and modern, on which the world has pronounced its verdict. These works, in whatever shape we may be able to possess them, are the necessary foundations of even the smallest collection. Homer, Dante, and Shakespeare, Cervantes, Milton, and Moliere, Gibbon and Scott, must be included by every lover of letters. The list of the classics is short, and, when we go beyond it, the tastes of men begin to differ widely.

A book is a friend whose face is constantly changing. If you read it when you are recovering from an illness, and return to it years after, it is altered surely, with the change in yourself. As a man's tastes and opinions are developed, his books put on a different aspect. He hardly knows the sonorous music of the "Songs Before Sunrise" he used to declaim, and the epigrammatic charm of "Omar Khayyam" sounds like "the horns of elfland faintly blowing." Books change like friends, like ourselves, like everything. But they are most piquant in the contrasts they provoke, when the friend who gave them is a success, though we laughed at him; altered in any case, and estranged from his old self and days. The vanished past returns when we look at the pages. The vicissitudes of years are packed in a thin octavo, and the shivering ghosts of desire and hope return to the forbidden home in the heart of fancy, when,—

> "sound upon Life's darkening slope
> The ground-whirl of the perished leaves of Hope,
> The wind of Death's imperishable wing."

It is as well to have the power of recalling them always at hand, and to be able to take a comprehensive glance at the emotions which were so powerful and full of life, and are now faded and of less account than the memory of the dreams of childhood,—

> "The rainbow comes and goes,
> And lovely is the rose;
> The moon doth with delight
> Look round her when the heavens are bare;
> Waters on a starry night
> Are beautiful and fair;
> The sunshine is a glorious birth;
> But yet I know, wher'er I go,
> That there hath passed away a glory from
> the earth."

Some readers there are who can read anything, from "Three Men in a Boat" to the "Analects of Confucius," with the same avidity, the same distressing want of literary perspective. Some seem born with a good literary taste, who instinctively know what is good from what is bad. Others, and these are the large mass of readers, grope blindly about for years through volumes of rubbish before they reach that which is best. They have to acquire a literary taste. The appetite is there, but it has to be cultivated. For the greatest possession of a reader is the power that Charles Lamb possessed of distinguishing between books that are books and books that are not books. "The way to perfection," says Walter Pater, "is through a series of disgusts," and only the man or woman who has been a seeker after truth in theology or science knows the full significance of this saying.

The multiplicity of interests and tastes, growing with our life, adds to the difficulty with which we answer the question, "What shall I read?" It is essentially a modern difficulty. In a less feverish age they managed things better. There is one of Austin Dobson's charming old-world idylls which is well worth reading. Mr. Dobson has a genius for catching the spirit of the eighteenth century. He is sketching a portrait of a gentleman of the old school:—

> "We read, alas! how much we read,
> The jumbled strifes of creed and creed,
> With endless controversies feed
> Our groaning tables.
> His books—and they sufficed him—were
> Cotton's 'Montaigne,' 'The Grave' of Blair,
> A Walton much the worse for wear,
> And 'Æsop's Fables.'"

And the old gentleman was less of a Philistine than many of us think. If we have access to the philosophy of Plato, the common sense of Socrates, the inspiration of Plutarch's "Lives," and can commune with the myriad-minded Shakespeare, we are not bereft of literature. Through what stages must men have not passed in countless generations to have produced such transcendant genius. They form the richest of legacies. What are the petty philanthropies of the world compared with the noble dowry of knowledge which these men have left to the world. They teach a man to reverence himself and to love his neighbor too. The poorest man, if he possess such friends, is to be envied, not pitied.

The eloquent ages tell the same tale. Down the long roll of humanity these are the names that gleam and sparkle, the characters whose influence has streamed like the sun over the dark places of the world, and chased before it the shadows.

A Socrates in his condemned cell, discoursing quietly on philosophy, a Bruno going to his fiery death, has more charm to the true man of our day than all the victories and glories of Alexander and Napoleon, and their impress on humanity is as Niagara to a drop of rain. Nations may war and fight, but the great purpose of the world is peace and advancement. The needle may be shaken from the course, and may appear to waver and change, but ever it comes back to the true pole. In the great stream of history, in the struggle for existence, the true victors have ever been those who adjusted themselves to the purpose of the world: those who have with the greatest faithfulness helped forward the great ideals, Liberty and Fraternity.

Literature may be said to be the one thing which is at once universal and immortal. Time devours all else. History becomes doubtful or forgotten; sciences change, religions die, sculptures crumble, and paintings perish; but great literature, never fading, never dies. Homer's birthplace and the events of his life are unknown, yet his characters live as freshly at this hour as they did millenniums ago. Lucretius, the noblest Roman poet, died twenty centuries ago. The hearts that have leapt at his tale of Iphigenia would have marched armies to her rescue. The marbles of Phidias and his contemporaries are now but fragments, but Catullus's lament for his dead brother sounds across the cen-

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turies like a linnet's song in the pauses of the wind. More than half a millennium of time and thousands of miles of space, and across the far deeper abyss of thought and faith, old Omar Khayyam still sings. Dante has been the supreme glory of Italy for six hundred years. Shakespeare, the uncrowned king of literature, counts more subjects than all the Pharaohs, and commands a more lasting allegiance than the Guelphs or the Romanoffs. To enhance prosperity, to soften adversity, people solitude, and, like flowers, adorn cottage and palace alike, is one of the functions of literature.

> "What good is like to this,
> To do worthy the writing, and to write
> Worthy the reading and the world's delight?"

MIMNERMUS.

Acid Drops

According to a *Times* report a protest has been issued by Professor Ernst Haeckel and Professor Rudolf Eucken, of Jena, against the behavior of England in the present war. The following passage is, to say the least of it, somewhat curious:—

> "What is happening to-day will be inscribed in the annals of history as an indelible shame to England. England fights to please a half-Asiatic Power against Germanism. She fights not only on the side of barbarism, but also of moral injustice, for it is not to be forgotten that Russia began the war because it was not willing there should be a thorough expiation of a wretched murder.
>
> "It is the fault of England that the present war is extended to a world war, and that all culture is thereby endangered. And why all this? Because she was envious of Germany's greatness, because she wished at all costs to hinder a further extension of this greatness. She was only waiting for a favorable opportunity to break out to the detriment of Germany, and she therefore seized most promptly on the necessary German advance through Belgium as a pretext in order to cloak her brutal national selfishness with a mantle of respectability."

We hesitate to believe that Professor Haeckel is responsible for these words. It is hardly the way, in any circumstances, in which a representative of the land of Goethe has any right to address the land of Shakespeare; and Haeckel, of all men, should show more respect for the land of Darwin. And what about the land of Voltaire? France is not even mentioned in this quotation. One would think that the writers had never heard of Alsace-Lorraine. Why is it "necessary" (for Germany, of course) to "advance through Belgium" except to advance through France to Paris? Why are the Belgians supposed to have no right to their own independence, which is really all that "neutrality" means? If Germany has a right to violate Belgian neutrality for *her* own ends, has England no right to defend it for *her* own ends? Is not that neutrality guaranteed, under the law of nations, by both of them? And why is the violator to be called virtuous and the defender a scoundrel? Is every nation to be punished, according to the will of Germany, for refusing to obey the orders of Germany? The idea is monstrous. And in subjecting Belgium to all the worst horrors of war, together with gratuitous barbarities, the Kaiser has acted like a fiend rather than a man. That he is still followed by a whole nation shows Shelley's prescience in the fine line about "King-deluded Germany."

Deliberate vileness, such as the sacking of Louvain, should put the Kaiser outside the recognition of humanity. To denounce him as an enemy to civilisation, and to declare that there is no safety or dignity for the world until he is hunted down and slain, is the duty of every self-respecting country. The Japanese acted humanely in their war with Russia. There is no need to talk about "semi-Asiatic" Powers. And what is "Germanism"? Renan's noble letter to Strauss, after the Franco-German war, pointed out that the hegemony of Europe had changed hands. It had been transferred from France to Germany. "Thirty years hence," Renan said, "we shall ask you what you have done with it." And what *have* they done with it? The symbol of Germanism is a rifle and a sword. It is responsible for the militarism of Europe; in other words, for the decivilisation of Europe. With endless gabble about God as the Kaiser's personal friend and Germany's sworn defender.

"If one smite thee on the one cheek, turn unto him the other also."—Jesus Christ. "Germany must be utterly and entirely smashed up."—Rev. A. J. Waldron.

Here is a statement from an American paper—the *Philadelphia Ledger*—that all sensible people and well-wishers to civilisation would do well to bear in mind:—

> "The pillars of civilisation are undermined and human aspirations bludgeoned down by no Power, but by all Powers; by no autocrat, but by all autocrats; not because this one or that has erred or dared or dreamed or swaggered; but because all, in a mad stampede for armament, trade, and territory, have sowed swords and guns, nourished harvests of death-dealing crops, made ready the way."

That seems to us an exact summary of the situation. Who actually begins the quarrel is a question of really minor importance when *all* have been so acting as to make a quarrel inevitable. Had the Christian nations been allied together by bonds of mutual respect, brotherhood, or admiration, war on any large scale would have been impossible. But this has not been the case. They were allied not because of mutual good feeling, but because of mutual hatred of someone else. And alliances on that basis cannot be any genuine guarantee of peace, but may easily become provocative of war.

The August issue of the *Hackney Parish Monthly*—a religious journal—was, we expect, published before the outbreak of the war, otherwise it would hardly have inserted the Bishop of Chelmsford's remark, "Was it a matter of chance that we had a President of the United States who believed, who preached the worth of that Book; that here in England we had a King who was not ashamed to say he read a chapter every day of his life; that in Germany they had a man who openly said that he tried to fashion his life and his work on the teaching of that Holy Book?" We wonder what the Bishop now thinks of the influence of the Bible upon the Kaiser? Stupidity has a boomerang capacity of returning to the point from which it is launched.

The Bishop of Chelmsford was exulting on the increase in the circulation of the Bible. On the other hand, the Bishop of Norwich is lamenting the ominous decline of Bible reading. Both bishops are correct. There has been a larger number of Bibles circulated; but there is less devotional reading of the Bible. The truth is, that the circulation of the Bible is almost as artificial as the circulation of a trading circular. It is circulated in large numbers because it is to the direct interest of a powerful and wealthy corporation that it should be. It is accepted, or bought, in this country, at least, for various reasons that are quite unconnected with any desire to read the Bible. In this respect the Bible stands alone. The circulation of a thousand copies of any other book proves absolutely that there are a thousand people, at least, who desire to read it. The circulation of 10,000 copies of the Bible only proves that some Society is interested in 10,000 people getting hold of it. To argue the value of the Bible from the number of copies circulated is exactly like a pill-maker proving the quality of his pills by the number of circulars that are placed in letter-boxes.

According to some of the daily papers a determined effort is to be made to capture German trade. In that case bronze "gods" will be made again in Birmingham, and giddy gauds in many other places in England.

Some foreign liners have been held up. We wish some penny-a-liners in Fleet-street had suffered the same fate.

A provincial paper recently referred in its war notes to the "fact" that "the great Garibaldi" had offered his services to the French Army. It would be unkind to suggest that the editor deserves a "biscuit."

According to the daily papers the Mohammedans have been praying for the success of the British troops. With the whole of Europe in a ferment of fanaticism, and the almond-eyed Japanese doing their Oriental best to imitate them, the "Lord" will have to defend his ears with some of Herbert Spencer's woollen plugs.

Bishop Boyd Carpenter has broken into verse over the subject of the War. Here are two lines:—

> "In thee alone we place our hope,
> Thou keeper of the just.

We do not like that reference to a "keeper" in the last line. It suggests Colney Hatch too forcibly.

The Christian proprietors of the *Daily Telegraph* have felt the lack of present-day poetry to express the War

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feeling adequately, and have reprinted some of Rudyard Kipling's outworn outbursts. Why don't they reset in block type the "Cursing Psalm" from the Old Testament. "God's" ways are so much better than our ways.

Lord Alfred Douglas has joined the French Army, and is now at the front. This is good news, for had he joined the British Army he might have sought absolution at the hands of the Bishop of London.

Mr. H. G. Wells has been hailed as a prophet for his anticipations in "The War in the Air." Will someone kindly make a claim for Milton, who has much to say of the heavenly militia?

A War Book of Facts has been issued. We are heartily glad to hear it, for the newspapers are as full of fiction as the Bible.

The Rev. Rhondda Williams has the happy knack of seeing quite clearly whatever he wishes to see. In the *Christian World* for August 27 he asserts that "a national interpretation of the world and of human nature is not barren in its yield as regards the reality of God." We confidently give that assertion the lie direct. We rather agree with Newman when he says that "it is a question whether Atheism is not as philosophically consistent with the phenomena of the physical world as the doctrine of a creative and governing power." We go further than the great Cardinal, and boldly declare that Atheism is the only consistent philosophy of the Universe. Mr. Williams does not interpret the world rationally, but spiritually, or religiously. In other words, he interprets it as a believer in God, and, at best, his reason plays a very subordinate part in the process. No parson believes in the free play of the pure intellect, because, as Newman says, it "forms the inlet for an all-corroding and all-dissolving Scepticism, the very poison of the soul." We differ from all the parsons, holding with Mill, that "the free play of the pure intellect is the necessary and sufficient guarantee of all improvement of the race."

Mr. R. J. Campbell is a believer in what he calls angelic ministry. He thinks there are guardian angels hovering round, always ready to come to the help and succor of distressed human beings. Curiously enough, he alludes to the tragedy which came to Mark Twain in the sudden death of his eldest daughter, and tells us that no God of love and sympathy, no angels of light and cheer, came to comfort the great writer in the supreme sorrow of his life. Why did the tender-hearted Father of the race, why did the ministering spirits, withhold the aid he so much needed? Why?

A recent issue of the *South African Review* contains an indictment of Salvation Army "Charitable" methods that will occasion small surprise to those who remember the controversy here when Mr. Manson published his book dealing with this much-boomed institution. It appears, also, that the Army in South Africa is following the same plan that was adopted here—silence. They know that in the long run that is their wisest policy. A reply means controversy, and controversy might lead to inquiry. And that is the last thing the Army desires. Inquiry by journalists eager for "copy," and who are ready to take the reports of Army officials without question may be tolerated—even welcomed. But inquiry by independent and capable men it will not have if it can be prevented. The "Army" trust to the ignorance of many, and the indifference of nearly all for protection.

The *South African Review* gives a number of cases of men turned from the Army's shelters who ought to have been admitted, and of the callousness of officials when no advertising end has to be served. It also emphasises the unpaid and underpaid labor employed by the Army in South Africa, as in England. It says:—

> "The 'Social' farms which are blessed with the name of these people, do not benefit the applicant financially. A man is only employed on the condition that he labors in return for his food and bed, and the food at the farm at Rondebosch is worse than that supplied to convicts at any of the gaols. Some of the out and out plodders, whose duties consist of rising about three or four o'clock in the morning to make arrangements for the delivery of milk, may receive remuneration of something like 12s. a month."

On the farms in Durban, Driefontein, and Rondebosch, all visited by the writer of the article, native labor is employed at the rate of from £2 to £3 per month. Some have the brother white Christian, compelled to ask for help, paid at 3s. per week—or nothing; and the black laborer employed at 10s. or 15s. per week.

Here is another illuminating excerpt:—

> "At the social farm in Durban, one of the finest creameries in the country has been built by this underpaid and unpaid labor. The milkman there, who held a position of trust on 25s. a month, absconded with the takings on one occasion. It is believed that no criminal process was taken against him, as in the first place the magistrate would be inclined to look leniently on a case of this kind where the employee was so outrageously underpaid, and this circumstance would certainly have alienated public sympathy from the Army."

The Army is also accused of "faking" its statistics of "free" meals distributed by incorporating the meals issued to the men acting as cooks, cleaners, waiters, night watchmen, etc. Finally, of the accommodation provided, the writer says:—

> "The beds are vermin-infested, the towels are as dirty as dishcloths, there is never any soap provided with which to keep one's self clean, and yet they have the effrontery to come forward as public benefactors to the outcast."

It is the same tale over again. And doubtless the Army officials feel as Mercury did when the gods were listening to the dispute between the sceptic and the believer: What does it matter if a sensible man here and there agrees with the sceptic; all the fools are on our side?

The Bishop of Zanzibar entertains a damagingly low estimate of the Christian world. A sermon by him appears in the *Church Times* for August 28, in which he says: "To those of us who live outside the civilised world and look at it across the ocean, it has seemed over and over again that vision is dead; that the civilised world, calling itself the Christian world, has had hardly anything to offer to the new races to which it comes." His lordship is quite right. The Christian world is not one whit better than the Pagan, and consequently the very idea of foreign missions is the most ridiculous ever heard of. And yet the Bishop is a missionary.

The Bishop believes in a dragon—"that dragon, the great serpent called Satan," the arch-liar of the Universe. Now, the dragon's greatest lie is that man is ultimately independent of God; that man develope apart from God, and in his own power will attain to his own destiny. A dozen years ago Londoners heard this lie with great horror from such places as the City Temple pulpit; but those who were blind enough to love it called it, not the lie of lies, but the New Theology. The gist of the New Theology was that "God could be ignored." Poor Mr. Campbell knows now that he is—or *was*, during the wild days of his New Theology campaign—not a minister of Christ, but a messenger of the great serpent called Satan, assiduously telling thousands of people the greatest of all lies.

The more we know of the extremely orthodox Bishop of Zanzibar, the more interesting he becomes to us. After the lie of the dragon comes that of the great beast, which is, that *the State is greater than God*. Then appears the third lie, the lie of the false prophet, which is, "that Jesus Christ has not come in the flesh, and therefore that Christian brotherhood is a mere dream, and that brotherhood, if ever it come, will be the fruit of a mere process of evolution." Now, because we have all more or less listened to and adopted these awful lies, the curse of war has been inflicted upon us. The Bishop says:—

> "Think, then, of the great lies, the lie of the dragon, the lie of the beast, the lie of the false prophet, which in God's judgment and in God's mercy have brought us to our present pass."

Is it any wonder that the churches are abandoned and the altars deserted?

A man named Kirk was killed by a passing motor outside St. Martin's Church, London. What our Scotch friends would call a case of two kirks.

Owing to the monetary crisis the Cardinals of the Roman Church are unable to get their monthly salaries, says a daily paper. We hope that the scarlet-cloaked ecclesiastics will not imperil their mortal souls by using Shavian adjectives.

What Polytheists these Christians are! At social functions, at places of worship, in newspapers, and even in public-houses the *dramatis personæ* of the Popular Superstition are hourly invoked. It is a species of intoxication in which the votaries seem unable to distinguish between the god of battles and the god of bottles.

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Saint Peter, who is alleged to have charge of the gates of heaven, together with his staff, must be working overtime just now. Maybe, to please the military arrivals, the warlike old saint wears the sword with which he cut off someone's aural appendage many years ago.

Handkerchiefs with alleged portraits of Field Marshal Lord Kitchener are being sold on the kerbs by itinerant merchants. His lordship, who is not a young man, appears to have one Christlike quality in the pictures, for he always remains about thirty years of age.

Dr. G. Pascal, founder and former editor of the *Entente Cordiale Review*, is a humorist. A short time since he was visited by a police constable for the purpose of registering his name as an alien. As a consequence, the doctor says he is half inclined to change the name of the great Pascal to that of Rascal, "and make it more English."

"A soldier can be made in a few months, but it takes four years to make a sailor," says a halfpenny paper. The clergy pretend to turn a "devil" into an "angel" in a few minutes—fees as per scale.

Some of the religious papers have thought it good policy to write of the late Pope's "obscurantism," of his antipathy to advanced thought, etc., etc. The criticisms seem to us extremely ill-advised. All they mean is that the Pope was a Christian and believed in Christianity. It might even be, although of this there may be doubts, that his attitude represented deliberate policy. A far-seeing man might well conclude that concessions to the "Liberal" school of theologians only pave the way for still further concessions, and, above all, weaken the support of the more orthodox type of mind. In the long run that policy gains nothing. An army in which each unit is devoted to the same idea is a far more effective instrument than one which is divided by all manner of conflicting ideals. And although the Papal policy may have offended some, it is certain that it contented a much greater number. And when we bear in mind that the teachings to which the Pope clung were all part of historic Christianity, we must confess to feeling more respect for the one who makes a straight fight for his belief, however mistaken we may believe him to be, than for those whose chief anxiety is to trim and shape so as to secure a larger measure of popular support.

The "Asterisks" column in the *Star* contains the wittiest paragraphs in the daily press. Here is an excellent example. "Eligible Cardinals are now anxiously studying Mr. Belloc's *Path to Rome*, and wondering if it would be safe."

The *Christian World* for August 27 is in a state of tumultuous rapture over what it calls "the soothing influence" of the Churches in the present war-time. At last preachers have discovered that they have "a great function to fulfil and great messages to deliver." The article is intended to serve as an advertisement of the same week's issue of the *Christian World Pulpit*, which contains sermons on the war by Dr. Clifford, Dr. Campbell Morgan, and Canon Wilberforce. On consulting these sermons, we learn that Dr. Clifford *soothes* his people by informing them that Great Britain is nearly, if not quite, as responsible for the unsheathing of the sword as Germany; that Dr. Campbell Morgan comforts his congregation by repeating the hoary-headed old lie, "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice"; and that Canon Wilberforce tries to calm the disturbed feelings of his hearers by assuring them that he knows what no human being ever has known, or ever can know, namely, that the Lord who reigns is omnipotent love. We verily pity the credulous simpletons who pretend to be soothed and comforted by such palpable falsehoods.

Some divines are of opinion that the present war is going to solve all problems and cleanse the earth from all evils. Dr. Orchard does not hesitate to affirm that "we shall never need to waste our breath upon the belief in force, the trust in statecraft, and the appeal to selfishness again," because "their Nemesis has arrived." Such an assertion is foolish in the extreme. War has never resulted in the moral regeneration of the people engaged in it. Was either France or Prussia in any degree ennobled by the war of 1870? The inevitable tendency of war is to degrade and demoralise all who take part in it; and the present sanguinary conflict is not likely to be an exception to the rule.

Dr. Orchard goes to the length of saying that the war now being waged is at once "a terrible catastrophe," and "obviously an apocalypse of God." That it is "a terrible catastrophe" is beyond all doubt; but it is the sheerest nonsense to call it a revelation of God. Does the reverend gentleman believe in and worship "the Lord of Sabaoth"? Is the Deity he glories in and preaches "a man of war"? What infinite folly it is to imagine that the bloody war now in progress is "obviously an apocalypse" of a tender-hearted, loving Father in heaven! Dr. Orchard goes further still when, in answer to the question, "Where now is the kingdom of Christ which we believed was growing up in our midst"? He says, "It may be that this is the way that the kingdom is to come; and that only by this means shall the foundations be laid bare on which alone the City of God can be built." It would be impossible to surpass the absurdity of that sentence; not even a pulpiteer could do it.

The worship of the God of Battles has everywhere superseded the worship of the Man of Sorrows. The headquarters of the Young Men's Christian Association has been turned into a barracks, and the mild excitement of draughts and tea and toast is suspended by the warlike Twelfth London Territorials. The irony is as complete as if they displayed a notice, "No Christian Need Apply."

The Bishop of London has benefited to the amount of £100 under the will of the late Mr. H. E. Trevanion, who died from veronal poisoning at Hove in 1912. His lordship will thus be enabled to purchase a splendid uniform for his six weeks' campaigning.

The Act of Parliament dealing with aliens and alien enemies, which has been enforced recently, is a very ancient and drastic statute. In seaport towns it would have roped in the twelve disciples.

The Bishop of Khartoum, who was a footballing celebrity in earlier days, is going to the front as a chaplain. As a sky-pilot, he will run little risk of having his inside left on the field.

The search for the soul is a quest that has been going on throughout the centuries, but it is now in a fair way of being settled. We saw the other day, outside a picture palace, a notice: "A Woman's soul, 3,000 feet long." Now we shan't be long!

The war has had a terrible effect on the publishing world, and last week no less than twenty-three publications were suspended. In addition, most of those still being issued are greatly reduced in size. One of the defunct periodicals is a religious paper, and we wonder if the editor is sure of a glorious resurrection.

THE CITY CHOIR.

I WENT to hear the city choir,
The summer night was still;
I heard the music mount the spire,
They sang: "He'll take the pil—"

"I'm on! I'm on!" the tenor cried,
And looked into my face;
"My journey home! My journey home!"
Was bellowed by the bass.

"It is for the—! It is for the—!"
Shrieked the soprano shrill;
I know not why they looked at me
And yelled: "He'll take the pil—!"

Then, clutching wildly at my breast,
Oh, heaven! my heart stood still.
"Yes, yes," I cried, "if that is best,
Ye powers! I'll take the pil—"

As I, half fainting, reached the door,
And saw the starry dome,
I heard them sing, "When life is o'er
He'll take the pilgrim home."

The secret of success is concentration; wherever there has been a great life, or a great work, that has gone before. Taste everything a little, look at everything a little; but live for one thing. Anything is possible to a man who knows his end and moves straight for it, and for it alone.—*Olive Schreiner*.

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To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £196 14s. 6d. Received since:—A. D. Corrick, £1; Geo. Smith (2nd sub.), 10s.; A. W. Hutty, 2s. 6d.; A Sergeant of the British Army and Wife, 10s.; E. Brooks, £1; E. B. (2nd sub.), £1 1s.; E. Lechmere, 10s.; W. Cromack and Friend, 5s.; Hy. Organ, 2s. 6d.

A. W. HUTTY.—"Stopping" a war is rather a dream. Something more than advice is necessary. That is why we say that peace can only be served *during* peace.

MORRIS CHRISTOPHER.—August 31 is late for a notice of a death on August 8—and Tuesday too!

E. B., sending a second cheque for the President's Honorarium Fund, wishes he could make it a hundred times as much. He adds that "if *all* who enjoy and profit by the intellectual treat provided for them in the *Freethinker* would put their shoulders to the wheel, and give one determined push, this Fund would reach the maximum asked for in no time."

A. RYMER.—Shall be read at once. Glad you "have found the *Freethinker* an inspiring force."

W. CROMACK.—Thanks for taking two copies every week.

H. R. ROSETTI.—Thanks.

A. MILLAR.—No space left this week. Shall appear in our next.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 6d.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote's business calls are very heavy this week. First, there is the business side of the paper to deal with at this critical time; second, there are sudden unexpected difficulties to be met of a character which can hardly be a theme for common publicity. Then there is the call of that week with our old friend, de Caux, at Yarmouth, right opposite the useless armaments of the Kaiser, who has ships but no water—a thing which he appears to have overlooked. For these and other reasons Mr. Foote doesn't feel dying for work just at present. And his old friends will forgive him for a little laziness now and then. They know he has done more than one man's share of work in the world already.

At the Conference of the N. S. S. held in 1913, it was resolved that one Sunday during September in every year should be called by the branches the "Charles Bradlaugh Sunday," and, whenever possible, on the day nearest to the anniversary of Charles Bradlaugh's birth, lectures or readings dealing with his life and work should be delivered. Charles Bradlaugh was born on September 26, 1833, and branches are therefore reminded that this year "Bradlaugh Sunday" will be celebrated on September 27.

Professor E. S. Beesly opens the September number of the *Positivist Review* with an able and impartial article on the war. With reference to Germany's refusal to promise to respect the neutrality of Belgium, Professor Beesly makes the following strong protest:—

> "Now to the maintenance of this, Germany was as much pledged as France or England. Her invasion was an outrage on the public law of Europe, preceded by the proposal that Belgium should violate her clear duty, and followed by an attempted justification amazing in its flagrant cynicism. I confess I can hardly restrain my indignation when I think of those fields dedicated to peace and now filled with carnage, of that nation guaranteed inviolate by the most solemn engagements, and now given over to all the ruin of war. If this be suffered, then we may tear up all treaties, repudiate all international obligations, dissolve all international tribunals, abandon all hopes of peace and settled order, and accept the reign of military necessity and naked force. May that day never dawn!"

We say "Amen!" to this. The basest of all objections against any war is that wrong-doing outside our own frontiers is no business of ours. No wonder that the "Refusal of Aid Between Nations" roused the eloquent indignation of a poet like Dante Rossetti.

The following is an extract from an old friend and supporter:—

> "I have great pleasure in enclosing my annual subscription to the President's Honorarium Fund for 1914.....I realise that the war will have a serious effect upon the *Freethinker* and Freethought organisations, but although a difficult struggle is before you I know that as a man used to vicissitudes you will not easily be dejected. You have my warmest wishes for success in keeping our flag flying, and I beg to assure you of my hearty support."

We are afraid that leaving Newcastle-street (which is compulsory) and obtaining other premises in spite of Christian bigotry, with the expense of refitting, and the almost certain increase of rent, will be a greater tax upon us than even the war itself. And the two together! Ay, there's the rub!

We were much moved by the following letter, bearing no name, but bearing an address in Devonshire—good old Devonshire—the county of George Odger and Richard Carlile, and a crowd of other heroes, to say nothing of poets and statesmen:—

> "Dear Sir,—Kindly accept enclosed P. O. for 10s. towards your Fund as a token of gratitude from 'A Sergeant of the British Army and Wife.'"

We appreciate that "gratitude." We are proud of it. The biggest subscription is but a subscription. This is something more. War is a desperate business, but it is never got up by the soldier himself, who is sometimes nearly the finest type of man on earth. His primary object, then, is to defend his own country whenever it is attacked. Some foolish Pacifists (we were never of *that* kidney) sneer at the soldier as one who engages to *shoot* anybody for a shilling a day. Let it be so, if you will, but pray remember that he also engages to be *shot at* for a shilling a day. That alters the case a bit.

The other morning we saw a sight that made us feel absolutely tender towards the British soldier. About two hundred newly enlisted Tommies, some in kahki, some still in the civilian's clothes in which they "joined," were drawn up at the western mouth of Lombard-street. They had been told that their King and their Country wanted them. They had Lord Kitchener's word for it—and everybody regards him as an honest man. They had taken the great soldier's word, they had flocked to their country's standard, they were eager to smite down its enemies, they were ready to lose their own blood, their own lives, in its defence. They had also faced the fear of fears—apprehension for those near and dear to them when a "grateful country" might be all that stood between these and destitution. A "grateful country"! Heaven save the mark! A "grateful country" was represented then and there by the usual crowd which gathers at that spot. It will hardly be believed, but not a hand, not a voice, was raised to cheer and encourage them. Not a smile, save a cynical one, was on the face of any spectator. Winks were exchanged amongst the Mammonites. All the Tommy Atkinses in the world were, at bottom, fighting for these gentlemen. These gentlemen didn't cheer, they couldn't cheer, they had no country. They were worshipers of Mammon,—"the least erected spirit that fell." Soldiers, to them, only meant "food for powder." There was a mighty "call to arms" for "King and country," and this was the first result; marching in the broiling sun, without a sign of recognition from the "country." They might have been a gang of workmen going out to dredge the Thames, or something of that sort, instead of a band of newly enlisted soldiers in a time of war, marching out into the shadow of death from which many of them might never emerge. We had our own thoughts of that well-dressed and for the most part vulpine-looking crowd. And we took off our hat to Tommy Atkins.

Mr. F. J. Gould sends us a nice photograph of himself, taken at New York, with a pleasant inscription which we ought to value—and do.

Men create the gods after their own image, not only with regard to their form, but with regard to their mode of life —*Aristotle.*

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The Material Basis of Life.—II.

(Concluded from p. 539.)

CONSISTING so largely of proteid matter, protoplasm is to be considered as colloidal in character. But the elaborate examinations of living protoplasm which have been conducted by a host of investigators under the most refined microscopic conditions have revealed a life-stuff structure far more complex than that displayed by lifeless colloid.

The physical make-up of protoplasm is extremely involved, and several theories have been advanced to explain the ascertained facts. None of these theories has, so far, won universal biological acceptance, but for all practical purposes, unanimity of opinion on all the main outstanding issues is merely a matter of time.

The unequal amounts of water which protoplasm from hour to hour contains are largely responsible for the varying phases this life-stuff presents. Not only is protoplasm built up by an extensive variety of dissimilar substances, but the sum total of materials which constitutes a given quantity of living matter varies with the plants and animals that it produces. And it must not be forgotten that every protoplasmic structure is subject to never ceasing changes so far as the substances composing it are concerned. This constant transformation renders it extremely difficult to arrive at any definite concept of its exact state. Not merely are the constituents of protoplasm in a perpetual flux, but the very elements of living substance themselves become related to one another in the most various ways.

In order to fully understand life's mechanism it is necessary to study it in its dynamic state, and that is a condition so far unattained. As George Henry Lewes said many years ago, when we attempt to analyse "life," the organisms which manifest life have ceased to live long before our inquiry is completed. Abbott's comparison of living matter with a chronometer is an excellent one, and illustrates the difficulty in a very striking manner. He writes:—

> "A watch is a delicately constructed and complicated mechanism of many parts, which by their action in moving the hands in certain fixed relations of time and space enables us thereby to tell the time of day. It is possible for anyone to take such an instrument apart and make a little pile of the wheels, screws, and springs, but when he has done so, the mass of metal and jewels which he holds in his hands is no longer a watch, and cannot be made to serve its original purpose. The very apparent reason is that the inherent quality of the watch, by virtue of which it is a watch, that is, a timekeeper, is involved not only in the parts composing it, but in their relations to each other as well, and such a mechanism will run correctly only when every part is in its proper place and adjusted carefully to every other part with reference to the joint action of the whole."

What applies to the watch as a going concern applies with equal truth to the architectural phenomena of protoplasm. Its vital activities are inseparably associated with its entirety. Precisely as the separate pieces of matter must be properly fitted together to form a complete mechanical contrivance—whether it be watch or steam-engine—which is capable of performing work, so the chemical constituents which supply the material make-up of living substances must be so arranged as to form an organic whole that is capable of carrying out the functions of life. The architecture or organisation of organic matter is its all in all.

As soon as this architectural unity is tampered with, although the weight of its substance and its chemical constituents remain what they were, its structure has been destroyed, and the chemical compound ceases to live and breathe. From the standpoint of structure the watch analogy is complete, but, of course, unlike the solid material component parts of the time-piece, living material is largely composed of water. Protoplasm is, in consequence, capable of adapting itself through wide ranges of structural modification without injury. And it seems very probable that in this very power of adjustment to the ever changing conditions of existence is to be found the secret of those animal and vegetable variations upon which organic evolution depends.

The physical basis of life manifests the power of automatic movement. Its appearance, in the words of Dujardin, is that of a greyish, viscid, slimy, semi-transparent and semi-fluid substance. When its movements are unimpeded and not limited by the walls of vessels, this life-stuff flows in all directions, as we see it in the motions of the single-celled amœba, or in the white corpuscles of the blood-stream in higher animals. Prof. E. A. Minchin states:—

> "When confined in rigid envelopes, as in plant cells, the protoplasm exhibits streaming movements of various kinds. Even more essentially characteristic of the living matter than the power of movement, is the property of metabolism—that is to say, the capacity of assimilating substances different from itself and building them up into its own substance [anabolism], and again decomposing these complex molecules into simpler ones [katabolism] with production of energy in the form of heat, movement, and electrical phenomena.....Metabolism results not only in the generation of energy, but also, if anabolism be in excess of katabolism, in the increase of bulk and consequent growth and reproduction."

The structural or constitutional units of protoplasmic products are the all-important cellular bodies. The term "cell" traces its origin and adoption to the circumstance that one of the leading pioneers of what has since become the great science of Cytology, while studying the structure of a thin section of cork, made the discovery that the cork was built up of tiny chambers, similar in appearance to the cells of honey-comb. Subsequent investigations disclosed the fact that all organisms—both animal and vegetable—were made up of individual cells, much as a human dwelling is made possible by a certain definite arrangement of the separate bricks and stones which compose it. The shapes of these individual cells are subject to great modification. They are transformed to meet the multitudinous requirements of the organism to whose well-being they minister. The cells are found to vary to a greater and greater degree as we rise in the scale of life, but there are certain cellular characteristics which are universal, and these are to be regarded as fundamental to all protoplasmic structures. With the doubtful exception of the Monera, simple organisms which are allegedly destitute of a nucleus, and probably many bacteria whose protoplasm has, so far, eluded discovery, it may be said that every cell is differentiated into two protoplasmic parts. These consist of the more or less circular nucleus lying near the cell's centre, and composed of comparatively solid material, and the cytoplasm which is more fluid in its constitution than the nucleus. The cytoplasm and its contained nucleus together make up the cell. Very commonly the cell is surrounded by a definite and sometimes thickened cell-wall. This characteristic is conspicuous in the tissues of plants,

> "in which the cell-wall becomes very thick and rigid through the deposit of various carbohydrates (pectin, cellulose). It is the latter (or its derivative, lignin) that gives its characteristic rigidity and hardness to wood. In animals, on the other hand, in only one rather obscure group—the Ascidians or 'Sea Squirts'—does cellulose occur, and it is the exception rather than the rule for the cell-wall to attain any considerable thickness or prominence. In many animal cells there is no cell-wall at all, the viscosity and surface tension of the mass of protoplasm holding it together."

The nucleus is of different chemical constitution to the cytoplasm; it is marvellously complex, and it is by far the most important cellular constituent, while a complete understanding of its involved phenomena will, in all human probability, dissipate the difficulties which at present surround the profound problem of hereditary transmission.

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The cytoplasm is frequently provided with vacuoles which contain a watery fluid, starch grains, yolk granules, chlorophyll bodies which produce the green in the foliage of plants, and other materials. These substances may be viewed as the waste matters and by-products of cell-life, and are distinguished from the living protoplasm by the term *metaplasm*.

The nucleus or karyoplasm, as it is occasionally called in contrast to its encircling cytoplasm, having almost the same refractive index as cytoplasm, is very rarely visible in living cells. But the nucleus readily responds to staining, and is then quite distinctly seen. Under these conditions it becomes clearly outlined in its cytoplasmic setting, and its microscopic study is easily carried on.

The protoplasm of the nucleus consists of at least two substances. One of these substances stains easily with most dyes, and on that account is known as chromatin, while the other (the linin) "stains with great difficulty and looks like a sort of network or scaffolding supporting the chromatin. Both chromatin and linin are surrounded by a watery transparent fluid, sometimes termed hyaloplasm." A nucleolus is also present in many cells, but its purpose is as yet not understood.

The vast majority of cells carry a single nucleus, but in others several nuclei may be seen dotted through the cytoplasm. In the kingdom of plants the cell-wall or envelope is an important cell structure, as it furnishes the strength and rigidity which are as necessary to the plant as the skeleton is to animals. The presence or non-presence of a cell-wall is, however, very materially determined by the stress and strain to which the various cells are subjected. "In tissues where there are strains and stresses to be borne, cell-walls develop in response to such stimuli, but where they are not necessary they do not appear, or only partially develop."

It is very suggestive that such unwalled cells have just as many nuclei as if they were partitioned by cell-envelopes and led a semi-independent life. There is little reason to doubt that the presence of the nucleus is indispensable to the cytoplasm if it is to perform its functions with due efficiency. A tiny section of a cell, if it contain a fragment of nuclear matter will continue to live, while, on the contrary, a scrap of cytoplasm deprived of its nuclear substance soon stagnates and dies. The nucleus is thus obviously the centre of the cell's vitality, and we must agree with those eminent cytologists who picture the phenomena of cell-life as the products of "an area of protoplasm dominated by a nucleus."

All that has ever been truly explained in matters biological has been interpreted in terms of matter and motion, and that circumstance completely justifies the expectation that all future conquests of Nature's secrets will be won by strictly material methods. Both in theory and practice this great verity is fully realised by the overwhelming majority of contemporary biologists. The laboratory production of organic compounds has become a commonplace. The famous biologist Bütschli has succeeded in synthesising "artificial foams of minute structure which not only mimic the appearance of protoplasm, but can be made to exhibit streaming amœboid movements very similar to those of simple protoplasmic organisms."

But this is merely a beginning. The small school of vitalists and neo-vitalists is likely to become smaller. No solitary recent discovery in the slightest degree countenances their mystical theories. As that thoughtful botanist, H. C. Cowles says:—

> "Each year the list of 'vitalistic activities' of plants becomes more and more restricted through the establishment of a definite physical or chemical cause for what has been thought to have a vitalistic explanation, *while never in the history of science has any phenomenon, once explained on a chemical or physical basis, later been found to be vitalistic.*"

T. F. PALMER.

Joseph Priestley.—III.

BY G. W. FOOTE.

[Reprinted.]

(*Continued from p. 557.*)

PRIESTLEY settled finally at Northumberland, residing in a house surrounded by delicious gardens, and situated so as to command the finest prospect on the Susquehanna. Still full of scientific ardor, he endeavored to establish a college there. He drew up the plans, and was chosen president; but the promised support was not forthcoming, and only the shell of the building was erected. That scheme failing, he set about erecting a laboratory and a library in his own grounds. And there, beloved by all his neighbors, he spent his few remaining years of life, still, as of yore, philosophising and experimenting. One is glad to learn that his English friends still remembered and assisted him. Independently of £50 per annum which Mrs. Elizabeth Rayner allowed him from the time he left England, she left him by her will £2,000 in the four per cents. Mr. Michel Dodson left him £500, and Mr. Samuel Salt £100. The Duke of Grafton remitted to him annually the sum of £40—a mark of aristocratic generosity which one is pleased to find and to chronicle, seeing how infrequent the signs of that virtue are in the history of our peerage.

In 1801, Priestley was prostrated by a fever, which left him sadly debilitated. His digestion was greatly impaired, so that he was obliged to refrain from a solid diet, and to subsist entirely on pulpy foods or liquids. Gradually he grew worse and worse, but to the last, even to the very day of his death, he persisted in his studies. On the morning of Monday, February 6, 1804, he died as peacefully as a child slumbers. A few hours before his death he had assembled around his bedside the little ones of the family, who al dearly loved him; after kissing them and bidding them be good and laying upon them a few religious injunctions, full of that loving piety which accompanied him through his long life, he serenely composed himself for the last long sleep, from which the good old man hoped there would be a glorious awakening.

Priestley's constitution was naturally robust, but in early youth he had suffered from ulcerated lungs brought on by youthful indiscretions, which he himself thought worked no other injury than the toning of his constitution down to that degree of nervous sensibility most favorable to a studious life. His mental faculties were vigorous, and he never suffered from headaches or abnormal nervous excitement. In the morning he awoke fresh and active, and anxious to recommence his labors. He had a large measure of that perseverance and pluck which are said to characterise Englishmen, and a full share of that energy which Matthew Arnold affirms to be the indicator of genius. Those who delight in bewailing the brevity of life should take a lesson from the history of Joseph Priestley's labors. The length of life depends not altogether on the clock register, but on the intensity and completeness with which it is lived.

Priestley's labors may be divided into four kinds—theological, philosophical, political, and scientific. A brief account of each will be necessary before the reader can in any way appreciate what this philosopher wrote, thought, and discovered.

In politics Priestley was a Democrat. He believed that all legitimate governments are based upon the people's will and conducted solely in the people's interest. For years before his emigration to America this was his publicly declared political faith, and subsequently to that event he became fully convinced of the utility of Republican institutions. John Locke had affirmed that "the end of government is the good of the governed," long before Priestley wrote; but his theory had not met with general acceptance, although probably no one would have asserted that any Government could rightfully exist in antagonism to the manifest welfare of its subjects. To-day Locke's dictum is a theoretical commonplace, but two centuries ago the ruling classes secretly entertained, and the masses tacitly admitted, a semi-divine right inherent in wealth and title to govern the plebeian poor in any manner short of abso-

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lutely insupportable tyranny. Priestley, however, was too clear-sighted and too large-hearted to rest satisfied with such a monstrous theory as that. He rather thought, with Paine, whose political writings he highly approved and admired, that the rights of man should receive full recognition, and that justice should be no respecter of persons. This paragraph, from his famous papers on the First Principles of Government, is well worth reading even now:—

> "It must necessarily be understood, therefore, whether it be expressed or not, that all people live with society for their mutual advantage, so that the good and happiness of the members, that is, the majority of the members of any State, is the great standard by which everything relating to that State must finally be determined. And though it may be supposed that a body of people may be bound by a voluntary resignation of all their interests to a single person, or to a few, it can never be supposed that the resignation is obligatory on their posterity, because it is manifestly contrary to the good of the whole that it should be so."

This brief and emphatic utilitarian utterance is worth a vast deal of that windy eloquence which often passes current for political wisdom. Again, let us quote another passage full of vigor and earnestness, which doubtless proved most obnoxious to the governing politicians of Priestley's time, furnishing as it did an indirect justification of the revolutionary movement in France:—

> "But in the largest States, if the abuses of Government should at any time be great and manifest; if the servants of the people, forgetting their masters and their masters' interest, should pursue a separate one of their own; if, instead of considering that they are made for the people, they should consider the people as made for them; if the oppressions and violations of right should be great, flagrant, and universal; if the tyrannical governors should have no friends but a few sycophants, who had long preyed upon the vitals of their fellow citizens, and who must be expected to desert a Government whenever their interests should be detached from it; if, in consequence of these circumstances, it should become manifest that the risk which would be run attempting a revolution would be trifling, and the evils which must be apprehended there were far less than those which were actually suffered, and which were daily increasing; in the name of God I ask, what principles are there which ought to restrain an injured and insulted people from asserting their natural rights, and from changing, or even punishing, their governors—that is, their servants—who had abused their trust, or from altering the whole form of their Government, if it appeared to be a structure so liable to abuse?"

In Priestley's time Dissenters practised their religious worship only on sufferance, and as for more extreme heretics, they were quite beyond the pale of toleration or justice, being regarded as a species of noxious vermin, who might justly be expelled from society, or deprived of life, if fitting occasion arose for so treating them. The Established Church arrogantly claimed exclusive rights, and superciliously looked down upon all other sects from the elevation of its monstrous privileges. Against the existence of a State Church, Priestley always argued. He boldly asserted what even many of his Dissenting brethren were unprepared to admit, that the Government had no legitimate control over conscience, nor the right to support any opinions whatever.

In theology Priestley was a Unitarian, believing in one God, and denying the asserted divinity of Christ. He maintained that the divinity of Christ is nowhere asserted in Scripture, and was not acknowledged by the Early Christians. Primitive Christianity, he argued, was characterised by none of the excrescences of later developments of that faith, but was simply a recognition of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of Man. This position he maintains in his History of Early Opinions Concerning Jesus Christ, and in his History of the Corruptions of Christianity. These works are marked by great learning, and the latter is still popular and esteemed among Unitarians. The existence of God, Priestley thought, could be completely proved by the argument from design, which of course was only one that he, as an experientialist, could consistently deem valid. With the conclusive force of the Design Argument he seems to have been quite content, for he never evinced any sense of its manifold difficulties and defects. Probably, if he had lived a century later, in these days of evolution and development, his lucid intelligence would have perceived that looking through Nature up to Nature's God is a far more difficult process than it was once believed to be.

Priestley was in philosophy an experientialist of the school of Hobbes and Locke and Hartley. He believed that man has no native intuitions, no innate ideas, but that his conceptions and beliefs are determined by his powers of perception and his faculty of reason. All knowledge, he held, is the result of experience, and can come in no other way. Man he contemplated as an organised system of matter, regulated by purely mechanical laws, and no more than the lower animals possessing an independent soul. In his celebrated Disquisitions on Matter and Spirit, he maintains this position with a remarkable force, which has probably never been equalled by any other writer on the same side. The following quotation summarily expresses his views on this subject, and conveys a fair idea of his style and method of reasoning:—

> "The powers of sensation or perception and thought, as belonging to man, have never been found but in conjunction with a certain *organised system of matter*; and, therefore, those powers necessarily exist in, and depend upon, such a system. This, at least, must be our conclusion, till it can be shown that these powers are incompatible with other known properties of the same substance; and for this I see no sort of pretence.
>
> "It is true that we have a very imperfect idea of what the power of perception is, and it may be as naturally impossible that we should have a clear idea of it as that the eye should see itself. But this very ignorance ought to make us cautious in asserting with what other properties it may or may not exist. Nothing but a precise and definite knowledge of the nature of perception and thought can authorise any person to affirm, whether they may not belong to an extended substance, which has also the properties of attraction and repulsion. Seeing, therefore, no sort of reason to imagine that these different properties are *inconsistent* any more than the different properties of *resistance* and *extension*, I am, of course, under the necessity of being guided by the phenomena in my conclusions concerning the seat of the powers of perception and thought. These phenomena I shall now briefly represent.
>
> "Had we formed a judgment concerning the necessary seat of thought, by the *circumstances that universally accompany* it, which is our rule in all other cases, we could not but have concluded that in man it is a property of the *nervous system*, or rather of the brain. Because, as far as we can judge, the faculty of thinking, and a certain state of the brain, always accompany and correspond to one another; which is the very reason why we believe that any property is inherent in any substance whatever. There is no instance of any man retaining the faculty of thinking when his brain was destroyed; and whenever that faculty is impeded, or injured, there is sufficient reason to believe that the brain is disordered in proportion; and, therefore, we are necessarily led to consider the latter as the seat of the former.
>
> "Moreover, as the faculty of thinking in general ripens and comes to maturity with the body, it is also observed to decay with it; and if, in some cases, the mental faculties continue vigorous when the body in general is enfeebled, it evidently because, in those particular cases, the brain is not much affected by the general cause of weakness. But, on the other hand, if the brain alone be affected, as by a blow on the head, by actual pressure within the skull, by sleep, or by inflammation, the mental faculties are universally affected in proportion.
>
> "Likewise, as the mind is affected in consequence of the affections of the body and brain, so the body is liable to be reciprocally affected by the affections of the mind, as is evident in the visible effects of all strong passions, hope or fear, love or anger, joy or sorrow, exultation or despair. These are certainly irrefragable arguments, that it is properly no other than *one and the same thing* that is subject to those affections, and that they are necessarily dependent upon one another. In fact, there is just the same reason to conclude, that the powers of sensation and thought are the necessary result of a particular organisation, as that sound is the necessary result of a particular concussion of the air. For in both cases equally, the one constantly accompanies the other, and there is not in nature a stronger argument for a necessary connection of any cause and any effect."

Singularly enough, however, Priestley tenaciously adhered to his belief in immortality. He had discarded the imma-

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torial soul, but he contended for the literal resurrection of the body in accordance with the Christian revelation. The overwhelming difficulties of this doctrine, when viewed in the light of man's antiquity on earth, never presented themselves to the philosopher's mind. We can only regard this sophistical theory of Priestley's as one of those crazes which sometimes lurk in the secret recesses of great minds, defying all efforts to dislodge them, and actually compelling the sober reason to contrive arguments to justify their presence.

(To be concluded.)

What knowledge is of most worth? The uniform reply is—science. This is the verdict on all counts. For direct self-preservation, or the maintenance of life and health, the all-important knowledge is—science. For that indirect self-preservation, which we call gaining a livelihood, the knowledge of greatest value is—science. For the due discharge of parental functions, the proper guidance is to be found only in—science. For that interpretation of national life, past and present, without which the citizen cannot rightly regulate his conduct, the indispensable key is—science. Alike for the most perfect production and present enjoyment of art in all its forms, the needful preparation is still—science; and for the purposes of discipline—intellectual, moral, religious—the most efficient study is, once more—science.—*Herbert Spencer.*

The bishops preach that it is as difficult for a rich man to get into heaven as for a camel to go through the eye of a needle; yet they enrich themselves as greedily and as carelessly as if they, at any rate, never expected to smell brimstone as a consequence.—*Bradlaugh.*

Wendell Phillips, the famous abolitionist, was once travelling northwards, when he was accosted by a tract distributor, who was going his rounds in the corridor-train. "My friend," said he, approaching Phillips, "may I inquire what your aim in life is?" "Well," says Wendell, "*my* object in life is to benefit the negro." "Then," replied the missionary, "why do I find you travelling due north; why don't you go south, where the negroes are?" "Hum, yes," drawled Phillips, "there's a good deal in that. What's *your* aim in life, may I ask?" "My aim in life, sir," replied the missionary, in a pompous voice, "is to save souls from hell!" "Ha!" retorted Wendell; "then what on earth are you doing in this train? Why don't you go to hell and save them?"

We will speak out, and we will be heard,
Though all earth's systems crack;
We will not bate a single word,
Nor take a letter back.

We speak the truth, and what care we
For hissing and for scorn;
While some faint gleamings we can see
Of freedom's coming morn.

Let liars fear, let cowards shrink;
Let traitors run away;
Whatever we have dared to think,
That dare we also say.

—*Lowell.*

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Obituary.

Just a line to let you know of the death of my father, Morris Christopher, on August 8, aged 74, at Wolverhampton. For many years a subscriber to, and supporter of, the Freethought movement. He asked me, his son, to write after he had gone and say good-bye to Mr. Foote and his many friends in Birmingham and district.—MORRIS CHRISTOPHER.

"All's Right With the World."

THE Kaiser made war,
While his moustache he twirled,—
"God's in his heaven,
All's right with the world."

The banner of blood
And of rapine's unfurled,—
"God's in his heaven,
All's right with the world."

In the seas mines are sown
With red ruin upcurled,—
"God's in his heaven,
All's right with the world."

From the navies above
Deadly missles are hurled,—
"God's in his heaven,
All's right with the world."

Hosts unnumbered on land
To destruction are whirled,—
"God's in his heaven,
All's right with the world."

The Devil in man
Is aroused and uncurled,—
And *if* God's in his heaven,
All's wrong with the world!

B. D.

God and the Kaiser.

"GOD AND I." THE KAISER.

[The following clever verses appeared in the *Freethinker* over twenty years ago, and are from the pen of the late Mr. George Leslie Mackenzie, a frequent contributor to our pages. At the time of their first appearance they attracted much attention and were reprinted widely.]

We are a pair unique,
God and I;
Apart from ev'ry clique,
God and I;
He's strong and quick and winking,
And I am good at thinking;
We know no fear nor shrinking,
God and I.

The German folk we guide,
God and I;
We're both upon their side,
God and I;
My colleague's inspiration
Gives me determination;
We thus both bless the nation,
God and I.

A man of war 's the Lord,
So am I;
He's partial to the sword,
So am I;
I am the Lord's adviser—
Than one, two heads are wiser;
The Deity plus Kaiser,
God and I.

I hope and trust that we,
God and I;
Will never disagree,
God and I;
All jealousy we smother,
Each supplements the other;
We study one another,
God and I.

If ever we fell out,
God and I;
We'd both be put about,
God and I;
All other kings are, clearly,
His passive puppets merely,
But we are equals nearly,
God and I.

Of course, the Lord is chief—
God, not I;
My life on earth is brief,
Soon I'll die;
But, when my days are ended,
And I've to heaven ascended,
We'll have some matters mended,
God and I.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15 and 6.15, Messrs. Gallagher and Thompson, Debate, "Do We Live After Death?"

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 6, Mr. Schaller, a Lecture.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.30, Miss Kough, a Lecture. Derby-road, Ponders End (opposite "Two Brewers"): Wednesday, Sept. 9, at 8.30, Mr. Davidson, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, F. Schaller, "Some Crimes of Christianity"; 7.30, a Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Finsbury Park): 11.30, Mr. Rowney, a Lecture. Parliament Hill: 3.30, R. H. Rosetti, a a Lecture. Regent's Park (near the Fountain): 3.30, Mrs. Rosetti, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, J. Darby, "Christianity and Crime."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

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By C. COHEN.

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CONTENTS.

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THE

Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXXIV.—NO. 37 SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 1914 PRICE TWOPENCE

A counting-house passes away; a school remains.
—VICTOR HUGO.

War Flags.

THERE is an intimate relation between religion and war. Both belong to the age of faith. When the age of reason has fairly dawned both will be despised and finally forgotten. They are always and everywhere founded on ignorance and stupidity, although they are decorated with all sorts of fine names. The man of sense sees through all these fine disguises. He knows that the most ignorant people are the most credulous, and that the most stupid are the most pugnacious. Educated and thoughtful men shrink alike from the dogmas of religion and the brutalities of war.

The Christian deity is still the lord of hosts, the god of battles. His eyes delight to look over a purple sea of blood, and his devotees never invoke his name so much as when they are about to emulate his sanguinary characteristic. The clergyman does not shock, he only gratifies, the feelings of the orthodox world when he blesses the flag which is to float over scenes of carnage, and flame like a fiend's tongue over the hell of battle, where brothers of the same human family, without a quarrel in the world, but set at variance by thieves and tricksters, maim and mangle and kill each other with fratricidal hands, which ought to have been clasped in friendship and brotherhood.

Yet these hireling priests, who consecrate the banners of war, dare to prate that God is a loving father and that we are all his children. What monstrous absurdity! What disgusting hypocrisy! Surely the parent of mankind, instead of allowing his ministers to mouth his name over the symbols of slaughter, would command them to preach "peace, peace!"

> "Until the war-drums beat no longer and the battle-flags are furled
> In the parliament of man, the federation of the world."

Of course there is a comic side to this, as to almost everything else. The priests of the various nations consecrate rival banners, pray for victory for their own side, and swear that God Almighty is sure to give it them if they trust in him. Now what is the Lord to do when they go on in this way on opposite sides? He is sure to disappoint one party, and he is likely to get devilish little thanks from the other. A wise God would remain neutral, and say, "My comical little fellows, if you will go knocking out each other's brains because they are not strong enough to settle your differences by peaceful means, by all means get through the beastly business as soon as possible; but pray don't trouble me with your petitions for assistance; both sides are fools, and I wash my hands of the whole affair."

We have heard of an old Dutch commander who actually prayed the Lord to remain neutral, although from a different motive. On the eve of battle he addressed the deity in this fashion: "O Lord, we are ten thousand, and they are ten thousand, but we are a darned sight better soldiers than they, and, O Lord, do thou but keep out of it, and we'll give them the soundest thrashing they ever had."

Our Prayer Book pays a very poor compliment to the god of battles. "Give peace in our time, O Lord," says the preacher. "Because there is none other that fighteth for us but only thou O God," responds the congregation. The compilers of the Prayer Book evidently blundered, unless they secretly felt that the Lord of hosts was used up, and not worth a keg of gunpowder or an old musket.

Consecrating colors, like consecrating graveyards, is after all only a trick of trade. The clergyman only practises the arts of his profession, and probably laughs in his sleeve at his own public performance. Perhaps he knows that God, as Napoleon said, is always on the side of the big battalions; just as, probably, every bishop knows that Church corpses rot exactly like Dissenting corpses, although they lie in consecrated ground. Priestly mummeries will last as long as there is a demand for them. It is of little use to quarrel with the supply. The Freethinker's duty is to lessen the demand.

The war which is at present spreading death and desolation over a large part of Europe is greatly due to the personality of the German Emperor, who has never outgrown his childhood, when "a box of soldiers" was reckoned a suitable present. Ever since he came to the throne—or, at least, ever since he parted with Bismarck—he has been "playing at soldiers" on a bigger scale. He has saturated the German nation with the same folly, and they are following him to their own destruction in a war with the bulk of Europe. This could not have taken place under a Republic. It is only under a Monarchy that one man is able to pervert a whole nation in this way. The King rules by divine right and the grace of God; public documents, processes of law, the very coinage, proclaim this as if it were an actual fact; and to the people who are born and brought up under this delusion, the King stands for something supernatural and immortal.

Here, again, the evil influence of religion may be distinctly traced. Nothing of the kind is noticeable in France where religion has been dethroned from all public positions, and left as a purely private matter between the people and their own consciences. President Poincarré could not hurl the French Army at Germany, but the Kaiser has hurled the German Army at France. The President must respect the law, the Emperor follows his own will. And it is nothing but religion that renders this dangerous absurdity possible.

It is only in a very limited sense that war makes people think. Religion promotes war, and war in turn promotes religion. Barbaric practices stimulate barbaric modes of thought. Not the man, but the brute, is roused in people by a return to the settlement of quarrels by brute force. Kill or be killed becomes the law for human beings, as eat or be eaten was the law of existence for the lower animals. Life becomes atavistic instead of progressive. Man's face turns in the wrong direction, and the faster and farther he goes the more leeway he has to make up again when he recovers his better senses.

This war has stimulated the monarchical superstition in England. The King's portrait is on the cover of *The History of the War*—which he has never been near. It was announced that he was going to the front—at Aldershot! And "God Save the King" is the universal song—in spite of its ridiculous words.

G. W. FOOTE.

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Christianity's Failure.

ALL sorts of morals are being drawn and all kinds of lessons derived from the present condition of the European nations, and it is only natural that the Churches should draw therefrom conclusions favorable to themselves. To those who are not blinded by religious prejudice it would seem that the one certain thing is the decisive disproof of religion as a civilising force. This remains true even though one were to grant the claim that European nations are as they are because none of them have really adopted Christianity. For surely that is as clear a proof of failure as anyone could desire. Christianity is not a thing of yesterday. It has a very long history, and it has had unexampled opportunities of asserting its claims. To say, therefore, that it is still untried, is to admit wholesale and irretrievable failure. The first business of a religion is, obviously, to get itself adopted; and if it cannot do this in the course of nineteen hundred years, it had better be cleared out of the way, and so make room for a teaching with a more hopeful outlook.

It becomes still worse if it is argued that what we have had in actual operation is a Christianity distorted and utilised in the interests of selfish Powers. On that one may well ask, What is there about Christianity that it should so readily lend itself to schemes of governmental tyranny and social exploitation? For there is no doubt that, from the time of Constantine, Christianity has been so utilised. Whether it has been governmental or other forms of exploitation, Christianity has been universally recognised as a capital means to that end. Not so recognised by the exploited, of course. They have continued to look to it for consolation and deliverance. That has been the condition of its serviceableness. But the exploiters have had no doubt as to its value. In the old Roman Empire, Christianity converted the emperor into a sultan. It gave his rule the authority of divinity, and made disobedience a religious offence. It cannot be said with truth that prior to the establishment of Christianity the rule of the emperor was ever completely divorced from the popular will. It was Christianity that made this separation as complete as it ever can be made. Professor Seeley well points out that—

> "Constantine, if he was influenced by policy, was influenced by a wise policy when he extended his patronage to the Church. By so doing he may be said to have purchased an indefeasible title by a charter. He gave certain liberties, and he received in return passive obedience. He gained a sanction for the Oriental theory of government. In return he accepted the law of the Church. He became irresponsible with respect to his subjects on condition of becoming responsible to Christ."

Nothing could be more favorable to tyranny in every form. The Christianised Roman Emperor, like the German Kaiser, willingly admitted his responsibility to Christ, but he repudiated it in the only direction in which it could have social value. No religious ruler would ever dispute his responsibility to God for all he did; but, on the other hand, I cannot recall a single case in which this recognition has ever stood in the way of governmental wrongdoing. It cannot, for instance, be denied that the German Emperor is an intensely religious man. He believes in God, and he also believes God believes in him. It is idle to call his constant use of religious phraseology hypocritical. It is equally idle to say that the brutality of the German soldiery is a proof of that hypocrisy. It may be granted—what is extremely likely—that Kaiser William is a paranoic, and therefore a fit subject for medical attention and restraint. The fact remains that he is an intensely religious man, and that his natural inclinations—whether normal or morbid—have been sustained and strengthened by his religious beliefs.

The apologists who argue on the lines above indicated have thus to face this conclusion, and it is one that follows from the success of their own arguments. Christianity has never yet been adopted by any nation on a sufficiently general scale to warrant one saying that its conduct may be attributed to the Christian faith. On the other hand, tyrants have found in what they conceived to be Christianity encouragement in conduct that has involved widespread ruin, misery, and degradation. This is absolutely all that their arguments prove; and if that does not demonstrate the failure, the worthlessness, of Christianity, what does it prove?

Needless to say, this is not the conclusion at which Christian writers arrive. One religious journal says:—

> "If only there had been enough Christianity in the world, no man, prince, potentate, or private citizen, could have hated or envied or overreached or dreaded his neighbors enough to bring war to pass."

If only there had been enough Christianity! Whose Christianity? After all, Christianity in practice can only be what each one, or each Church, takes it to be. Whose Christianity is it, then, that is to make war and hatred impossible? Is it the Christianity of Germany? Obviously not. Is it the Christianity of England, of America, of Russia? Is it even the Christianity of any one of the Churches? Which of these has ever declared war wrong, or acted so as to make it impossible? At present, so far as this war is actually concerned, we are all agreed that England could not have kept out of it with honor; and we are, therefore, at one with the Churches in this respect. That, however, is true only under present conditions. The further question remains as to the responsibility for those conditions that make war sooner or later inevitable. And here the position of all the Churches is very different. Uniformly, in every country, and no matter the character of the war in which that country has been engaged, the influences of the Churches have been on the side of war. They have encouraged, they have blessed it; they have given it the moral and religious sanction without which the true nature of warfare might be more apparent. There are enough Christians in the world to make war a practical impossibility if only the Churches were genuinely on the side of peace.

In what way is more Christianity going to prevent war's recurrence? Will it cause people to even live amicably together? Consider one fact as illustrative of a whole class. The fact of this country being at war has, for the present at least, broken down a host of differences. Political divisions have, for the moment, disappeared. Men of all shades of religious opinion, and of no religious opinion at all, have volunteered for service, and are ready to lead a common life, share a common danger, for a common cause. They will eat together, sleep together, fight together, die together. The one thing they will not do is pray together. When it comes to the question of religion, all the old differences remain. The Catholic, the Protestant, the Jew, will each continue to perform his religious devotions in his own way, and so far alone. If they have ceased to quarrel for a time about religious formulæ and doctrines, it is only because more insistent and more fundamental social forces are making themselves felt. No amount of religious conviction is strong enough to bring these people together, working side by side for a common object. It could only be done, and has been done, by something more fundamental and more genuinely universal—by a direct appeal to the social nature of mankind.

There is no need to multiply instances. The one plain outstanding truth is that while the general tendency of the social forces is to unite people, that of religion is to divide them into hostile camps. In its wider aspects religion is always a seperative force. This is a fact that all statesmen, from Constantine onward, have had to recognise and deal with. Very often rulers have taken religion under their charge because they saw in it a useful agent for their purpose; but often they have been compelled to do so because they saw it meant splitting up the nation into so many warring groups. Let anyone, in imagination, strip from the various

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sects in this country the influence of a common social life, leaving only the religious belief, and then consider what prospect of co-operation would remain. It is true that these sects do co-operate to some extent now, but their co-operation is not based upon religion. Their union is due either to social considerations, or to hostility directed against a common enemy. And their union for social purposes is not without its dangers. For they bring to the consideration of several questions a narrowness of view and a bitterness of temper that is almost fatal to a genuinely helpful settlement of any problem that may arise.

Europe needs neither more Christianity nor more religion. It has plenty of both; it has never lacked either. As a mere force Christianity has failed utterly to unite two nations in any part of the world in bonds of genuine friendship. There is not a country on the face of the globe that can appeal successfully to another country in the name of Christianity. It is Christian nations that threaten the peace of the world, it is Christian nations that drive non-Christian powers to arm and spend their revenues in preparations for war, it is a Christian nation that has shown itself careless of written agreements and of common decency in even the conduct of war. Some time back Canon Scott Holland said:—

> "The Roman Empire far more nearly succeeded in giving unity of life, culture, government, and intercourse to the entire body of civilised men—European, Asiatic, and African—than we in our wildest dreams could ever imagine possible to-day.....A common unity for Christian Europe is infinitely less conceivable now, eighteen hundred years after Christ, than it was in pre-Christian Europe. It is Christian Europe which gives us the spectacle of race divided against race by implacable enmities.....Racial differences grow more intense, and let us note it is Christianity itself which tends to sharpen them."

Two thousand years ago a Roman citizen might travel from Rome to Britain under the safe protection of Roman law and Roman civilisation. To-day, could that Pagan traveller be resurrected and perform the journey, he would find some fifteen millions of soldiers, belonging to the Christian Powers of Europe, invoking their Deity to aid them in their work of mutual destruction. What clearer proof of Christianity's failure could be needed?

C. COHEN.

Nietzsche.

IN almost every pulpit and religious journal at present the unbelief and Materialism so prevalent in Germany, and particularly in Prussia, are said to be responsible for the calamitous war which is being so savagely waged. Atheism is described as the root of all evil, and Atheism is declared to be supreme in Prussia. That great champion of Anglican exclusiveness, the Bishop of Zanzibar, tells us, in a most violent discourse, that Prussia is the home of the false prophet, the prophet who denies, not only the true incarnation of God in Jesus Christ, or that "God, through God in human flesh, died upon the Cross," but also even the very existence of God, as taught by the Church, as well as the laws of morality. Now, what is the inevitable result of such wicked denials? "Look," exclaims his lordship, "look over at Prussia, and there you see it. You see a race proud of its past, but prouder still of its imagined future; a race that names God only to bless its own purposes and deeds." Of course, Dr. Weston, being a rabid partisan, deplorably misrepresents the facts and woefully misleads the uninformed among his hearers. Can he be really ignorant of the fact that Prussia is an exceedingly religious kingdom, sixty-four per cent. of its population being Protestants, and thirty-four per cent. Catholics? Is he unaware that the imperial influence is scrupulously employed on behalf of orthodox Christianity? Whatever be the explanation, these facts he entirely ignores, and puts the whole blame for the war upon the shoulders of the Modernists in the Catholic Church and of the Liberal Christians in the Protestant, well knowing that these heretical parties form but insignificant minorities in their respective communions. Thus the Bishop of Zanzibar must be dismissed as a hopelessly biassed and wholly unreliable authority.

The next witness is Dr. Campbell Morgan, who has already preached five of "those great sermons which have made Westminster Chapel in August more than ever the centre of London Nonconformity." So eager are people to hear this comparatively new oracle that they crowd the large building from floor to ceiling every time he is announced to speak. One of his utterances is this: "When there is a denial of morality, then immediately there is an apotheosis of brute force." Again: "At the back of everything there is lust for power," which is described as the inspiration of war. Then comes this illustration:—

> "That great nation of Germany, to which we owe so much for its scientific investigation and its wonderful learning, has, for more than a generation, been under the influence of a philosophy that has denied that reality of the moral. The philosophy of Nietzsche may be condensed into this one brief sentence: 'Nothing is true. Everything is permitted to the strong.' When that is believed sub-consciously by a people, it comes out sooner or later into actuality. At the back of a passion for war, wherever it exists, is this denial of morality."

Dr. Clifford and Principal Griffith Jones make the same charge against the great Basel Professor. The Principal speaks of the extent to which the cult of Nietzsche is in the ascendant among the ruling and official people of Germany, and adds:—

> "We are now reaping the consequences of that movement in a harvest of blood and tears. For the German attitude in this war is the translation into action of the theories of that bold and unscrupulous thinker; and it is against Nietzsche that the rest of the world is instinctively under arms."

Dr. Clifford asserts that, according to the Nietzschean philosophy, "ethics are ruled out of the life of States, only naked might remaining." "The superman has arrived, all brawn and brain and without conscience." "Goliath is lord of all." Then comes the elegant conclusion of the whole matter in these words:—

> "This is the incarnation of the philosophy of Nietzsche; the logic of the criminals of Dartmoor; the defence of the barbaric march of the world-conquerors, Attila and Napoleon; and the audaciously proffered vindication of the action of the military caste in Berlin."

What these divines are anxious to impress upon the minds of their people is that the present war owes its origin to the influence of an anti-Christian philosophy, or that it is in no sense a Christian war except on the part of the Allies. They forget that the German Emperor and his court are distinctively Christian, and that with them lies the origin of the war. However numerous Nietzsche's disciples may be in Germany, the fact remains that German militarism has the Kaiser as its head and inspiration. It is to him that the Empire is indebted for its ambitious aims and idealism. It was he who drove Bismarck out of office in order to get the reins of power more fully into his own hands. It was he who gave birth to a world-policy and began to work for a world-Power. *And William II. is an orthodox Christian believer and an exceedingly pious man.* The German Government has sought to prevent the spread of Freethought within its bounds. If "at the back of a passion for war, wherever it exists, is the denial of morality," then the denial of morality, in the present instance, lies at the door of the German Emperor, a zealous preacher of the Gospel of Christ. Consequently, we declare, without fear of intelligent contradiction, that all the Powers involved in this gigantic conflict are engaged in it in the name of the Christian God, and in oft-expressed dependence upon his direct protection. The attempt to throw the

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responsibility for this war upon the Nietzschean philosophy is therefore a ludicrous Christian blunder, and to make it at the expense of telling lies about "the mad philosopher" is a heinous crime. It is a complete falsehood to assert that Nietzsche denied morality. So far was he from teaching that morals are obsolete that he posed as an advocate of morality. He denounced, not morality, but slave-morality—the morality that secures the perpetuation of the weak and unfit, and gives undue prominence to pity and compassion. He says:—

> "In a tour through the many finer and coarser moralities which have hitherto prevailed or still prevail on the earth, I found certain traits recurring regularly together and connected with one another, until finally two primary types revealed themselves to me, and a radical distinction was brought to light. There is *master-morality* and *slave-morality*" (*Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 227).

Master-morality is a morality that originates in master-minds and seeks to promote the advancement of the human race. Dr. Clifford is guilty of bearing false witness against a great man and a great system when he says that "ethics are ruled out of the life of States," or that "morals are obsolete," the truth being that Nietzsche takes special trouble to emphasise the truth that the welfare of society is the only real ethical end. Many men of God merely *infer* from the title of the little book just mentioned, *Beyond Good and Evil*, that the author must be a denier of morality, whereas, if they only carefully perused the work, they would learn that the good and evil he claims to be beyond and above are those stereotyped in a slave-morality. Divines are quite free to disagree with and attack Nietzsche's moral theory; but they commit a moral crime when they deliberately misrepresent it.

A writer in the *Christian Commonwealth* for September 2 may be fully right when he says that "German militarism is not merely the product of its geographical situation, but a symptom of national aims, an expression of national ideals"; but he is fundamentally mistaken in the statement that it challenges the pacific ideal of Christianity because it has Nietzsche for its philosopher, Treitschke for its historian, and Strauss for its theologian. The curious thing is that, when it suits their convenience, the theologians confidently announce that Professor Eucken, "the greatest thinker in the world," is Germany's present guiding star in philosophy, and Eucken makes a firm profession of Christianity. It is well known that the heretical theologians of Germany, the so-called Liberal Christians, among whom is Professor Harnack, a close friend and admirer of the Kaiser, are second to none in their adherence to what they glory in as the religion of Jesus. Indeed, we have been assured again and again that Nietzsche's influence is greatly on the wane, that his day is past or rapidly passing even in Germany. The writer in the *Christian Commonwealth* just referred to is of opinon that Germany, "while preparing to found a world-empire, is also preparing to create a world-religion." He says:—

> "No cultured European nation since the French Revolution has made any experiment in creative religion. The experiment which England, with her dull imagination, has recoiled from, Germany will make; the fated task, which England has declined, she will essay."

That is pure speculation, for which there is no foundation in fact; but, whatever we may think of it as such, there is no doubt whatever that the present war is prosecuted in the name of the Prince of Peace, and that the prayers of all the parties to it, except Japan perhaps, are addressed to "Our Father which art in heaven."

J. T. LLOYD.

A God who damns his own creatures for exercising the reason he gave them, proves that he has none left for himself.

The Origin of Supernatural Ideas.—VIII.

(*Continued from p. 565.*)

> "'Nations, like individuals, have their periods of youth, of manhood, and decay.' Religions are the same. The same inexorable destiny awaits them all. The gods, created by the nations, must perish with their creators. They were created by men, and like men they must pass away. The deities of one age are the bye-words of the next. The religion of our day and country is no more exempt from the sneer of the future than the others have been. When India was supreme, Brahma sat upon the world's throne. When the sceptre passed to Egypt, Isis and Osiris received the homage of mankind. Greece, with her fierce valor, swept to empire, and Jove put on the purple of authority. The earth trembled with the tread of Rome's intrepid sons, and Jupiter grasped with mailed hand the thunderbolts of heaven. Rome fell, and Christians from her territory, with the red sword of war, carved out the ruling nations of the world, and Christ sits upon the old throne. Who will be his successor?"—COLONEL INGERSOLL, "Oration on the Gods," *Orations*, p. 37.

> "Before God! But God has died! Ye higher men, God was your greatest danger. It is only since He was laid in the grave that ye have risen from the dead. It is now only that the noonday arrives, it is now only that the higher man becomes—master. Take heart, ye higher men! Now for the first time the mountain of man's future is in travail. God is dead; we now want—the overman to live."—NIETZSCHE; cited by Dr. Common in *Nietzsche as Critic*, etc., p. 132.

> "Thou art judged, O judge, and the sentence is gone forth against thee, O God.
> Thy slave that slept is awake; thy slave but slept for a span;
> Yea, man thy slave shall unmake thee, who made thee lord over man."
>
> —SWINBURNE, *Hymn of Man*.

THE peculiarities that so easily distinguish the negro from the European, both in mind and body, are the result of the environment in which he lives. Major Ellis, whose testimony we have cited, and who is one of the greatest authorities on the subject, also observes:—

> "Joachim Monteiro, indeed, in his work on *Angola and the River Congo*, attributes the 'rudimentary character of the negro intellect' entirely to climate, and holds that countless ages of battling with malaria have produced, by a process of natural selection, a peculiar insensibility of both mind and body, which now admits of his inhabiting, with comparative impunity, regions which are deadly to the white and more highly organised races."*

Major Ellis also cites the weighty opinion of Professor Waitz, who holds very similar views, and observes, in the Introduction to his *Anthropology*:—

> "The comparatively low degree of civilisation among the negroes may be chiefly explained by the relaxing effects of the climate, the geographical position of those regions, the few requirements as regards dress, food, and habitation, all of which nature yields in abundance, and are obtainable by the simplest efforts. A high degree of intellectual development, deep thought, and a refined morality seem scarcely compatible with the mental prostration which life in torrid zones produces in the European as well as in the native. Human art will hardly ever overcome the power of these natural obstructions."

It will be as well at this point to make a digression to consider the much-vaunted claims of missionaries as to the civilising influence of the religion taught by them to the natives; and as two million pounds a year are spent by this country alone in missions, there ought to be some return for the money.

The theory the Churches and the missions work upon is that conversion to their peculiar beliefs has a civilising influence; that the convert is regenerated—spiritually "born again" is their mystical description of the process. Now, it is a fact—and all the rhetoric of the missionaries cannot explain it away—that the converted negro is not made a better man by conversion, but a very much worse one. No one in Africa would think of employing a mission boy. We have produced much evidence on this point in these columns at different times, which is confirmed by Major Ellis, who says that "the expenditure of large sums of money by various philan-

* A. B. Ellis, *The Tshi-Speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa*, pp. 6-7.

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thropic societies, and the exertions of missionaries and teachers of all denominations, have failed to do more than impose a mere veneer of civilisation upon the inhabitants of Sierra Leone, and then only upon a small minority, and this after a century of labor" (p. 7). "For," as he further remarks, "it is not the religion that is the cause of the civilisation, but rather the higher stage of civilisation that gives birth to higher religious ideas" (p. 10).

Thus it is not religion that these primitive people require. To relinquish their superstitions for those of the missionary would only place them in the position of the gentleman who abjured the errors of the Church of Rome to embrace those of the Church of England. On the other hand, if you civilise these people in the first instance, then they can do without the religion. The Japanese adopted Western civilisation, but refused to have anything to do with our religion; and in the march to Pekin, to relieve the Legations, they showed by their conduct to the Chinese a far higher morality than the representatives of the Christian nations who accompanied them.

As the historian Buckle pointed out long ago:—

> "Whoever will compare the triumphant reports of the missionaries with the long chain of evidence supplied by competent travellers, will find that such profession is only nominal, and that these ignorant tribes have adopted, indeed, the ceremonies of the new religion, but have by no means adopted the religion itself. .....The rites and forms of a religion lie on the surface; they are at once seen, they are quickly learned, easily copied by those who are unable to penetrate to that which lies beneath. It is this deeper and inward change which alone is durable; and this the savage can never experience while he is sunk in an ignorance that levels him with the brutes by which he is surrounded."*

The truth is the natives take over the forms and ceremonies of the new religion without relinquishing their own beliefs. Miss Kingsley tells us: "For the African, whose mind has been soaked in Fetish during his early most impressionable years, the voice of Fetish is almost irresistible when affliction comes upon him." And, speaking of the mission converts, she observes: "How many of these earnest people could one guarantee to have completely cast out their belief in Ju-Juism? If I were put upon my oath to answer truthfully according to my individual belief, I am afraid my answer would be, *Not one.*"† And although Miss Kingsley, who shows a great deal of sympathy with the natives—much more than most Europeans who have known them—thinks, in spite of a mass of evidence, that it is too much to say that the African will never advance above his present level, yet she declares:—

> "I am certain they will never advance above it in the line of European culture. The country he lives in is unfitted for it, and the nature of the man himself is all against it—the truth is the West Coast mind has got a great deal too much superstition about it, and too little of anything else. Our own methods of instruction have not been of any real help to the African, because what he wants teaching is how to work."‡

Therefore the money spent in the attempt to Christianise these natives might just as well be taken out and dropped into the ocean for any good it does.

As Mr. King observes, under the newly adopted religion the old spiritual conceptions survive.

> "The fetish still lives, and the Obi mysteries are still rehearsed, though the black devotee raises his hands in pious acknowledgment of the blessings he receives from Allah, or worships with the white man in the Methodist communion. The same cry comes from the missionary to the Zulu, from the remote shores of Patagonia, from the humble teachers of the Eskimo in Greenland or Labrador; even the attentive and pious Australian aborigine maiden, scarce from her birth out of the higher influence, flies from the greater civilisation to revel in the bora association. As it was in the ancient days, so it is now; like forms of spirit influence still retain their prestige; the gods of the vulgar never die; they still claim the reverence of like fears, and like superstitious rites, as when they were the only known local supernal powers."*

Let us consider the religious ideas prevalent to-day among ourselves. What are they but a crude Anthropomorphism? That is a long word, but it has a very simple meaning. It is composed of two Greek words, meaning "man-like" and "form"; and Anthropomorphism in religion means that God is conceived of as being like a man. Nor is this to be wondered at when every child derives his religious notions from the Bible, where we are told that the Almighty was tired, "and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed" (Ex. xxxi. 17); that he walked and talked in the Garden of Eden "in the cool of the day" (Gen. iii. 8), choosing the "cool of the day" because umbrellas and sun-helmets had not been invented then. He possessed a nose, for when Noah offered a burnt sacrifice "the Lord smelled a sweet savor" (Gen. viii. 21). He was evidently not infinite—that is, everywhere at once—omniscient or all-knowing—for we learn that when the Tower of Babel was being built "the Lord came down" (Gen. xi. 5) to see for himself what was going on, and, there being no architect to tell him that the thing would collapse when it reached a certain height, he sent a confusion of tongues, lest the builders should carry it up to heaven. Finally, he had the bodily form of a man, for Moses had the dubious honor of being shown his "back parts" (Ex. xxxiii. 23). In other places we learn that he was jealous, vain, and shockingly revengeful.

Moreover, man, by the limitations of the human mind, is incapable of conceiving God in any other manner. The Greek philosopher Xenophanes, five hundred years before Christ, arguing against the superstition of his countrymen, observed:—

> "It appears to mortals that the gods are like them in form, apparel, and language. The negroes serve black gods with flat noses, the Thracians gods with blue eyes and red hair. If the oxen and lions had hands to fashion images, they would give the gods a bovine or leonine shape."

Ludwig Feuerbach observed that "If God were an object to the bird, he would be a winged being: the bird knows nothing higher, nothing more blissful, than the winged condition."† And, as Buchner well remarks, "No one has demonstrated and explained the purely human origin of the idea of God better than Ludwig Feuerbach," who declared "God is the self-consciousness of man. Man created God in his own image."‡

W. MANN.

(To be concluded.)

Bible Makers.—IV.

RUTH, SAMUEL, AND DAVID.

SANDWICHED between Judges and Samuel is the Book of Ruth. How it came to be incorporated in the Bible it would be difficult to tell without great faith and a prayerful spirit; and unless we suppose that some lewd fellow, thinking a little more pruriency would be an improvement, by some dexterous and surreptitious means slipped the book in, there is no accounting for its appearance among the sacred writings at all. It is, however, a pretty love story. It tells of a poor simple girl from the country, who came up to town to see her cousin Boaz, and, having successfully repelled the advancements of numerous young men who were infatuated with her charms, steals slily to bed with her cousin, who blesses her for her unselfish kindness, and ultimately rewards her by making her his wife. As no more mention is made of them, we will be generous enough to suppose that they lived happily ever after. If Miss Ruth, however, wrote this delightfully brief autobiographical sketch, it must be confessed that she

* Buckle, *History of Civilisation*, p. 145 (1904).
† Miss Kingsley, *West African Studies*, pp. 125-482.
‡ Miss Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa*, p. 513.

* J. H. King, *The Supernatural*, pp. 236-7.
† Ludwig Feuerbach, *Essence of Christianity*, p. 17.
‡ Buchner, *Force and Matter*, pp. 393-4.

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was as candid in revealing her failings as Jean Jacques Rousseau was in revealing his, if, indeed, she meant this little business with her cousin to be considered as an iniquity at all. Then we come to Samuel. He was the son of Elkanah. He wrote a book, or a number of books, and followed his predecessor Moses's example, in being careful to give a full account of his own death and burial. His father was described as "a certain man of Ramathaim Zophim and Mount Ephraim." Most fathers are "certain men." He gives an account of a man named Saul, who was seeking his father's asses which had gone astray. The children of Israel at the same time were in search of a king. The asses were found, so was Saul, who was at once anointed by Samuel who, from an early age, was a prophet of the Lord.

His early appointment to this profession took place in this wise; he received a "call" from the Lord, who, hiding himself in an obscure corner of the sky, had an inoffensive game at bo-peep with the child Samuel, and after allowing the lad to make a couple of wrong guesses as to who it was that had called him, permitted him to guess correctly the third time and thus save his bacon, and become a perpetual prophet of the Lord of Hosts ever after.

Samuel faithfully recorded the lives of such illustrious kings as Saul and David, and gave a graphic description of the unequal encounter between David and Goliath, in which he showed how easy it was for a little boy, with a sling and a stone, to kill a giant; and, further, how difficult it is for a harpist—a Jew harpist—by dulcet strains of music to soothe the savage breast of a king, after having taken from him the favor of the people. Samuel also demonstrates that a high degree of mental culture was not an indispensable accomplishment of a prophet.

David prophesied upon a harp; many of the people prophesied with cymbals and with song; and some, no doubt, produced the same result upon the banjo, or with the tom-tom or the bones; but King Saul put them all to the blush. Finding that everybody was going in for prophesying, he divested himself of all his raiment, and lay on his back and prophesied as hard as any of them. This, as a faithful historian, the prophet Samuel has faithfully set down, not in a spirit of malice or uncharitableness, but in that of candor and truth, that ordinary folk might understand some of the strange doings of the godly.

Samuel's account of the life of David is filled with interest. If only the letters of David to his various mistresses had been preserved, what a splendid addition they would have made to this fascinating biographical sketch! Great affection, unselfish devotion, David unquestionably displayed towards Jonathan; but how infinitely small it was compared with the unbounded love he showed towards the wives of Nabal and Uriah. David robbed, outraged, and murdered wherever he went; and in true prophetic strain Samuel described him as a "man after God's own heart," clearly showing that he knew the character of the Jewish God very well; and he therefore represented David as much "after the image of his Maker" as possible. It was said that David, at the end of his career, repented; but so have many other pious murderers—at the rope's end.

The Books of Kings and Chronicles, which are merely a combination or repetition of the stories of Samuel, I pass over, as also the Book of Job, a Gentile production, which deserves to be considered on its merits, apart altogether from the place it occupies in men's minds on account of being one of the books of the Bible.

We come now to the Psalms of David, which throw a flood of light upon the inner life of the king and prophet. They are a collection of songs—not comic—mostly expressive of praise to Deity. What many-sidedness of nature these poetic expressions disclose! What great piety, combined with consummate rascality — what unctuousness, covering the imperious dogmatism of a king and a priest!

How anxious David is that the religious shall have no "fellowship with the ungodly"; that the Lord shall rebuke the unbeliever and afflict him with great suffering!

David's God was essentially a butcher and a king. Give heed to this poetic strain:—

> "O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph.
>
> "For the Lord most high is terrible; he is a great king over all the earth.
>
> "He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet.
>
> "He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom he loved. Selah" (Psalm xlvii.).

As for the Atheist, David loathed him with every drop of his blood. He regarded him as a fool, and said as much. Most people call those persons names whom they cannot answer.

> "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity; there is none that doeth good" (Psalm liii.).

In a more humble mood was the Psalmist when he penned the following:—

> "Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.
>
> "Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child.
>
> "Let Israel hope in the Lord from henceforth and for ever" (Psalm cxxxi.).

But in his true colors David is seen when, from the depths of his fiendish heart, he gives vent to his views as to how God should treat those who had been his (David's) and God's enemies:—

> "Set thou a wicked man over him, and let Satan stand at his right hand.
>
> "When he shall be judged let him be condemned, and let his prayer become sin.
>
> "Let his days be few and let another take his office; let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow.
>
> "Let his children be continually vagabonds and beg; let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places.
>
> "Let the extortioner catch all that he hath, and let the strangers spoil his labor.
>
> "Let there be none to extend mercy unto him; neither let there be any to favor his fatherless children.
>
> "Let his posterity be cut off, and in the generation following let his name be blotted out. Let the iniquities of his fathers be remembered with the Lord, and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out."

Oh, what a difference between the sentiments of the Atheist poet Shelley and the Theist poet David! The one wrote for the ignorant and cruel and despotic people of ages that have gone; the other, in incomparably grand verse, breathed the pure and lofty sentiments of the humanity of the future.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

It is far more important to love your wife than to love God, and I will tell you why. You cannot help him, but you can help her. You can fill her life with the perfume of perpetual joy. It is far more important that you love your children than that you love Jesus Christ. And why? If he is God, you cannot help him, but you can plant a little flower of happiness in every footstep of the child, from the cradle until you die in that child's arms. Let me tell you to-day it is far more important to build a home than to erect a church. The holiest temple beneath the stars is a home that love has built. And the holiest altar in all the wide world is the fireside around which gather father and mother and the sweet babes.—*Ingersoll.*

To die is one of two things; for either the dead may be annihilated and have no sensation of anything whatever, or, as it is said, there is a certain change of passage of the soul from one place to another (metempsychosis). If it is a privation of all sensation, as it were a sleep in which the sleeper has no dream, death would be a wonderful gain; for this futurity appears to be nothing more than one night.—*Socrates.*

The palace of the Bishop of Llandaff has been destroyed by fire. There is no cause for undue alarm. There is no possibility of his Lordship, like his poor Master, not knowing where to lay his head.

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Acid Drops.

The dear old *Daily News* is gushing away as usual on the War. A gentleman who signs himself "A. G. G." (no doubt the editor) is turned on to do the double-extra piety. Under the title of "The God of Blood and Iron" this gentleman treated his Nonconformist public the other morning to some unctuous silliness which he should have been ashamed to write as they should have been ashamed to read. The writer tries to make out that Germany's mean and horrid treatment of Belgium is due to "infidelity." "Belgium," he says, "has been desolated in cold blood, on calculated principles, by a nation of philosophers and intellectuals." Mr. Gardner must have written this with his tongue in his cheek. He knows very well that the Kaiser is notorious for his piety, which is of the true-blue Protestant persuasion; and that the name of God is always upon his lips. The Kaiserin, too, has built more Protestant churches in Berlin than the whole city fills. Is it not infamous, then, to ascribe this imperial bigot's wanton cruelties to the influence of the "philosophers and intellectuals"—that is to say, to the Freethinkers of Germany? It reminds us of the compelling of poor Simon to carry the cross of Jesus. When the Christians are caught with a load of evil on their backs they shuffle it off on the shoulders of the Freethinker. "It doesn't belong to *us*," they say; "*he* put it there."

Lord Rosebery's appeal for volunteer soldiers to fight the battle of England in the present war was mixed with a reference to the "just God" who is on our side. Well, if God is to settle the matter, after all, we may as well leave it in his hands. Why should *we* trouble? It will go *his* way at the finish. The victory will be by prayer and not by fighting. This is recognised in Berlin as well as in London. The English church in that city bears a notice that the services may go on there as usual during the war, but *prayers must not be offered up for the success of the British arms.*

Mr. Gardner wants us to believe that the people who put up that notice are Atheists—or something of that sort. There is nothing too idiotically absurd for Christian advocates nowadays.

Mr. Robert Blatchford has never been quite able to drop "God." He says he is not an Atheist but an Agnostic—which is a distinction without a difference. He is now declaring, in the *Weekly Dispatch*, that Kipling did not discover (or should it be invent?) Tommy Atkins. Nor did anybody else except R. B. He alone did it. "I discovered Tommy Atkins," he says, "for the first time in the Vale of the White Horse in 1809, and I thanked God." Has he had an acknowledgment yet?

Mr. Asquith goes down to the City of London one day—with Mr. Bonar Law, Mr. Balfour, and Mr. Churchill—and pleads with the people of England to join the Army and save the nation. You would think they were saints and heroes. The next day the "pubs." are shut early—and the practice is to be continued—in order to keep these saints and heroes from getting drunk. Something is wrong somewhere.

Practically every paper in the country is now a war sheet. Naturally, the keenest interest displayed is in war news, and everyone is deeply concerned with the news—good or bad. But that hardly seems a sufficient reason for all the papers dropping all their ordinary articles and giving nothing else but war news. That policy seems calculated to encourage what should be our chief concern to avoid—panic. And nervous people who read the papers can hardly avoid a "panicky" frame of mind at present. If "business as usual" is a sound policy, we think the press should set an example by retaining some of its old features, and giving a little less than ten or twelve pages of war news—half of which is sheer repetition. In this connection, and as one way of avoiding panic, we are glad to see the Home Office issuing a warning concerning the spy mania. This document states that there has been no actual case of outrage brought to the notice of either police or military, that all the reports of attacks on police constables, sentries, etc., are lacking in truth, and there have been no discoveries of secret arsenals. We hope this statement will serve as a check upon the imagination of journalists, and allay the fears of nervous people.

"At this critical hour," says the *Christian Commonwealth*, "people are looking to the Christian pulpit for light and guidance." Rubbish! People are doing nothing of the kind. Indeed, one of the striking features of the situation, and one which shows how much of their hold on the people the Churches have lost, is that very few people are paying the slightest attention to the clergy. In the more pressing business before the nation the clergy have been shouldered out of the picture. Of course, there were plenty of special services in connection with the war, and the clergy have done their share—perhaps more than their share—of talking. But to suggest that the people are looking to the Churches for guidance is supremely ridiculous. Listen to conversations in 'bus or tram, speak to the people one meets, and then see how much they are thinking of the clergy as guides.

"Our world has passed away, In wantonness o'erthrown," sings Mr. Rudyard Kipling. We thought something was wrong, but we do not seem to be living in heaven.

We notice that the days of intercession arranged by the officials of the Government religion were also observed by some of the fancy religionists, including the Nonconformists and Roman Catholics. Adversity makes strange bed-fellows.

"Nothing German" is a bellicose notice displayed in shop-windows, which we hope booksellers will not imitate. We cannot afford to exchange Goethe and Heine for Miss Marie Corelli and Mr. Charles Garvice.

Poets have the privilege of poetic licence. Mr. Rudyard Kipling chants "There is but one task for all, For each one life to give." If this sage advice were taken, the earth would be depopulated, and there would be no Kiplings to amuse us in troublous times.

The whirligig of war has brought in many revenges. It has changed that hero of a hundred tea-fights, the Bishop of London, into a six-weeks' soldier.

Piety appears to be very closely related to patriotism, but if you want to get the quintessence of Christian emotionalism, you will find it in the pages of the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Daily Express*, the proprietors of which both belong to good old English families.

Many years ago a book was published with the title *Guesses at Truth*. It would not be a bad headline for the war news in the paper, for most of the paragraphs appear to be as true as the Gospels. As far as we can see, the correspondent who gets to the telegraph wires first, claims the victory for his side.

We are informed by the *Catholic Herald* for September 5 that the late Pope "breathed his last affecting sigh over the world's wickedness, and died because he could not persuade the rulers of men to keep peace among themselves and their subjects." As a matter of fact, Pope Pius X. was of no account in the council of nations. As God's vicegerent on earth, he did his utmost to prevent the war, writing "the most pathetic letters" to the rulers of men, "imploring them to spare the Christian peoples. Those letters were not delivered, or not read, or, at all events, were disregarded." Thus the Holy Father was thrust aside, and when the end came, the sad conviction lay like iron in his soul, that "what was called society was lapsing into unbelief."

Principal Griffith-Jones says that "pure Darwinism spells pure *egoism*" That is the utterance of a man who does not know what "pure Darwinism" is, which is proved to the hilt by the fact that the same man of God speaks of "the crudely Darwinian philosophy that once prevailed." Not one essential element in the Darwinian theory has been discarded by present-day biologists. Even the Mendelists are as firm believers in Natural Selection as was Darwin himself. Now, Dr. Griffith-Jones is perfectly well aware that orthodox Christianity seeks to suppress all *egoism*. Has he not often heard the prayer, "O! to be nothing," offered up at revival meetings, and does he not know that, apart from true egoism, true altruism is a natural impossibility?

Principal Griffith-Jones, a mediocre Nonconformist divine, imagines, in his abysmal ignorance, that he is competent to sit in judgment upon and demolish so subtle, nimble, independent, original, profound, and brilliant a thinker as Nietzsche. Condescendingly he allows that, as "a needful corrective of the 'soft' tendencies of much modern speculation, Nietzscheism has its undoubted place, and has done good work," but haughtily contends that "the sublimatic

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and refined but truculent self-assertion which was Nietzsche's central principle of thought and conduct is a hopeless anachronism." Such supercilious criticism only shows how utterly unequal to his self-chosen task the reverend gentleman is. He does not even understand what the Nietzschean philosophy really stands for, any more than he can tell us what "sublimatic" means. Only an ignoramus could have applied the adjective "truculent" to such a system. Nietzsche was an ardent lover of vigorous life, and of power when justly acquired and wisely exercised. The central and grandest quality in his philosophy is "justice," which, as we all know, occupies a very secondary position in the Christian scheme.

Clearly Dr. Griffith-Jones is equally unacquainted with Nietzsche's "conduct," in which there was certainly nothing "truculent." Has he never read how ardent was this "truculent" fellow's patriotism, how deep his inner sympathy for private soldiers—"*les âmes les plus délaissées*"; how, during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, he abandoned his professorial work at Basel and went to assist in the ambulance corps; how he tended the wounded with zealous care, and carried out his duties at the cost of a serious illness? Even the *British Weekly*, to its honor be it said, published these facts a few years ago in a review of a new *Life* by Daniel Halévy.

"Both England and Germany are nominally Protestant countries," says the *Christian Commonwealth*, "but their Protestantism has worked out in very different directions." The difference, as stated, appears to be this. England is concerned "with peaceful government of an empire long since acquired." In Germany "the dominant" interests have been those of expansion rather than consolidation. We quite fail to see any substantial difference here. This only means that Germany is trying to acquire, as England has already acquired. But their Protestantism appears to have led both along the same direction—in that of seizing and controlling, rather than in the direction of developing friendly intercourse. For over two hundred years the nations of Europe have been battling for the ownership of colonies and the control of markets, and so far their religion, whether Protestant or Catholic, has quite failed to direct that competition into friendly instead of militant channels. Not only has it failed in this, but the influence of Christianity in every country has been given to the encouragement of conditions that make such an outbreak as the present war, sooner or later, inevitable. In both Germany and England the Protestant Church gives the Government of the country to which it belongs the same unhesitating support. And that fact alone is enough to show its worthlessness as an instrument for the moral betterment of the world.

The *Christian Commonwealth* adds, "It may well shake the faith of some if, in such a contest, God does not decisively declare against the doctrine that might is right; if broken treaties, and civilisation outraged, and all the horrors of war forced upon innocent people go unavenged." Here is all the old Christian cant served up anew. How often in the past has might overcome right? And if God allowed it then, why should he not allow it now? And if it occurred once more, why should that shape religious faith to-day more than it has done in the past? The question of might versus right is not a matter of chronology. When the Germans overran France in 1870 did that prove they were in the right, or did it prove that they possessed the best fighting machine? The Germans could not do better than they are doing, even if they had right on their side, they will not do worse because they have not. And, after all, the Kaiser is *very* confident that God is on his side. He is as good a Christian as anyone that is opposed to him. Whether he is as good a *man* is quite another question.

If God wished "to decisively" declare that he was on the side of right against might, he had a magnificent opportunity when the Germans invaded Belgium. Here was a people who had done nothing to injure Germany. They were guiltless of offence—at least, there only offence was a geographical one; that, and having the courage to stand up for their rights. Yet God has allowed Belgium to be overrun; its cities destroyed; its men, women, and children murdered. And now, when the Allies defeat Germany, we shall be informed that God has vindicated might against right. Absurd! How can the defeat and humiliation of Germany make good the horrors through which Belgium has passed? Is there a single Belgian who has had his home and family destroyed that will feel the defeat of Germany compensates him for his loss? So far as that mass of suffering is concerned, might and not right is triumphant. If God wished to prove that might could not stand against right he had his opportunity when the German troops attacked Liege. He should have blasted the Kaiser's armies then. Their defeat after months of carnage and brutality can only prove that in "God's world" right *plus* might is effective. Right *minus* might is of small account—so far as God is concerned.

Rev. W. E. Orchard has joined the prophets. The whole mechanical explanation of nature, he says, will appear in the next generation as one of the most amazing blunders in the world of thought. *Will* appear; not *does* appear. Had Dr. Orchard spoken in the present tense, he might have been asked to prove it. To speak in the future tense is a much safer plan. For our part, we are quite content with the fact that the "mechanical" conception of nature is simply universal in the world of science. "Mechanical" is not, by the way, a good term; it has too many misleading connotations. "Causational" is a much better term to express the truth that in nature every phenomenon is the product of all preceding conditions. This is not only the ruling conception in the world of science; it is inevitable to all systematic thinking. Even theologians cannot escape it. Even though matter were not ultimate, but, as some theologians assert, there is beyond that a world of "spirit," the position remains substantially unchanged. All that occurs would still be due to the action and interaction of the properties of this "spiritual" substance. Whether we believe in "spirit" or "matter," the principle of universal causation remains as the indispensable condition of scientific thinking. And so long as that is established the case for Theism is hopeless.

Dr. Orchard asks, "If this universe is a purposeless machine without a mind to guide, how much longer will man be content to be one of its cogs? Is it possible to content his mind, his aspirations, his strivings after better things, with a life and destiny which are the mockery of his whole nature?" Content whose mind? One might paraphrase the question by asking, Is it possible to content one whose whole nature cries out for some alcoholic stimulant with water, tea, or ginger-beer? One would have to answer, No. But one would also add that the craving itself pointed to a more or less unhealthy condition of the organism, and the chief thing was to create counter desires in a healthier direction. So in reply to Dr. Orchard. It may be quite true that a man brought up under strong religious influences will feel that without religion life would not be worth living. But this does not mean that we must fall in with his view of life. On the contrary, what we have to do is to bring him to realise that the craving after better things may receive full satisfaction after all specifically religious beliefs have been rejected. It is the problem of the alcoholist over again. And the real test of the value of religion is not found in those who say they cannot live without it, but in those who do, and are none the worse for its absence.

Sir William Lever says it is depressing to find that Christians, after preaching the gospel of peace and goodwill for nearly twenty centuries should now be at war with each other. It *is* depressing; but that ought to lead thoughtful men and women to query the value of a preaching that has borne so little fruit. The fact is that Christians have preached goodwill, and practised its opposite. They have praised peace, and made every possible preparation—material and mental—for war. And when nations prepare for war they will, sooner or later, have it.

What Secularists these Christians are! In the current issue of *Home Words*, a pious periodical circulating in thousands of parishes, nearly two pages are devoted to such sacred subjects as pea-soup, plum-pudding, roly-poly, mince-meat, fig pudding, and similar culinary delicacies. Perhaps they are meant to be "sweets" after "the bread of life." As the pill advertisers are also in evidence in the magazine, doubtless the editor anticipates some of his readers overeating.

Pious versifiers are busy invoking the Deity concerning the alleged killing of children in the present war. When the reports are confirmed, it will be high time to write poems; but religious folk might reflect that it is not irreligious persons who imagine that unchristened babies are damned through all eternity by the "God of all Christians."

One would think that "Thou shalt not kill" and "Forgive your enemies" were in the *Analects of Confucius*, and not in the Christian Bible. At Southend-on-Sea the Church Army band has been playing the recruits to the railway station, and among those who have joined the colors are members of the Salvation Army.

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To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £201 15s. 0d. Received since:—R. C. Proctor, 2s. 6d.; Anglo Italian Secularist, 2s. 6d.; Charles and Collis Cade, 10s.; A. Firth, 5s.; A Few Workers (per M. Beagling), 8s. 6d.; C. J., £3.

C. AND C. CADE.—Thanks for your pleasant and encouraging letter.

J. D.—"Peace on Earth" is hardly up to our mark.

MILDRED WINTERS (Canada).—Glad to have your letter, but the political aspect of the matter is of course tabu in our columns.

W. P. BALL.—Thanks for cuttings.

E. B.—Always welcome.

RAMSEY TESTIMONIAL FUND.—We have received:—C. J., £1.; R. Gibbon, 5s.

R. C. PROCTOR.—Your N. S. S. sub. is passed over to the Secretary.

ANGLO-ITALIAN SECULARIST.—(1) Our correspondents should not give themselves great historic names. We object to answering Cæsars, Cromwells, etc. They give a comic aspect to the "Correspondents" column. (2) Never trust Cassell's or other orthodox Cyclopædias in relation to dead Freethinkers.

W. J. MOLINEUX.—The reverend gentleman's remarks had been dealt with by anticipation. Pleased you think this journal "delightful."

M. BEAGLING.—Thanks to yourself and friends for "a tribute to what they know to be good work for the best of all causes. Back numbers forwarded for free distribution.

R. GIBSON.—We should be very pleased to see you by appointment. You would probably waste your time by calling at a venture.

C. J.—May all your good wishes be realised.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote's engagement at the Birmingham Town Hall on Sunday, November 1, is cancelled. The great hall is being used for drilling and other military purposes. Mr. Foote's visit, therefore, is postponed indefinitely.

Pious folk pretend never to have heard of Mr. Foote, but, somehow, their innocence is not so filmy-eyed as that of prattling childhood. A religious publisher has issued a book with the title, *Bible Heroes*. Of course, the book is not Mr. Foote's, but the fat will be in the fire if the wholesale booksellers supply Mr. Foote's publication instead of the other one.

An Outdoor Demonstration has been arranged for Sunday, September 13, in lieu of the ordinary lectures in Finsbury and Regent's Parks. The speakers will include Messrs. C. Cohen, C. E. Ratcliffe, W. Davidson, A. D. Howell-Smith, and Miss Kough. The brake, kindly supplied, as on former occasions, by Mr. Edwin Wilson, will be in position at Finsbury Park at 3 o'clock sharp, and at Regent's Park at 5 p.m. There should be a good rally of North London Freethinkers at both stations.

The September *Humanitarian* contains a good article on the War, and a fine one on Schopenhauer's "Basis of Morality." We heartily commend this little monthly (organ of the Humanitarian League) to the attention of our own readers.

The *English Review* for September opens with a fine poem on "August, 1914," by Mr. John Masefeld. We like him better in this vein than in the turbulent and (may we say so?—raw one) on which his fame mainly depends. The most noticeable of the rest of the contents is a reprint of Mr. Frederic Harrison's article from the January, 1913, number—warning England against the German menace. Prophets are apt to forget that prophecy is not an exact science, and that many prophecies come true in the course of what may be called accident. Mr. Harrison's article, however, is well worth reading again. The editor's contribution is very ably written, and "hits the nail on the head." The Kaiser started with his Kruger telegram and has been going war-mad ever since. English publicists might have the courage to point out that this could only have happened under a Monarchy. Shelley's "King-deluded Germany" still holds the field as the poetico-philosophic description of the great central European nation from a political point of view.

The Secretary of the Camberwell Branch, N. S. S., asks us to remind readers that, in consequence of the earlier closing of Brockwell Park, lectures from Sunday next, till end of season, will commence at 5 p.m.

Cardinal della Chiesa is the new Pope, and his election to the post seems to give satisfaction. Man for man, we prefer him to the Kaiser. What he might be if the Catholic Church had its old power we do not know, but as things are (and it is no good talking about anything else) the Pope beats the Kaiser hollow from a humanitarian point of view. The Protestant monarch talks and acts like a brutal egotist. For years he has been boasting of his intention of smiting down whoever didn't agree with him, and now he is doing it. He is practising brigandage by murder (and something worse) on a colossal scale; and he will never stop until he is beaten down, for the appetite for that sort of thing grows by what it feeds on. But the new Pope, coming into office amidst all this horror of deliberate bloodshed and desolation, shudders at the prospect. One is not surprised to hear him say so in his first message to the world. We quote the following from the Rome correspondent of a London newspaper:—

> "Immediately after he was elected, the Pope said he could not imagine how his frail being would be capable of enduring the weight of the enormous responsibility thrown on his shoulders, especially at a moment when almost all the countries of Europe were stained with blood. The war had armed the faithful against the faithful, while the priests and bishops of each country had to offer prayers for the success of the arms of their own nation; but the victory of one side meant the slaughter of the other, a destruction of children equally dear to the paternal heart of the Pontiff."

Freethinkers will chuckle over the Pope's perception of the absurdity of rival nations praying to the same God for victory; but they will recognise that the avowal of it in the open daylight of publicity does him credit. For the rest, *we* are not bigoted; we like to see all influences working on the right side in this dreadful crisis; and are glad to see even the Pope talking the language of sense and humanity.

What Protestant priest of any eminence has done this? Those who say that Protestantism is in itself better than Catholicism are talking nonsense out of ignorance. Protestantism *is* better than Catholicism, but not in the sense in which they mean the statement. Protestantism is better than Catholicism in the sense that the less religion you have the better—just as a mild attack of fever is better than a severe attack of fever. Protestantism has all the harsh features of Catholicism, with none of its grace and tenderness. Hell and damnation belong to both, but not the adoration of motherhood, symbolised in the Virgin and Child—the holy conception *(really* holy) into which so many great artists have poured the splendor of their genius—and which every evolutionist knows is the vital secret of all human culture. Catholicism did not invent the worship of the divine mother and child, but Catholicism adopted it, while Protestantism (especially of the Kaiser's sort) spits upon it. As for absurd superstition, Protestant men of God pray to him for victory in war, just as Catholic men of God do. From that point of view they are all in the same (ridiculous) business.

This is not a bad time for our friends to push the circulation of the *Freethinker*. Something really sensible, not only about this war, but about all wars, is uncommon enough to attract a good many people if it were only introduced to their notice.

After the first "knock" caused by the war, our circulation has suffered very little. If anything, indeed, it has been going up a little. But this always was a peculiar journal. We hope to be able to maintain our present size, even if we have to print on an inferior paper. It will be a triumph if we have to make no change at all. But the price of things keeps going up.

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The Heart of the Rose.

LIKE most preachers, he spoke under the influence of the delusion that all his hearers believed in the ideas upon which he placed his faith. Consequently, his sermon was thoroughly dogmatic throughout. Nothing he said required weighing in the balance of truth and error. Everything he said was right. It never occurred to him that some of the members of the congregation considered him an unmitigated ass. It never seemed to dawn upon his vision that, perchance, he was not so much an ass as a fool. He sailed from one open port, across a very calm sea, to another open port; and before he asked God to bless and fructify the words he had just spoken, he wiped his forehead with a silk handkerchief, and sighed heavily; and then he sat down to rest awhile.

His sermon was entitled "The Rose of Christianity"; and, after a few remarks upon roses in general, went something like this:

You may have little appreciation of flowers; you may regard roses with as much respect as you give the down-trodden daises of the fields; but you cannot quell the conquering admiration this flower of flowers awakens within you. You cannot negligently overlook it. You cannot treat it with indifference. You cannot remark unconcernedly upon its beauty and pass on, more or less disinterestedly, to something else. You cannot, try as you may, subdue the glow of delight that suffuses your soul when its loveliness first fascinates you, and you feel your more animalistic senses becoming lulled into slumber by its aroma.

You *must* regard it with awe and wonderment. You *must* recognise that all other flowers are as leaves of grass, even as straw, compared to it; you *must* be conscious of the divine inspiration of its creation. You cannot help yourself. The beauty of it dulls your critical power, as it negates the apathy of the careless. Though your mind be full of facts relative to its growth and history, and your reason inclined towards doubt, there is still the warm corner of your heart that tells you of the beneficent influence of the rose of Christianity; how it has sweetened and gladdened life. Behind your knowledge of the erring ways of its votaries, behind your knowledge of the weaknesses of its lovers, weaknesses you, too often, call its failures and shortcomings, there lies the silent admission of the great charm of it. Its tender loveliness, its dignity and grace, its quiet majesty, all evoke an admiration you vainly endeavor to hide.

Its ethereal nature gives suggestiveness to your wonder and awe; the many unpleasant things in the lives of its apostles are forgotten; and from your thoughts and dreams arise convictions. Nothing else on earth is like it. Nothing else is so lovely. Nothing else shows so clearly that there is something within it we do not rightly understand.

One step only, and we are with God. Then we understand. And the rose of Christianity, as you stand in worshipful attitude before it, your mind picturing its age, its power, its influence, its supremacy; your eyes seeing, in the figures of time, its claims to greatness; your ears listening to the low music of its invisibly moving petals, hearing the voices of the many martyrs who gave their lives for its love; your nostrils dilating with the subtle incense of its breath—the rose of Christianity waves a wand over you; doubts and fears disappear; you see the glory of God. The rose of Christianity enslaves you to make you free. You are impelled by a mysterious power to seek what your will may deny, but what your soul rejoices to own. And so on, till one got sick.

It may be very nice, all this romantic stuff; but the worm of it is in its untruthfulness. Lies can be told so easily. Falsehood arrayed in solemnity often carries more weight than truth spoken royally. Any quack can gather a crowd and keep his audience if his tongue be nimble enough in following his imagination; and priests are only a portion of the quack class after all.

Christianity may be a blossom on the rose-tree of life; but to call it the most perfect is to forget that many a rose has withered and dropped into oblivion long before this particular one opened its petals to the light. To prate about its glorious beauty, saying it is the flower of flowers, is to forget that the tree is old, and has, even yet, a long life hidden in the roots of the future. Remembering these things, there is no sacrilege in tearing off the petals one by one. You come nearer to the heart of the rose; and, regardless of your equanimity, of your enthusiasm, of your admiration, the sight of the worm in its heart will discolor all the delicate tints of your idealism. Your commonplace human nature does not allow you warmly to honor something internally rotten. The worm in the heart of a rose feasts as much on its loveliness and charm as on its sappy materialistic strength. Your appreciation becomes hesitant; then it ceases; for our natures rebel against praising the surface beauty of the corrupt.

So with Christianity. Freethinkers have plucked petal from petal, and have bared the heart of the rose; and not a priest, pastor, or minister exists who does not know that the worm is there. The knowledge has shocked, maybe stunned them; but, in their slow recovery, they have turned for safety to the stuff that forms the first portion of this article. Around the heart of the rose they have been, and are, fixing false petals. They are exhausting the resources of language in the endeavor to hide the truth. A sermon of to-day is as sloppy as a baby's breakfast. They are decorating the worm with phantastic petal wings, and coloring them with all the tints of poesy. To their congregations the petals are not the worm's mausoleum; they are the walls of a heavenly palace within which everything is lovely.

Inside the heart of the Christian rose is the lie of all religion, the lie that came as a tremor of fear, bidding the human mind hate and worship. Out of it has come, as real history teaches us, disaster and death. No pen can fully picture the horrors inflicted upon Humanity by the influence of this lie. For it gave to the cutest minds the miserable opportunity to dominate their fellows. It put authority in their hands. Religion meant autocracy; and the little of civilisation that there is amongst the mass of men has come only in so far as religious autocracy has gone.

The spirit, ghost, or God idea could never become truth; for all the belief in the world cannot make a lie even a half-truth; and the lie of Religion, once fastened to life, and supported by all the most cunning faculties of the human mind, flourished exceedingly. Its nourishment was of the richest and rarest. It fed sumptuously upon the very sap of life. Its home was in the heart of the rose.

Gradually primitive cunning became civilised astuteness, forced not so much by devotion as by the social power it involved. Gradually the heavy curtain of sacredness was woven. Around the ugliness of the worm arose the protecting grandeurs of mediæval power, the elaboration of the primitive hut, the dignification of the mysterious medicine-man. As the leaves dropped, faded and withered by the sun's rays of civilisation, they were replaced by others more refined, with more semblance of culture. Around the unchangeable ugliness gathered the sweet fruits of man's brain. Religion, being the social power, impinged its character upon everything. Delicate artistry beautified the worm's tomb. Loveliness more and more enveloped the internal coarseness, till the human mind could not conceive it other than it seemed. Wonderful ingenuity forced the horrible corruption deeper into the darkness, and incense sweetened the atmosphere that once reeked with blood.

But with all the accumulations of false beauty and surface delicacy, the lie was never in the least made more worthy by its environment. The worm fattened,

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but despite the gold and glory of its home, it remained a worm. Time, with its cohorts of civilisation, has altered the rose from a thing of materialistic significance to a thing of spirituous incandescence; but the nature and activities of the worm in its heart remain unchanged. And to-day the rose of Christianity, with all its marvellous loveliness, all its ineffable influences, all its sweetness, and purity, and delicacy, its tenderness, refinement, and charm, all the thousand graces that adorn it and beautify Humanity, as we are told—where is it? Growing in the cruel sorrow and blood of a battlefield, growing amidst shattered bones and quivering flesh and spilt brains, growing amidst desolation and horror and murder, growing with all its false hypocritical meekness and mildness and Christlike simplicity, amongst the ruins of the work of laborious years. How similar its surroundings are to its heart! Yea! it is a marvellously wonderful flower, this rose of Christianity. Christians have cause to be proud of it; but we are glad we are Freethinkers.

ROBERT MORELAND.

Heredity and Progress.

(BY THE LATE J. M. WHEELER.)

THE law of heredity in its wider aspects is hardly popular, although observed in all ages. As a scientific theory, it has the misfortune to come in conflict, not with facts, but with what are often more potent—namely, prejudices and dogmas. The *Catholic World*, reviewing Galton's work on *Hereditary Genius*, declared the doctrine "is at variance with Christian theology, with the freedom of the human will and man's moral responsibility. It excludes all morality and all sin, and recognises only physical good or evil." Without troubling to follow these charges, which have been reiterated *ad nauseam* whenever positive science has ventured on fields over which theology has vainly claimed jurisdiction, let us simply look at the facts.

The truth of the law of heredity cannot be denied. Were it not the primary fact that like produces like, there would be no constancy of species. No one doubts that the hard head of the Negro and the light foot of the Indian are inherited. Inheritance extends not simply to size, complexion, and figure, but even to tricks of expression, handwriting, tastes, disposition, intellect—in short, to all that is summed up in the word "character." Anyone who considers the Jews will see at once that their characters, as much as their noses, are an inheritance. A Scotchman "caught young," as Johnson said, may lose some of the superficial characteristics, but will retain all the national peculiarities of his race; and so will the Irishman. The most noticeable qualifications of the law of heredity are those of sex and age. Various characteristics (as in the human family, teeth, beards, and various diseases) appear not at birth, but at the same age as in parents. Striking instances have been recorded of suicide, insanity, and special diseases, breaking out at the same age as in parents. It is even noticed that in men there are long-lived and short-lived stocks. The famous Turgots, of France, scarcely ever reached over half a century, while centenarians usually spring from a long-lived stock. Darwin noted that "on this principle of inheritance, at corresponding periods, we can understand how it is that most animals display from the germ to maturity such a marvellous succession of characters." He also considered this tendency of the utmost importance in determining the laws of embryology.

Theodule Ribot, the French writer on heredity, alleges two causes as among the chief in cases where the law does not obviously manifest itself. First, the disproportion of an initial force to the amount of energy it may liberate or direct. Each individual having two parents with the latent qualities of their ancestry, and being subject to new embryological conditions, is, however, slightly diverse from every other individual. As affecting this, the military excitement in which Mme. Buonaparte lived prior to Napoleon's birth has been instanced. The Greeks surrounded expectant mothers with beautiful works of art. The second cause is that characteristics are transmitted, which, though modified, are the same at root. Thus a consumptive father may have a child with rickets or rheumatics. An hysterical mother may give birth to a child afflicted with epilepsy. The children of drunkards are often imbecile or otherwise unhealthy, while those born previously to the parents taking to drink have been healthy.

What Darwin calls the "prepotency of one sex in the transmission of character" is also to be noted. In crosses, the most thoroughbred animal is usually prepotent in the offspring. G B. Starkweather is even of opinion that the sex of human beings may be determined by a study of prepotency, or what he calls "superiority."

The seeming absence of certain elements in one generation, and their reappearance in the next or a later generation, is just what should be expected. A father may transmit certain qualities to his daughter which her sex will prevent being other than latent ones, but she in turn transmits them to a son, who thus inherits from his maternal grandfather. Readers of Darwin know the importance of *atavism*, or the reversion to an earlier type, in determining the stock whence an animal proceeds. Atavism is explained by the latency of traits which are kept in check by other circumstances, but which, upon a fitting opportunity, again take shape. Scratch a Russian, and you find a Tartar. Under the veneer of our civilisation lies the disposition of an earlier savage life, ready to crop up in sport, Jingoism, or love of adventure. The momentum of ages is not to be stayed by the training of a single life. The man who fights his ancestry is often worsted in the last round, giving in in old age to what he has resisted in his manhood. We are, for instance, all more superstitious than we know. Mme. de Staël spoke for many when she replied to the question, "Do you believe in ghosts?" by saying, "No; but I am afraid of them."

In addition to the tendency to transmit peculiarities to the same sex should be noted the more general, slowly acting, and weaker tendency of transmission to both sexes of qualities, or degrees of qualities, which originally appeared in one sex only. This tendency is shown in connection with the tendency to inherit acquired qualities at earlier and earlier ages, and therefore in a manner independent of adult sex development.

Those who accept the facts of biology will find no difficulty in Galton's contention that it would be quite practicable to produce a highly gifted race of men by judicious marriages during several generations. In the case of the Brahmans it has been done, although the adverse forces have been strengthened by the habits of superstition and the lack of education on the female side. Every stockbreeder knows the difficulty of keeping up the high character of any valuable variety. There is a steady tendency to revert to the average ancestral character which has to be guarded against by careful selection. With every race of animals, if unpruned for a single generation, the weaker varieties would survive, and the average quality of the race deteriorate. The usual question asked of the believer in inheritance is, How is it the breed falls off? Why was not Cromwell's son, or Milton's daughter, as superior to their parents as they were to theirs? A consideration of the laws already mentioned will, in part, supply the answer. The case of Cromwell, also, deserves a word of notice. His military and political genius may be said to have developed with his opportunity. Had Charles been a good king, Cromwell might only have been a self-willed yeoman and a leader of opinion among the Huntingdon gentry. He had come of good descent, and his high qualities appeared to some extent in his daughters.

The difficulty is, however, properly met by Mr.

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Galton in his latest researches. It lies in the constant tendency to mediocrity of which I have spoken. In experiments on seeds of different size, but of the same species, Galton noticed that the offspring did *not* resemble their parents in size, but always tended to approach a medium size—to be smaller than the parents if the parents were large, to be larger than the parents if the parents were small. The point of convergence was below the average size. In regard to human height, an experiment furnished the result that where the average height of the two parents either exceeded or fell short of the mean standard height, that of their offspring would be one-third nearer. The explanation, of course, is that the child inherits partly from his parents, partly from his ancestry. The further his genealogy goes back, the more numerous and varied his ancestors become, until their mean stature becomes the same as that of the race. The man who boasts descent from some Norman baron rarely reflects how inconceivably small can be the share of that remote ancestor in forming his own constitution. The father transmits, on an average, one-half of his nature, the grandfather one-fourth, the great grandfather one-eighth, the share decreasing in geometrical ratio with great rapidity. This law of regression, towards the average of parentages, tells heavily against the full transmission of any rare and valuable gift. The more exceptional the gift, the more exceptional is the good fortune of a parent who has a child of equal or greater abilities than himself. If this discourages extravagant hopes in gifted parents, it no less discountenances extravagant fears in those a little below the standard.

(To be concluded.)

Joseph Priestley.—IV.

By G. W. Foote.

[Reprinted.]

(*Concluded from p. 573.*)

The logical corollary from this Materialism was the doctrine of Philosophical Necessity, the absolute denial of the unintelligible doctrine of the freedom of the will. In his correspondence with Price he argues and illustrates this theory with great power. Man as an organised system of matter is subject to the inevitable laws of his nature, and his actions depend upon his general frame of mind in presence of the conditions which surround him. Owing to the complexity of his structure, and the multiplicity of environing circumstances, it is often impossible to predict in what precise manner a man will act in any particular instance; but we ought not, therefore, to infer that his actions conform to no laws whatever. It may be impossible to predict how the wind will blow to-morrow, but the winds are nevertheless subject to the laws of meteorology. This doctrine of philosophical necessity was not new; it had been propounded by Hobbes, by Spinoza, by Toland in his Letters to Serena, by Dr. Coward, by Collins, and by a number of less distinguished writers; but Priestley presented and defended it with trenchant and irrefragable logic, and so perspicuously presented it that it never could again be misunderstood, except by wilfully perverse persons or imbeciles.

In his treatment of the problem of the existence of evil, he by no means manifested his customary rigor of logic and clearness of perception. Moral evil, he argues, is ultimately resolvable into physical pain, and physical pain is necessary to the progress of the human race. If we were not stimulated by hunger to partake of food, we should die of inanition. Throughout nature what seems evil is only a necessary part of the great providential scheme of good. Now this is the veriest sophistry; it is an invasion of the difficulty. The human suffering complained of by those who deny that the existence of evil is irreconcilable with the existence of a being at once omnipotent and good, is not that pain which is a beneficent stimulus to action, but that appalling misery which, in the shape of congenital disease or social servitude or semi-starvation, attends from the cradle to the grave vast numbers of the human race, even in some of the most civilised countries of the world. Priestley, however, was not the first philosopher who sacrificed reason in the attempt to gloss over the difficulties of Theistic conceptions. His belief in the ultimate perfectibility of mankind does credit to his humane feelings, if not to his intellect. Even if it be a delusion it is a very harmless one. Many people, as Huxley says, would be glad to share it, if it could be reconciled with scientific truth. The earth is cooling very fast, and the rate of human progress is very slow, so that the perfected man is likely to be only a perfected Esquimaux.

Of Priestley's contributions to chemical science only a scientific man is competent to speak with authority. We, therefore, prefer to borrow from Professor Huxley's address on Priestley's Life and Labors, rather than attempt an independent account ourselves. The quotation is not characterised by the Professor's customary grace of style; but that is readily accounted for by the fact of its being taken from a newspaper report:—

> "To estimate what Priestley did in chemistry, you must carry your minds back to the beginning of the last century, and try, difficult as it is, to form a notion of what was then the condition of chemical science. At that time there was no one who believed, hardly anyone who suspected, that the doctrine of the ancients, that air and water and fire are elements, was other than true. The researches, indeed, of Boyle and Hayles had tended to define the qualities of air, had tended to show that there were different kinds of air; but that there was anything like a multiplicity and diversity of elementary bodies, which we now branch under the name of gases, was entirely unsuspected. But immediately at the commencement of the second half of the last century—about the year 1755—a most remarkable young man, a young Scotch doctor, Dr. Black, had made investigations upon the nature of what was then called fixed air. He had shown that this substance could be combined with such matters as lime, and such matters as alkali, and could be got again from these combinations; that it was an acid substance, capable of neutralising the strongest alkali; and had thus paved the way for the conception of an air-like body, an aeriform elastic substance, which, nevertheless, was independent, and could play the character of an independent existence totally distinct from common air. And then a little later, in 1766, Henry Cavendish, one of the most remarkable men who ever adorned the science of this or any other country, in a series of researches which strike one at present by their precision, and by their exactness of statement, showed the nature of sundry other gases, particularly that gas which is called hydrogen now, which was then termed 'inflammable air'; and the special peculiarity of Cavendish was that to the investigation of these questions he applied a rigor of method which was almost unknown before. For he brought the balance into play, and he implied, although he did not express, that great truth which it remained for the French chemist Lavoisier to formulate, the doctrine that 'matter is never created and never destroyed.' It was following immediately after Cavendish's work that Dr. Priestley commenced his inquiries, and if we look upon them as contributions to our knowledge of chemical science they are something surprising—not only surprising in themselves, but still more surprising when we consider that he was a man devoid of the academic training of Dr. Black, that he had not the means and appliances which practically unlimited wealth put at the disposal of Cavendish, but that he had to do what so many Englishmen have done before and since—to supply academic training by mother-wit, to to supply apparatus by an ingenuity which could fabricate what he wanted out of washing-tubs, and other domestic implements and then to do as many Englishmen have done before, and many have done since—to scale the walls of science without preparation from the outside. The number of discoveries that he made was something marvellous. I certainly am well within the limit when I say that he trebled the number of gases which were known before his time, that he gave a precision and definition to our knowledge of their general characteristics, of which no one before had any idea; and, finally, on the 1st of August, 1774, he made that discovery with which his name is more especially connected—the discovery of the substance which at the present day is known as oxygen gas."

On the 1st of August, 1874, a great gathering took place at Birmingham to do honor to Joseph Priestley. There, in the very place whence the noble-minded man had been driven by political and theological hate, was unveiled a statue

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erected by the lovers of science and liberal thought to his great memory. It was the centenary anniversary of his discovery of oxygen gas, and Professor Huxley was chosen to present the statue to the Mayor of Birmingham, and to deliver a commemorative address in the Town Hall. And not in Birmingham alone on that day had thinkers and men of science assembled to celebrate Priestley's praise. Away on the far-distant banks of the Susquehanna, by the grave of the good old man, American savants met for a similar purpose; and another gathering assembled at Leeds near the place which gave him birth. Surely some progress has been made since Joseph Priestley was hunted from his native land, and compelled to lay his bones in alien soil. It is to him, and to such as he, that we owe much of that great and beneficial change. In the eloquent language of Huxley, "Such men as he are not men who care very much for honors and rewards; happily for them, for their generation is not usually disposed to give them any very great share of these matters. They are men who say in another spirit than Falstaff's,—

'What is honor, who hath it, he who died o' Wenesday?'

But whether such men undergo after their death that sort of lay canonisation which we have to-day bestowed upon Priestley, whether posterity erects statues to their memory, or whether their name and fame and remembrance are blotted out from the recollection of man, there still remains to them one thing which shall never die—every truth which they advocated. The whole progress of truth has been helped by them, and for all generations and for all time to come truth will be stronger for their efforts; and for every lie which they have smitten, and every imposture they have detected, falsehood and imposture will be weaker until time is no more."

A New Carol.

Recommended to be sung by the Christian soldiers of the Powers now at war.

GOD save you, merry gentlemen,
List kindly to our lay,
Remember now our Savior's birth,
For whom we fight to-day:
And 'tis tidings of comfort and joy.

'Twas nineteen centuries ago
And fourteen years to-day,
And now we Christian folk are out
To rob and burn and slay:
And 'tis tidings of comfort and joy.

They say that he was meek and mild,
And harmless as a dove,
But fierce as tigers clemmed are we,
And naught but carnage love:
And 'tis tidings of comfort and joy.

Goodwill and peace he brought to men,
Or so his priests have said;
But goodwill long has left the earth,
And peace lies stark and dead:
And 'tis tidings of comfort and joy.

His soldiers have his doctrines preached
In every age and clime,
With sword and fire and tortures dire,
And many a flagrant crime:
And 'tis tidings of comfort and joy.

The Prince of Peace they named him once
In mockery and scorn,
But not to bring peace on the earth,
But warfare, was he born:
And 'tis tidings of comfort and joy.

'Tis said he gave his blood to save
Mankind from mortal doom;
But 'tis our purpose now to send
A million to the tomb:
And 'tis tidings of comfort and joy.

God save you, merry gentlemen,
Christ's followers are we:
The fountain filled so oft before,
We'll fill again with glee.

B. D.

The Good God.

ONE day the good God got out of bed
In a very good humor for us, 'tis said;
He put his nose to the window light—
"Perhaps their planet has perished quite."
Not yet; in its corner very far
He saw it twinkling, our little star.
"If I can think how they got on there,"
Said he, "the Devil may take me, I swear;
The Devil may take me, I swear.

"Black or white, frozen or broiled
(He said, like a father to children spoiled),
Mortals whom I have made so small,
They pretend that I govern you all;
But, God be praised, you shall also see
That I have ministers under me.
If I don't give the sack to one or two pair,
My children, the Devil may take me, I swear
The Devil may take me, I swear.

"To make you live in peace divine,
Have I not given you women and wine?
Yet in my teeth with prayers and boasts
The pigmies call me the Lord of Hosts;
And even dare to invoke my name
When they light the murderous cannon's flame!
If ever I commanded column or square,
My children, the Devil may take me, I swear;
The Devil may take me, I swear.

"Who are those dwarfs so richly dreet,
On gilded thrones in sumptuous rest?
The head anointed, so proud and pert,
These chiefs of your insect-swarms assert
That I have blest their rights of place,
That they are kings by my special grace.
If it is by me that they reign thus there,
My children, the Devil may take me, I swear;
The Devil may take me, I swear!

"Then these other dwarfs, all black, of whom
My poor nose hates the incense fume?
They make of life a dismal fast,
And in my name fierce curses cast
In their sermons — Very fine, said he;
Only, by gad, they're Hebrew to me;
If I believe anything they declare,
My children, the Devil may take me, I swear;
The Devil may take me, I swear!

"Children, enough of this: no sect
But the good kind hearts shall be my elect.
Make love to each other and live in joy,
Without any fear that God will annoy;
Laugh down the great and the canting crew —
But suppose the *mouchards* should hear me? Adieu!
If into heaven those fellows fare,
My children, the Devil may take me, I swear;
The Devil may take me, I swear."

—JAMES THOMSON, *from Beranger.*

"Jewish history as revealed in the Old Testament is sacred, and our English history is no less sacred." Thus says the Bishop of Chelmsford. His Lordship has a stronger faith than we have, for the lively days of Charles II. and his lady friends and the period satirised by the great Hogarth do not move us to adoration.

As an index to what lengths war will lead ordinary folk, the suppression of German music from concert programs shows a deliberate want of judgment. As the Messiah is out of date now-a-days, we suppose that even Handel is a back number. Perhaps the Germans will refuse to read Shakespeare.

"Scratch a Russian and you find a Tartar," says the old proverb, and the zest with which the ordinary Christian enters into "the game of beasts" on the Continent shows that two thousand years of contact with the pacific commands of Christianity has had little or no effect on the race. It is all to the tune of "an eye for an eye," but as for Christianity, that's "all my eye."

Mr. Rudyard Kipling has been strumming his lyre on the subject of the war. Two of his lines read, "Though all we knew depart, The old commandments stand." This is news! We thought "Thou shalt not kill" had been overlooked by European Christians.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Mr. Neary's, 94 Lordship-road, Church-street, Stoke Newington): Monday, Sept. 14, at 8.30, Business Meeting—*Re* Outdoor Week Evenings, Propaganda, etc.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Mrs. H. Rosetti, a Lecture.

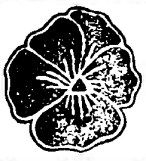
CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 5, Mr. Hope, a Lecture.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.30, Mr. W. Davidson, a Lecture. Lincoln-road, Ponders End: Wednesday, Sept. 16, at 8.30, Mr. Davidson, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, J. Bellamy, "Christians of To-Day"; 7.30, C. Burke, "Facts and Fictions."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Finsbury Park): 3, Freethought Demonstration. Speakers: Messrs. C. Cohen, W. Davidson, Miss Kough; chairman, C. E. Ratcliffe.—Parliament Hill: 3.30, Mr. Rowney, a Lecture.—Regent's Park (near the Fountain): 5, Freethought Demonstration. Speakers: Messrs. C. Cohen, W. Davidson, A. D. Howell-Smith, Miss Kough; chairman, C. E. Ratcliffe.

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THE
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Maximise morals, minimise religion.—BENTHAM.

Christian Civilisation.

CONSTANTINE was the first Christian emperor. Did he abolish slavery? No. He liberated the slaves owned by Jews, if they embraced Christianity, but the slaves of Christian masters enjoyed no such advantage. According to the old law, a free-woman who had intercourse with a slave was reduced to servitude; but Constantine humanely decreed that the slave should be burnt, and the free-woman executed in the ordinary way.

Stoicism branded slavery as immoral, but where is there a word against the institution in the New Testament? Christianity tolerated slavery for centuries. Even in the nineteenth century slavery was legal in our West Indian colonies. Men under sixty can remember the abolition of slavery in the United States. Some twenty years later slavery was abolished in Brazil. If Christianity abolished slavery, it took a frightful time to do the work. Might not civilisation have done it more rapidly?

Christianity "restored the position of women in society." In what respect did Christianity improve it? As a matter of fact, Christianity degraded woman by two methods; first, by adopting the Jewish story of the Fall; secondly, by preaching up virginity. Paul's view of woman's position is contemptible; she is as inferior to man as man is to God. Saint Jerome called her "the demon's door, the road of iniquity, the scorpion's sting." Saint Chrysostom called her "a sovereign pest." "When you see a woman," said Saint Anthony, "be sure you have before you, not a human being, not even a wild beast, but the devil in person." Saint Augustine's insults are nearly as extravagant. Saint John of Damascus styled her "a child of lying, the advanced sentinel of the Devil," and "a malignant she-ass." Gregory the Great denied her "any moral sense." That is how Christianity "restored the position of woman in society."

Polygamy was not proscribed by Christianity, because it did not exist in the Pagan civilisation which Christianity supplanted. Monogamy was legal in Greece and Rome, and had been so for centuries. When Christianity opposed polygamy among the barbarians it simply carried forward the morality of Pagan civilisation. The Bible never censures polygamy or enjoins monogamy. It is a big book, but it never gives a right sentence on this subject.

That Christianity "put down divorce" is undoubtedly true, but the result was of questionable value. Vagrant affection was compelled to pay an outward respect to the marriage tie, but those who could not be divorced found a compensation in adultery. Mr. Gladstone appeared to regard divorce as immoral, but in this he was out of touch with the law of every civilised State. The Church still brands divorce with anathema, but the secular law, even in the most Catholic countries, has been constrained to permit it under certain conditions.

Christianity put down divorce, yet it certainly did not put down war, nor did it make "peace, instead of war, the normal relation between human societies." The *Pax Romanus* was a reality, which Christendom has never equalled. Rome boasted a Goddess of Peace, and a splendid temple was erected to her by Vespasian. At no time did the Roman armies number four hundred thousand men. We admit that philosophers deprecate war, but they always did so. Marcus Aurelius, though himself an emperor, and obliged to take up arms against the barbarians, detested war as "the disgrace and calamity of human nature."

Mr. Gladstone was right, however, in saying that Christianity "changed essentially the place and function of suffering." Suffering was always regarded as an evil before Christianity preached it as a blessing. Fortunately the modern world is returning to the old opinion, and the party of progress is everywhere warring against the evils of this life, without waiting for the rectifications of another world.

Charity itself has been narrowed by Christianity into mere almsgiving. Paul's great panegyric on this virtue is perhaps the finest thing in the New Testament, but the very word he uses (*caritas*) was borrowed from Pagan moralists. Cicero anticipated him before the birth of Christ in his *caritas generis humani*. This kind of charity is far superior to almsgiving, which often produces as many evils as it alleviates; and, after all, the charity of which the world stands most in need is that highest kind which is known as justice.

"Humility and forgiveness" are fine phrases, but they are seldom more. Generally they are little else than cheap devices for popular oppression. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth," is a sweet text; but, as a matter of fact, the soil of England is chiefly owned by the House of Lords. The clergy, also, have taught humility by enjoining the "lower orders" to remain contented in that state of life to which Providence has called them, and to order themselves lowly and reverently to all their betters. As for "forgiveness," we have simply to point out that, until recently, the criminal jurisprudence of Christendom was a ghastly scandal. Even in England, in the early part of last century, men and women were hung in batches for small felonies; and when Romilly tried to terminate this infamy, he was vigorously opposed by the bench of Bishops. During the eighteenth century, men were hung, drawn, and quartered wholesale, and malefactors' heads were exposed on Temple Bar. Thackeray in his *Four Georges*, gives two samples from the public journals of 1781. At Cork, on January 15, Tim Croneen, for murder and robbery, was "sentenced to be hanged two minutes, then his head to be cut off, and his body divided in four quarters." In England, "Mary Lynn was burned to ashes at the stake for being concerned in the murder of her mistress." Going further back we find torture common in ordinary trials. The Inquisition carried this practice to a devilish extreme; but, as Joseph de Maistre argued, in defending that institution, it only developed the habitual proceedings of the secular courts. Not until the Revolution (October 9, 1789) was trial-torture abolished in France. On the whole, it is safe to say, that for exquisite, deliberate, and ingenious cruelty, Christendom has eclipsed every antique State with any pretence to civilisation.

G. W. FOOTE.

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"John Bull" and God.

IN times of war many people lose their heads. The conditions are so abnormal, things in general are looked at from a point of view so far removed from the customary, our interests are forced so violently into an unusual channel, that a great deal of rash and extravagant language may easily be excused. John Bright most probably had this in his mind when he said that he would as soon lecture a cage of wild animals as preach peace to a people seized with war-fever. Human nature is not really built for war, but for peace—that is in any permanent sense. The strain of warfare is too intense, the emotional tension too great for human nature to stand without being thrown, temporarily, off its normal balance. That is why it does not do to scrutinise too carefully the language of men and women during such a time. Human nature must be finally judged by what it is in its normal rather than in its abnormal phases.

This strain appears to be showing itself in unexpected quarters, and developing in unexpected directions. Some of the religious papers have informed us that with many people there has been a marked increase in the intensity of religious belief. That one may easily believe. A flood of feeling once aroused will expend itself along the line of least resistance, and with many this is most likely to take a religious form. Those of a more reflective and analytical turn of mind are much more likely to find their religious convictions disturbed. But it is inconceivable that religious belief should be created by such a catastrophe as that of the present war. If people fail to find God in times of peace, it does not seem reasonable to suppose that they will find him when the air is full of tales of battle and deeds of bloodshed. Well-balanced intellects do not veer this way or that with every passing phase of national temper.

One of these unexpected places in which religion appears to have broken out is in the pages of *John Bull*. And, strangest of all, in the person of its editor, Mr. Horatio Bottomley. I write under correction, but I have always been under the impression that Mr. Bottomley chose to call himself an Agnostic. And not an Agnostic of the "reverent" or religious type, but one who claimed to know as much about God as anyone, and to mean that he knew nothing at all. Since the war commenced I have been led seriously to reconsider this opinion. Two or three weeks ago there appeared in *John Bull*, presumably from the pen of its editor, an article on "God's Stocktaking," in which there was a plentiful scattering of pietistic terms. Now, in the issue dated September 12 there is another article, again presumably the editor's, with the title, "The Mills of God are Grinding." Alone, these titles would afford small ground for criticism, but the contents of the last named "gives one furiously to think." It is gratuitously pietistic, and, as a consequence, arguments that, by themselves, might be called reasonable, become, because of the pietistic ingredients, nonsensical.

The subject of the article is the Kaiser and the brutality of the German troops. No one in this country, no one, I imagine, in the whole civilised world, feels anything but the utmost horror for these barbarities and for the system that has produced them. As for the Kaiser himself, he deserves distinct consideration. I fancy that no mental authority in Germany—if he could safely speak—and certainly no mental pathologist outside Germany, would be at a loss to diagnose his case. He is a paranoiac of a most pronounced type. His speeches for some years past, his restlessness, his grandiose ideas concerning himself and the destiny of the German people, all point to this. Worst of all, he is a paranoiac who is further afflicted with religious mysticism. The disease with anyone in a position of influence is bad enough, when to it is allied the driving power of religion, he becomes a positive danger to all. When the War is over it is to be hoped that the Kaiser will be placed in a position where further mischief is impossible.

Here is a dose of pietistic jingoism from Mr. Bottomley that should satisfy the most omnivorous appetite:—

> "'God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform,' and the wonder He is now performing is the riddance of Europe, and mankind, of the Teutonic menace to his Scheme of Things. That scheme, as clearly as human intelligence can comprehend anything, was and is that, for good or ill, he has placed the destiny of the earth in the hands of the Anglo-Saxon race, with the Latins as their natural allies. All else is accidental or caprice; it cannot affect the final order of the world. And but for our own folly that order would never have been challenged. He has indeed been a patient God to have tolerated us.....He must have pondered whether we were worthy of the great trust; there must have been moments when He turned His eyes to the East, and hesitated whether one of the old Oriental peoples might not, after all, be better fitted for the task. *But He has decided to give us another chance* —on condition that now, at last, we do our part.....If *we* do that, God will do his part. He will crush the German monster. He will smash the Berlin butcher."

There it is, in all the glory of capitals and italics! And now we know exactly where we are. The Kaiser's offence is that he has interfered with God's "Scheme of Things," about which Mr. Bottomley writes with all the confidence of a Presbyterian elder of the old school. Really, a "Scheme of Things" that overlooks so large a fact as the "Teutonic menace," with its seventy millions of population, its army of four millions, with all its ambitions, is almost staggering in its criminal shortsightedness. If Mr. Bottomley's God wished to keep a character for common sense he should have prevented the "Teutonic menace" from developing. As it is, it looks as though ordinary human beings have to step in, and, as usual, make good the Deity's shortcomings. Besides, the Kaiser is quite genuinely convinced that the "Scheme of Things" involves the supremacy of the Teuton. I hesitate to give an opinion where two such theologians as the Kaiser and Mr. Bottomley differ. I believe that on this head both are equally well informed, and it would be interesting to see them engaged in a public discussion on so important a point.

We know—or, rather, Mr. Bottomley knows—as clearly as we know anything, that "He" has placed the destiny of the earth in our hands. That is "Britain's Divine Destiny." Under ordinary conditions such a statement might betoken "swelled head," or even indicate a phase of the disease from which the Kaiser himself is suffering. Observe, it is not said that we *do* hold the destiny of the earth in our hands. That *might* be a statement of fact. It is not even said that we ought, in our own interests, to do so. That might sound selfish. No, it is a burden that has been placed upon us; we must shoulder it in the name of duty; we are co-workers with the Deity, his selected instrument. (I must really congratulate Mr. Bottomley on the way in which he has assimilated the Puritan touch.) Of course, there are our Allies to consider—at least some of them. For while the Deity has selected us to rule the world, he has appointed the Latins as our Allies. The Latins, too, are in the divine "Scheme of Things," but only in a subordinate capacity. We hope they will remain contented in their allotted place, and do their duty in the sphere in which God —with Mr. Bottomley—has been pleased to place them.

It would only have been gracious under present circumstances to have found some place for Russia in the "Scheme of Things." For Russia has undoubtedly rendered valuable assistance in opposing the "Teutonic menace." Perhaps Mr. Bottomley was afraid that Russia might not readily consent to the divine "scheme" which places the destiny of the world in Britain's hands, and, not having the keen sense of humor possessed by our Latin Allies, might have seriously protested against the scheme—instead of laughing at it. Still, some place ought to have

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been found for the Slavs. They are too big to be ignored. Mr. Bottomley might try again. Mohammed received many supplementary revelations; why not the editor of *John Bull*? At any rate, Russia should be cautioned that if it does not agree to Britain deciding "the destiny of the earth," *John Bull* will have to denounce the Slav "menace" to "His Scheme of Things," and write of the Pirate of Petrograd in place of the "Butcher of Berlin." There is no doubt that he would be crushed. For anything that thwarts "Britain's Divine Destiny" can only be in the nature of a momentary obstruction. It is mere accident or caprice, and cannot endure.

It is not, it seems, a simple thing to work in line with the "Scheme of Things." Even Britain has been guilty of "folly," and Mr. Bottomley rightly compliments God on having "tolerated us." But, then, one might ask, What was "He" to do? Where could he have found anyone better? "He turned his eyes to the East," and wondered whether he should not select one of the Oriental races for the post of honor. Then "He" decided that, bad as we are, we were better than the others. Perhaps "He" read *John Bull*, and that helped "Him" to decide. At any rate, the fact remains, "He has decided to give us another chance." We should be thankful. And as in former ages God selected strange and not-to-be-expected vehicles to convey his message, so in these days he has passed by the hosts of the clergy to deliver his decision concerning us through Mr. Horatio Bottomley, and to acquaint us that this decision is conditional. We must "do our part." But suppose we fail? Will that seriously disturb the "Scheme of Things"? And if the destiny of the earth is placed in our hands "for good or ill," what does our failure matter? It seems that either God's decision concerning us is not conditional, or he has *not* placed the destiny of the earth in our hands "for good or ill." Like other revelations, that of Mr. Bottomley's needs checking.

Mr. Bottomley would seem to agree with that section of the community which—because we are at war with Germany—will not listen to the music of Wagner or Beethoven. He says, "All idea of German civilisation has gone," and "dear old Haldane need not waste any more tears over Schiller and Goethe." Perhaps Mr. Bottomley only means that our ideas concerning the nature of German civilisation needs revising, and that may be true enough. But genuine culture remains culture, whether it is in Berlin or London or Paris. The value of Goethe's philosophy and poetry, of Wagner's, or Beethoven's, or Schubert's music, the work of German scientists, is not in the smallest degree affected by the barbarities of Germans in Belgium and France, or by the inflated military ambitions of the Kaiser and his supporters. Genius is more than national; it is part of a world-wide democracy; and to reject it because it appears in Germany is only a little above destroying masterpieces of art and literature in Louvain. If the German is a Hun and a barbarian because he ignores the claims of art and culture in Belgium, what is the Briton who ignores the claims of art and culture in Germany? Will not our so doing jeopardise the good favor of the Deity who has placed "the destiny of the earth" in our hands? Might "He" not be again led to doubt our fitness for the task of leadership? Might not even the function of the Deity's mouthpiece be transferred from the editor of *John Bull* to some other and equally unexpected quarter?

C. COHEN.

A Desperate Subterfuge.

IN times of peace Christian teachers are accustomed to describe the Sermon on the Mount as an infallible compendium of the laws of the kingdom of God, obedience to which is said to be an essential condition of genuine discipleship. How often have we heard the exhortation thundered out of the pulpit, "Obey Christ at whatever cost." But when Christian countries are at war the majority of Christian ministers give the Sermon on the Mount the go-by, while those who refuse to do so are severely reprimanded. The Rev. Leyton Richards, of Bowdon, is one of the few who advocate absolute loyalty to the Gospel Jesus, let the consequences be what they will. He says:—

> "We must have the courage of our faith, and declare without qualification that since war is 'the crime of Cain multiplied a millionfold,' no conceivable exigencies can ever, from the Christian standpoint, condone or excuse it. In the abstract, we should never admit the end justifies the means, and we must never admit it here. 'War is Hell'; it means the tearing up of the Sermon on the Mount, the flouting of every Divine command."

In this protest Mr. Richards has the support of Mr. S. Hocking, who nevertheless contends that "since the first century the Church, speaking broadly, has never taught that war is 'the crime of Cain multiplied a millionfold.'" Mr. Hocking maintains further that the Church does not regard war as any crime at all. "The Church to-day," he adds, "believes in war through and through." Mr. Hocking and Mr. Richards, however, stand practically alone in the attitude they have taken. Dr. Clifford, Dr. Campbell Morgan, Sir William Robertson Nicoll, Mr. R. J. Campbell, and thousands more, boldly assert that France, Russia, and Great Britain are simply serving the Lord by taking part in the present bloody conflict. Criticising Mr. Richards the Rev. Frank J. Leggatt, of Manchester, angrily exclaims:—

> "Mr. Richards makes reference to the Sermon on the Mount. Does he stand for the Sermon on the Mount against Jesus Christ, when Jesus Christ, contradicting the Sermon on the Mount, or contradicting the Tolstoyan interpretation of Matt. v. 39, with a whip of small cords swept the money-changers out of the Temple courts"?

As it has been repeatedly pointed out in this journal, the Church, while always lavishing praise upon the so-called maxims of Jesus, has never even tried to put them into practice, and to be a Christian has never meant to be an imitator of the Gospel Jesus. A Christian is a person who believes in salvation by faith, not by works, and who seldom, if ever, belies his faith. Mr. Hocking is so deeply grieved and humiliated by this undeniable truth that he frankly confesses he is dumb when he attempts to pray. His words are worth quoting:—

> "I blame the Tsar scarcely less than the Kaiser for this wicked and inhuman war. Yet they are both devoted members of the Christian Church. Will the Church cast them out as men who have denied the faith? I scarcely think so. If the Kaiser wins, the Protestant Church of Germany will hail him as the anointed of the Lord; and if he loses, the same Church will add his name to the long roll of Christian martyrs."

Now the curious thing is that, with the history of the Christian Church staring him in the face, Sir William Robertson Nicoll still persists in the daring assertion that the present war is not of Christian origin. We owe it, he informs us, to the fact that in Germany Christ is dethroned. It is getting to be whispered abroad now that in Germany "Corsica has conquered Galilee." In other words, "Germany as represented by its dominant thinkers is at open war with Christ," from which statement we cannot but conclude that Germany is more powerful than the God-man. Surely Sir William cannot realise the full import of what he says. In the *British Weekly* for September 10 he tells us that though "the Germans are setting themselves against the will of Christ," we must remember that "Christ must reign till all enemies are put under his feet." Christ *did* once reign in Germany, otherwise Sir William could not certify that he is now dethroned there. The Germans have reigned until they have succeeded in putting him under their feet as their supreme enemy. But the editor of the *British Weekly* is entirely mistaken. It is well known that Prussia became one of the great Powers of Europe under Frederick the Great, who was, if not an

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Atheist, a Deist. Frederick's work was completed by Bismarck, who was a Protestant, on whom the Pope bestowed the Order of Christ. The war with Austria in 1866 resulted in making Prussia the dominant Power in Germany, while the war with France four years later eventuated in the establishment of the German Empire, and ever since it has been the one ambition of those in power to make Berlin the mistress of Europe, if not of the world. One of the chief champions of the greatness of Germany was Treitschke, the historian and great orator. Strangely enough, Sir William seems to put Treitschke in the same category as Nietzsche, whereas in reality the two were as wide asunder as pole and pole. Nietzsche was an Anarchist and Individualist, and so in deadly opposition to the theory of State supremacy, while Treitschke was an enthusiastic believer in the State as Force. Nietzsche was an Atheist, and a hot opponent of Christianity, while Treitschke was a zealous member of the Lutheran Church, and regularly partook of the Lord's Supper. He is often spoken of as the Macaulay of Germany. Well, what was the teaching of this disciple of the Galilean? For twenty years he lectured at the Berlin University, believing himself to be Divinely called to discourse on the greatness and glories of primitive Germany, the Prussian domination of the Germany of to-day, and the domination of Europe by the Germany of to-morrow. In his opinion the State's one business is to command, and the subject's to obey. The point is, however, that these peculiar views were held and advocated by a man who was a firm believer in the Christian religion. His sincerity cannot be doubted, and he could see no inconsistency between his religious orthodoxy and what Sir William would call his political heresies. If he regarded war as the fruitful field for magnanimity, heroism, and mercy, is it not a fact that a very similar remark occurred in the *British Weekly*, when, a few weeks ago, the editor was considering the difference Christ is making?

Someone asked the other day, with the war in mind, "Is God dead?" History's answer to that question is, "No, God cannot be dead, because he never lived." This world, from the beginning until now, has never shown the least sign of the existence of such a being. Even Canon Wilberforce admits that it is absurd to imagine that there is a great, external World-Ruler, such a conception being merely an idol of the mind. The Kaiser speaks of God with amazing familiarity, and it was very easy to lampoon his telegram to the Crown Princess, "How magnificently God supported the Crown Prince," as Barry Pain did in the *Times*:—

> "Led by Wilhelm, as you tell,
> God has done extremely well;
> You with patronising nod
> Show that you approve of God.
> Kaiser, face a question new:
> This—does God approve of you?"

Both the telegram and the lampoon treat the Divine Being as an idol of the mind, which he is, and nothing more. The Kaiser has enthroned an idol of the mind and called it his ally, and every Christian minister in Great Britain has done exactly the same. Germans, Russians, Belgians, Frenchmen, and Britishers claim God as their ally, and he lets them. And without heeding anybody, the Nature of Things has its way, the strong becoming stronger, and the weak weaker. Such is the order of Nature, and neither piety nor prayer can set it aside.

> "The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,
> Moves on: nor all your Piety nor Wit
> Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
> Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it."

The issue of the present war is alone in Nature's hands, and she will bring it about in due time according to a law that has never yet been broken, whether it will make for the true progress of mankind or not. The one thing that is absolutely certain is that the ambition and ideals of neither Germans nor Allies will be in the least regarded. We can only hope that, as the result of the superior strength and skill of its defenders, the cause of right and freedom shall win the day, and that of militarism receive its death-blow.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Origin of Supernatural Ideas.—IX.

(Concluded from p. 581.)

"My business was, and above everything is, to illumine the dark regions of religion with the torch of reason, that man at last may no longer be a sport to the hostile powers that hitherto and now avail themselves of the mystery of religion to oppose mankind. My aim has been to prove that the powers before which man crouches are creatures of his own limited, ignorant, uncultured, and timorous mind; to prove that in special the being whom man sets over against himself as a separate supernatural existence is his own being. The purpose of my writing is to make men *anthropologians* instead of theologians; man-lovers instead of God-lovers; students of this world instead of subservient and wily ministers of a celestial and terrestrial monarchy. My object is therefore anything but negative, destructive—it is positive; I deny in order to affirm the substantial being of man."—LUDWIG FEUERBACH, *The Essence of Religion*, p. vi.; 1890.

"The first duty of man, intelligent and free, is to instantly chase the idea of God from his mind and conscience: For God, if he exists, is essentially hostile to our nature, and we advance in no way by his authority. We arrive at science in spite of him; we arrive at well-being in spite of him; at society in spite of him; every progress of ours is a victory in which we crush Divinity.....

"Therefore I deny the supremacy of God over humanity; I reject his providential government, the non-existence of which is sufficiently established by the metaphysical and economic hallucinations of humanity—in a word by the martyrdom of our species; I decline the jurisdiction of the supreme being over man; I deprive him of his titles of father, king, judge, good, clement, merciful, helpful, rewarder and avenger. All these attributes of which the idea of Providence are composed, are only a caricature of humanity, irreconcilable with the autonomy of civilisation and refuted by the history of its aberrations and catastrophes."—P. J. PROUDHON. (Translated by Hinds; Green. *Freethinker*, June 15, 1890.)

MAN endows God with all the qualities which he himself would like to have, but does not possess. Man can see; therefore he makes his God all-seeing. Man is wise; therefore God is all-wise. Man is finite; God is infinite. Man has goodness; God is all-good. God is merely man magnified to the highest degree.

Ever since Xenophanes ridiculed man for making God in his own image, the intellectual upholders of the God-idea have been trying to deanthropomorphise or depersonalise God, but without success. For the multitude, God is now, as he always has been, and always will be, until they learn to do without the idea altogether, a person. "The average Christian," as Professor Leuba remarks, "whatever he may say to the contrary, is, theoretically speaking, a materialist, and, I might add, a polytheist"—that is, he is a materialist, not in the scientific meaning of the word, but in the sense that he cannot conceive of gods or spirits apart from some bodily material shape or form. For it is impossible to think of the immaterial—that is, nothing—having a form or shape of any kind.

Professor Leuba illustrates this with the answers given by two students at an American college who were beginning the study of philosophy. The first—a lady, twenty years of age—replied to the question as to her idea of God: "God, to me, is a being of flesh and blood, for without this form he would seem unnatural and unsympathetic as our leader." The second—a gentleman of twenty-one—replied: "I think of God as real, actual flesh and blood and bones, something we shall see with our eyes some day."*

This was the conception of God which prevailed throughout the Middle Ages. A "frequently recurring group" to be seen sculptured upon the cathedrals which have survived those times, says Andrew Dickson White, is a representation of God creating the universe:—

> "The Almighty, in human form, sits benignly, making the sun, moon, and stars, and hanging them from the

* J. H. Leuba, *The Psychological Origin of Religion*, p. 25.

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> solid firmament which supports the 'heaven above' and overarches the 'earth beneath.' The furrows of thought on the Creator's brow show that in this work he is obliged to contrive; the knotted muscles upon his arms show that he is obliged to toil. Naturally, then, the sculptors and painters of the mediæval and early modern period frequently represented him as the writers whose conceptions they embodied had done—as, on the seventh day, weary after thought and toil, enjoying well-earned repose and the plaudits of the hosts of heaven."*

Nor have the Protestant Churches any superiority over the Catholic Church in this respect. From Luther—the founder of Protestantism—down to Spurgeon, the same ideas prevailed. They both believed in the man-like Bible God. Luther observed that Abraham must have had a bad time when God told him to kill Isaac, and roundly declared that "If he had given me such an order, I should have disputed the point with him."† Again, says Luther:—

> "God has now and then a fine game at cards, all of them court cards: kings, princes, and so on. He deals them out, and plays them against one another—the Pope against Luther, for instance; and by-and-bye, as children do when they've been fighting at beggar-my-neighbor for a long time without results, gets tired, and throws the cards under the table."‡

Spurgeon held the same belief. He would hold no terms with those who would depersonalise God. He roundly declared:—

> "If God does not see and hear, *we are shipwrecked upon the rock of blank atheism.* I do not care a bit what men believe in, whether it be pantheism, or agnosticism, or theism; if they have no personal God that hears and sees, they have, in fact, no God at all. 'There is a power that makes for righteousness,' said one; but if that power is insensible, and never communicates with man, and never notices him, there is nothing in the forced admission of any use to him who makes it or hears it. It is big talk, such as men call 'bosh,' and nothing more. Though it be veiled in the language of philosophy, the scientific jargon which makes God into insensible force is covert atheism. I must have a God that hears and sees, and comes into the arena of my daily life, and helps me because he loves me, or else I have no God. My God dwells with me, and works for me, or else I have no God. Fine words, pretty phrases, and magnificent definitions are so many windbags, and go for nothing: there cannot be a deaf God, or a blind God, or an insensible God. If any of you so believe, go you to Bedlam, and find your fit associates. As for us, we know that the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob is the living God, and his memorial is that he heareth prayer."§

This outburst was aimed at Matthew Arnold, who defined God as "a power, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness." But how could anyone pray to an impersonal "power"? One might as well pray to a current of electricity.

The dilemma by which religion is faced, the insoluble problem that so many philosophers have attempted to solve, but against which they have broken themselves in vain, is this attempt to square the infinite existence of God with a personality responding to the wishes and aspirations of those weak and spiritless souls who, according to their own confession, could not observe the ordinary laws of morality unless they believed that a righteous Judge was secretly watching their every action, to punish or reward.

An "Infinite Personality" is a contradiction in terms. You can place the words together in print, but you cannot amalgamate them in thought. How can something filling infinite space bear the shape of a person? It is unthinkable. Even the philosophers are beaten here. Spinoza, the greatest of them all, arrived at the idea that there is but one existence—not two, as the pious think, a material and a spiritual—infinite, eternal, self-existent, simple and indivisible, of which all elements are but modes; this substance being God. In fact, that God did not exist apart from and over the universe—like an emperor over his dominions—but God was the universe.

Unfortunately, the pious have never been able to agree as to whether Spinoza was "a God-intoxicated man" or an out-and-out Atheist. It is significant of the thin tissue between the Pantheism of Spinoza and Atheism, that Charles Bradlaugh's philosophy was largely founded upon Spinoza's Pantheism. All that was required was to drop the word "God," use Monism in its place, and there you have your Godless, infinite, self-existing, eternal universe complete, four-square to all the winds that blow.

When the religious try to establish the existence of an impersonal God, they are sawing off the bough upon which they are sitting. It is related of an old monk named Serapion, who had been convinced of the folly of attributing a human form to God, that, upon kneeling down to pray, the image which his imagination had conceived for so many years had disappeared. The old man burst into tears, exclaiming, "You have robbed me of my God."* Yes, take away the human form and attributes from God, and you are committed to Atheism, no matter what you call your system of religion or what religious ritual and symbols you attach to it. The mass of the people will never attempt to juggle with these fancy systems of Theism, Pantheism, the Immanence of God, and so forth. Their choice will be between a human God or Atheism. As Dr. Maudsley well says:—

> "There is always a fund of wisdom in the common sense and practical instincts of the common people, the instruction whereof philosophy misses when it neglects or disdains to take sufficient account of it. Having to deal with the stern realities of life, working men are compelled to have working beliefs in order to act; feeling instinctively that the best test of the value of a belief is—Will it work? they turn their backs impatiently upon empty abstractions and demand beliefs with real contents. For example, persons of culture who make for themselves the dismayful discovery that they cannot go on believing in a personal God, are happy to take refuge in more general terms and abstractions, such as Deism and Pantheism, and make mighty use of them; but the laboring classes, rejecting such barren metaphysical abstractions, either repudiate God altogether or demand that, if there be a God who ruleth the earth, He shall be a real living God, working in the events of the world as they do themselves; not an abstract absolute, emptied of contents and living only in the misty regions of speculative thought, but 'a literal, personal, and eternal God.' Thus they, by their practical instincts, escape those self-deceiving effects of abstractions by which philosophers sometimes seek and discover the explanation of a concrete fact in what is no more than the abstract statement of the very same fact."†

We have now traced the origin of the idea of the Supernatural, which had its germ in the fear of the unknown, common to animals and man. This became confirmed when primitive man—by means of dreams and similar delusions—arrived at the idea of spiritual existences, which he held responsible for the storm, the lightning and thunder, for disease and death; in fact, for everything evil.

Arriving, by way of chiefs and kings, at Polytheism, or the worship of many gods, both good and evil, as he rose in knowledge and culture he gradually began to discard his gods and spirits, which, originally all evil, gradually assumed the morals and manners of their worshipers, until they were whittled down to one Supreme Being, all-good. But as the progress of knowledge has left nothing for this Being to do, "Science," as Caro wittily puts it, "Science conducts God with honor to the frontiers, thanking him for his provisional services."

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* A. D. White, *The Warfare of Science*, vol. i., p. i. Professor White says that he saw at Munich a banner, dated 1727, on which Jesus "was shown turning and shaping the globe on a lathe, which he keeps in motion with his foot.....God the Father looking approvingly upon him from a cloud" (vol. i., p. 12).

† "Luther," by J. A. Froude, *Contemporary Review*, July, 1883.

‡ Michelet, *Life of Luther* (Bohm's edition), p. 341.

§ Sermon (No. 2, 118), *The Planter of the Ear Must Hear*, p. 665. Preached Oct. 31, 1889. The italics are his own.

* Lecky, *History of European Morals*, vol. i., p. 52.

† Maudsley, *Natural Causes and Supernatural Seemings*, pp. 11-12 (1887).

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Let us conclude with the inspiring words of Colonel Ingersoll:—

> "Let the ghosts go—we will worship them no more. Man is greater than these phantoms. Humanity is grander than all the creeds, than all the books. Humanity is the great sea, and these creeds, and books, and religions, are but the waves of a day. Humanity is the sky, and these religions and dogmas and theories are but the mists and clouds, changing continually, finally to melt away. That which is founded upon slavery, and fear, and ignorance, cannot endure. In the religion of the future there will be men and women and children, all the aspirations of the soul, and all the tender humanities of the heart. Let the ghosts go. We will worship them no more. Let them cover their eyeless sockets with their fleshless hands and fade for ever from the imagination of men."*

W. MANN.

Acid Drops

The Russian papers, according to last week's *News of the World*, published one of the Kaiser's farewell speeches to a division of the army going off to the front, in which the following tit-bit occurs:—

> "Remember that the German people are the chosen of God. On me, as German Emperor, the spirit of God has descended. I am His weapon, His sword, and His vice-regent. Woe to the disobedient, death to cowards and unbelievers."

A poor man who talked like this would soon be in a lunatic asylum. The Kaiser should have been put under restraint many years ago. The malady he suffers from is very common amongst the insane. It begins in what the Americans christened swelled-head. The religious symptoms show that the Kaiser's case is hopeless.

The Kaiser's madness has spread downwards through his whole Army. After his abominable defence of the destruction of Louvain, with its insensibility to everybody's rights and feelings but his own, we need not be surprised at any atrocities on the part of his soldiers, who are themselves treated like dogs by their own officers. We take the following sample from a letter from Mr. E. Alexander Powell, special correspondent of the *New York World* and the *Daily Chronicle*, published in the latter journal on Monday, September 14:—

> "A sentry on duty in front of General Headquarters failed to salute an officer with sufficient promptness, whereupon the officer lashed him again and again across the face with his riding whip. Though welts rose at every blow, the soldier stood rigidly at attention and never quivered."

What can be expected of men who are liable to such treatment themselves?

Perhaps we ought not to be *too* hard on the Kaiser, and we mustn't overcrowd the asylums. There is Mr. Bottomley, for instance, who backed up Austria in its intention to give Servia a castigation, and now perceives that his view of the situation was totally mistaken; Servia having refused to accept a castigation, and administered one to Austria instead. Mr. Bottomley had to "change the subject" to avoid damage to his infallibility, and the war gave him an opportunity of working "the pious lay." He and the Kaiser are running each other very close in that direction. The Kaiser says that God has chosen the Germans; Mr. Bottomley says that God has chosen the British. All these gentlemen mean is that the greatest nation on earth must be the one they belong to. We regret to say that most people's patriotism comes to that—and no more.

Britishers may fight as well as ever, but the muse of war languishes. The case is so bad that even Begbie is treated as inspired. Kipling himself seems played out, and Watson shows that in finding Christ he has lost song.

There is a pedestrian poet called Kaufman who supplies patriotic verse to *Reynolds' Newspaper*. Does the editor pay him, or does he pay the editor, for its insertion? The betting odds must, we think, be on the latter.

A laudatory notice of Mr. Robert Blatchford in the last number of the *Weekly Dispatch* refers to all his writings except those against Christianity. Is this by agreement?

"Providence," says Lord Charles Beresford, "will never countenance barbarities which were far more atrocious than those of the Middle Ages." Lord Charles was referring to the reported doings of the German troops, and he seems to have quite overlooked the fact that "Providence" *has* countenanced them. "Providence" is quite a hardened offender in this direction. It has never interfered to prevent atrocities in past ages, and we see no reason for assuming that it will be shocked by those that are being pepetrated to-day.

Canon Wilberforce would agree with Lord Charles Beresford. He says:—

> "A God who, to further the insane ambitions of one man, will shock the moral sense of the whole civilised world, turn Belgium into a shambles, and promote upon an unoffending nation an aggressive attack [What is an unaggressive attack?] which for its ferocity, its treacherous break of solemn international obligations, bids fair to outdo the wickedest and bloodiest struggles in the history of the world! such a God would, of course, cordially approve of the Kaiser."

But clearly God has not prevented the Kaiser's doing these things. He has permitted the German troops to outrage, to burn, to murder, and how can it be said that he will show his disapproval by arranging for the German forces to be beaten in the end? If he could do this at the end, why not at the beginning? Or, if these outrages occurred without his sanction, why may not their cessation be brought about without his co-operation? Good is not really triumphant because at the end a murderer is hung. Evil has triumphed already in the murder of the victim. And whoever wins the present war the triumph of evil is assured. That is certain, from the fact of the war having taken place. And if people were not blinded by theology, they would realise the absurdity of God's government of the world being justified by the signing of peace over the ruins of thousands of homes and the bodies of many thousands of innocent victims. God's rule is not justified by the cessation of brutalities; it is impeached by their occurrence.

God, says Canon Wilberforce, shares our sorrows. He knows every pang we shall feel, but he permits it. And he adds "the question of why this is so is no business of ours." Is it not? It seems to us that, if there be a God, this *is* our business. If it is not, why do Canon Wilberforce and others spend so much time trying to explain why these sorrows are "permitted"? *We* believe it is not our real business to bother about "God" at all. But if we do believe in a God, we are bound to frame some theory of things that fits in with his assumed existence. No doubt Canon Wilberforce means that it is not our business to blame God. A good Christian should act like a camel—take his burdens kneeling.

Rather an interesting correspondence is going on in several of the religious weeklies concerning the duties of Christians in the present crisis. Ought they to take part in the war or not? If the answer is Yes, are they not pinning their faith to force, and what then becomes of the Christian teaching of non-resistance and of conquering by love? Some of the clerical writers who are taking part in this controversy, and who plump for war, seem to be quite unaware of the fact that they are knocking the bottom clean out of Christian teaching. Rev. F. Y. Leggatt, for instance, asks whether another clerical gentleman really means that, in order for England to live up to its Christianity, it should disband its Army and sink its Fleet? If so, ought we to disband the police force and trust to overcome the predatory instincts of the burglar by our pacific zeal?

All this is no doubt considered very telling, but an uncompromising Christian ought to answer Yes to these questions without the least hesitation. The New Testament does teach non-resistance; it does command us to turn one cheek when the other is smitten; it does say "Resist not evil." Of course, these teachings are absurd, as Freethinkers have always pointed out; and all that Mr. Leggatt and those who agree with him prove is the absurdity of the doctrines they profess to have faith in. For clearly, if evil is to be overcome by non-resistance, it must be done when evil is afoot. It becomes still more absurd to say that the teaching is only to be practised when there is no evil to combat. Mr. Leggatt is proving that common sense and logic are too strong for Christian teaching—that and his own insincerity, or shortsightedness, in preaching one thing and practising another.

Mr. Fielding Hall, in his *Soul of a People*, tells a story of the Buddhist priests which bears on this point. When the English invaded Burma—after painting the abstemious, tolerant Buddhist Theebaw as a drunken, dissolute perse-

* Colonel Ingersoll, *The Ghosts*, p. 32 (1881).

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cutor—the Burmese Buddhist soldiers consulted their priests as to what they were to do. Buddhism says "Thou shalt not kill." It also says that no man can take life, under any circumstances, without paying the price. What, then, were the soldiers to do? If they did not fight, they were disloyal to their country. If they fought and killed, would they suffer for it? The reply of the Buddhist priests was simple and straightforward. There, they said, is the law. We did not make it, and we cannot unmake it. No man can take life without his nature suffering. It may be that duty demands that you shall kill, but the consequences of a natural law cannot be set aside by national exigencies. Each man must decide for himself. And each Buddhist soldier went to war feeling that, however necessary, he would pay a price over and above that of being wounded or even killed. On the other hand, the Christian soldier went to war encouraged by *his* priests, and with *their* blessings on the annexation of—ruby mines. Had Buddhism been as Christianity is, its priests would have found an easy excuse for sanctioning warfare. Being a philosophy and not a religion, it remained true to itself.

Mr. Silas K. Hocking differs from Mr. Leggatt in not finding any Christian sanction for the war. He says, with truth: "Since the first century, the Church—speaking broadly—has never taught that war is 'the crime of Cain multiplied a millionfold,' or, indeed, any crime at all; had it done so, the present war would be impossible.....The Church to-day believes in war through and through." And he adds:—

> "I blame the Tsar scarcely less than the Kaiser for this wicked and inhuman war. Yet they are both devoted members of the Christian Church. Will the Church cast them out as men who have denied the faith? I scarcely think so. If the Kaiser wins, the Protestant Church of Germany will hail him as the anointed of the Lord; and if he loses, the same Church will add his name to the long roll of Christian martyrs."

That is putting the essence of the position in a paragraph.

Mr. Hocking asks, "What does the Church stand for in Europe to-day?" He might well ask, What does religion stand for in Europe to-day? British Christians will reply that it strengthens us in a righteous war. But did any country ever go to war without persuading itself that right was on its side? It is clear that Germany is as strongly convinced that it, also, is engaged in a righteous war. The truth is that we should have to oppose German aggrandisement in any case, and the need for that is responsible for our attitude to-day. Really, so far as religion is concerned, its direct and unmistakable influence is, as usual, in the wrong direction. Of course, the vast majority of our soldiers would call themselves Christians, but they go to battle singing, not hymns, but "It's a long, long way to Tipperary." On the other hand, the Kaiser, whom all good Britons are cursing heartily, is a Christian of the most sincere and pronounced type. He believes he is one of the representatives of God on earth. He is convinced that God is on his side, and that he is carrying out God's will. British Christians believe him to be deluded, and we argue that he is. But that does not affect the vital fact, the ambitions and ideals of the German Emperor are vitalised by his intense religious conviction. Were he less religious, he might see himself and his aims in a more rational light.

How silly the doctrine of original sin seems in the light of the gay spirit of Tommy Atkins, whether safe and sound, or slightly or badly wounded, or—we were going to say *dead*. One of the prettiest things we have seen for a long time is Mr. Horace Grant's report in the *Daily Mirror* of September 14 of a talk he had with a Tommy who had been left behind in the hospital at Havre, had been there a fortnight, and was just going for his first limping trial. When he was asked what struck him most forcibly about the Germans, he replied laughingly, "The bullet that hit my calf." Observe the humor as well as the good humor. The Germans are reported to be bad shots with the rifle.

Here is one of those things that might have been said otherwise; it occurs in an editorial paragraph in an Essex newspaper:—

> "In last week's issue I referred to the great increase in the population of Chelmsford and neighboring villages, brought about by the presence of many thousands of Territorials."

Oh! Ah! The writer should try again.

The election of the new Pope was complicated by the war, but the villainous saltpetre did not prevent the successors of St. Peter making the usual choice of an Italian ecclesiastic. In the olden times "God" was very partial to Jewish gentlemen, nowadays he seems to favor the nation which supplies the ice-cream vendors.

The *Daily Telegraph* is more pious than its less orthodox rivals, and we are not surprised at a fulsome eulogy of the Papacy appearing in its pages. But what does this religious periodical mean by asking the new Pope to join in a "resistance to a God-defying barbarism?" Has the Kaiser sent an ultimatum to God already?

The innate snobbishness of English editors emerges in these troublous times. The heroism of a duke; the Spartan economics of a duchess, who has one lump of sugar in her tea instead of four; the wondrous bravery of august personages at the front—at Aldershot—move these penmen to ecstasies of emotion, paid for at the customary rates. Who would imagine that these journalists and their readers worship a carpenter-God?

Men who enlist are told that they will come back from the war covered with glory. Some of them will stop there, covered with something heavier. And what will be the glory worth to the women and children while their bread-winners are away? A young husband that we know of joins the Army; his young wife, totally unprovided for, seeks something to live on, when it ought to be offered to her. Something is said to her about 4s. 6d. a week. She is asked what she can earn? What did she do for a living before she married? Something at a jeweller's. Oh, it's no use looking for work in that line now. Could she do charing? The poor girl—for she is no more—mutters "Yes" in her fright. She goes up like a culprit, and is treated as such. This is what glory means, in cash terms, to the women of the "heroes" who risk their lives for "King and Country" on foreign soil.

We understand that insolence to volunteer soldiers' wives is the rule rather than the exception. When they ask for their weekly allowance they are treated as if they were beggars asking for charity. As a matter of fact they ought not to have to fetch it at all. It ought to be taken to them. They are women, to begin with,—wives, probably mothers; and as such men should regard them all as of the blood royal. Fancy telling a mother of two children, whose husband was on active service at the front, that she should go out to work! Work! What was she doing already with two children to look after? Isn't that *work* enough for any woman already. *Work!* What was her *husband* doing? It is a pity that he couldn't give his own view of it on the spot. And what hypocrites the upper and middle classes must be to let such things continue. "Tommy" out at the front is a "hero." He is told so, his wife is told so, she is proud of her man. Yet when it comes to providing her "a grant" (hateful word!) in lieu of wages to supply just the common decencies of life, there is humming and ha'ing and worse. The "hero" disappears when it comes to paying up. One really cannot help asking if the people whose battles "Tommy" fights, who get up public funds and "administer" them (that's the word), are *worth* protecting.

Some people, mostly belonging to the "administration" classes, will no doubt accuse us of *inventing*. But there never was any need to invent insolence on the part of the rich to the poor. Besides, such a case was reported in the *Daily Chronicle* of September 12. It was adduced by Alderman Parry at a meeting of the Newport (Mon.) Corporation. Another councillor stated that complaints in relation to the Prince of Wales's Relief Fund were general.

Mr. A. M. Thompson tells men who have their livings to get to think of their wives and children before enlisting in the Army, even for the duration of the present War. "The root of true patriotism," he says, "is in men's devotion to their families. All other kinds are swank and bluster." Ingersoll puts the same truth with greater verve and humor. Every man, he said, will handle a rifle to defend his own home, but who will shoulder a rifle to defend a boarding-house?

Mr. Thompson speaks of the "Socialist attitude" in this war. We cannot ascertain that there is *any* Socialist attitude. There are *many* Socialist attitudes,—which is a very different thing. British and French Socialists are actually fighting German Socialists on the battlefield. The other day the *Star* referred to an article by Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner as expressing the Rationalist view of the war. We are not aware that there *is* any Rationalist view of the war, or that Mrs. Bonner has any mandate to express it, if there is. We

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are not quarrelling with her view in itself; we only dispute it as officially, or in any other way, representing the Freethought party in England. Even if "Rationalist" be narrowed down to the membership of one particular association, we should hardly think the lady is entitled to speak for all of them.

Mr. Bernard Shaw once said that Socialism would succeed if it were not for Socialists. This criticism would be true in relation to some other causes. At the last Rationalist Peace Society's annual meeting Mr. Foote was asked to "say a few words," which, much against his inclination, he consented to do. He tried to correct the Norman Angell worship which was going on inside that Society as well as outside. It was not true that nations would refrain from war by finding out that it didn't pay. No nation, in modern times, ever thought it did pay. Peace parties were getting too optimistic. The main cause of war lay in human nature itself, and these were nearly as active in Pacifists as in Militarists. War and Peace were not only a question of intelligence—they were also a question of character. A peaceable disposition, aided by a sense of justice, and even a vein of humor, was a great preventive of all sorts of quarrels. Europe was growing worse instead of better. War might break out almost any day—even before the Society's next annual meeting. Let them not chortle too loudly. For his part, he hoped for the best, but feared the worst. Mr. Foote was followed and rebuked by one of those unwise "friends" of advanced causes who take their own wishes to be the measure of future reality. She (it was a lady) was sorry to see Mr. Foote, of all men, going back on the Peace causes in this way. Surely the world had made too much progress to start fighting again. And so forth—and so forth; stuff which cannot be answered as there is nothing in it. Well, what has happened? Mr. Foote hasn't gone back an inch, and—*war is here*—the war of wars, enveloping most of Europe, and involving also Asia, Africa, America, and Australia.

Mr. Foote doesn't "go back," for all his views are convictions founded on principle and carefully thought out. He never opens his mouth, or wields his pen, on any subject without doing this to the best of his ability. His old friend Mr. F. J. Gould, favoring him with a new photograph lately, wrote upon it as presented to one who "never swerved." We have already said that Mr. Foote appreciates the compliment, coming from one who knows and understands.

"Daniel was an admirable scholar, yet in the crisis he needed more than learning." Thus said the Rev. Bryan Marshall, a Southend parson. If Brother Marshall is referring to Daniel's interview with the lions, we agree that a fist like a leg of mutton would be more useful than a knowledge of Hebrew.

In the old adage, after the mountain had been in labor it produced a mouse. Following the fulsome press adulation of the Bishop of London's bravery in going to "the front," we read that he is remaining with the London Rifle Brigade in camp. Evidently his lordship does not wish to go to heaven in a hurry.

A misprint in a parish magazine reads, "Give *pence* in our time, O Lord!" instead of *peace*. Probably the readers, already inured to the rattle of the collection-boxes, brace-buttons and all, did not notice the mistake.

"The Germans are never tired of appealing to God," says the *Evening News*. The canting appeal has been heard also in Carmelite House, so the Teuton is not alone in his theological prejudices.

"God help them when we get to Berlin" is Russian comment on account of German atrocities. Religion is such a civilising influence.

According to the *Evening News*, the crypt of Brixton Parish Church is to be converted into a rifle range. A fitting place for the funeral of the religion of the "Prince of Peace."

It was a humorous coincidence which caused a bold announcement of a "military pickle" to appear immediately above the latest war news in an evening contemporary. Let us hope that hasty readers were not misled.

A few months ago we were assured that the Brotherhood movement was going to reform the world. It claimed millions of followers, and alleged that it was backed up by Omnipotence. The present exhibition of brotherly love in Europe is scarcely a testimonial to the influence of the movement.

Mr. R. M. Jones, speaking at a Sunday-school Demonstration at Southend-on-Sea, said that "There is a divine spark in all of us, but we simply poured water on it and quenched it." That's the worst of living at the seaside. Water is so cheap.

Some religious people have objected that "It's a long, long way to Tipperary," the song warbled by our soldiers, is a music-hall melody. Did they think that the boys would march to battle singing, "When my eyeballs crack in death," or some other lugubrious ditty?

"The predominant forces are not the intellectual," says the Rev. J. Bryan Marshall, a Baptist minister of Southend-on-Sea. Probably there are more tradesmen in his church than "intellectuals," and cutting cheese with a wire is not the best expression of "god-like reason."

Last week's *Reynolds'* reported the magnificent news that the Archbishop of Canterbury had visited the Folkestone Technical Schools, now the headquarters of the Belgium Relief Fund Committee. "He conversed with some of the refugees," it is added, "in their own language." Our contemporary appears to think there is a Belgian language. There is not—any more than there is an Austrian language or a Swiss language. French is the State language in Belgium, and Flemish is spoken side by side with it. Many languages are spoken in Austro-Hungary, but the State language is German. French is the State language in Switzerland, but German and Italian are also spoken. What the Archbishop spoke was probably French, and there is nothing miraculous in an educated Englishman (or Scotsman) speaking that.

"Sex After Death" is the interesting title of an article in the *Nineteenth Century and After*. Dear, dear! This implies dressmakers after death, for such modest Christian gentlemen as the late Rev. Price Hughes and W. T. Stead would never be happy in the midst of unclothed angels.

Toy Noah's arks, which are such favorites with children, appear to have been a speciality of German manufacturers, and there is now a dearth of these juvenile delights. Unless British manufacturers oblige, small Christians will soon cease to see the animals go in "two by two."

Rev. Matthys Vandeweg, minister of the Dutch Reformed Church, took to calling Miss Anna C. Brink, a school-teacher at Lindley, "Atheist" and other names, not calculated to gain her the love and respect of her fellow-citizens. He also threw out the gravest hints as to her immorality, and expressed horror as to her low-cut blouse, which gave him such a shock that his eyesight went wrong, and he could hardly look at her. But on this point clergymen are not the best of witnesses; they are so inflammable. The other charges, however, were more important, and the reverend gentleman seems to have pressed them both in his sermons and in his prayers. When an official inquiry was instituted, the man of God tried Lord Hugh Cecil's trick, which filled the House of Commons with derisive disgust in the Lloyd George "Marconi" case. The reverend gentleman had documents too filthy to produce, but "everybody was at liberty to come and read them at the Parsonage." Miss Brink was at length obliged to bring an action against him for defamation of character, obtaining a verdict with £500 damages and costs. The Chief Justice at Bloemfontein, before whom the action was tried, said "the Court found that the defendant was not actuated by a proper sense of duty, but by express malice." "I may state here," the judge added, "for the benefit of ministers of religion, if they imagine that in the twentieth century the general public is going to endure their attacks on individuals from the pulpit, they are very much mistaken." This declaration was greeted with loud applause by the public in court. It ought not to have been, of course, but we are glad the applause was on the side it was.

To meet the common Christian objection to any report to the discredit of a man of God, we may state that the information in the foregoing paragraph is derived from long reports in the *Transvaal Leader* of August 18 and August 20.

"The outbreak of war sent us all to our knees," says the Rev. D. Ewart James, a prominent Essex Congregationalist minister. It is reassuring to know that the weaker brethren were not under the table.

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To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £206 3s. 6d. Received since:—Mr. and Mrs. Capon, 2s.: P. W. Smart, 2s.; W. Bean, 5s.: P. C. H., 2s. 6d.; F. G. Margetson, 5s.

J. LATHAM.—There seems to be a slump in the Freethought movement in South Africa: we mean as a movement. Our correspondence and our subscribers' book show there are many individual Freethinkers. Great things were to happen when our friends the Rationalists came along, but new names don't always mean new life.

W. H. MORRISH.—It is good to see a veteran "saint" so constantly cheerful. But you know where the clergy say you are going. Pause, Pause, as the curate cried, hanging his leg of mutton hands out over the pulpit. But, seriously, our hand, old friend!

W. H. HUNT.—Much overset this week; room perhaps in next issue.

JAMES NEATE, 385 Bethnal Green-road, desires the address of Mr. James Rowney, the lecturer.

F. CAFFERY.—We read Taylor's *Devil's Pulpit* ever so many years ago. We cannot attempt to criticise it in this column.

A. H. SMITH.—Apportioned as desired. Glad you find this journal so interesting.

A. T. GILLMAN.—We cannot tell for certain yet. The weekly drop on a paper like ours during war-time is cumulative—something like the fall of a stone under gravitation in the atmosphere. We have not suffered much yet, but we have fears of the future. A few weeks will decide. Meanwhile we make no alteration whatever. Perhaps our readers will do their very best to push our circulation just now, by introducing the paper to friends and acquaintances.

W. P. BALL.—Cuttings welcome.

T. LONSDALE.—Sorry, but not surprised, to hear the Glasgow Branch has decided to drop its Winter Lectures for once. Our own impression is that this war is not going to be a long one.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

We are always glad to see the handwriting of our old friend and veteran "saint," Mr. W. Morrish, of Bristol, whose memory goes back to the Southwell and Holyoake prosecutions for "blasphemy." In his latest letter to us he says:—

> "I greatly admired Mr. Cohen's article on the blasphemous utterances of 'the Christian Kaiser.' It would make an excellent leaflet, and I hope it will be reprinted. It was just splendid."

The suggestion shall be considered,—on the financial side; it needs none on any other. Unfortunately there is very little money available at present even for the worthiest investments. But it is "now or never" with a tract about the Kaiser.

For many reasons it is to be hoped that this horrible war will soon reach its finish. Freethought propaganda will have a bad time until peace is restored. Audiences will be difficult to obtain. The "saints" alone do not make a meeting to pay its way; some of the general public must be present to constitute a success—and it is really the general public that the lecturers want to get at. We note that the Glasgow N. S. S. Branch has resolved to drop this Winter Lecture Session altogether. Mr. Foote was to have lectured there on October 18. The Birmingham Town Hall is not now available for his visit on November 1. He is not yet sure about Queen's (Minor) Hall on the first two Sundays in October, but a definite announcement will appear in next week's *Freethinker*. It is fortunate that this journal is blessed with a strong constitution. There is something, even in the days of Armageddon, to concentrate upon; and we trust the "saints" will make every effort to maintain and even promote our circulation during this distressful period.

Both N. S. S. Demonstrations held last Sunday at Finsbury and Regent's Parks were highly successful, the audience at Regent's Park being particularly good. Inspiring speeches were delivered by Messrs. Cohen, Davidson, Hope, Howell-Smith, and Miss Kough, the all-absorbing topic of the war being dealt with from a Freethought standpoint. Mr. E. C. Ratcliffe kept the meeting in the best of humor by his skilful and efficient chairmanship. The Society's thanks are again due to Mr. Edwin Wilson for personally superintending the arrangement for the platform, consisting of a brake drawn by two magnificent horses kindly provided by him.

This is not exactly a "Sugar Plum," but we don't know where else to put it. There is sweetness, of course in being able to report that Mr. W. Heaford is on the way to recovery, but we are very sorry that there is any occasion for this to be good news. We have only just heard (from himself) that he has had a very bad nervous breakdown, which he cannot hope to get the better of in a brief space of time. But hundreds of friends will hope, as we do, that the time will be shorter than it threatens.

We hope our Brussells contemporary, *La Pensée*, bravely and ably conducted by M. Eugène Hins, will soon see the end of its "suspension." When the city is once more free from invaders and assassins it should be possible to resume the publication of that gallant journal. It has had an uphill fight at all times, but all Freethought journals have that. What an heroic chronicle the history of Freethought journalism would be!

A Christian Apologist.

WAS ever such a queer Apologist?
He invents a faith no mortal could conceive
Except himself,—and only *he* believe;
And gaily ropes of sand proceeds to twist:
His "arguments" are but midsummer madness,
And seem intended for ironic jests,—
Or show that maggots in his brain are guests
If he advances them in sober sadness.

Yet wherefore censure his ingenious folly?
A foolish faith makes fools of its confessors:
The deadly dullness of his predecessors
He shuns, and strives to make his quips seem jolly:
With sophistries and paradoxes glib
His faith becomes a Chestertonian squib!

B. D.

WHITMAN AND INGERSOLL.

Whitman said: "I had a visitor one day last week, a preacher fellow: he wore black clothes, clerical: was quite courteous, almost gracious.....Just before he left he said (here Whitman paused and chuckled): 'I hope it is not true, Mr. Whitman, that you are a great admirer of Bob Ingersoll.' It was lugged in in such a way that I felt as if that was really the purpose of his visit—to satisfy himself on that point. I blurted out at once, so that he should remain in no uncertainty: 'I'm afraid, my friend, that I hope it is true and always may be true.' You should have seen his crestfallen face. He said at once: 'I confess I am disappointed.' I only smiled. He seemed to take it to heart. I asked him: 'I suppose your religion has a place for Ingersoll?' He answered evasively: 'That opens up a large field,' which meant that he had his doubts. So I hurried to add: 'Well, I am afraid mine does, anyhow. *Leaves of Grass* would be a poor sort of pretender if it flourished a whip over people.' He bowed as if to say, Have it as you will. The fellow riled me a bit, too; it was all so unnecessary. I did not wish him to go supposing my love for the Colonel was only a half-hearted sort of thing—an apology: so I said quite vehemently: 'You must make no mistake about it: I am Bob's friend: I admire him: I stand by him in his war on the Church. He was as solemn as a judge by this time. 'And in his war against religion, Mr. Whitman—do you stand by him in that?' I answered: 'He makes no war on religion.'"

Whitman laughed. "It's astonishing to me how those preacher people thin themselves down—lose their blood: they have no more guts than a dead weasel: they nose about with their little hells and heavens, like a corner grocer with something toothsome to sell."—*Horace Traubel, "With Walt Whitman in Camden."*

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Heredity and Progress.—II.

(BY THE LATE J. M. WHEELER.)

(Concluded from p. 588.)

Is heredity, with its constant ancestral pull, a bar to progress? Not entirely. The average type to which the tendency is to revert is not a stationary one. The aptitude for progress, the habit of adaptability to new conditions, and the faculty of invention, are themselves heritable, and with each generation the liability to reversion is slightly diminished. It still remains true that the civilised races supplant savages, and that feebler nations are overcome by stronger ones. The children of a gifted pair are far more likely to be gifted than the children of an average pair. I say pair, for any exceptional quality will be diminished in the first generation unless both parents partake of it. In the case of music we observe stronger evidence of inherited faculty than in other arts, for musicians usually select a partner with at least a love of music. In the Jews we can see that all their art has run in this direction, the plastic arts having been forbidden to them. That many eminent musicians have had Jewish blood in their veins is well known. Great musicians, indeed, almost invariably come of a musical family. It was so with Beethoven, Hadyn, and Mozart. Still more striking is the case of the family which boasted Sebastian Bach as the culminating illustration of its musical genius. Through eight generations it produced multitudes of musicians of high rank, of whom twenty-nine were reckoned eminent. If, in our gardening, we desire to produce larger seeds, a considerable selection will have to be made through successive generations, and, if we wish to improve any valuable human quality, a careful selection of partners might be made and continued for several generations. Of two persons apparently equal, one may be an excellent specimen of a poor stock, the other an average specimen of a better one. Marriage with the latter is preferable, since there is a diminished liability to reversion to a lower type. And the latter case is the more unlikely. The tendency to mediocrity, as we have seen, makes it more frequently the case that an exceptional man is the somewhat exceptional son of mediocre parents than the average son of exceptional parents. The breeder considers "pedigree" even more than form.

Plato long since advocated breeding from the best men only, and in our own times Schopenhauer has hinted that great men should breed from as many as they please. "The life is impossible," said Aristotle of Plato's stud farm, and if the same is said now of the schemes of eugenics, stirpiculture, or man-breeding, it will arise from the same reason. Marriageable persons and their parents will look rather at their own immediate wants than at any ideal improvement of the race. Yet just as selfish trade benefits the world, so does sexual selection, looking only at its own interest on the whole, bring into existence the lives fittest for the environment. Each party usually has some eye to assistance, comfort, and happiness, which are supports in the struggle for existence; and the attraction of "beauty," after all, mainly consists in the requisites for the continuance of the race, including health, intelligence, energy, and amiability. The type before referred to in the composite picture representing health, in the frontispiece of Galton's book, is that of what ninety-nine women out of a hundred would, other things being equal, consider an "eligible" young man. Moreover, nature's blinder method does act, despite the artificial hindrances of civilisation. It is true weakly lives are preserved that would have perished in barbarous lands, and that both wealth and sentiment interpose shields between the action of natural selection and many of its rightful victims. But, though humanitarianism and medical science may preserve the unfit for a generation, it cannot do so in the end. Galton carefully analysed the census returns of a thousand factory operatives of Coventry, and of the same number of agriculturalists from the surrounding small rural parishes, and found that the former had but little more than half as many adult grandchildren as the latter. They had fewer offspring, and of these a smaller proportion reached adult life. The offspring of the constitutionally diseased are stamped out in the long run. For the consumptive, scrofulous, epileptic, or otherwise hopelessly disordered, to have children is as absurd, not to say immoral, as to propagate a race of *cretins*. I say to have children, for, if they would avail themselves of the methods which Neo-Malthusianism places within their reach, I see little objection to their marrying among themselves, but strong objections against their marrying with those who might take better partners. They should be content to let the race be continued by those best fitted to meet its requirements. And here I take occasion to remark how the doctrine of Evolution, first suggested to Darwin in connection with Malthus's law of population, tells strongly against the conclusion of Malthus that the prudent should refrain from early marriage. On the contrary, it is the prudent who should marry early. As fecundity diminishes with age, the wisest policy is that which retards the average age of marriage among the feeble and hastens it among the vigorous classes. Ruskin, in eloquent words, has urged that marriage should be in the nature of a reward to be earned before permitted. If this is somewhat Utopian, at any rate a public sentiment is growing adverse to the placid reproduction of themselves by the criminal and diseased. The type of character which leads to criminality is shown by statistics to be strongly inherited. Dr. R. L. Dugdale, of New York, followed the lines of descent from one Margaret Jukes, whose progeny for six generations, including in all seven hundred and nine persons, turned out thieves, prostitutes, murderers, and idiots.

> "Whate'er Ezekiel may allege,
> When fathers eat of sour grapes
> The children's teeth are set on edge."

The main characteristics demanded in modern man are obvious enough. "Brains, sir," said Opie, when asked what he mixed his colors with. While the civilised man is but a fraction taller than the savage, his cranial capacity is larger by nearly thirty per cent. His brain, too, presents increased diversity in its convolutions. With brains are required larger powers of vitality to direct them, and of self-regulation to use them in conformity with the needs of social life.

Galton says: "In any scheme of eugenics energy is the most important quality to favor." Of its importance there can be no doubt; yet I venture the proviso that the energy must be of an enduring kind. The stress of civilisation is calculated to develop precocious energy, and to use it up speedily. It is still a question whether a long-lived phlegmatic race may not hold its own against one with a more glowing, but more easily diminished, vitality. Intellect is essential, but it must be backed up by physical vigor. Fineness of nerve is apt to end in fragility. Overbred animals have little stamina, and the race of German professors, which, it is said, has been vastly improved by the custom of marrying daughters of professors, might be bettered by an occasional variation with the daughter of an intelligent farm laborer of good descent. The Greeks were intellectually the superiors of the Romans, yet the latter had the stronger wills and the more vigorous vitality.

Modern progress also depends largely upon adaptability to new conditions. Those races and persons who insist upon retaining the ideas and institutions of the past can no more hope to hold their position against those of greater adaptability than can a person expect to protect himself from modern cannon with mediæval armor. We may rest assured that those who are most open to new ideas, and readiest in adopting new inventions and in setting aside faiths and formulæ no longer adapted to progressive humanity, have the future for their own, and their species will, like a dominant organism, supplant and supersede inferior forms.

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The Proof-Reader at Large.

"Mind your p's and q's."—OLD SAYING.
"It is human to err."—ANOTHER OLD WHEEZE.

IN these troublous days it is well sometimes to turn from wars and rumors of wars to something that will bring a sense of relief, and, as the 'bus-driver was said to have taken his scant holidays riding on other mens' 'buses, so a journalist may be pardoned for turning for a few minutes to the amusing experiences of his profession, especially with regard to proof-readers and their unconscious lapses into humor.

The proof-reader is the watch-dog of literature, and he is the author's best friend. Perhaps the haste with which modern books and periodicals are produced is responsible for the greater prevalence of the printer's error than formerly. Of the proof-reader it may be remarked that his strokes of humor owe much of their success to their surroundings. The flashes of fun are spread over pages of dullness, which enhance them, just as a dark night suits fireworks, or the atmosphere of the House of Commons, or of a court of law, is propitious to a joke. Here are a few examples which show that unconscious humor is not the least laughable:—

A clergyman was made to say, in describing the burial of a friend, that "disconsolate *fiends* stood riveted to the *sport!*" instead of "disconsolate friends stood riveted to the spot."

Another clergyman once preached a sermon from the words, "All that a man hath will he give for his life." The discourse was printed, but the printer had put *wife* for life, to which the unhappy parson made a marginal note, "That depends upon circumstances."

The omission of the letter *n* in an hotel advertisement in a local paper, made the alluring announcement that *mice*-pies would be furnished for the delight of the guests.

The substitution of *s* for *a* once made havoc with the feelings of quite a number of people; it being stated that a marriage took place under *suspicious* instead of auspicious, circumstances.

A minor poet who used to chirp through the columns of a popular magazine, was made to sing about *lead-booted* hours instead of lazy-footed hours.

A philosophical journalist wrote "there is truth in the converse" of a certain proposition; but he had the pleasure of reading in print that "there is truth in the universe," but for that, he adds, he "would not like to vouch without further investigation."

A temperance orator lectured on "Fables: Ancient and Modern," and referred frequently in his oration to Æsop. His joy may be imagined when he found that in the newspaper report the word was rendered "Allsopp" throughout.

Perhaps a proof-reader corrected in a geographical work, "a plain covered with erratic blocks" into "a plain covered with *erotic blacks*." Blocks are not erratic, he probably argued, but niggers are amorous.

A delightful result of carelessness was the insertion of an advertisement in a provincial paper relating to a dog: "Pomeranian female, nearly white, quiet for home, carriage paid, thirty shillings."

An author of repute quoted, in a daily paper, Browning's "Just for a handful of silver he left us." This appeared in public as "Just for a *handle* of silver he left us." The author complained to the editor and explained that everybody knew the quotation, and that "handle" was not sense. The answer was that the line was not known and that sense was never expected from Browning.

A proof-reader should know stock quotations. He should never have passed the following improvement upon Milton:—

"that fatal and perfidious bark,
Built in the eclipse and rigged with curses dark,
That junk that drowned that sacred head of thine."

In the following issue of the paper the justly enraged editor said that when he saw it "we wished him a junk diet for a fortnight."

A country editor altered Shakespeare's "He smote the sledded Polack on the ice" into "He smote his *leaded poleaxe* on the ice."

This was a better emendation than a Teutonic professor's correction of "Christy Minstrels" to "Minstrels of Jesus."

In a printseller's catalogue we have seen Benjamin Franklin described as the "President of the United States." Nell Gywnn, in the same publication, was pictured as "a friend of Charles the Second," although this does not accurately describe the lady who was "less than kin and more than kind." But this error is at least excusable. Even Scott called Joan of Arc "an unfortunate female."

Some "malaprops" must surely be ascribed to the author as well as to the proof-reader. Anthony Trollope makes one of his heroes come "whistling up the street with a cigar in his mouth."

Even so magnificent an artist as Keats could, on occasion, perpetrate a good-sized "bull":—

"So the two brothers and their *murdered man*
Rode towards fair Florence."

But the blame must rest on the unfortunate proof-reader when he informed the readers of a suburban paper of the coming performance of Shakespeare's *Turning of the Screw*.

In a report of the Colley-Maskelyne libel case, Bishop Colenso, of Natal, appeared as the Bishop of Colenso, an accidental reversal of true relations between the Bishop's name and the place called after him, which recalls the enthusiastic Imperialist who thought it splendid that Lord Melbourne should have taken his title from an Australian city.

Nobody but a good, professional proof-reader can read proof-sheets properly. An educated and accurate man, he notices the misprints, corrects the grammar, and verifies the quotations. Without a good proof-reader a book or paper goes forth in slovenly condition. The author, knowing what he intended to say, and reading in proof-sheets his own work, found there, sometimes, a printer's error. This is especially the case with dates. We know very well that Bradlaugh died in 1891, but the printer does not know, and prints 1891. The error of a single figure escapes our eyes until the statement is published, and then our language is Shavian, and proportionate to our distress. In extenuation, it may be urged, since even Homer sometimes nodded, that the proof-reader may be excused if he occasionally takes a nap. But, on the other hand, it is to be remembered that, of all mistakes, a misprint is the most indelible. Other mishaps may possibly be retrieved, but the printer's error proudly remains. Owing to publications being produced in as much haste as soap or sausages, the proof-reader is hustled nowadays, and there is a greater prevalence of printer's errors than formerly. To miss, however, the vagaries of the proof-reader is to miss one of the good things of the literary life.

MIMNERMUS.

Christian Libels Christian.

THE leading article in the *British Weekly* for September 10, written presumably by the editor, Sir William Robertson Nicoll, is entitled "Has Corsica Conquered Galilee"? By "Corsica" is meant physical force, and by "Galilee" Christianity. The article pretends to present the readers with the gist of the contents of two books, namely, *Germany and the Next War*, by General Bernhardi, and *Germany and England*, by the late Professor Cramb. In both Germany is described as under the dominion of the Will to Power; but Professor Cramb's little work is of a much more comprehensive character than that by the General. From the former we learn that there is a rapidly growing school in Germany which is positively hostile to Christianity; but this school is by no means confined to Germany. The Professor states that "you meet with it in England and in America, as in Austria and Spain." It is beginning

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to flourish even in Italy, while in France and Russia it has been a powerful factor for many years. This school is anti-Christian, and largely anti-Theistic. In Germany it is composed almost wholly of enthusiastic disciples of Nietzsche, who, it must be borne in mind, was at once anti-Christian and anti-German. He violently attacked German culture and German "flagrant and compromising lack of taste." In his pamphlet against Strauss he coined a phrase, "Culture-philistine," which, as he told Dr. Georg Brandes, "survived the thrusts of violent controversy, and has taken root in the language." He was angry with the Germans because they were "unanimous in admiration of Strauss's *Old and New Faith*, pronouncing it a masterpiece of acuteness and freedom of thought, and even of style." Writing to Brandes in 1888 he says:—

> "Do you imagine that I am known at all in the dear Fatherland? It is there, above all places, that I am regarded as something absurd and eccentric, something that is not wanted and need not be taken seriously. Presumably, they scent that I do not take them seriously, and how could I in these days when German *Geist* has become a contradiction in terms?"

He wrote a book called *Ecce Homo*, which, he informs us, is an onslaught on the Crucified, without the ghost of a scruple; it ends with thunder-claps and lightning flashes, that deafen and blind, against everything that is Christian or tainted with Christianity." Writing to Brandes about this volume, again in 1888, he observes:—

> "Guess who comes off the worst in *Ecce Homo*, Messieurs the Germans. I have told them awful things."

Now, the present followers of Nietzsche in Germany are not necessarily, and *as such*, active members of the German imperial party. Their great aim is to destroy Christianity, root and branch, to get rid of superstition in all its forms, and to treat the present life as the only reality known to us. They are not of necessity politicians at all; nor are they as yet, alas, Germany's "dominant thinkers." Sir William is, therefore, fundamentally wrong when he asserts that "Germany as represented by its dominant thinkers is at open war with Christ," and if he has really read the second chapter in *Germany and the Next War*, he knows it. *All the important and influential advocates of the German imperial policy have been and are Christians.* General Bernhardi boldly justifies the pursuit of that policy in the name of Christianity. On page 29 he says:—

> "There never was a religion which was more combative than Christianity. Combat, moral combat, is its very essence. If we transfer the ideas of Christianity to the sphere of politics, we can claim to raise the power of the State—power in the widest sense, not merely from the material aspect—to the highest degree, with the object of the moral advancement of humanity, and under certain conditions the sacrifice may be made which a war demands. Thus, according to Christianity, we cannot disapprove of war itself, but must admit that it is justified morally and historically."

Nothing could be plainer and more indisputable than the fact that Germany is now at war *as a Christian nation, not as a nation in opposition to Christ.* To maintain the contrary is to be guilty of lying to the glory of God. Why do clergymen persist in trying to circulate such a glaring falsehood? There was no better Christian in all Europe than Treitschke, the distinguished historian; and this is what Professor Cramb says of him as a politician:—

> "His answer to all our talk about the limitation of armaments is: Germany shall increase to the utmost of her power, irrespective of any proposals made to her by England or by Russia, or by any other State upon this earth. And I confess it is a magnificent and a manly answer, an answer of a man whose spirit of sincerity, of regard for the reality of things, is as great as Carlyle's.....To him the army is simply the natural expression of the vital forces of the nation; and just as those vital forces of the nation increase so shall the German army and the German navy increase. A nation's military efficiency is the exact coefficiency of a nation's idealism. That is Treitschke's solution of the matter" (*Germany and England*, pp. 64, 65).

Such were the ideals fondly cherished by a passionate lover of Christ and a devout member of the Lutheran Church, and Professor Cramb assures us that he, the Christian, not Nietzsche, the Atheist, is the "man whose spirit still controls German youth, German patriotism, a man who has a power in Germany, as a thinker and as a writer, that you might compare to the power exercised by Carlyle and Macaulay put together in this country."

Sir William, will you still continue, in company with Dr. Clifford and Dr. Campbell Morgan, to repeat such an obvious lie about the attitude to Christianity of the originators of the present war, or will you repent and be converted? Unfortunately, however, one lie generally leads to another. This has happened in Sir William's case. Having misrepresented the Christian attitude of the Kaiser and those associated with him in this sad business, he proceeds thus:—

> "As for morality, public or private, it is at an end. The policy advocated is one of virulent attack on all those who have held out their hands in friendship. Plain-dealing, generosity, and regard for human right are antiquated superstitions."

We challenge the reverend knight to cite his authority for so wild a statement. It is a crime to bring such a foul charge against a party or a movement unless it can be fully substantiated. General Von Bernhardi holds that the idea of universal peace is absurd and immoral, that there arise circumstances in which war becomes a moral duty, and in which to postpone a war may be a crime against humanity; but while advocating this view, he professes belief in Christian morality. He states his position thus:—

> "Christian morality is based, indeed, on the law of love. 'Love God above all things, and thy neighbor as thyself.' This law can claim no significance for the relations of one country to another, since its application to politics would lead to a conflict of duties. The love which a man showed to another country as such would imply a want of love for his own countrymen. Such a system of politics must inevitably lead men astray. Christian morality is personal and social, and in its nature cannot be political. Its object is to promote morality of the individual, in order to strengthen him to work unselfishly in the interests of the community. It tells us to love our individual enemies, but does not remove the conception of enmity. Christ himself said: 'I am not come to send peace on earth, but a sword.' His teaching can never be adduced as an argument against the universal law of struggle" (*Germany and the Next War*, p. 29).

That reasoning may be ingenious and plausible, but so are most interpretations of the alleged sayings of Jesus. Sir William knows perfectly well that the morality enjoined by the Gospel Jesus has never been exemplified by either nations or individuals in any age of the world. But to assert that with a man like General Bernhardi "morality, public or private, is at an end," is to transgress the law of decency, as well as that of veracity.

The lies stand exposed. May those who utter them be shamed into uttering them no more. This is a war waged by two Christian countries against five other Christian countries, all of whom implore the help of the same Christian God, who will leave them severely alone, to settle their quarrels as best they can.

CELTICUS.

Mrs. Barber noticed that her daughter, Edith, did not say her prayers in the morning, and questioned her as to the cause. "Don't you want God to take care of you during the day as well as at night?" she asked Edie. "I think if God takes care of me at night, you might take care of me daytimes," was the quick response.

In a village church, a few Sundays back, the clergyman, having published the banns of marriage, was promptly followed by the clerk reading the hymn, "Mistaken souls, who dream of heaven." The friends of the parties interested left the church *en masse*.

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Fragments that Remain.

These are days in which we hear and read much about courage, bravery, intrepidity, and we all ardently admire it whenever instances of its operation are brought to our notice. But there are two kinds of courage, the courage of knowledge and the courage of ignorance. The latter kind is possessed by most religious teachers, and by some in a superlative degree. To the latter class belongs the Rev. Peter Green, Canon of Manchester, who contributes an article to the *Church Times* for September 11 on "The Providence of God." The courage of a man who, in these dark times, believes in God and Providence is absurdly audacious. Yet Canon Green has the temerity to "declare unhesitatingly that it is perfectly possible to reconcile the existence of sin and suffering with the omnipotence and goodness of God." Very probably the reverend gentleman believes in the truth of that dogmatic declaration; but all we know is that his article entirely fails to demonstrate its truth. He doesn't even touch the real problem at all, but simply walks round it, winks at it, pretends to simplify it several times, and then turns away from it, having thus filled his believing readers' eyes with dust.

The Canon's position is this: "If I am to believe in God at all, he must be one whose never-failing providence ordereth all things in heaven and earth; he must be one without whom not a sparrow falleth to the ground. If he is not, then prayer becomes an absurdity." Excellently well said, reverend sir, and we fully agree with you; but a rather awkward question confronts both you and us, which you have never faced, namely, Is there such a God? You say there is, and we say there isn't. That's all the difference between us.

A more utterly irrational article than this by Canon Green it has never been our misfortune to read. It contains the rankest Calvinism ever heard of. God is all-powerful, all-wise, and all-good, and, as such, he is said to order everything that ever happens, and to be responsible therefor. You resolve to murder an enemy at noon to-morrow, but you will not be able to touch him unless God has ordained that his life shall end at that hour. Thousands of men are killed in the war almost every day; but God has ordered the death of every one of them at the very moment it occurs. Volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, disasters at sea, resulting in the loss of countless lives, they are all fulfilments of his holy will. "No man dies," the Canon asserts, "till the moment when, in the eternal Providence of God, it was willed that he should die."

One would think that the teaching has already touched the highest pitch of absurdity; but it hasn't. The Canon succeeds in climbing to a greater, giddier height still. There is one exception to God's responsibility, namely, "*the individual act of sinful will.*" If you murder a man you commit a wicked act for which you alone are responsible, although in the commission of the act you are the instrument of God's will concerning him. You are a free agent, the Canon tells you; you can make whatever choice you like, but you cannot do a single thing that has not been ordered. The Kaiser and the Tsar are responsible for the war, because the declaration of it was an act of sinful will; and yet all that has happened and all that shall happen during the struggle has been ordered by heaven from all eternity. Well, well; and yet there are some who can still swallow such sheer nonsense, and think the writer the astutest of men.

Our contemporary, the *Church Times*, is, of course, theologically, extremely orthodox, though, nominally, a friend of criticism; but, according to its own admission, orthodoxy has already become a rarity under the sun. In a recent issue there is a review of a book entitled *The Religious Instinct*, in which it is stated that "the present age is highly humanitarian, but sets little store by holiness." We rejoice exceedingly at the amazing admissions in the following extract:—

> "Both Christ and his Apostles are said now by reputable divines to have reflected too much the ideas of their age and country. The old-fashioned Liberalism, wishing to put moral advance in place of a supernatural creed, thought that the standard of morality was agreed. But a revolt against Christian ethic is at the heels of the attack on Christian doctrine. In any case the idea of sin is being discarded as morbid, evil-doing being only reprobated as detrimental to the community.....Also an influential school is popularising the idea of the New Theology that Adam and Eve 'fell upwards,' and that sin is a necessary stage of spiritual progress, a mere relic in us of the tiger and the ape."

All this is gall and wormwood to the *Church Times*, but to us it is merely evidential of the fact that Christianity is not only dying a natural death, but is actually being slain by its own professed defenders.

"What your children's children will permanently treasure" is the modest announcement concerning a history of the war, of which several parts have already been published. This is history while you wait. But it may still be as true as the Gospels.

The remarkably Christian *Daily Telegraph* has been trying to explain the lack of public enthusiasm for Russia on the part of the general public. Whereas French and Belgian flags are everywhere displayed, that of Russia is conspicuous by its absence. Why is this, asks the *Telegraph?* Maybe our Christian contemporary has never heard of Jews and pogroms.

Christians are astute business men. At York Minster recently Lord Kitchener's Chaplain was billed as the preacher. We doubt if he referred to the divine commands "Thou shalt not kill," and "Forgive your enemies."

Mr. Rudyard Kipling's poems, "Recessional" and "Hymn Before Action" are now sold in leaflet form for church use. Mr. Kensit's stalwarts will note with pleasure that the latter poem contains an invocation to the Madonna.

In the olden times Biblical names were customary, and some of the street titles were redolent of the Bible. In an old book, *New Remarks on London*, published in 1732, the following quaint names of streets are mentioned: Adam-a-digging Yard; Damnation Alley; Labour in Vain Alley; Shall I go Naked Street. Some are still in existence, such as Ave Maria Lane and Godliman Street.

A story is going the rounds that a boy was asked by his teacher what was the most wicked letter in the alphabet. He replied, "K, sir; but L used to be."

A curious charge was brought before the magistrates at Thames Police Court the other day. A man was charged with stealing eleven hundredweight of timber, valued at £20. Some of the stolen timber had been used to make a praying-desk, elaborately carved, bearing the initials I. H. S. "Jesus, Saviour of men," is quite a touching inscription to carve on stolen timber. It bears eloquent testimony to the strength of religious conviction, and its tremendous strength as a moral force.

FLIM-FLAMS.

If you say to me, Master, it would seem that you were not very wise in writing to us these flim-flam stories, and pleasant fooleries: I answer you, that you are not much wiser to spend your time in reading them: nevertheless if you read them to make yourselves merry, as in a manner of pastime I wrote them, you and I both are far more worthy of pardon, than a great rabble of squint-minded fellowes, dissembling and counterfeit Saints, demure lookers, hypocrites, pretended zealots, tough Fryars, huskin-monks, and other such sects of men, who disguise themselves like maskers to deceive the world, for, whilest they give the common people to understand, that they are busied about nothing but contemplation and devotion in fastings, and maceration of their sensuality; and that only to sustain and aliment the small frailty of their humanity: it is so far otherwise, that on the contrary what cheer they make, *Et Curios simulant, sed bacchanalia vivunt.* You may read it in great letters, in the coloring of their red snowts, and gulching bellies as big as a tun, unlesse it be when they perfume themselves with sulphur; as for their study, it is wholly taken up in reading of Pantagruelin books, not so much to passe the time merrily, as to hurt some one or other mischievously, to wit, in articling, and diablicalating, that is calumniating, wherein they are like unto the poor rogues of a village. Fly from these men, abhorre and hate them as much as I do, and upon my faith you will find yourselves the better for it.

And if you desire to be good Pantagruelists (that is to say, to live in peace, joy, health, make yourselves always merry) never trust those men that always peep out at one hole.—*Rabelais.*

Little Ephraim: "Daddy, whar did de fust tukkey come from?" Daddy: "Nebber yo' mine askin' irreligious questions. An' w'en Pahson Thompson come for dinner, Sunday, doan yo' fink yo' hab tor ask whar dat tukkey come fum eider."

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EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.30, James Rowney, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, W. Davidson, "Iconoclast" (Charles Bradlaugh).

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Finsbury Park): 11.30, Mr. Davidson, a Lecture. Parliament Hill: 3.30, Miss Keogh, a Lecture. Regent's Park (near the Fountain): 3.30, Mr. Hope, a Lecture.

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Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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The only true divinity is humanity.—CHATHAM.

Views and Opinions.

I never gave a halfpenny to the Prince of Wales' National Relief Fund. I never advised anybody else to give a halfpenny. It was all arranged, of course, beforehand. Its projectors were "in the know." They secured the right to use the Prince of Wales's name. That and the war together were, so to speak, to provide the milk, and they had everything ready for skimming off the cream. It is ridiculous to suppose their effort, or even the Prince's, added to the amount of money available for "benevolence," and still more ridiculous to suppose that a larger portion would reach those for whom it was really intended. What *was* secured was simply this, that a large amount of cash was labelled "charity," and put under the control of the classes for the alleged benefit of the masses, as far as they suffered directly from the effects of the war. Look at the names of the General Committee, look at the names of two or three specimen local committees, and you will soon see what kind of people they are. All sorts of upper middle-class men and women, with shopkeepers who find it pays to be in evidence, with clergymen to see that the interests of religion are properly looked after, and clergymen's wives to take a better interest in what they are pleased to call morality, which is indeed *vin* but always *vinaigre*—like so many of their faces.

* * *

This sort of thing happens,—not by supposition but in reality. I speak only of what has come under my own notice. In the first case, two ladies turn up representing the same Tommy Atkins. Nothing like that ever occurs amongst the upper classes. We all know that. Up jumps a lady whose husband is not in the Khaki Army but in the Black Army, wearing its uniform and drawing a highly respectable salary. The lady is nearly convulsed with pious indignation. She wants both applications to stand over. But there was a baby in one of them, and it was in want of food, and what had *it* done to be starved to death because its father was too fond of "life"? Besides, as the clergyman's wife was reminded, one of the two ladies *was* the absent warrior's wife; so the committee would have to settle it somehow; and with great reluctance this was done.

* * *

The second case, if I spoke the plain truth, I should venture to call shocking. A newly married young woman's husband had joined the Army during the war. He was unable to withstand the frequent and frenzied appeals to his patriotism. His head wasn't strong at the best of times, and I need not emphasise the fact that he left his wife absolutely to the care of his country,—which was a far less cheerful prospect to her than it was to him. The first question she is asked is what she worked at before her marriage, but it is useless to look for work in that line now. She is then asked if she could do "charing." The answer is obvious to anybody outside a "Relief" Committee; it is furnished by her physique. But she is advised to try, and that is all the help she gets. "Charing! Charing!" Let some of the "ladies" try it for a week, and see how it agrees with them. Let me add that this recruit joined as a married man. They accepted her breadwinner and left her to "try charing." And the joke is they fancy they are doing Tommy Atkins a good turn. They've got him anyhow. That's the point as far as they are concerned. But the woman? Ah, the truth of the old proverb that the woman pays!

* * *

Another Tommy's wife makes an application. Her husband is a territorial, and he volunteered for active service abroad. They had a nice little home, and had saved up and bought a piano. She applied on this basis. They told her that she did not want relief; she had a piano, she could sell it if she wanted money. Her "hero"—their hero when they were flatulently loyal at public meetings—was told in effect that the relief committee could do nothing for her until she had sold up her home. If she had been fonder of eating and drinking than of music they could not have given her this insolent answer.

* * *

The words "grant" and "relief" are hateful words—damnable words. A man goes out to fight for his country, as he and his country think it; he faces every kind of hardship in addition to the danger, by night as well as by day; he may bring back a broken and perhaps quite ruined body; or it may be buried in an alien grave; or it may even be laid in no grave, being blown to pieces by one of those instruments of war which seem to be the proudest boast of Christian civilisation. A promise is made—how often well kept?—that his wife and children shall be looked after. What is done for them is mean and contemptible. While the "hero" is fighting abroad they pay his wife and family a few shillings a week, and tell her she can go out to work. Just as if she didn't work already in the home! Just as if her husband were not working—and at *such* work—in that frightful war! One feels ashamed of one's country in face of this sorry exhibition. The "Pay, Pay, Pay," that Kipling addressed to the British public seems more applicable to the British Government.

* * *

We can only write about the war itself from a Freethought point of view. It is all wickedness and folly at bottom. England was forced into war at the finish. That must be admitted. We couldn't sit still and see France "annihilated," as they call it now, or "bled like veal," in the language of Bismarck; nor could the neutrality of Belgium be violated with impunity. This is true enough. But how about all that led up to this? The intrigues, the backstairs correspondence, hatred and malice, and the Ententes and Alliances that were invitations to a breach of the peace. When the psychological moment came a Catholic bigot on the Austrian throne and a mad Protestant bigot on the German throne gave the signal for opening "the purple testament of bleeding war." Had Europe been full of Freethinkers this could not have happened.

G. W. FOOTE.

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The Kaiser's Blunder.

IT is said in all directions—and it really does not need a supreme intelligence to say it—that the German Emperor blundered badly in going to war. He must have underestimated the resisting power of France; he seriously misunderstood the opposition that Belgium could, and would, offer; he made no allowance for the rapidity of Russian mobilisation; he over-estimated the power of the German Navy; and he could never have counted on the opposition of Great Britain. All these were very serious miscalculations, and in the contest of nations when such a blunder is made the price must, sooner or later, be paid. Only a fool counts on *everything* going in one's favor, and the Kaiser—with God behind him—seems to have made no allowance for a check in any direction. Perhaps he depended too much upon the help of God. If so, he is not the first who has come to grief for the same reason.

But all these, however, are miscalculations of the moment. They are all recent, all obvious, and everyone may observe them. His real blunder, the one that shows he and his advisers quite failed to appreciate the right method of working, is of many years' standing. This blunder does not lie in the fact that Germany has aimed at the possession of colonies. Other countries have been fired with the same ideal, and some—our own, for instance—have met with considerable success. It does not lie in the desire to make Germany a world-power. Other countries cherish that ambition likewise, and it is our constant boast that "Britain rules the waves." And whoso rules the waves rules, in the long run, the world. There is a right way and a wrong way in achieving these ideals, and the Kaiser's fault lies in the fact that he has always chosen the wrong way. He has been arrogant when he should have been humble; openly proclaiming that he would make Germany feared, when he should have aroused the desire to make her loved.

When Mark Twain took a trip round the world, when he visited the British possessions, north, south, east, and west, he was not slow in drawing therefrom a lesson that must have appealed to every Godfearing Briton. He discovered that the British people were mentioned—under a figure—in the Bible. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." And there is no Briton of the variety above-named who would not say that the vastness of England's possessions is a direct proof of the favor with which Providence views this island. He is convinced that if we are in possession in India, China, Egypt, North America, Australia, the South Seas, etc., it is because we are fulfilling the designs of Providence in being there. He does not talk to the world of how much of the earth's surface we have taken under our protection, but speaks of the "burden" that has been placed upon us, and which it would have been a breach of duty to neglect. He does not talk of our desire to make the power of England felt, but of our ambition to carry the Bible and Christianity into the dark places of the earth. Our anxiety is to spread religion—true religion; we are the ambassadors of God, carrying out his plan; we would gladly avoid the task if we could do so with honor—but that is impossible.

With the example of England before him the Kaiser has deliberately chosen to ignore all that our history had to teach him. He has proclaimed the greatness of Germany and of his resolve to take his share of the earth in the language of a fire-eating swashbuckler. It is true that his language was that of a pious swashbuckler; but that, in a sense, only made the matter worse. God was always with him, but it was essentially a German deity—one who thought first and foremost of Germany's welfare. He brandished the "mailed fist" when he should have held aloft the Bible. He talked of the might of Germany when he should have spoken of its sacred mission to carry the gospel of Christ—in German gunboats—all over the earth. Instead of calling upon his people, as he did some years ago, to "make sacrifices for their position as a world-power," he should have told them it was their duty to spread the Christian Gospel. He would thus have avoided a considerable amount of ill-feeling, and in the day of trial would not have been lacking in moral and religious reasons for his conduct.

Those who cannot obey are unfit to rule, and it is equally true that those who cannot learn cannot teach. The German Government has shown a strange inability to assimilate the elementary principles of empire-building. In China, when two German missionaries were killed, the Emperor demanded and received territorial compensation. Probably he would have been pleased to get rid of a number of other missionaries on the same terms. But even in this case the world was treated to the same swagger about the "mailed fist," and religious considerations were made subservient to Germanic greatness. How different, and with how much more wisdom, does England manage these things. The Kaiser calls on his people to make sacrifices in order to spread the *power* of Germany. Lord Hugh Cecil, on the contrary, says:—

> "A great many people were most anxious to go with their whole hearts into what might be called the imperial movement of the day, but had, as it were, a certain uneasiness of conscience whether, after all, this movement was quite as unpolluted by earthly considerations as they would desire it to be. By making prominent to our minds the importance of missionary work we should to some extent sanctify the spirit of Imperialism."

There is the mark of the old colonising hand, of one who belongs to a nation that has been taking colonies for almost as many decades as the German Empire has been in existence. No English leader would ever have called upon his people to make sacrifices in order to impress British power upon the world. He would never have sent a punitive expedition to strike terror or to wreak vengeance. All our efforts in China have been to spread the truth of religion there; and even though force may have been used, we did, to quote Lord Hugh Cecil, "to some extent sanctify" its use. Of course, we have been materially benefited by our efforts; but this was quite incidental. The burden was cast upon us by Providence, and it was only proper that Providence should lighten the burden so far as it was possible. As Sir Robert Baden-Powell puts it, the British taxpayer "looks for two groups of results as his reward. On the one hand, he hopes to see Christianity and civilisation *pro tanto* extended; and on the other, to see some compensating development of industry." And unless either or both of these results are secured, he asks the question, "Has he the right, and is he right, to urge such wars?"

Germans—and others—may say this is sheer hypocrisy. That is an easy explanation, but it does not cover the facts. For the plain truth is that the vast majority of Englishmen really believe it, and act up to it. They have no doubt that we are in India solely for the benefit of the Hindoo. We annexed Burma to end an intolerable tyranny—it was a mere accident that it possessed ruby mines. We are in Egypt in the interests of religion and civilisation—the interests of the English bondholders merely gave "Providence" the opportunity to use us as its instrument. There was nothing hypocritical in singing "Abide With Me" over the fall of Khartoum. It expressed the belief of the God-fearing Briton that we are carrying out God's will. Why could not the Kaiser have learned from Britain the art of acquiring a world-empire before setting up in that business? Every trade has to be learned—that of empire-getting among others.

It was a poor, shallow policy to grab a tract of land on account of the death of two missionaries, and to immediately talk about the "mailed fist." Here was a splendid opening for him, had he known how to use it. The better course would have been to have flooded China with missionaries, and to have pointed out that in place of seeking revenge, he had returned good for evil by giving the Chinese the Gospel.

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Again, he might have learned from Britain how to properly utilise the Christian missionary. First the missionary, then the trader, then the need for protecting both trader and missionary, then the gunboat and the soldier—not for the purpose of acquiring territory, but in order to secure peaceful trading and introduce Christianity and civilisation. Of course, acquisition follows, but the world is not affronted by it. For we do not seek it; it is forced upon us. There is no talk of power or might, there is talk only of how responsibilities are forced upon us, and what a breach of duty would ensue were these responsibilities evaded.

It is ultimately a question of psychology. The world is not ruled by force, and never has been, but by ideals. These may be better or worse, but they are there. Even the exercise of force is the expression of an ideal, and the Kaiser made the sad mistake of working for this ideal in an age that has largely outgrown it. Germans will say—as France and Russia said but yesterday, and as they may say it again when this war is over—that this expressed desire of the English people to spread Christianity is sheer hypocrisy. That is not true. It may be delusion, but it is not hypocrisy. The English people are not hypocritical when they talk of their "burden," or of "a sanctified Imperialism," or proclaim themselves instruments in the hands of Deity. They really believe it. It is a teaching upon which generations have been nurtured, and so has become an almost indestructible part of our social environment. So much so that even those who repudiate the belief in Deity may be found talking of our "Imperial destiny." As far back as the days of Queen Elizabeth we can see this belief in operation. The sixteenth century freebooter when he seized Spanish vessels or raided Spanish possessions would never have admitted that plunder was his object. He was carrying on a semi-religious warfare, vindicating Protestantism against the Roman Catholic Church. This tradition has never been broken. It is with us to-day. Thousands of Britons will tell you that the Bible is the source of England's greatness. They say it because they believe it. And the lesson has been too well mastered for it to be easily or quickly unlearned.

The Kaiser has blundered badly; there can be no mistake about that. Everybody resents open egotism; nearly everybody dislikes the use of brute force. He has failed to grasp the elementary lesson that if an empire is to be acquired, and is to last, the "mailed fist" must be hidden in the silken glove. Subjects must be brought to believe that it is to their interest to be subjects. Otherwise nothing is secure. But, above all, he neglected the instrument that lay ready to hand. A staunch Christian himself, he quite failed to realise how useful to him his Christianity might become. He belongs to a nation that gave Europe "an open Bible," and has wit only to use his religion as a support for his egotism. How much easier would it have been to have pursued the arts of peaceful penetration, to have proclaimed his desire for carrying the Bible and Christianity to the ends of the earth! How much more profitable to have expended in subsidising missionary societies a great deal of the money that has been paid over to Krupp! Of course, he might say in defence that Britain had been before him, and in the name of Christ had already seized a very large part of the earth that was available and desirable. Still, he might have done something. He might even then have failed; but he could have claimed the merit of following a policy that time had over and over again vindicated.

C. COHEN.

Progress.

THIS is a word in constant use amongst us, though few are able to tell what it means. In the works of Treitschke and Bernhardi we are always coming across the phrase, "the true progress of the human race," or "the highest development of mankind," or "the greatest good of humanity," but these men only understand by it the gaining of predominance by the race to which they belong. To them progress merely signifies the winning of a commanding position among European Powers by the German Empire. That is the ideal goal towards which the Germanic face is steadfastly set. To us, however, the domination of Europe by the Teutons would not necessarily indicate true progress, but, more likely, a step backwards and downwards, being the triumph of militarism. Indeed, progress is a difficult thing to define, because of the variety of standards and ideals entertained by different nations, and because each nation regards its own as the only true ones, with the result that the nations are now calling one another any number of uncomplimentary names. As a matter of fact, progress is very largely a figment of the fancy. Nature is entirely ignorant of it. The term that most appropriately applies to her processes is evolution, and evolution is simply a double change from the imperceptible into the perceptible, and then back again. All life is a cycle, always ending where it began. Nature has established no goals towards which she unfailingly toils. Spencer prefers the word "involution," regarding it as a more accurate designation of Nature's operations. Progress, then, is a literary term, and means different things to different people. An advanced nation may signify a strong nation in the purely material sense, or it may denote a highly intellectual and refined people.

Now, since progress is not a law of Nature, or since development is not an eternal principle, we shall discern very few and exceedingly slender evidences of progress as we carefully contemplate the history of the world. What we call civilisation is not a product of yesterday. According to Professor Flinders Petrie, there was a high state of civilisation in Egypt nine thousand years ago. Possibly Babylonia was in a similar state earlier still. Coming down to historic Greece, we find it a marvellously civilised country. The Greeks were a truly superior race, whether we regard them from the philosophical, artistic, or scientific point of view. They were in every respect a great and distinguished people. Twenty-four centuries ago they enjoyed an intellectual pre-eminence of the most dazzling splendor. Since then there have been many changes, but scarcely any advance. Have we many thinkers in the twentieth century worthy of comparison with Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, or Epicurus? Can we boast of poets who are greater than, or even as great as, Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides; of artists who outshine Phidias, or of statesmen superior to Pericles? Then we arrive at the brilliant period of Alexandrian and Syracusan greatness. At Alexandria lived Eratosthenes, keeper of the great library, the first great physiographer, the first to arrive at an approximately accurate measurement of the size of the earth; and he made his calculation on the assumption that the earth is round. Here flourished the first scientific astronomer, Hipparchus, who discovered the procession of the equinoxes, and first catalogued the stars. It was here that the steam-engine was invented by Heron; and it was from a clever device of his that the modern hot-air engines were developed. At Syracuse flourished Archimedes, who is characterised as "the greatest mathematician and the greatest inventor of antiquity."

In those great days of yore intellectual giants graced the earth, the light of whose genius shone with exceeding brightness. Then Christianity came and completely extinguished that brilliant light, crushing it under her feet of clay. The ancient civilisation by degrees utterly perished, and the world kept sinking lower and lower until it touched bottom in the tenth century. Civilisation went, and, as even Milman sorrowfully confesses, morality went with it. At last a revival started with the arrival of the Arabs in Europe, and the consequent awakening and new life of the classical learning which had been slumbering for centuries beneath layer upon layer of dogmatic and traditional rubbish. And once more

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the light of knowledge was seen shining in a new morning glory. Doubtless now at last it is a light that shall shine more and more unto the perfect day of knowledge; but it shineth at present in the darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not. Yes, science is marching on to triumph, not because present-day workers are intellectually superior to their predecessors in antiquity, but because they have better instruments and improved methods. The natural capacity of the human mind is not greater now than it was in the best Athenian, Alexandrian, or Syracusan days. The advance already made has been almost exclusively of a mechanical nature. The progress of the race has been of a deeply doubtful character. For years we have read and heard a great deal about the superior German culture, and behind the allusions thereto and boastings there has incontestably been much genuine if somewhat conceited sincerity; but allowing for all exaggerations in sensational newspaper reports, we cannot escape the conclusion that the superiority melts clean away in practice. How true, after all, is Mr. Carl Snyder's following generalisation:—

> "We must concede that neither mentally, morally, nor physically has the race varied greatly in six thousand and, perhaps, ten or fifteen thousand years. The intervening period has meant less change than is represented, say, in the advance from a bushman or a cave-dweller to a Zulu chieftain" (*New Conceptions in Science*, p. 20).

And this in spite, perhaps *because*, of the vast difference Christ is alleged to have made.

It is true that the present war is the biggest thing in that line the world has ever seen. The slaughter will be on an incalculably greater scale than on any former occasion. War is in its very nature the most atrociously brutal of all realities. But we have had many thousands of wars before which, on their smaller scale, were quite as bloody and attended by quite as many horrors as this is likely to be. Why, during nearly two thousand years Europe has been free from cruel bloodshed for scarcely two years running, and practically all the blood spilt in all those ages has borne upon it the name of God and the interests of conflicting religions. Now, the question that demands an answer is this, Can you point to a single sanguinary conflict that did not result in the demoralisation of those engaged in it? Does not war of necessity arouse the lowest instincts and worst passions of human nature? Is it possible to take part in a brutal game without being more or less brutalised? And yet, in spite of all this, ministers of religion are assuring their credulous congregations that *this* war is going to be an exception to the rule, that *this* war shall put an end to war for ever. Dr. Horton confidently predicts that after *this* war "the nations will be prepared to turn again to their deserted Lord, and to fall at the feet of Jesus." Then he exclaims, in an emotional outburst, "Christ may be the true Conqueror in this..... Have faith in God, and he will give us the victory." Dr. F. B. Meyer, he who two years ago prophesied an immediate religious revival that never came, now cocksurely says: "I believe the heavenly legions are marching forward. Our Empire has been called to bear the brunt of this terrific conflict, and to see that for all time to come men may worship, beneath the Cross, in peace and good will." The *British Congregationalist* for September 17, however, admits that "the Church has undoubtedly failed to control the baser passions of mankind, the lust of power, the desire for vindicating by force of arms the policy that is summed up in the phrase 'might is right,'" and puts in a plea for emotional Christianity, which alone is capable of redeeming the world. Then it adds:—

> "Intellectual Christianity has been Germany's curse at this crisis. We now find its exponents in the ranks of those who bolster up the lust of power and the crimes of war. What the world wants is the one great note of the love and Fatherhood of God, and the frank and humble acknowledgment that the Gospel of the Prince of Peace cannot be effectively preached in the face of the schism in the ranks of the Christian Church."

Is it any marvel that the British are reviled as a nation of hypocrites? Think of the insincerity displayed by the ease with which men of God contradict one another as to the cause of the war. One swears that it is the cold-blooded Atheism of Prussia; another, it is the adoption of the philosophy of Nietzsche, the essence of which is lyingly alleged to be the denial of morality; and another that it is the profession of an intellectual Christianity, or the belief that the vital things in religion are of the intellect, and not of the heart and spirit. They are all mistaken, the Kaiser having declared that he has gone forth for this work of destruction clothed with the Spirit of God, whose sword, whose weapon, whose vice-regent he claims to be; and their prediction of the religious effect of the war is sure to be as false as their conflicting explanations of its cause. One thing is certain, namely, that whatever the issue of the war may be, humanity is not at all likely to march forward by leaps and bounds once it is at an end. Transformation of character does not occur after that fashion. In the first "Locksley Hall" Tennyson

> "Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rained a ghastly dew
> From the nations 'airy navies grappling in the central blue;
> Far along the world-wide whisper of the south wind rushing warm,
> With the standards of the peoples plunging through the thunder-storm;
> Till the war-drum throbbed no longer, and the battle-flags were furl'd
> In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world."

In "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After," that glowing hope of youth has faded, and in its place is a dogged resignation recklessly clinging to the new doctrine of evolution half apologetically, thus:—

> "Nay, your pardon, cry your 'forward,' yours are hope and youth, but I—
> Eighty winters leave the dog too lame to follow with the cry,
> Lame and old, and past his time, and passing into the night."

And so "Progress halts on palsied feet," and is destined to halt, more or less, for many a long year to come.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Ebb Tide of War Poetry.

> "A time for frighted peace to pant."—SHAKESPEARE.

THE noise of battle is echoing in all ears and many poets have attempted to celebrate this tremendous moment of the world. The papers have been full of their good phrases, excellent sentiments, and some well-turned lines; but nothing so far that recalls the masterly songs of the older poets. Compared with the resounding lays of the poets of previous generations, the present-day singers are poor of resource and barren of ideas, and their honeyed effusions sound like "the horns of elfland faintly blowing." Think of Campbell's "Battle of the Baltic," Tennyson's "Revenge," "Charge of the Light Brigade," or his "Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington." Recall the sonorous music of Swinburne, or Meredith's stately verse, or the vivid realism of Walt Whitman, and then turn to the mouthing and coxcombry of the latter-day bards.

This absence of real present-day poetry has caused editors and publishers to disinter some of Rudyard Kipling's earlier verse, particularly "The Recessional," which has been printed as a hymn-sheet for the use of Christian congregations. This poem is, however, but Anglo-Indian orthodoxy "writ large." The second verse, if it stood alone, might pass: though its best line, "An humble and a contrite heart," has not the merit of novelty. But how absurd is the association of the reference just quoted to that other sentiment:—

> "Such boasting as the Gentiles use,
> Or lesser breeds without the law."

It almost seems as if Rudyard Kipling were utterly incapable of striking a deep note on his lyre.

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In his "White Horses," he attempts to be profound, and all he can suggest is that the very sea is bestowed by the Almighty for the express purpose of destroying our enemies. Even the poetasters who illuminate the pages of *Punch* can do this sort of thing without too much loss of dignity. The older poets wore their singing robes with a far better grace. Assuredly the poets of to-day cannot approach the altitude of:—

> "The meteor flag of England
> Shall yet terrific turn,"

or the magistral music of "The Marsellaise," in which is preserved the clangor of the trumpets of war—a veritable soldiers' song that heartened a nation of soldiers in the hour of their supreme struggle.

What the little poets overlook is that humanity is eternal, and that the horrors will pass away. The greatest artists, "looking before and after," justify their use of the terrible with beauties that are taken from happiness. In the midst of that greatest of all tragedies, Shakespeare introduces that pathetic note of music in which the captive Lear says to his beloved Cordelia, "We two alone will sing like birds i' the cage." Shakespeare never for a single instant made the mistake of imagining that the heroic spirit is a thing which is possessed by soldiers and sailors only, and that they monopolise it whilst the rest of men and women are inert and impotent. Just as water cannot rise above its level, so the heroism of soldiers cannot rise above the level of the nation. There is a heroism of the hearth, and of the daily work, which speaks of duty and devotion no less than the embattled field. The workman who has to subsist on starvation wages, the wives who have to wear quiet, cheerful faces with the shadow at their hearts, the mothers who are ever waiting for news of their loved ones; all these are none the less heroic because they are unaccompanied by the panoply of war.

After all, how should drawing-room singers be affected by the tremendous, awful, and heart-shaking facts of a European War. Their small minds cannot visualise the long roads of Europe thundering with the march of the great guns, resounding with the tramp of endless hosts of men. Yet the large heart of a great poet could not fail to respond to the terrible cry of struggle and triumph, or the still more appealing note of human agony. The spectacle of even one murdered mother with her babe clasped to her bosom, even in her death agony, should find an echo in his heart:—

> "Other sins only speak; murder cries out;
> The element of water moistens the earth,
> But blood flies upward and bedews the heavens."

Love of one's country is the common birthright of poets, but it is ridiculous to express that love in the sham sentiment of the music-halls. Whitman, in scores of pages, wrote himself a citizen of the world, but his thought was enriched and purified by the awful experiences of the American Civil War. There is no false rhetoric or brazen bravado in his "Dirge for Two Veterans":—

> "The moon gives yon light,
> And the bugles and the drums give you music;
> And my heart, O my soldiers, my veterans,
> My heart gives you love."

Indeed, the nineteenth century poets responded freely to the heroic influences of their time. Byron, who died like a soldier for Greece, regarded the liberation of Italy as "the very poetry of politics." Shelley's intense sympathy gave us the immortal lines on "The Euganean Hills" and "The Ode to Naples." A later and a greater writer, George Meredith, gave the noblest utterance to the French national sentiment during its ordeal of suffering in 1870. From her Casa Guidi windows Mrs. Browning watched the struggle for Italian freedom, and her muse was afire with impassioned sympathy. Swinburne, however, surpassed them all in the ardor of his devotion and in the rapture of his praise:—

> "The very thought in us how much we love thee
> Makes the throat sob with love and blinds the eyes."

With quieter eyes that veteran of the Victorian intellectuals, Thomas Hardy, has achieved the masterpiece of "The Dynasts," a magnificent work to which the language can give no rival. The subject is the Titanic struggles of the Napoleonic wars. We begin with the preparations in England to meet an expected French invasion; we end with the carnage of Waterloo; and the music throughout responds to the grandeur of the theme. As we would expect, the death of Nelson inspires the author, and his tribute is lyrical:—

> "Who in simplicity and sheer good faith
> Strove but to serve his country."

And that touch of the "grey dial"

> "marking unconsciously this bloody hour"

is of the higher flights of the imagination. How characteristic, too, are the verses, "Time's Laughingstocks," addressed by the soldier to his dead enemy:—

> "Had he and I but met
> By some old ancient inn,
> We should have sat us down to wet
> Right many a nipperkin!
>
> But ranged as infantry,
> And staring face to face,
> I shot at him as he at me,
> And killed him in his place.
>
> I shot him dead because—
> Because he was my foe.
> Just so; my foe of course he was;
> That's clear enough; although
>
> He thought he'd 'list, perhaps,
> Offhand like—just as I—
> Was out of work—had sold his traps—
> No other reason why.
>
> Yes; quaint and curious war is!
> You shoot a fellow down
> You'd treat if met where any bar is,
> Or help to half a crown."

This is poles asunder from the blood and thunder heroics of the minor poets, who are everywhere forgetting that the petty personalities of party politics, and praise of ourselves as the noblest and best of all the races of the earth is altogether out of place, and no matter for serious poetry. There is great and grave harm in the fact that the subtler and more civilised honor of England is not presented so as to keep pace with the times. Generations ago a brave and handsome Cavalier poet sang of a soldier's honor in unforgettable language, addressed to his mistress:—

> "Tell me not, sweet, I am unkind,
> That from the nunnery
> Of thy chaste breast and quiet mind,
> To war and arms I fly.
>
> True, a new mistress now I chase,
> The first foe in the field;
> And with a stronger faith embrace
> A sword, a horse, a shield.
>
> Yet this inconstancy is such
> As you, too, shall adore;
> I could not love thee, dear, so much,
> Loved I not honor more."

The first of all the marks of love is seriousness, and Colonel Richard Lovelace, who wrote that perfect song, lost his all in supporting the Cavalier cause, and died a ruined man. War may be an insane lust, but its cruelty and blindness is in part redeemed by the superb courage which never submits. What we really need for the frustration of a depraved and raucous Jingoism is a renascence of education. That the countrymen of Shakespeare, Newton, and Darwin should march to battle to the strains of a vulgar music-hall song is intolerable, when we remember that the minstrel Taillefer rode out before the Norman host singing of Roland and of Oliver, and the knights who died at Roncevaux.

MIMNERMUS.

Blake and Others.

IT is strange how one may be deceived by a preconception of the particular place of a poet in the firmament of letters. We had known Blake chiefly by some grotesque Biblical designs, which at first

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sight repelled us. After enjoying his companionship for a week or so, we were compelled to confess that the approach to a poet is not by way of a design depicting a devil dancing on the abdomen of Job Regretfully we have to admit that we had acquired the opinion that Blake was better left alone; but we chronicle our joy to the sun, the moon, and the stars, and to readers of the *Freethinker* when we say that we found him a lovable friend, a cheerful singer, and poet of sunny optimism sparkling like dew in the morning. Heaven send us more like him! The road on which we travel, beset by gibbets of superstition, lurking with wildfowl of revelations, and strewn with the bodies of dead and dying faiths, is, in many places, as dreary as the Steppes of Russia; and we cannot dispense with one singer who, in tones of purity, cheers and fortifies us on the grand tour called life.

To us, Blake appears to have much in common with Swinburne, and we had seen his name coupled with that of Nietzsche. Therefore, it was with no small degree of pleasure that we examined the poetical versions of "Good and Evil," and this decision drew us down many pleasant byways. With willing steps we followed him from his light poetical sketches to the "Songs of Innocence," and from thence to his "Songs of Experience" and "Ideas of Good and Evil."

For beauty and charm, the four stanzas "To Spring" will favorably compare with those of any accepted poet, and we cannot resist the temptation to quote the opening four lines:—

> "O thou with dewy locks, who lookest down
> Through the clear windows of the morning, turn
> Thine angel eyes upon our western isle,
> Which in full choir hails thy approach, O spring!"

Here we meet with reasonable personification, clarity of thought, and we hear the musical cadence of a genius. We should hesitate to ascribe similar qualities to the production of James Thomson on the same subject. Blake's invocation consists of sixteen lines; Thomson's, inscribed to a member of exalted society, contains more than we have the disposition to count, and lacks the fascination and glow of one not dedicated to any titled patron. The defects of patronage are almost too apparent to call for comment; what material gain is received in this respect seems to be marked by a loss of freedom and spontaneity. It would appear that the bane of the patronised poet was his servility to one whose palate had to be tickled, and as a result of this posterity is the loser. Patronage of this kind is not confined to any age, neither is it restricted to the world of letters. At this moment, religious bodies have hundreds of capable men who could find better work to do outside their respective circles, but for no other reason than that of bread and butter they are compelled to plough the sands of theology.

In the "Proverbs" of Blake there is an apt allusion to matters which are now claiming the attention of everybody:—

> "Nought can deform the human race
> Like to the armorer's iron brace;
> The soldier armed with sword and gun,
> Palsied, strikes the summer's sun."

This problem of force was apparent in his time, and to this day it has lost none of its difficulties. A mystic of Blake's temperament preferred the jewelled plough to the glittering sword, and we could not imagine him placing any faith in the doctrine of might being right. In the region of ideas truly philosophic, force is never present, either for the inception of the new or the propagation of the true.

In "The Everlasting Gospel" there are two lines which significantly sum up his opinion of the Gospel Jesus:—

> "I am sure this Jesus will not do
> Either for Englishman or Jew."

In pity he expresses his judgment about a character the best parts of which no Freethinker will sneer at, and the worst parts—well, we can safely leave them in the hands of his various commentators. If the Gospel writers could not give the world a clear picture of Jesus, then those who live on the cross cannot expect us to rise to great heights of faith. Renan lived about two thousand years too late.

Travelling farther with this poet and mystic, we come to a narrative poem entitled "Mary." Sweetness, tenderness, and love breathe through every line, and no one can read it without recognising the iron-hearted treatment meted out to helpless women. Here, again, on the social plane, we are face to face with the doctrine of force, and its disastrous consequences. Force is not an attribute of civilisation; it exists in spite of it. So long as force rests on an irrational basis, the best of mankind will rebel, and the worst will be found drivelling about the will of God. That there is a plentiful supply of the latter folk none will deny; the feather-bed side of life will always allure, the easy path to salvation will always invite; but we shall always have poets like Blake to draw us to the sweeter side of life.

With eyes to heaven, it is not to be wondered at that the Christians make such a poor display on earth. They see visions, they dream dreams, and the earth is still as wretched as it was in Swift's time, when he wrote "I cannot but conclude the bulk of your natives to be the most pernicious race of little odious vermin that nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth." The numbers who are deaf to the calls of common sense have not decreased since *Gulliver's Travels* was written, and for that reason admirers of Blake will always be limited. It was not for the rabble that he wrote—

> "The sword sang on the barren heath,
> The sickle in the fruitful field:
> The sword he sang a song of death,
> But could not make the sickle yield."

We must conclude with the remark that this is a perfect example of mystical Atheism.

WILLIAM REPTON.

Correspondence.

KEATS'S "BULL."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Your contributor, "Mimnermus," in his article this week, accuses John Keats of perpetrating a "bull." Is not Charles Lamb nearer the truth when he says, in reviewing this poem: "*The anticipation of the assassination* is wonderfully conceived in one epithet, in the narration of the ride,—

> 'So the two brothers, and their murder'd man,
> Rode past fair Florence'"?

THOMAS C. RIGLIN.

DEMOCRACY AND WAR.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Norman Angelism is the most likely thing to stop war—if one could apply it. But war will never cease whilst the priest, in alliance with the financier who pays him, controls education. In our days all wars are the result of commercialism. Religion may play a subsidiary part, as in the Ulster strife, which might have led to a sort of war; and patriotism is worked on by wire-pullers in the present war; but all the nations concerned are motived in the main by self-interest.

If the principles of democracy could be applied, war would cease; but what do we see in England, as elsewhere? One set of democrats fighting another, instead of the common enemy. In this war I don't believe there is absolute right in any one of the combatants; it is a fight between groups of financiers and nations greedy to steal from each other, and the Socialists of each country supporting the financiers of their own country. They all appeal to God. Our King and the Emperor of Austria are not far behind the Kaiser in this respect.

Children require to be educated in Norman Angelism. How is it to be done?

A. J. MARRIOTT.

"Pa, who was Shylock?" "Great goodness, boy, you attend church and Sunday-school every week, and don't know who Shylock was?" cried his father, with a look of surprise and horror. "Go and read your Bible, sir."

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Acid Drops

A thousand men joined Kitchener's Army from the Salvation Army Social Institutions. This tremendous event is suitably celebrated by Poet Begbie, who seems to aim at undercutting Mr. John Masefield. A "pome" of his called "Saved" appeared a few days ago in the *Chronicle*. The Salvation soldiers are now in an army with real blood and fire, and march along with "a Hallelujah swing"—whatever that is. Finally comes the following refrain:—

"Ho, we've slung our sins behind us,
And we're marching to the front,
And if the Devil wants to find us,
Why, it's there he'll have to hunt.
We've a feel of soap and water,
And we're in with Christian men;
Ho, a chap can do some slaughter
When he knows he's born again!"

We endorse this most thoroughly. If it isn't poetry it's truth. A born-again chap is up (or down) to anything—including any amount of slaughter. Read the Old Testament. And there are some nice texts in the New. For instance "Those mine enemies that would not I should reign over them bring them hither and slay them before me" or "I came not to send peace but a sword."

The Kaiser, as God's pal, is no better and no worse than Harold Begbie. The last verse of this modest Englishman's "Fall In!" ends with the declaration that "England's call is God's." Who says so? The (minor) poet Begbie. "Germany's call is God's." Who says so? The Kaiser William. Both declarations are blasphemy—flat blasphemy—very flat blasphemy. About as flat as they make it.

Mr. William Le Queux, the novelist, in his twopennyworth of *German Atrocities*, copied from the newspapers, without the slightest effort at verification, ends up his "Foreword" in the same pious way.

> "The frightful deeds which have been done over the face of Belgium and in France are, no doubt, intended to be repeated in Great Britain, and, if it were possible, the Red Hand of Destruction would certainly be laid very heavy upon us—more heavily, perhaps, because we, by our honesty of purpose, have incurred the hatred of Kaiserdom.
>
> "Yet we should reassure ourselves by remembering that when Attila of old came to Chalons, full of ostentation as the great War-Lord he came to his own undoing, and his dominion at once disappeared to the winds. There is One with Whom vengeance lies for wrongs, and most assuredly will He mete out the same dread Fate of death and obscurity to the unblushing War-Lord of Germany, who, daily, with his blasphemous impiety, lifts his bloodstained hands and thanks his Maker for his shameful 'successes.'"

No doubt the Germans have committed abominable outrages, which have been brought to the Kaiser's notice, and that he has done nothing to check them. It even looks as though he had ordered or suggested them. Yet he "daily appeals for the blessing of God"—which, according to Mr. Le Queux, is the Kaiser's crime. But every nation engaged in war reminds God that he owes it a victory. Why should Germany be excluded?

A lie deliberately and repeatedly told, a lie rooted, not in ignorance, but in prejudice, cannot be too often or too vigorously exposed, because it is the vilest and most pernicious thing under the sun. Such a lie is the assertion, made again and again by such prominent Christian ministers as the Bishop of Zanzibar, Dr. Clifford, Dr. Campbell Morgan, and Sir William Robertson Nicoll, that the Atheism of Prussia is the cause of the present war. As a matter of undeniable fact, it is a conviction firmly held by the overwhelming majority of Atheists that all differences between nations, as well as between individuals, can and ought to be amicably and permanently settled without having recourse to armed force. But this is a conviction that has never been cherished by the Christian Church. Hundreds of times has she had the sword unsheathed in furtherance of her own ambitious interests. Popes have ere now marched at the head of armies, and inspired the most bloody wars. Even the meek and mild Gospel Jesus is reported to have ordered his disciples to sell their cloaks and buy swords, and to have stated that his mission in the world was not to give peace, but a sword. We know that the teaching attributed to him is extremely self-contradictory, as has also been that of his Church in all ages. Do not these men of God know that there is nothing un-Christian, much less anti-Christian, in the fact that the Church has always been, and still is, at heart the most bellicose organisation in the world?

Now, we will give Dr. Clifford, Dr. Campbell Morgan, and Sir William Nicoll the opportunity of publicly showing how beautifully, as well as daringly, consistent they can be on a pinch. Will they have the goodness to declare unambiguously that Martin Luther must have been an impious dethroner of Christ and a very wicked Atheist, because he was a strong believer in war? General Bernhardi, in the chapter entitled "The Duty to Make War" (*Germany and the Next War*, pp. 54, 55), quotes the great Reformer in support of his own teaching, and the quotation is very much to the point, as the following extract from it abundantly shows:—

> "We must look at the business of war or the sword with the eyes of men, asking, Why these murders and horrors? It will be shown that it is a business, Divine in itself, and as needful and necessary to the world as eating or drinking, or any other work."

Surely only a God-defying barbarian could have written like that, otherwise those men of God, whom we have accused of lying, stand utterly and finally self-condemned.

The *British Weekly* is angry with the Kaiser for his use of religious phraseology. It quotes from one of his speeches as follows:—

> "Remember that the German people are the chosen of God. On me, as German Emperor, the spirit of God has descended. I am his weapon, his sword, his vice-gerent. Woe to the disobedient, death to cowards and unbelievers."

We admit that this is a trifle strong, and betokens a want of mental balance. Still, save for the pronounced personal note and the threat of vengeance, there is not much here that could not be paralleled by speeches manufactured in Britain. We also have been very fond of talking of the British people as being providentially selected for this or that work. And even in this war we are talking of doing God's work in overthrowing the Kaiser's plans. And is there any substantial difference between the British claim that God is on their side, and the German claim that God is fighting for them? If one claim is silly, why is the other sensible? Would not the really sensible thing be to leave God out of account altogether?

The *British Weekly* also quotes against the Kaiser his speech to the German troops who left for China in 1900, in which he ordered the soldiers to take no prisoners and show no quarter. On that occasion the German soldiers were co-operating with other European troops for the relief of Peking, and it is curious that so little was said against it at the time. Why did not the *British Weekly* protest, *at the time*, against British troops co-operating with soldiers who were thus instructed? Of course, it was against the Chinese, and they were not Christians. And, as a matter of fact, the Christian troops in China outdid in barbarity all that is now recorded of the German Christian soldiers in Belgium. Time brings many changes, and the fact of our denouncing as an outrage on civilisation methods that we, at least, passed by in silence fourteen years ago, is not the least curious.

Sir Robertson Nicoll again falls foul of Treitschke. And it is curious to find a writer—on another page of the *British Weekly*—pointing out that Treitschke "loved the Bible because it describes so many wars, and sets before us so many warlike figures, thus teaching lessons of manliness to the young. He wished the Bible to be taught in schools and committed to memory. The choice, he used to say, lies between Christianity and Materialism." There it is! Treitschke loved the Bible. The Kaiser also loves the Bible. It is the book he always consults for guidance. One was, and the other is, a sincere Christian. There is no doubt whatever about that. It is a fact that other Christians—in this country—find most awkward. We would like Sir Robertson Nicoll to explain why it is that men like the Emperor of Germany have so often the fullest support for all they did in the Christian religion. That would be much more to the point than all the yards of pious piffle to which he has lately treated his readers.

Prussia has been pilloried as the poisoner of Germany, but the chief teachers of "the religion of valor" were not Prussians. Nietzsche was of Saxon birth; Bernhardi, of Italian origin; Von Treitschke, a Saxon of Czech origin; and Houston Chamberlain an Englishman.

The newspapers are entirely given over to war news, and the pleasant editorial pastime of hanging halos on murderer's necks has been temporarily abandoned. As a fact, the ordinary murderers are very quiet. Maybe they are too

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busy gloating over the details of wholesale manslaughter in the press.

Since the war started the range of the collecting-box has considerably increased. Let us hope that the habit of inserting brace-buttons and bad money has declined.

That six-weeks' soldier, the Bishop of London, has been parading in his khaki uniform, which must be a change after wearing petticoats for so many years. He was at the front—in the Peers' Gallery of the House of Commons—last week, arrayed like Tartarin crossing the Alps.

There has been considerable searching of hearts among some Christian people as to the propriety of holding harvest festivals this year. The Bishop of Chelmsford, however, "trusts that thanksgiving gatherings may be held." To parody Browning, "God's in his heaven, all's right with the Christian world"—despite the red harvest on the Continent.

Religious journalists have been bewailing the war as an effect of German "culture." That is so like them. It requires a pious frame of mind to discover "culture" in Bernhardi's book, which is as emotional as any other soldier's pocket-book.

There are two things, at least, that the present war should make clear. The one is the utter needlessness of conscription, either from the point of view of protection or of efficiency. For years we have been told that some form of conscription was essential, and that to get ready for war was the only way of preserving peace. Well, if that doctrine is sound anywhere, it must be sound everywhere; and the complete answer to the most muddle-headed of conscriptionists is—Germany. Did her getting ready for war make for peace? On the contrary, all that was best in German life has been lowered and degraded by the spirit of militarism that has been cultivated. And what militarism has done in Germany it would do everywhere else, given the same power and the same opportunity. German human nature is not different from human nature elsewhere—although to read some of the journals one would imagine that to be the case. It is everywhere the expression of the forces to which it is subjected. Given the same militarist environment for a generation or so, and the product in other countries would be essentially similar.

The second superstition that is badly scotched, if it is not killed, is that militarism is essential to "efficiency." "Efficiency" is a blessed word, and may mean almost anything But, taking it on the not very elevated plane of capacity for fighting, the facts have given it the lie direct. There has been no lack of volunteers—there never is, as a matter of fact, during war time—and these volunteers show no lack of physical efficiency. On the contrary, the authorities express surprise at the quality of the men who have come forward. This ought to at least weaken the belief that civil life unfits a man for playing a soldier's part when it is necessary that he should do so. The truth is that all the qualities that make a soldier really of value are bred in civil life—warfare merely provides a platform for their ostentatious exhibition. This is shown by the fact that an army in the field—one that is not being continually recruited by fresh blood—deteriorates in all those qualities that make an army of value. That is why the bands of mercenary soldiers in the Middle Ages fell to pieces. That is why every country that has devoted itself to militarism has come to grief. Devotion to duty, courage, the sense of comradeship, the sense of honor, readiness for co-operation, are all social virtues, and are merely transferred from the civil to the military field of action.

The Secretary of the Christian Evidence Society is appealing for help for his Society on the ground that the war raised "various special problems for Christian speakers to solve." We do not know what problems there are facing the Christian speaker that were not there before. Perhaps Mr. Drawbridge only means that there is not the same opportunity for dodging them under present conditions. But the idea of a Christian Evidence speaker solving any problem of a really serious character is delicious—to those who know Christian Evidence speakers. So far as we are concerned, we have never known them to *solve* a problem, but they have always suggested one—that is the problem of explaining how a man can go on talking for as long as they do without falling into the truth or dropping into common sense. Perhaps it is practice that does it.

It is certain, says Rev. T. Rhondda Williams, that "human history is full of testimony that it is not trouble that drives men away from God or destroys their faith in Him. The most troubled times have been the times of deepest religious experience, the deepest realisation of the presence of God." It is all a matter of temperament. There are men who are driven to their knees by trouble, and there are others who meet it with heads up and their eyes open. The mere fact of so many apologies for God being put forward in times of trouble proves that the movement is not in the one direction only. People who are really religious become more pronounced in their expressions of piety when the "Lord's hand is heavy on them." Those who are not really religious, but have passively accepted religious doctrines, are driven to question the value of these teachings, and those who are definitely non-religious see in the condition of the world fresh support for their views. This is really all there is in it. For ourselves, we vastly prefer the attitude of the man who faces trouble as something to be overcome by unaided human effort than that of the one who goes on his knees and whimpers about the chastening hand of God.

The Bishop of London fears lest people, in the many calls for subscriptions arising from the war, will overlook the requirements of the Church. He says that the "primary interests" of religion may suffer, and "the call to self-sacrifice is apt to be interpreted by many as a call to sacrifice some department of God's work." Naturally, the Bishop does not allow anything to obscure his professional outlook. Religion is "the primary interest," and people should attend to that first. He should lay this view before Lord Kitchener, who has, apparently, quite overlooked it.

Another great trouble is the scarcity of chaplains for the new Army that is being raised. This is, again, a point that seems to have quite escaped the attention of the authorities. The public has been appealed to for all sorts of things—blankets, mufflers, socks, reading for the wounded (tracts were specially marked "not wanted"), but no one has appealed for more parsons. Lord Kitchener should see to it at once. And yet we fancy that if the suggestion were made to send all the clergy of Great Britain off to the front, the only people who would wholeheartedly support it would be Freethinkers.

Most of our readers will be interested in the following leaderette taken from the *Daily News*, and thank us for reproducing it:—

"THE PHANTOM ARMY.

"Accepting at its face value the official denial of the presence of Russians in the West, the world is provided with a psychological experience infinitely richer and subtler than the military experience of an actual Russian army in the West could be. No story could have had a wider circulation, and seem to be strengthened by testimony more various or more respectable. Policemen had seen these Russians, mayors had entertained them, bus-drivers had observed them, engine-drivers had driven them, men had travelled with them and photographed them, women had spoken to them, scholars had interpreted for them, shipowners had lent their ships for them. Here was an accumulation of witnesses which would have convinced the normal mind of the truth of any assertion not in itself manifestly absurd. Now we are assured on the sufficient authority of the War Office that the whole story is without foundation in fact. We can well believe that not a few of the stories were the deliberate fabrications of a misguided humor; but the solid residue of serious rectitude will constitute an imposing monument to humanity's power of self-deception. Here is a warning to which every student of history, and in particular of the history of religions, will have to give heed."

That word "warning" is significant—being what it is and where it is.

In the good old days when England was really Christian, Biblical names used to be the fashion. Recently, these seem to be borrowed from the penny novelettes; but the war has aroused martial feelings in many maternal breasts. Who will be the first to call the baby Kitchener Jellico Joffre French Liege ——?

According to the *Star*, bright novels are wanted for the relaxation of wounded soldiers, but religious tracts are not desirable. Why is not the same wholesome rule observed in ordinary hospitals?

The kilt of the Highlanders continues to be a spring of comic inspiration for Continental newspapers. Yet the petticoat of the priest is as plentiful as blackberries in an English lane.

Among the new book-notices appears *The Pride of Eve*. Whatever it was, it was scarcely a pride in being well-dressed.

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To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £207. Received since:—Thomas Dixon, 10s.; G. P. Denny (per D. Baxter), 10s.; G. Thomas, 1s.

ARTHUR ST. JOHN.—You raise an interesting question, though not for the first time, but the treatment of spies does not come within the scope of the *Freethinker*. We agree with you, however, that the "kind-heartedness of our soldiers" is a most valuable national asset. It is probably the most valuable of all things in the world, whether in soldiers or civilians. One may observe, too, that the moral lessons read in courts of law by the judges of one country to the spies of another are perfectly farcical, for they all maintain the spy system, which is the inevitable result of keeping up an army at all.

H. GEORGE FARMER.—You are right, but we see no reason for advertising it.

JOHN A. REID.—Your good wishes are reciprocated.

B. THOMAS, who describes himself as "an old coal miner 60 years of age," takes two copies of the *Freethinker* weekly and gives one away to "likely subscribers." Our circulation would improve if others acted in the same spirit, according to opportunity.

G. S. P.—Sorry to hear that nothing addressed from "this place" (your residence in the United States) to the editor of the *Freethinker* "stands the remotest chance" of starting for its destination. Copy under consideration. Mr. Foote is sleeping rather better. The difficulties as to our necessary change of premises still remain. With regard to the effect of the war on our circulation, we did not say we had not suffered at all, but not so much as we expected. There is always a prospect of danger while the war lasts.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

J. PARTRIDGE.—We hope the Birmingham Branch meeting will be thoroughly successful. We should like to join, at least "in spirit," in the well-deserved compliment to Messrs. Willis and Williams.

G. THOMAS.—We understand that G. K. Chesterton is a Roman Catholic, though we don't recollect that he has plainly said so. Thanks for your efforts to promote our circulation.

W. REPTON.—The contingent promise is not forgotten though so long delayed.

C. JORDAN.—Not bad for a first effort, but hardly up to our mark. Glad you find sense and humanity in the *Freethinker* on the subject of war.

We must again announce that we cannot answer anonymous letters. It is a good rule of journalism that correspondents must give their names and addresses, not necessarily for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and not to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

In order to "keep up the connection" Mr. Foote has secured the Queen's (Minor) Hall for Sunday evening, October 11. No doubt a hall-full of his London friends, with some liberal-minded outsiders, will be glad to hear him again. It is a good while since they had the opportunity. Full particulars will appear next week.

In ordering a new supply of paper for the *Freethinker* (a tentative supply) we have made a slight change in the weight, but none in the size or quality. We fancy that most of our readers will fail to notice the difference. Those who do notice it will probably agree that it is not an occasion for weeping or wailing or complaining. The *Freethinker* has never been printed on poor paper. It looks remarkably well in bound volumes. We have always had a respect for its appearance, and it is not lost. Of course the new paper will not come into use for a week or two. We will mention the matter again in due course.

We are always obliged to keep a good quantity of paper in stock, in order to be prepared for any accident that may happen to the *Freethinker*. It is a peculiar journal, it has many enemies, and we have to be ready for everything. Both "accidents" and "accidental accidents" have to be provided for.

The Birmingham N. S. S. Branch will celebrate Bradlaugh Sunday to-day (Sept. 27) by holding a meeting at the Oriental Café, Hill-street, at 7 p.m. Friends as well as members are cordially invited. At the conclusion of the main purpose of the meeting presentations will be made to Mr. F. E. Willis and Mr. E. Clifford Williams of testimonials in recognition of their lectures and general propagandist work in aid of the local Freethought movement.

Mr. William Archer's letter on Heinrich von Treitschke in a recent *Daily Chronicle* is noticeable for a phrase quite on a level with one that figured in our indictment for "blasphemy" in 1883. It appears that the German historian, who supplies the absolutist philosophy for the Kaiser and the whole military party in Hun-Land, was converted himself to that view of things by Sadoara and Sedan. "Up to that point," Mr. Archer says, "his views had been comparatively human. He had been inclined to rationalism in religion, and had not yet become a devotee of the tribal God who smiles upon all carnage that is commanded by the pious House of Hohenzollern." One of the statements that got *us* into trouble was that the God of the Bible (presumably the party that Mr. Archer refers to) was "as cruel as a Bashi-Bazouk [an echo of the then recent Russo-Turkish war and the Bulgarian atrocities] and as bloodthirsty as a royal Bengal tiger." The sentence was not our own; it was from the pen of a contributor. But it was true; it could not be objectionable except to the worshipers of the said Deity; and we defended it as quite permissible in a country that boasted of its free speech. We paid the penalty of having, and displaying, a little more courage than most people in religious discussion; but we never regretted it, and our "crime" has become a commonplace. Mr. Blatchford said some nice things about Jehovah, then came the Rev. R. J. Campbell, and then a flood of attack was let loose upon a Deity who was found to have scarcely a handful of friends left amongst the younger generation. To mention him even as an acquaintance nowadays calls for some kind of apology. Mr. Archer feels free to dig him under the fifth rib in the columns of a highly respectable newspaper. We are delighted to see the progress of ideas for which we suffered. Some day or other it will be perceived that the German "God" is precisely the same one as the English "God," and that it is just as foolish to pray to him in England as it is to pray to him in Germany. Mr. Archer must know, and in time the respectable morning newspaper may let him say it, that all Christians, in their various phases of faith, are "devotees of the tribal God who smiles upon all carnage."

"Whatever Is, Is Right."

PRUSSIA'S mad monarch, spoiling for a fight,
Has set the fires of hell on earth alight,
And sent his troops to ravage, burn, and slay, [way;
Hacking through Belgium and through France their
Plundering and murdering, ravishing and destroying,
And every deed of devilishness enjoying:
But let not this disturb you or affright,
Do we not know "Whatever is, is right"?

The German troops are told where'er they go
To cause the unarmed the maximum of woe:
To act the parts of murderers and thieves,
Do all the vilest criminal achieves;
Women dishonor, old men stab or shoot;
Strangle small children in default of loot: [write,—
What then? Of such things we should calmly
Are we not told "Whatever is, is right"?

In wicked wantonness, with rage insane,
They have given to the flames divine Louvain:
Destroyed its noble monuments of old,
Rich above mines of diamonds or gold,—
Each worth the lives of thousands of their hordes,
And all their Junkers, Pedants, and War-Lords:
But let not such things your fierce wrath excite,—
For who can doubt "Whatever is, is right"?

B. D.

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In the Gloaming.

IN their longing for rest some thinkers go to the crowds. Their self-identity, the ego, about which their thoughts circle like so many moths around a flame, seems to be lulled to sleep by the very indefiniteness of a mass of people. They lose the acuteness of self, becoming but a grain of sand in a Sahara; and the consciousness of their littleness operates as an opiate upon their minds. But most of those whose minds crave for relief find it away from their fellows. They go to the hills, to the tree-peopled glens, to the quiet country, where the fumes of the mental miasma we nickname "life" rarely seem to drift. There they taste some of the pure happiness that alone justifies the living out of their days. They escape from themselves.

Although so keenly penetrative at other times, their eyes are content to see only the soft surface and its many marvellous beauties. They forget the unceasing internecine strife between nature's several parts; forget the instinctive animosity that never sleeps; forget the ravage, the horror, the sickening death-throes. They look upon the whole, and its loveliness delights them, and soothes their febrile minds. They gain strength from their joy. Happiness, quiet and solacing, floods their minds. It is well that they forget.

During the early part of the evening he had passed a somewhat strenuous time lecturing. The subject had necessitated references to sociology; present trends of social thought had been touched upon; and many avenues of discussion had, unavoidably, been opened up. His pointed remarks had set fire to the argumentative spirit of the audience; and he had experienced a particularly hot time of it.

Conscious of a weakness in his powers of debating, he had left the lecture-room displeased with himself. And now, as he slowly walked along the busy streets, his mind was becoming tired with the innumerable successful answers he *might* have given. A sense of impatience stung him into a fretfulness that hastened the development of the mental tiredness. His limbs became more and more rapid in their movement. He longed to escape from it all, all these problems, and worryings, and things, that sprang from conscious life as sunrays spring from the sun, and demanded thought and action more than man seemed capable of giving. He longed for quiet; and, without deliberate intention, he was treading the shortest road to the hills.

Soon he became aware the stir of the city was gone. A quick flow of freshness seemed to sweep over his mind. It was similar to the feeling of physical purity that enlivens the body when first immersed in cold, swiftly running fresh water. He stopped; inhaled a deep breath of honeysuckle-scented air; and inhaled and inhaled again. Then he furtively glanced around. Seeing no one in the terrace, the learned gentleman rapidly hoisted himself upon the wall; pulled a spray of the rich red honeysuckle over the railing, broke it off, and jumped down.

It was an unusual escapade for him; but the honeysuckle was worth the loss of dignity. And as he fastened it in the velvet lapel of his coat, he felt as happy as a schoolboy in a "safe" orchard.

The sun had gone down behind the distant unseen hills, leaving the cloud-diapered skies a vision of pink glory. Coolness and calmness moved in the atmosphere to mellow the perfumes of the flowers.

He began to feel well again, and stepped out briskly, determined to watch the pink dissolve into saffron, and then into grey, and to see the evening star flash from its blue robe, from the hillside.

The relief deepened within him when the last mansion was left behind. The city and its poisoned thought-arrows were gone. Peace came upon him; and quiet happiness, such as the gloaming gives to the sensitive spirit, or the country gives to the lover of nature, drifted around him in greater purity than he had ever experienced before. He forgot about the lecture and the discussion. Renouncing, unconsciously, his relationship to humanity, he drew nearer the great mother. One by one the trivialities of society slipped from his mind. Introspection lost its power; and when, at last, he reached the hillside, his mind had become as clean as a mountain loch, beautifully reflecting the surrounding loveliness.

He lay down upon a shoulder of the hill, and, looking upwards, watched with idealess but concentrated mind the marvellous color-changes on the clouds. Often before had he gazed upon those wonderful pictures; but always with a keen, scientific interest; never with the childlike absence of the knowledge of causation that now enthralled him. Nor did his mind even attempt to distinguish the various shades that rapidly followed each other, till the clouds resumed their original grey.

Directly before him, across the glen, rose the hill behind which the sun had said "good-night." On its brow rested a little cloud that was gradually diminishing in size. Slowly it subsided into seeming nothingness. He looked, fascinated, his eyes struggling hard to intensify their sight with the disappearance of the object. When the last wisp of cloud had gone, his eyes relaxed their vigilance; and he saw, with startling suddenness, the loneliness of the hill.

Although it was but a peak in a range that sloped away towards the north, somehow it seemed to be strangely apart from its neighbors. Perhaps the luminous blue atmosphere that surrounded it was somewhat responsible for the awful loneliness that became almost palpable to the man who looked, enthralled by this new spectacle. He had heard of lonely domesticated animals and of lonely men, but never had he realised that Nature, by her marvellous, unpremeditated ingenuity, so to speak, could cast around a hill the dark cloak of solitude. Often had he seen a ship sailing alone on a huge expanse of sea; often had he seen a great mountain standing in solitary grandeur above its fellows; and often had he seen the last memory of a forest waving its branches unconcernedly in the breeze; but this was stranger than those: it had something they had not; it was mystical, weird, wonderful beyond all words; it was uncanny.

The gloomy silence of the hill, its black magnificence, the complacent sense of monarchy that seemed to clothe it in nobility, were all as obvious, as real, as the grass on which he lay. He *felt* them, besides seeing them. Royalty seemed to irradiate from its majestic repose, commanding obeisance from him, and yet flooding his being with a similar supremacy. He felt impelled to rise to his feet, his shoulders and head erect, his eyes bright, undaunted, full of the same knowledge of power, of strength, that it possessed and showed. His obeisance, he felt, could not be the humility of genuflexion. No; rather of fearlessness, of equality, of the discovery of power within himself.

Standing before it, the loneliness of its incomprehensible majesty came more forcibly upon him. The gloom became a sadness too deep for utterance, a sadness that found its only food in stern acquiescence. His arms shot out impulsively, and words of heartrung sympathy rushed to his tongue, but, ere they fell, the pang of their commonplaceness froze them on his lips. The loneliness of the hill, its profound depth of gloom, its motionless, unvanquishable acquiescence, made even sympathy banal.

A dark, upright, solitary figure he stood, enwrapped in the mysterious garment Nature had enwoven about him, gazing across the glen to the hill she had similarly enclothed. It was as if his brain had, for the moment, ceased to function. He had surrendered himself. The ego had become a mirror, nay, more, it had become a part, an impalpable part, of the silent, actionless drama; for drama it was. He felt it. Unconsciously he was moved by it. Unconsciously he had ceased being a spectator; he had become an intrinsic part of it.

Nothing stirred; yet everything had life. The semi-gloom was full of an inconceivable meaning. The deep blue of the air seemed to linger for a

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little in its intensity. The weirdness seemed to possess a strange reality that suggested immense potentialities. It was the animation of profound silence, the vitality of motionless might.

And then, gradually, the deep blue seemed to change. Wreaths of pleasant clouds seemed to rise from his brain. He felt his mind's power return to him; and with the lightening of the color there came a fragrance and purity he had never previously experienced.

Suddenly he saw a star glitter above the shoulder of the hill. It was the evening star, as he was taught to name it in his boyhood days. A thrill passed through his nerves. He threw back his head, drew in a deep breath of air, and released the tension of his body. He laughed, and the sound went rippling down into the glen and over to the hill, and the lonely hill joined in his quiet merriment.

He felt a new man, cleaner, stronger, better; and as he trudged joyously citywards, he knew it was good to be alive, good to feel responsive to Nature's loveliness, and good to draw near to the mother-breast and be purified.

ROBERT MORELAND.

Bible Makers.—V.

SOLOMON AND OTHERS.

INTERSPERSED among much that was unwittingly funny, and more that was deliberately barbarous, it was only natural that the Bible makers should supply a few chapters of gloomy sermonising, to lend a kind of moral respectability to the whole work. King Solomon was, therefore, specially retained to supply the article. Credited with almost unlimited knowledge and wisdom, but possessing, if we judge from his writing and conduct, a very infinitesimal quantity of either; a notorious man of the world; devoid altogether of principles or sincerity; a more appropriate person could scarcely have been chosen for the task. No men are more prone to preach—and sometimes very good sermons too—than those whose practice is in flagrant and diametrical opposition to their teachings. From the judge upon the bench to the unpaid magistrate in an obscure country town, or from the opulent bishop to the poor, underpaid curate, we have hundreds of examples of men who, in their official position, give admirable lessons to the public as to how they should conduct themselves morally—lessons which they themselves not only never attempt to put into practice, but which they persistently and deliberately disregard in their daily life. The Spartans, it is said, used to make a slave drunk and set him before their sons so that the exhibition might disgust them, and thus influence them against the excessive use of intoxicating drink. Solomon seems to have been chosen as a contributor to the pages of the Bible on the same principle. Having divided his attention mainly between wine and women, especially the latter; monopolising several hundred wives and three hundred concubines, he was considered to be a high authority upon the things of life in general and upon women and wine in particular.

And a very gloomy opinion it was—pessimistic to the last degree. The reclaimed drunkard is often considered the best advocate of temperance, the converted burglar the most admirable teacher of morality, the reformed prize-fighter the best example of the influence of the meek and lowly Jesus. In Solomon the qualities of all these persons were combined. He had had experience of life in all its various aspects, he had prostituted his physical and mental faculties for the sake of transitory pleasure, and at last, when he became a decrepit, used-up debauchee, he yelled out in the agony of his despair, "Vanity; all is vanity!"

To Solomon childish laughter seemed fiendish; innocent playfulness, agonising folly; honest toil, madness; and he summed up life as comprising nothing but "Vanity and vexation of spirit." He had wasted his life and he longed for death to escape from what, to him, was a dreary and miserable existence. While he was in this unpleasant mood he contributed twelve chapters to the Holy Bible, for which the long-faced, lugubrious gentlemen of orthodoxy will ever thank and praise him. Having finished Ecclesiastes, Solomon apparently rested for a time and then rushed into song, which, being written when the author was in a better state of mind, in fact, in quite an affectionate mood, with doubtless one of his many wives sitting upon his knee caressing him, are therefore much more pleasant, though not altogether decent, compositions. The metaphor, at times, is very coarse, as the reader will see if he glances cursorily over the first few verses of chapter seven; and one cannot avoid the conclusion that the writer was inebriated at the time with something of a stronger nature than exuberant verbosity.

The book of the prophet Isaiah follows. Isaiah was a dreamer, and all the terrible events he foresaw as certain to happen he had revealed to him in a vision. Many of these predictions were perfectly safe. They were not to take place till the "last day," and as that interesting period is unlikely to come very soon in a world, that is, as the Prayer Book properly says, "without end," the events are not likely to be carefully verified. When we are assured that "it shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all the nations shall flow into it," we can only remark that if ever the mountain of the House of Lords—or Lords' House, which is the same thing—should get elevated at all, it is not unlikely that it will be exalted much higher than the hills—probably elevated off the face of the earth—and so that prophecy will be fulfilled. As to the composition itself, I think it may not unfairly be said that it is the most incoherent and meaningless jargon to be found in the Bible, save and except, perhaps, the ravings of St. John, the divine maniac, in the book called Revelation, which reveals nothing but the hopeless imbecility of the writer.

Prophesying was once a good business. Every priest practised it and every ignoramus believed in it. Old women of both sexes gave it their countenance and support. The Bible makers knew the importance of it, and so for every single historian or poet on the staff they kept four prophets. After Isaiah come Jeremiah and Ezekiel, the former of which contains nothing of importance, and the latter only a parable concerning a boiling pot and a faithful narrative of the disgusting practices of Aholah and Aholibah—two painted harlots of Babylon. These, with Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Zechariah, Malachi, and one or two others that are never read, complete the first part of the Bible. Most of these last-named writers were in the prophetic line, and their prophecies need a revelation before they can be understood. I do not profess to understand them, and I do not know any sensible person who does; but if there are any who do, or think they do, they are sure to be numbered among the Bible makers of the future.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

Primitive Marriage.

(BY THE LATE J. M. WHEELER.)

"MARRIAGE," said Goethe, "is the beginning and end of all culture." Certainly it may with equal truth be said to be the beginning and end of all civilisation. It is man's highest achievement, making all others possible. Even those who believe it to have been divinely instituted have the difficulty of the sons and daughters of the first pair committing incest. Those who believe that mankind began their career at the bottom of the scale, and slowly worked their way up from savagery to civilisation, will find abundant evidence that marriage, like all other

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institutions, has passed through various stages of growth among all nations, the Jews included. Tradition, indeed, points to a period when marriage, as it exists among civilised nations, was unknown. The Greeks ascribed it to Cecrops, the Egyptians to Menes, the Hindus to Svetaketu, the Chinese to Fou-hi, "before whose time men knew their mothers but not their fathers."

In the most primitive stage in which man can be supposed to have existed, some bond of union would be necessary for the preservation of offspring. With very prolific animals, regard for their young is scarcely necessary for the preservation of the race, and among such it is deficient; but it is common to all others, for the sufficient reason that any race in which it did not exist would speedily become extinct. But not only is man amongst the slowest breeding of animals; his infancy demands care for a longer period than any other, and if this be not bestowed the individual dies, leaving the race to be continued by those in whom parental instincts are better developed. Many animals pair permanently, and others do so for a season. Even among the lowest races of men promiscuity is qualified by unions having some persistence. Early man living mainly by hunting and fishing, pursuits in which women do not excel, the rearing of children could only succeed when both parents supported them in their tender years. Fijians, Australians, American Indians, and Andamanese, show us that however informally they may originate, sexual relations of a more or less enduring kind exist, even among the lowest races. A typical instance was found in the Andaman Islands, where, according to an early observer, the custom was for the man and woman to remain together until the child was weaned, when they separated as a matter of course, and each sought a new partner.

Among the Fijians, so famous for cannibalism and parenticide, it is declared to be "truly touching to see how parents are attached to their children and children to their parents." The Veddahs, a very low race of Ceylon, are monogamous, and say only death can part man and wife; yet it is important to observe that they have no marriage ceremony, and do not scruple to unite with their younger sisters. Darwin, whose views must command the utmost respect, says, in his *Descent of Man*:—

> "Judging from the social habits of man as he now exists, and from most savages being polygamists, the most probable view is that primeval men aboriginally lived in small communities, each with as many wives as he could support or obtain, whom he would have jealously guarded against all other men.....In primeval times men.....would probably have lived as polygamists or temporarily as monogamists."

With customary candor Darwin notices that writers like McLennan, Morgan, and Sir John Lubbock, have believed rather in early promiscuity. It may indeed be argued that just because marriage is so useful an institution, it is no more "primeval" than metallurgy, for no tribe of men could safely have resigned such a social advantage.

Many low races cannot be said to have the institution of marriage. What is called marriage is really only the capture of a slave to use as one pleases. Among Bushmen and Bushwomen there is no form of union save the agreement of the parties and consummation. The Chippewas, Aleuts, Eskimo, etc., have no ceremony, and divorce consists of a good drubbing and turning the woman out of doors. "In his native state," says Mr. Morgan, "the (North American) Indian is below the passion of love. It is entirely unknown among them, with the exception of the village Indian." The Tinné Indians had no word for "dear" or "beloved," and the Algonquin language is stated to have contained no verb meaning "to love." The Aymaras, having no word of their own to signify marriage, have of late adopted a Spanish word. "In Yariba" (Central Africa), says Lander, "marriage is celebrated by the natives as unconcernedly as possible; a man thinks as little of taking a wife as of cutting an ear of corn—affection is altogether out of the question"—as, indeed, it must be wherever woman has no right of refusal. According to Galton, Dammar women "divorce themselves as often as they like; in fact, the spouse was changed almost weekly, and I seldom knew, without inquiry, who was the *pro tempore* husband of each lady at any particular time." Crantz observes of the Greenlanders, that "they break the matrimonial obligation on both sides without a blush." Mitchell says: "After battle it frequently happens among the native tribes of Australia that the wives of the conquered, of their own free will, go over to the victors"—a somewhat persistent trait of feminine nature, reminding us of the readiness of the hind to accept the conquering stag.

A great many races are quite indifferent to juvenile unchastity, and only impose strict conduct on their women after marriage. The record of all early voyagers among savages is the same. They found everywhere fathers, brothers, and sometimes husbands, offer wives for a consideration. Sexual jealousy, though one of the strongest impulses we have in common with other animals, is sometimes broken down. With the Tahitans, to offer a girl or woman to a visitor was an act of ordinary politeness. The Comanches, and other Indian tribes, were in the habit of ceding their wives to their guests. This hospitable practice is found also among the Aleuts, the Eskimo, the natives of Kamtschatka, the Papuans, and the Australian aborigines. Of the Greenland Eskimo "those are reputed the best and noblest tempered who, without any pain or reluctance, will lend their friends their wives." In Nubia, among the Hassiniyeh Arabs, married women have free disposal of themselves on every fourth day; an evident restriction of earlier laxity. In some parts of China the husband may annually repudiate his wife and marry another. Here the mother owns the children and has over them the power of life and death.

Fatherhood is a matter of opinion, motherhood of observation; hence the first kinship is through mothers. Among native Australians, children took the family name of the mother, and a man could not marry a woman of his own name, a usage common to the Fijians and Maories. One effect of the division of clans in this way, is that the children of the same father by different wives, having different names, may be obliged to take opposite sides in a quarrel. Herodotus (Book I., 173) says of the Lycians, "They take the mother's, and not the father's name. Ask a Lycian who he is, and he answers by giving his own name, that of his mother, and so on in the female line." The father of history was deceived in thinking this instance exceptional. It is rather the rule among tribes in a low stage of development. The evidence on this point I shall further have to adduce when dealing with the question of exogamy, or the prohibition of marriage within the limit of the family or tribe.

Of course, before all law is social usage. The rise of a social law implies a certain preceding social existence. Herbert Spencer says "reproduction unregulated by interdicts must be taken as initial." At first we presume our ancestors knew and cared for little beyond sexual difference, but those in whom care of offspring was most developed had the best chance of survival. The patriarchal family, a group of men, wives, children, and slaves, connected by common subjection to the chief of the household, which Sir Henry Maine regards as a primitive form, and from which undoubtedly modern law has been developed, so far from being a simple group, is highly complex, and is usually freely recruited by the adoption of strangers within its circle. We must presume that the social arrangements of tree and cave dwellers were even more primitive than any patriarchal arrangement of which we have record. Probably they would consist of the herding together of a male with his mate or mates and their offspring, who would freely interbreed if without the opportunity of capturing mates outside the family group. Of course, Sir Henry Maine is entitled to plead "the imperfection of the archæological record."

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Mr. Lewis H. Morgan's hypothesis, probably from its being mainly derived from somewhat dry investigations into the systems of kinship in vogue among Indian and other tribes, has hardly received in this country the attention it deserves. It considers the first state of marriage was the marriage in a group of men and women of the same blood, calling themselves brothers and sisters. This he calls the Consanguine Family. This undoubtedly obtains both among wild and domestic animals. How far it has been the usage of some races of men I shall give some evidence. The fastidious reader is requested to remember Dr. Livingstone's remark that the negro women on the Zambesi were shocked on hearing that in England a man had only one wife.

Mr. Spencer admits that men were "originally free of any prejudice against marriage between relations." Traces of this freedom are abundant. In the Sandwich Islands, men whose wives were sisters, and women whose husbands were brothers, called each "punalua" or "dear companion." The relationship arose from the fact that two or more brothers with their wives or two or more sisters with their husbands were inclined to possess each other in common. The Yncas, the rulers of Peru, were bound to marry their eldest sister. Diodorus Siculus informs us that the Egyptians allowed brothers and sisters to marry, nor could the Pharoah of Egypt select a more fitting consort than his own sister. This custom of close intermarriage was kept up by the Greeks in Egypt under the Ptolemies, as it had previously been among the Bacchiadians, the oligarchy of Corinth.

(To be continued)

Non-Religious Humanity.

JACOB LANGELOTH, once a penniless immigrant, who amassed a fortune of $30,000,000 in eighteen years, left the bulk of his vast holdings for the benefit of humanity by his will, which was filed yesterday for probate. He was a dreamer, an inventor, a financier, and held strong convictions on religious matters. He left nothing to churches, and directed that no clergyman be allowed to officiate at his funeral.

Mr. Langeloth was chairman of the board of directors of the American Metal Company, of 61 Broadway. Eighteen years ago he came to this country from his birthplace, Mannheim, Baden, Germany, without money or immediate prospect of employment. Fortune came when he perfected a method of reducing copper ore. He held large interests in mining properties throughout the United States, and organised several companies for extracting metals from ore.

The declaration of war by Germany is said to be the direct cause of the death of Mr. Langeloth, August 14, at his summer home, Riverside, Ct. He had been deeply interested in the fortunes of his fatherland, and had provided that various institutions in Germany should receive substantial bequests. To Mannheim, the town of his birth, he left $125,000 for the benefit of the deserving poor.

With his residuary estate Mr. Langeloth founded a great home for the benefit of "middle class persons of education and refinement." He endowed the future city of Langeloth, Pa., with $150,000, and remembered numerous charities and employés with substantial bequests.

Mr. Langeloth showed preference for non-sectarian institutions. He believed in aiding humanity in all possible ways, but disapproved of religious form and ceremony. This is shown by article 25 of his will, which reads:—

> "I desire that my body be cremated; that no religious ceremony of any kind take place at my funeral or cremation, and that no clergyman be permitted to officiate at same.
>
> "It is my wish that my wife do not go into outward mourning upon my death, and that she do not abstain from visiting theatres, concerts, or any other entertainments.
>
> "I desire my executors to procure the services of a good orchestra at my funeral and to have the same play Beethoven's 'Funeral March,' the finale from Wagner's opera, 'Rheingold,' beginning with the 'Storm' (see G. Schirmer's vocal score, pages 203 to 221), and Siegfried's 'Toden March' from Wagner's 'Goetterdaemerung.'"

Mr. Langeloth left no children. His wife, Mrs. Valeria Langeloth, of 636 Fifth-avenue, alone survives him. Mrs. Langeloth receives all realty in Connecticut, all household furniture, all silverware and personal effects, jewelry and automobiles. $250,000 outright, and an annuity of $100,000 until her death.

The entire residue, which includes the greater part of the estate, is left for the foundation of the "Valeria Home" in honor of Mrs. Langeloth.

The will explains the purposes of the institution, as follows:—

> "It is to be adapted and used for purposes of a recreation and convalescent home for persons of education and refinement who cannot afford independent homes or to pay the charges exacted at health resorts or sanitoria. The home shall be open to all creeds, entirely non-sectarian, and absolutely free from all religious tendencies whatsoever. Such home shall, so far as may be feasible, be self-supporting, and it is my preference that the inmates pay weekly charges, to be determined by the directors, and that in special cases patients be accepted without payment."

Mr. Langeloth said that employés of the American Metal Company and of other corporations in which he was interested, together with his friends and relatives, should be given preference for admission to the home in the event of its being crowded. He said in his will:—

> "I have observed that homes of this character have been organised for the benefit of the very poor, who are not able to pay anything for their support, while no provisions seem to have been made for persons of education and refinement belonging to the middle classes who would not be justified in asking for or in accepting charity, but who are, nevertheless, not able to pay the prices exacted for a sojourn in the usual health resorts. It is for this reason that I do not desire the home to be organised as a charitable institution, but to be, in so far as possible, on a self-supporting basis."

Mr. Langeloth provided that in the event of any profits from the venture, they immediately were to be put into the upbuilding of the home. He directed that land be found for the institution within "convenient distance of the City Hall of New York," and that at least $300,000 be spent for it. All the rest of the large fund in the residue is to go for buildings, equipment, and general endowment, for payment of the physicians and nurses, and for additions from time to time.

The funds set aside for the payment of annuities to various recipients, including the annuity of $100,000 to Mrs. Langeloth, will revert at the termination of those bequests to the residuary estate. Thus the endowment for the home will be increased in years to come.

As trustees of the Valeria Home, Mr. Langeloth appointed his wife, Berthold Hochschild, Julius Goldman, Henry Goldman, and Carl M. Loeb. They are to co-operate in organising the corporation with a delegate from the chamber of commerce, the president of the Charity Organisation Society, the president of the Society for Improving the Condition of the Poor, and the president of the German Hospital.

The bequest of $125,000 to Mannheim, Germany, is left to the mayor and president of the chamber of commerce to use among the deserving poor, but with the provision that all organisations through which it is used must be non-sectarian.

By a codicil of February 26, 1914, Mr. Langeloth said that he expected a city to rise at Jefferson and Cross Creek, Pa., where the American Zinc and Chemical Company was establishing large plants. For the future city, which was to be named Langeloth, and would be occupied by employés, he left $150,000 to be used for schools, playgrounds, parks, recreation grounds, libraries, bath houses, gymnasiums, or any other thing beneficial and free to the public.

Mr. Langeloth gave $5,000 each to Mount Sinai Hospital, German Hospital and Dispensary, Manhattan Eye, Ear, and Throat Hospital, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. He gave $2,000 each to the Charity Organisation Society and the Society for Improving the Condition of the Poor; $1 500 to the Chrystie-street Recreation Room and Settlement; $1,000 each to the German Society, Isabella Heimath, St. John's Guild, New York Zoological Gardens, and New York Botanical Gardens.

The employés of the American Metal Company who have worked consecutively for ten years, each will receive six months' salary; those who have worked at least two years will receive two months' salary. Miss Augusta Keller, of Weinheim, Germany, receives an annuity of $900; Mrs. Katherine Langeloth, sister-in-law, of Mannheim, Germany, an annuity of $5,000; Betty Burggraf, a friend, of Jersey City, N. J., an annuity of $400.

The Mannheimer Park Gesellschaft of Mannheim, Germany, receives $2,500; the children of the late Johann Jacob Langeloth, a cousin, $24,000.

The executors are Mrs. Langeloth, the wife; Berthold Hochschild and Julius Goldman.

Mr. Hochschild and Mr. Goldman each receive 200 shares of the American Metal Company and $20,000 in its certificates of indebtedness, or, in lieu, $50,000, either bequest to be in place of commissions.

Carl M. Loeb of the Company receives 100 shares of stock and $10,000 in the certificates of indebtedness. The executors and the Columbia Trust Company are the trustees. The will was dated Februrary 13, 1912.—*Boston Herald*, August 31.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, James Rowney, "Charles Bradlaugh."

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 5, Miss Kough, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, Miss Kough, "Charles Bradlaugh: 'Lest we forget'"; 7.30, J. W. Marshall, "A Giver of All Good Gifts."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Finsbury Park): 11.30, Mr. Hope, a Lecture. Parliament Hill: 3.30, Mr. Hope, a Lecture. Regent's Park (near the Fountain): 3.30, Mr. Davidson, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, A. D. Howell-Smith, B.A., "Charles Bradlaugh."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Oriental Café, Hill-street): Bradlaugh Sunday. Meeting at 7. Speakers: Messrs. F. E. Willis, E. Clifford Williams, and others.

PROPAGANDIST LEAFLETS. New Issue. 1. *Christianity a Stupendous Failure*, J. T. Lloyd; 2. *Bible and Teetotalism*, J. M. Wheeler; 3. *Principles of Secularism*, C. Watts; 4. *Where Are Your Hospitals?* R. Ingersoll. 5. *Because the Bible Tells Me So*, W. P. Ball; 6. *Why Be Good?* by G. W. Foote. *The Parson's Creed*. Often the means of arresting attention and making new members. Price 6d. per hundred, post free 7d. Special rates for larger quantities. Samples on receipt of stamped addressed envelope.—MISS E. M. VANCE, N. S. S. Secretary, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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Greatness is great power, producing great effects.
—WILLIAM HAZLITT.

Fighting Christians.

JESUS CHRIST is most frequently called the Savior. Whether he will save us, or any of us, somehow and somewhere, in the next world, if there is a next world, is a matter of pure speculation. Whatever we find out on this point, we must die to do it. Meanwhile, it is pretty certain that he has not saved us in this world. All the salvation we get comes from the progress of science and civilisation. England is a Christian country, and is well to the front in the race of progress. Abyssinia has been a Christian country ever so much longer, and is just as far behind. The difference between them is due, not to Christianity, but to secular causes. And the same rule applies in all cases. Every nation that has an advantage over other nations owes it to natural conditions, such as soil, climate, position, material resources, education, and good government. Of course the most advanced nations still profess and call themselves Christians. But profession is one thing and practice another. It seems to be generally admitted that real Christianity is only possible—if it is possible at all—on off-days, like Sunday, when business is suspended, and people are free to indulge in all sorts of sentimentalities, without the least hindrance to their prosperity. Indeed, an English bishop has openly declared that any State which tried to carry out the Sermon on the Mount would be ruined in a week.

Another inappropriate name of Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace. This is not only inappropriate, but positively facetious. Jesus himself said that he came not to send peace, but a sword; and this prophecy, at any rate, has been amply fulfilled. One can hardly find in all history a religion which has been so cantankerous and quarrelsome as his. All religions have been more or less bitter and contentious, and creators of discord and division. According to the Bible itself the first quarrel in the world was a religious one. Cain worshiped God in one way, Abel in another; and they settled the dispute by one knocking out the other's brains. This is the way in which religious disputes have been settled ever since. But the religion founded—whether in reality or only in repute—by Jesus Christ has been the *most* fruitful in hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness. It has always been marked by bigotry, arrogance, persecution, and cruelty. Never has it truly served the cause of peace. Even if it aimed at doing so it has signally failed. The history of Christendom is a long record of war, bloodshed, and conquest. The map of Europe has always been adjusted on battlefields. And the fighting power of Christian nations is simply overwhelming. The late Mr. Gladstone, indeed, cited this fact as a proof of the divine origin and character of Christianity. Christian nations build all the battleships, manufacture all the guns, rifles, and explosives, drill and maintain all the great armies, and carry the arts of destruction to the highest pitch of perfection. Christian nations, too, are the chief disturbers of the peace of the world. Wherever war is going on they are in it. Even when China and Japan had a set-to the Christian nations looked on longingly, and soon arranged to take part in any future quarrels in that locality. The commonest, twopenny-halfpenny Englishman talks about "our empire" and "the soldiers of the King," and quotes odds and ends of the latest patriotic poets. Our American cousins went mad over Admiral Dewey, because he performed the by no means miraculous feat of smashing up a number of ineffective Spanish ships in the bay of Manila. Millions would not have turned out to welcome the greatest genius who ever contributed to the world's highest civilisation—to its science, its art, its literature, or its industrial development. They go wild over gunpowder and glory. Yet the vast majority of them are Christians, and are ready to talk by the yard (on Sundays) about the Prince of Peace. No doubt they think Dewey was a far greater man than Ingersoll. Perhaps if Jesus Christ himself had turned up during the Dewey celebrations they would have voted him a nuisance and sent him to Sing-Sing.

Some time ago the Czar's Love-Feast was sitting at the Hague. The Christian nations, including the United States of America, were all represented there. Ostensibly their object was to promote peace. Really their object was to diminish the cost and risks of war. It was like a Conference of Burglars discussing how they might reduce the expenses of their profession. Even the expressed horror of Dum-Dum bullets, and new explosives, was not really humane. Christian rulers want to keep up armies and navies, and they see that war will cease altogether if science is allowed to make it too deadly. So they want to construct a ring, and have a good set of international Queensberry rules, in the interest of the noble art of slaughter. Anyhow, the chairs upon which the Hague Conference sat were hardly cold before another war was in progress. And of course it was the dear, good, peaceable Christians who were at it again. They put the Prince of Peace in a cupboard in the joss-house, and have brought out and trimmed up the Lord of Hosts. Boers and Britishers both worshiped this deity. The Boer had a Mauser rifle in one hand and a Dutch Bible in the other, while the Britisher had weapons in both hands and a Bible behind his back. Each relied upon the God of that book. Each prayed to the God of that book. Each informed the God of that book which side he ought to take in the quarrel. And what did this God do? He sat silent in heaven and did nothing. He let both sides take his name in vain. He read them no lesson in honesty and charity; he did not bid them try justice and mutual toleration instead of fighting; he simply went to sleep and left word for the victor to call him when the fight was over. Such a God is only fit for a museum. Some will say he is hardly fit for that.

At the present moment a number of Christian nations are engaged in the biggest war in history. Millions of soldiers are in the field, and the killed and wounded amount to thousands a day.

It may be said that Christianity is not responsible for the fighting disposition of Christian nations. But this is a confession of its moral impotence. It means that Christianity must be supplanted by another regulating power—the Religion of Humanity.

G. W. FOOTE.

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God's Opportunity.

EVERYBODY is familiar with the story of the Castilian king who said that had he been present at the creation he would have moved an amendment. In spite of its "blasphemy" the story has always commanded considerable sympathy. For what Alfonso said he *would* have done had he been given the chance, all good men and women have been doing since the creation. In one form or other all human effort after betterment resolves itself into attempts to improve God's handiwork. They are so many amendments to the "Divine plan." Nature is—so say theologians—God's handiwork. It expresses his plan; and man is everywhere remoulding it. Man is everywhere in conflict with nature; it is his one constant opponent. There never exists anything better than an armed truce, and the slightest relaxation of vigilance, the overlooking of a weak point of defence, is followed by some natural catastrophe on a more or less comprehensive scale. If God's work is to be seen anywhere it must be found in nature. And man is everywhere trying to pass amendments.

"Man's weakness," say the theologians, "is God's opportunity." Freethinkers understand the phrase and appreciate it. Ultimately, it means that the belief in God, the fear of God, is never so strong as when man is weak and helpless. Give man knowledge, and the strength that comes of knowledge, and—to again follow our religious guides—he becomes puffed up with pride and arrogance. Let him realise his weakness, his ignorance, his helplessness, and he becomes more susceptible to religious influences. There is a truth—of a kind—in this. Historically, human civilisation develops along the line of a challenge to the control and commands of Deity. Early human history shows us man everywhere oppressed by the thought of what the gods want, and by the fear of what may happen if their desires are not gratified. Had that fear continued civilisation would have been an impossibility. One generation would have succeeded another, treading the same round, with no greater variation than could be secured by the slow operation of natural selection. It was the revolt against the gods that lifted man out of that rut. Man had to learn to dare the anger of the gods in order to investigate, to criticise, and, as a consequence, to improve. The power of the gods had to be broken before civilisation could advance. Heresy is the condition of progress in all ages.

What, however, theologians mean by man's weakness being God's opportunity, is that his pride must be broken before God's will can be done. It is a curious argument, and I am not now going to discuss either its sense or its relevancy. I desire only to point out that there are many other opportunities that offer themselves whereby God might impress upon the world both his presence and his power. One such opportunity has just presented itself. All the world is ringing with the story of the German bombardment of Rheims Cathedral. It has been called an offence against civilisation—as though the acts that led up to that bombardment were not a still greater offence. The world has been horrified and protests have been made, as though there were not greater cause for horror and greater need for protest on account of the thousands of ruined homesteads and the slaughter of thousands of human beings—including women and children. New cathedrals may be, and I suppose will be, built. But a family once blotted out is destroyed for ever. And if the world is less affected by the thought of the families destroyed than by the contemplation of a cathedral in ruins, it is only because its imagination is not yet sufficiently civilised to appraise things at their proper value. A great artistic structure in ruins and a ruined home are both deplorable sights, but there should be little doubt as to which constitutes the greater sin against humanity.

No Freethinker would wish to do aught that could destroy or depreciate a work of art, whether it be a statue, a cathedral, a painting, or a secular building. But there are some considerations in connection with these cathedrals that everyone would do well to bear in mind. Quite naturally journalists have been "spreading themselves" on the subject. They have written largely about the piety, the love, the devotion, the self-sacrifice that went to the building of a cathedral such as that of Rheims. Some element of truth there may be in this; but it is all greatly overdone. Artists—whether painters, sculptors, or engravers—worked in the Middle Ages much as they work now; and if in earlier times a more religious form was given to their production than is the case to-day, the cause was economic, not religious. Religion does not create art; it is doubtful whether it improves it or purifies it. All it does is to *buy* it. The Church bought art as it bought everything else that was likely to advance its claims or strengthen its position. And while we admire the cathedrals of the world, let us not forget that the religion which brought about their erection was content to see men and women herded like cattle and treated like slaves beneath their very shadow. A church might be rich with carved stone or wood, the sun's rays might enter through windows rich with the colors of the rainbow and depicting all the glories that supreme art could portray, but the people out of whose enforced labor they were reared were living meanwhile in windowless huts that were fœtid with disease, amid streets unpaved, and with sanitation unknown. The "glorious cathedrals" of the Middle Ages is only one side of the picture. To get the picture complete we must realise how their richness of construction and endowment was procured through widespread misery and oppression; how the solemn music of the cathedral was accompanied by the clank of prisoners' chains, the songs of marching priests by the groans of tortured men and women, the perfume of incense by the smoke of the *auto-da-fé;* and that while within the church there might be the peace of God, outside there existed the very misery of fabled hells. The beauties of Rheims, Amiens, Cologne, remain; they are part of the world's possessions. We appreciate their beauties, but we do not forget that the religion which could raise them could do nothing to promote a better human life for those who saw their erection.

The horror expressed at the bombardment of Rheims is not wholly artistic. It is partly religious. The building was one erected to the glory of God; it was his house; it belonged in a peculiar sense to him. So be it. The Germans, in shelling the cathedral, were not merely vandals—they were impious vandals. They had raised their hands against God's house. What was God doing to permit such sacrilege? Here was a glorious opportunity for him to vindicate his presence and his power. At a time when the eyes of the whole civilised world are fixed on Northern France, what a triumph for religion it would have been had the German shells been miraculously deflected from their course, or if paralysis had seized the arms of every gunner who aimed a shot at the cathedral! Or the shells might have reached their mark, but have failed to do injury. There are a dozen ways in which a miracle might have been wrought in order to save the cathedral, each one of which would have been enough to convert the world to religion. Or if God had only—to use the conventional religious jargon—"moved the hearts" of the Germans to spare the cathedral. Even that would have been something. But no nothing was done. The German shells went as true to the mark whether they were directed towards a church or a fort. God did nothing. A first-rate opportunity was there, and God refused to avail himself of it.

Is this asking or expecting too much? I do not think it is. The religious world is full of stories of miraculous happenings in obscure ways and to obscure persons. It also tells us of the many ways in which God *does* move the hearts of people to act as he would have them act. Why not then, just for once, perform a miracle and manifest his presence in

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so public a way that all doubt would be silenced? Or is the German heart quite beyond his power? Consider the number of religious stories we have of people who were preserved from death or disaster by the interposition of "Providence." Consider, also, the solemn testimonies of men like the late Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, or of the Rev. Dr. Horton, that God has directly influenced people to send them sums of money, or help them recover missing articles. If God can do these things, are we to say that either a German gunner or a siege gun is beyond his control? That would, indeed, be blasphemy. Or, are we to conclude that these stories are all wrong, and that God does nothing either at Rheims or elsewhere?

"What terrible punishments God must be reserving for this German nation, which commits so many acts of sacrilege," said the Archbishop of Rheims, when he was informed of the German action. That is a truly Christian view. God is reserving "terrible punishments" for the German nation! But what is the use of that? Whom will they benefit? These terrible punishments will not rebuild the cathedral, they will not re-people the devastated villages, they will not bring to life again the women and children who have been murdered. They do not, obviously, stop the Germans continuing their work. God is waiting until it is all over; he is making a note of all the Germans are doing, and will square accounts with them later. That policy benefits no one. Any man, who could prevent outrage, and permitted it, would not be allowed to defend himself with such a plea. It is not God's duty to punish; if there is a God, it is his duty to guide and prevent. A parent does not lie in wait for his children to do wrong in order to punish them later. He guides; he, if possible, restrains; and only punishes in order to prevent a repetition of the wrong-doing. Why does not our "heavenly father" act likewise? A God who will not prevent has no right to punish. His standing aside makes him an accessory to the act. His "terrible punishments" later is the act of one who does not play the straight game even with his accomplices.

Perhaps, after all, it is better to leave God altogether out of account. It is true that he did not avail himself of this opportunity to vindicate his presence. But then he never has seized opportunities of this kind. He has watched unmoved massacre after massacre, war after war, with all the horrors and outrages that war always brings wherever and by whomsoever waged. A God who has done nothing for so long is not likely to start doing something now. Powder takes no note of Deity, and Deity returns the compliment by taking no note of powder. God did nothing at Rheims. He did nothing when his Spanish followers, in the sixteenth century, killed 50,000 heretics in Belgium and Holland. He did nothing when his French followers perpetrated the massacre of St. Bartholomew. Opportunities are always present for the manifestations of God's power. But these manifestations never come.

C. COHEN.

An Infamous Libel on Humanity.

WHILE the war-drum is at its loudest and Europe deluged with innocent blood, the *Saturday Journal* affords space for a discussion of the trite question, "After Death—What?" In two of its issues, September 19 and 26, the doctrine of a future state is dogmatically stated for the hundred millionth time by Mr. Lee Danvers and the President of the Wesleyan Conference. The latter's article is of the extremely commonplace type, and neither deserves nor requires any further notice, its arguments being those threadbare ones with which we are all familiar, and which have been triumphantly refuted innumerable times. The peculiarity of Mr. Danvers's contribution is that it does not pretend to adduce any arguments at all. This eccentric writer goes so far as to admit that "it may be true, as some would have us believe, that there is no future life for any of us; that when we die nothing happens except the thing which is obvious to us all—the decomposition of our bodies." He candidly acknowledges that "death is utterly beyond the domain of reason," and that "therefore we cannot reason about it." "We can speculate about its meaning," he adds, "or we can decide to leave it out of our thoughts, but we cannot argue about it and prove our arguments right before we ourselves die." He also grants that science is opposed to the belief in immortality, and accuses the parsons of having paid too much deference to the scientists, and in consequence discarded the simple Gospel of the primitive Church. Of course, so tremendous a believer as Mr. Danvers is profoundly convinced that "religion has not gained anything by its adaptation to the scientific thought of the twentieth century," and this is a conviction in which we fully concur. As a matter of fact, religion has lost on a stupendous scale as the result of its various attempts to accommodate itself to the conclusions of science. Religion and science have absolutely nothing in common, though the latter completely undermines the foundations of the former.

Mr. Danvers tramples reason as dust under his feet. Take the following as a sample of the process:—

> "To construct is always better than to destroy, to build up better than to pull down; therefore, the simple, unquestioning faith of the Christian in a life after death must obviously be finer than the complicated reasoning of the scientist and the discontented questioning of the unbeliever. For Christianity constructs a Hereafter, whereas most of the scientists and all of the unbelievers do their best to destroy the Christian idea of a Hereafter without seeking to supply a substitute."

With a man who can write in that wild, irresponsible manner it is quite impossible to argue, for no argument, however well-founded and true, would find anything in him to which to appeal. Like the seed in the parable, it falls upon a rocky soil, and can bear no fruit whatever. The biggest fool on earth is aware that sometimes it is better to destroy than to construct, to pull down than to build up, and that, therefore, it by no means follows that "the simple, unquestioning faith of the Christian in a life after death must obviously be finer than the complicated reasoning of the scientist." The world at this moment abounds in evil constructions which need to be destroyed. Does Mr. Danvers really believe that it is better to construct militarism than to destroy it; better to fill the world with armaments than to pull them down? If Mr. Danver's statement were true, it would be a justification of all the terrible evils now rampant on the planet. It is a mistake to say that Christianity *constructs* a Hereafter, the Hereafter being simply an old superstition which Christianity, at the commencement of its career, appropriated, regarding it as an invaluable asset, which it has abundantly proved itself to be. We can trace its evolution as a Pagan superstition during countless ages before Christianity was ever heard of; but although admitting that its incorporation with Christianity has eventuated in incalculable profit to the Church, we are firmly of opinion that its effect upon the morals of Christendom has been wholly bad. We belong to the category of unbelievers so wholeheartedly despised by Mr. Danvers; but we beg to inform him that it is excessively foolish to expect us to supply a substitute for a baseless superstition which we seek to demolish. It is an injurious excrescence of which the world should be rid as soon as possible, and for which, certainly, no substitute is required.

Mr. Danvers clings to the Biblical doctrine of life after death, not because it is true, but because it is more attractive than the view that death ends all. This is how he puts it:—

> "The Christian used to believe in a life after death that should consist of becoming an ethereal creature with wings on one's shoulders and a harp in one's hands, and eternity was pictured very largely as an

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> eternity of music. Such a belief is grotesquely absurd according to the scientist and the unbeliever, but, at least, it is more attractive than a belief in nothingness, or in nothing in particular, after death."

According to this teaching, if error is more attractive than truth, we should cherish it and fling truth from us as a despicable thing. If evil is more fascinating than good, by all means let us choose evil and hurl good down the wind. If hate has greater charms than love, let us give free vent to our hatred and bottle up our love. It is a damnable and damning doctrine, and our detestation of it cannot be too vehement. There are neither wings nor harps of gold in the next world, Mr. Danvers tells us, inasmuch as the inhabitants are disembodied spirits, but both wings and harps must be retained, not because they are real, but because they are such lovely symbols; nor are there angels, "but, all the same, angels serve a very useful purpose, if not as facts, at least as figures." Now, listen to this balderdash:—

> "The wings and the harp and the music are held nowadays to be the childish figments of childlike minds, and the ministers of the Gospel have agreed to banish them from their talk of an after-life, out of deference to the fact that humanity has, so to speak, grown up. But those things ought not to be banished; we need them."

Let us leave such trivialisms and proceed to consider the only important point in the whole article. Mr. Danvers shall state it in his own words:—

> "If everyone believed that death meant utter annihilation, the world would promptly become a place of unspeakable horror. It is all very well to argue that many people would live honestly, soberly, and decently, that they would do right for the mere sake of doing right; but we all know well enough that the majority would do wrong, for the simple reason that it is so very much easier to do wrong than to do right. Let us not deceive ourselves. It is the simple faith of the bulk of mankind in a life after death of infinite possibilities that prevents the world from becoming a hell of madness, murder, and debauchery."

It is extremely difficult to realise that a man in his right senses, or any man who lived on this globe, could have written such ineffably silly stuff. Is not Europe at this hour a veritable "hell of madness, murder, and debauchery?" What about poor little Belgium, France, Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia? Is Great Britain a Paradise to-day? *But all the people who are responsible for the existing state of things are firm believers in God and a future life.* Mr. Danvers is simply talking unmitigated nonsense. No one who keeps his eyes open can conscientiously assert that its Christian faith has ever been of the slightest service to Christendom. What has Christian Germany lived to achieve? Domination. Which Christian Power has ever existed for any other purpose? What other object has even the Christian Church ever had in view? We challenge Mr. Danvers to answer. We know to our sorrow what awful evils have flourished, what harrowing injustices, tyrannies, cruelties, murders, and debaucheries have run riot all through the ages under Christianity; but this champion of a life to come evidently does not know what the death of Christianity would mean. Indeed, the deeps of his ignorance and prejudice are altogether unfathomable. He may be speaking for himself when he avers that it is so very much easier to do wrong than to do right; but so to characterise all mankind is to indulge in grossest slander. To say of those who repudiate the belief in immortality "that they have nothing to live for," is to fling at them the most abominable affront. If Mr. Danvers is so morally weak, of himself, that he would steal our watch or murder us if he did not believe in a world to come, he has no right to infer that the rest of the race is equally depraved; and this inference which he is conceited and audacious enough to draw is absolutely false. He entertains a low opinion of himself, and a much lower one of all others.

We have been told by eminent men of God that the War owes its origin to the blatant Atheism of Prussia; but out of his hopeless insularity of view, Mr. Danvers assures us that there is no such thing as Atheism. So reckless are his utterances on this point that we are almost tempted to conclude that he is himself an Atheist masquerading as the most irrational Christian believer ever known, and waxing furiously merry at the expense of his readers. Surely the following extract must emanate from insanity or from hypocrisy:—

> "The Atheist declares that there is no God, but the real truth is that there is no Atheist. There are professed Atheists, just as there are professed Christians, but there is no genuine Atheist. There is no man or woman on the face of the earth who does not believe in the existence of an omnipotent God. Atheism is nothing more than a wanton, impotent bravado. It is a sheer impossibility for anyone to live and disbelieve in an Almighty, no matter what name you may bestow upon him."

In spite of all the sorrows and sufferings of the times, all we can do is to laugh at a man who is the victim of such deplorably blind prejudice, or capable of such silly and offensive play-acting. In any case, he is a convicted false accuser of his fellow-human beings.

J. T. LLOYD.

A Grey Street.

BENEATH their superficial simplicity human affairs are so complex that we are often amazed at the ease with which the most audacious conclusions are obtained. The difficulty of imagining even the possibility of the existence of a group of ideas directly opposed to their own seems to be insuperable to most people, presuming the endeavor is made. To think of two different lines of thought; to analyse them; to ponder over their antagonistic merits and demerits; and to base opinion, not on the emotional appeal of either, but upon the rationality of the one as distinguished from the other, seems a hopeless task. Nearly invariably, emotion is elevated at the expense of reason.

British patriotism is the patriotism. We forget our opponents are equally in love with their Fatherland, and for similar reasons. We have nationalism so badly that we forget we are not the only nation on the face of the earth. We forget that, if we insist upon a nation being likened to a superman, then an expanding nation *must* have the opportunity to grow. It is dangerous to thwart its growth. Obeying the evolutionary forces, it will fight, and fight hard, for its essential increase in life. We bitterly condemn brutality, forgetting the horrors we tolerate next door. We prate of the refinement of an evil, of the culture that should accompany warfare, forgetting that every great human mind considers war barbaric. We are chokeful of ideas of honor, omitting to recollect that *our* honor, as a nation, is not altogether stainless, and that, in our national expansion, we painted the map red with patriotic blood.

These are just a few of the popular purblindnesses. And perhaps the funniest, at the present time, circles round our Christianity. God is in the King; but the Devil inhabits the Kaiser. We are too much concerned with motes, too little occupied with beams. The power to observe both sides seems lacking. One might justly put it down to an inability to use the reasoning faculties. And as religion has always been an opposing factor to the free use of reason, we fail to see why it should not be held semi-responsible for a calamity that might have been easily avoided with a little reasonable give-and-take on both sides. Less religion and more reason would save the world much suffering.

So long as people never strive to see both sides of a question, just so long will the fruits of reason remain solely with science; just so long will social power remain in the hands of the financially powerful; just so long will religion have ample human food to nourish it. Religion has cultivated the one-sidedness of the human mind to such an extent that we cannot, regardless of our wishes, deem it immune from blame. And Freethought, above any other

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human movement, has accomplished more in the ridding of this purblindness from the mind than its adversaries give it credit for. But, in these strenuous days, we are afforded evidence, unmistakable and incontrovertible, that the anti-social nature of religion must be opposed; that Freethought's time of rest is not yet. Freethinkers are fighters; and we have, perhaps, the conceited opinion that their fight and their bravery shadow the warfare and bravery of conflicting militarism.

There is, naturally, a comic side to this war affair; and in the reaping of the great harvest of human sorrow priests, being single-minded men, are forgetting that the crystal of human life has more than one facet.

. . . . . .

The prevailing color-tone is grey. The factory on the other side, its massive stone masonry hiding the western skies, is grey. On this side the tenement houses are grey. Even the atmosphere seems tinted in grey. Age and the smoke from many tall stacks have accomplished their task well; for the street is steeped in a hopelessly melancholic moroseness. Even on the freshest of spring days you can smell it. Anyone whose feelings were in the least susceptible to lights and shades, and whose nature rejoiced in the wide open spaces above fields and hills, would soon discover how easily and rapidly such an environment breeds an ugliness closely akin to immorality.

And yet there is the happiness that is elemental with life in the dismal place. During the daytime it resounds in the whirring of machinery; the rattle of traffic carries the same chorus; the loud-voiced hawkers unconsciously embody in their calls the basic happiness of life; and in the early evening the children, with their ceaseless laughter and shouting and quarreling, continue the life-refrain.

However distressful may be one's comparison of ideal and reality, however sorely the need for improvement may impress itself on the mind, and however painful may be the undesirable opinion that progress is a forlorn hope against an impregnable phlegmatism, it is impossible to overlook the happiness underlying it all. Life, full of activities useful and useless, average commonplace life, with all its stagnant repellancy to ideas and all its dull-witted safeguarding of social customs once dearly bought, the sluggish life the people live, is here; and in the heavy grey of it there is only one thread of light, the indestructible fundamental happiness inseparable from human life.

Tawdriness, squalor, and lowness cannot thoroughly conceal it. Depressing monotony and sordid excitement cannot hide it. The two outstanding characteristics of the place and the people, child-breeding and labor, serve only to intensify it by different means. The life-happiness laughs in uproarious merriment, smiles in coarse pleasures, leers in obscene jokes. Through the touches of beauty and the splashes of ugliness, through the conglomeration of vices and virtues, joys and pains, runs the life-sustaining rivulet of happiness, one thread of gold in the overwhelming grey. It is the happiness of being alive; for even the slave with the greatest burden prefers life to death, prefers to carry the load rather than give Death the knife to cut the burden's cords.

Not that this in any way softens the hardships religion has completely failed to remove, or the griefs that Christianity cannot assuage, or the sorrows God cannot eradicate. Despite them, the life-happiness exists; and sometimes I fancy I can see the smile of the life-happiness flaunting its strange powers in the lugubrious face of God.

God, if he exist, has lamentably failed to crush love for himself into the human heart, and failed, also, to crush merriment out. And if, as some of our religious luminaries seem to have been informed by wireless phonogramic communication from heaven, God, at the present time, is doing his utmost to blacken the soul of man with battle smoke, and lacerate his heart with all the hideous sorrows of war, and obliterate from his mind all the humanistic teachings of centuries, so that man may be taught the error of his ways, then God, again, will ignominiously fail. Notwithstanding the hellishness of his educational methods, Humanity will still smile, for Humanity will still live; and the smile will rob God of the essence of his victory.

Twenty centuries of Christianity have not been enough to keep men from the throats of their brothers. Twenty centuries of Christian teaching of morality have not secured one single step of progress from the brute. Twenty centuries of idealistic instruction have not given us the least justification for saying that we have been civilised by Christianity, or even that it has been helpful to us in eliminating the lower instincts from our natures. And yet these twenty centuries of Christianity, on the other hand, have not been able to freeze the laugh on our lips.

Never has God, if what religionists say be true, poured such a sackful of horrors into the heart of Humanity. Never before has God flooded the white flesh of his little ones with such a sea of red blood. Never before, we are told, has God seen fit so terrifically to blazon forth the wrath of his love for us. But the innumerable grey people of millions of grey streets like this can still laugh.

Although we grey people are all interested more in battles than in anything else; although victories, defeats, advances, rearguard movements, and all the rest hold our attention nearly entirely; although we know our lives are being gradually screwed down to subsistence levels, and that the sufferings of thousands of children at home will be no less severe than the sufferings of soldiers at the front; although we know that misery is deepening her depths in the life of man, and that most of us will, at some time or other, be affected by the overspreading darkness of the valley in which we live, we can still laugh. And the laughter becomes more bitterly ironic the nearer its sound gets to God.

To-day we are all speaking of warfare. We compare casualties. Braveries and brutalities fill our little minds. We are full of an accrescent animosity against an enemy. We are fighting, not so much for victory, as to the death. We are soldier mad. Militarism has gripped us. We might be living in a tribal state a few degrees from animalism. We must yield implicit obedience to the most foolish command of the merest minion of the tribal chief.

Christianity, in fact, with all its contemptible morality might be dead. But we can still laugh.

Those who are praying around the putrescent corpse of Christianity forget this facet of human life. They forget that Humanity is bigger than their conceptions of God and his heavenly clique of assistants. They forget that Humanity can smile through its tears; that man can laugh when his heart has been furrowed by the plough of sorrow.

In this grey street the people are living their grey lives as usual. Perhaps it is as well that they cannot vision the sufferings of which they so easily speak; perhaps it is as well their minds cannot imagine the terrible tortures that have come upon their unknown fellow-beings, unsolicited and unjustly; perhaps it is as well their little grey minds cannot feel the hardships others are toiling through.

Sometimes I think that; at other times I wish they could realise a hail of bullets, and could feel the sudden plunge of bloody steel into a human breast —could feel the twist, and wrench, and crunch as it was pulled out. I wish they could see, in idea, the horrors of a lovely meadow strewn with dead and dying bodies, portions of flesh, limbs, and muscles and human organs in all stages of decomposition and in all degrees of laceration. Sometimes I wish they could see their own sons and daughters lying there. And then, when the idea begins more fully to develop, a sickness creeps over, and I become glad the little grey minds of the people cannot see these things; and yet, how else will they ever realise the unheroic side of ugly barbarism?

The question brings me back to my starting point. Perhaps the little grey minds of the people of these grey streets can only be reached by the interpenetra-

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tive teaching of what is opposed to the cause of their singlemindedness. Slowly that teaching will work through religion into their lives. Fighting religion, we are fighting one of the great original causes of their purblindness. Opening the gates of Reason, it may be we are opening the gates to a more civilised life; for when Reason dominates life, we are justified in thinking, barbarism, in all its aspects, and horrors, and sufferings, will be no more.

ROBERT MORELAND.

Acid Drops.

That eminently Christian novelist, Mr. Hall Caine, has contributed to the October number of *Nash's and Pall Mall Magazine* an eminently Christian article on the war, which is but a distinct echo of the utterances of the Bishop of Zanzibar, Drs. Clifford and Campbell Morgan, and the editor of the *British Weekly* on the same subject. The article as a whole is extremely commonplace, written in the slovenly, diffuse style peculiar to this novelist, and we would not dream of noticing it at all were it not for its reiteration of a fundamental heresy. Like the leaders of his public, Mr. Hall Caine asserts that the war, on the part of Germany, is a reversion to Paganism; and Paganism, from his point of view, means Atheism. In this assertion there lurk two radical errors. The first is that Paganism was Atheistical, and the second that Paganism favored war. For these two errors, fallen into by a public man, there is absolutely no excuse.

Surely there is no need at this time of day to prove that many Pagan philosophers were profoundly religious men. No readers of Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius would dare to question that fact; but it may be news to Mr. Hall Caine and the generality of his numerous readers that, like the early Church Fathers, Pagan philosophers were zealous denouncers of war. If he were to consult the works of Cicero, Seneca, Plutarch, Celsus, as quoted by Origen, and many others still accessible, he would be heartily ashamed of several prejudiced statements in his article. One citation only must suffice here. In Epistle 95, Seneca, by far the most brilliant of the Latin writers of the Silver Age, says:—

> "We punish murders and individual homicides; what of wars and the glorious wickedness of slaughtered nations? Neither our avarice nor our cruelty knows a bound."

In point of fact, Paganism was incomparably more pacific than Christianity has ever been from the moment it came to power under Constantine.

Mr. Hall Caine quotes largely from the sayings of the Gospel Jesus; but he carefully selects the pacific maxims, and makes no allusion to the warlike ones, of which there are several. Not a word is uttered about sending a sword rather than peace, about selling cloaks and purchasing swords, or about sowing discord in families. Is it fair to cite one set of sayings and omit another set of an opposite character? But it is a Christian habit—oh, so Christian!

Sir Joseph Compton-Rickett, M.P., President-elect of the Free Churches' Council, writing in that religious periodical, the *Daily Mail*, says it is a "mistaken idea that Christianity excludes the exercise of force—The Divine Word itself abounds in warnings, and utters its last comforts and cautions beneath the lurid sunset of the Apocalypse." We know that "sunset." It used to be a coaling station.

According to some of the daily papers, the Germans are all "Atheists," whilst others deride them as "religious maniacs." The reader pays his halfpenny and takes his choice.

Those Christian gentlemen who are so very anxious for other people to consider that the Germans are all "Atheists" might explain how it is that the German soldiers wear belts with a buckle bearing the inscription "Gott mit uns" ("God with us"). That is the motto of the German Army, and it reads very oddly as an Atheistic inscription.

We hope, or rather we don't hope, that Mr. Lloyd George was sure of his figures in his Criccieth speech the other day. "You will be surprised to know," he said, "that for every one Belgian soldier lost on the battlefield three unoffending, innocent people were ruthlessly killed in that country." This is a terrible statement. If true, it damns Germany beyond redemption.

Dr. Arthur Canon Doyle, writing in the *Chronicle* on "The Great German Plot," says that "the real cause of war was universal national insanity," and that this insanity "was based upon the universal supposition that the Germans were the Lord's chosen people." This is plain enough. And it shows how much Atheism had to do with this great calamity.

"Randall Cantuar" (alias Canterbury) is a very good name for the Archbishop who has been contributing hypocritical absurdity to the war correspondence in the newspapers. A very good name. Cant he is.

Mr. R. J. Campbell says that "a spirit of swagger and bullying appears to have taken possession of what was once a simple and God-fearing race." Well, we have often observed that "swagger" is one of the outstanding characteristics of God-fearing. Consider the spiritual "swagger" of the old-type Puritan, or of the newly made revivalistic convert. There are other kinds of swagger beside that of the military bully, and that of the Christian is among the more objectionable of its many forms. Besides, if "God-fearing" is of any real value, it should have protected this simple race from the swagger to which Mr. Campbell alludes. There are things that often act as a protection against the development of objectionable qualities. Christianity seems to invite their presence.

Mr. Campbell says that "perhaps" the war "has been divinely permitted as a stern discipline" to save us from becoming a decadent people. And perhaps, also, Belgium "needed this purifying flame" because "her record in the Congo is not a good one." This is unmitigated rubbish. Decadence is not brought about by an absence of war; it is induced by war. Germany is decadent—in comparison with the Germany of forty years ago—precisely because in the interval it has given so much of its energies to thoughts of militarism. And the men of England who are responding to the call for soldiers have not been produced by war, but by peace. Recruiting officers are expressing their pleasure and surprise at the quality—physical and mental—of those who offer themselves for enlistment. We need only remember that these recruits are not the products of a military system to realise the absurdity of the talk about war being needful to prevent decadence. Character is made in the home and in the peaceful pursuits of social life. At best war only employs what has been otherwise produced, and generally it leads to waste and demoralisation.

To talk of the desolation of Belgium as a "purifying flame" is an insult to common sense, if not to common decency. True, the brutalities of Belgian officials on the Congo were almost beyond description; but what had the peaceful Belgian villager to do with these? And how are they remedied by God permitting the German armies to ravage Belgium? The man chiefly responsible for those outrages, King Leopold, died peacefully in his bed. God let *him* alone; and now, years after his death, according to Mr. Campbell, he blasts the Belgian people for what Leopold did, and for what he permitted. Mr. Campbell says it is "blasphemous" for the Kaiser to talk of the "divine blessings" that follow the German armies. But if Mr. Campbell is correct in saying that this war is permitted by God to act as a "purifying flame" in Belgium, then the Kaiser is, after all, correct. He *is* God's instrument. He *is* purifying Belgium. Really, Mr. Campbell might try to be consistent, even in his unreason.

According to a *Times* report the Bishop of St. Albans said that "the war had brought a strange position with regard to ordination candidates. In one case with which he was acquainted, every single candidate on the list had volunteered for service in the New Army." They preferred fighting to preaching, and Kitchener to Christ.

"What you say about the administration of the Prince's Fund," Mr. J. T. Lloyd writes to Mr. Foote, "is perfectly true everywhere. I know a poor woman in Paddington who has been abominably treated. She has two sons in the Army, and six helpless ones depending upon her at home, one an invalid husband. She works her finger nails out, and yet she was asked if she couldn't do some more work, and which church she attended. Another case is that of a young girl who was engaged to be married to a reservist. The banns had been put up, but he was called out before the marriage could be performed. Soon after he left she gave birth to a child. When an application for assistance was made she

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was informed that 'she didn't count.' And yet England is fighting for Christianity!"

Truth (September 17) devotes a pointed paragraph to this subject:—

> "From all I can gather the Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association are dealing pretty efficiently with the mass of relief work which the war has entailed upon them, but here and there one hears of incidents which show that local committees are not always wise in their choice of the voluntary workers who do the necessary inquiry work. Here is one of them. A widow whose son is on active service at the front applied to the Glasgow Committee on August 15. After answering a number of questions, she was told that someone would call on her the following week. On August 20 a lady called and gave her 4s. On the 27th appeared a gentleman visitor. After putting the widow through the usual catechism, he told her that she must put her whole trust in the Lord, and, dropping on his knees, prayed for four or five minutes. He then presented her with an evangelical tract and took his departure. When people ask for bread they ought not to be given tracts."

We hope *Truth* will continue these exposures.

Information reaches us that it is quite common in South London to ask applicants if they attend church, and to treat them according to their replies. In this way the National Relief Fund becomes an agency for promoting the interests of the Church of England mainly, though other denominations are not wholly ignored.

"Religion Under Fire" is the title of an article, by "One from the Front," in the *Globe*. The writer's object is to show that only religious men are brave on the battlefield. Probably he never heard that nearly half the men in France are Freethinkers. That they fight as well as their comrades, and both of them as well as the British, is beyond question. As to great soldiers of the past, Napoleon was a Freethinker, and Frederick the Great was a Freethinker. These will do to go on with.

"No one," the writer says, "ever heard of a man giving his life for the cause of arithmetic, agnosticism, or atheism; he will for religion and what it teaches." The word "arithmetic" shows that this journalist or preacher (for we don't believe in his being one from the front at all) doesn't know what he is writing or talking about. An intelligent child would not confuse arithmetic with agnosticism or atheism. What possible relation can they have to each other, except, perhaps, where the subject of the Trinity is concerned? In that regard it might be said that Servetus gave his life for arithmetic. Atheism has had its martyrs. No doubt men have given their lives for religion, but they have been far more prone to taking other people's lives for it. Nor is it only on the battlefield that men have to face death. Whoever you are, you have to face him when he comes—even on a feather bed.

In all the ages nothing has been more distinctively Christian than for Christians to differ from and contradict one another, and they are still doing so with a vengeance. For example, Dr. Clifford and Dr. Campbell Morgan have asserted, again and again, that the prevalence of the philosophy of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche in Prussia is responsible for the present war, forgetting, or not knowing, that the latter philosopher was the former's severest critic. Now, a lady, writing in the *Church Times* for September 25, assures us that such an assertion has no foundation whatever in fact. Her words are worth quoting:—

> "However much Nietzsche may be disliked and despised in England, it is perfectly certain that the mass of human beings in Germany dislike and despise him even more than those gentlemen who, never having read a word of his writings, hold him up to opprobrium in this country. They have an equally false idea of his teaching, and one has only to mention Nietzsche in most German houses to call down a chorus of disapprobation from everybody..... It is not, perhaps, too much to say that the keynote of his philosophy is that only by suffering pain with acceptance can we make any way towards becoming a Superman. And this secret life itself whispered in my ear: 'See,' he said, 'I am that which must always conquer itself.' This is very different from the cult of the 'blond beast' which he is supposed to have taught."

This testimony is fully borne out by all who know both Nietzsche and modern Germany. What have Dr. Clifford and Dr. Campbell Morgan to say to this counter-Christian opinion based on knowledge?

The lady maintains, further, that Pan-Germanism is not at all inconsistent with a zealous profession of the Protestant form of the Christian religion. She tells us that "Germany is the only country which has really adopted Protestantism, and carried Protestantism to its logical conclusion." Germany is dominated even to-day, not by Nietzsche, but by a much greater man, namely, Martin Luther, who was as much a man of blood and iron as Bismarck himself. On this point, again, her words are well worth quoting:—

> "If in the great scheme of things punishment lies in seeing the result of our actions, then the saddest soul in the Universe to-day is that of Martin Luther. The German Kaiser has always posed as his great defender and exponent, and he is perfectly right in so doing, given his point of view. Without Martin Luther there would have been no Treitschke, no Bernhardi.....Anyone who will take the trouble to read the writings of Martin Luther will see that if one accepted this man as a prophet, one would have to accept the gospel of force which the Kaiser is promulgating to-day.....That was the immense strength of Martin Luther, that he believed in himself and in his right to trample under foot anything, however holy, which seemed to him to collide with his ideas of what was expedient and just."

We exhort Sir W. Robertson Nicoll, in particular, to ponder the above extract from the pen of an intelligent Christian lady, with whom, on this point we fully agree. It is, to us, exceedingly pleasing to learn with what ease an enlightened Christian exposes the gross and culpable ignorance of some of the leaders of religious thought in this country.

Religious love and religious logic are both curious things. Here, for example, is the *Catholic Times* chuckling gleefully over the disestablishment of the Church in Wales, and congratulating Welshmen on being freed from "the incubus of an alien Church." It also asks, "Why should Wales, if she does not want Anglicanism, be compelled to put up with it?" and looks forward to a time when the principle that freed Ireland, and has now freed Wales, will free England also. We have no objection to this; on the contrary, we approve of it; but, all the same, it comes curiously from the representatives of a Church that has, whenever it has had the opportunity, put down by force all dissentient opinion, and has always insisted upon the supremacy of religion in secular life. With what amount of grace did the *Catholic Times* consent to the disestablishment of the Church in France? With what grace would it consent to the disestablishment of the Church in Spain? It welcomes disestablishment in Ireland, Wales, or England, because these Churches are not branches of the Roman Catholic Church. But everyone knows that, given the chance, the Roman Catholic Church would insist upon forcing itself once more upon the British people. A Roman Catholic championship of the right of people to choose what Church they will live under is indeed something to make one open one's eyes.

"Everyone knows," continues the *Catholic Times*, "that the Church was living on endowments, many of which were stolen from the Catholic Church at the time of the Reformation." "Stolen" is quite a misnomer in relation to funds that are for the larger part essentially State funds, and which can no more be "stolen" than a man can steal money from himself. Either a person or a State may spend money unwisely, but to steal, someone else's property must be involved. Moreover, in any genuine sense of the word, the wealth of the Roman Catholic Church was largely "stolen" from the people. It was taken from them in the shape of toll and tithe, of Government grants and forced labor. The people were robbed right and left for centuries, to build up the wealth of the Church. What occurred at the Reformation was, it is true, very largely a case of changing the name of those who followed this policy of spoliation; but the Catholic Church ought to be the last in the world to raise its voice against a policy to which it owes so large a part of its own possessions.

Here is a story, given in the *Church Times*, by a Church of England clergyman. A newly enlisted soldier of his acquaintance asked permission to go to early communion. He was asked, What for? To this he replied: "Christ died for me as well as for you, sir, and I wish to feed upon His Blood and His Flesh, which I believe are there." It sounds like an invitation to a cannibal feast. And the people who can talk in this way imagine themselves civilised!

It seems that President Wilson has received many appeals to act as mediator in the War. As none of the parties directly responsible for, and concerned in the war have made the request, the President is, of course, powerless. But he has hit upon, if not a *via media*, at least an alternative. He has issued an official appeal to God. He has appointed Sunday, October 4, as a day of prayer throughout the United States for peace in Europe. This seems like shifting his own troubles on to the shoulders of God. And *he* must be bothered enough already. The

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Germans are praying to him to crush the Allies, the Allies are praying to him to crush the Germans. Now the Americans join in with the request that he will stop the war at once, and make peace between them. If God tries to please all these people it will be the fable of the old man and the donkey over again. He can't possibly satisfy all, and he may offend all. And if he does nothing, other people will ask what is the use of his government? It is a very ticklish position, and a very lengthy essay might be written on "The Troubles of Diety."

President Wilson asks "all God-fearing persons" to pray that "He vouchsafe His children healing peace again, and restore once more that concord among men and nations, without which there can be neither happiness, nor true friendship, nor any wholesome fruit of toil or thought in the world." The general drift of this is all right, but when God is asked to restore "once more" the concord among nations, one wonders where it existed. As a matter of fact it has not existed. What concord can there be when the nations—before the actual outbreak of war—were all piling up armaments against each other? How can a man live at concord with his neighbor if he feels that he must keep him under constant surveillance, and be prepared to employ brute force to prevent direct aggression? President Wilson should know that genuine concord between Christian nations does not exist, and never has existed. The President asks these same "God-fearing" people to confess their "lack of any wisdom" equal to bringing about genuine peace. And with that sentiment non-God-fearing people will cordially agree.

The best thing about the Kaiser lately is from America. It occurs in a letter to Mr. Eugene Wason, M.P., as having been overheard: "*Nobody seems to be on Germany's side except the Almighty, and we have only the Kaiser's word for that.*"

Mr. Robert Blatchford will have to look out. The British soldier at the front to-day dislikes being called a "Tommy," and "Tommy Atkins" is still worse. "Tommy" is half Mr. Blatchford's stock-in-trade as a military writer, and we should hardly like to see him with such a large stock left on hand.

The Bishop of London's latest volume of collected addresses has the charming title, *Eyes of Flame*. The book contains the sermon preached at St. Paul's after the outbreak of war, entitled, "Drinking the Cup." There is no necessary connection between these two titles.

How very shy journalists are in mentioning the dreadful word, Freethinker. This how *T. P.'s Weekly* refers to Abraham Lincoln's theological opinions: "Like all strong men, his religion was that of the little boy who did not pray in the morning, because 'a bright lad can take care of himself.'" It is hard to believe that the writer is "grown-up."

Importance may be attached to the opinion of Mr. Vivian Phelips, author of the *Churches and Modern Thought*, on the question of the treatment by the Germans of the Belgians. Mr. Phelips has lived in Belgium for some time, and being asked what was his view as to the reality of "German atrocities," he replied:—

> "I am seeing my girls off at Ostend to-morrow. I have come unwillingly to the conclusion (I've had opportunities to verify) that the stories of German atrocities are only too true, and, in fact, that much has been kept from the public for fear of playing into the hands of the enemy, and creating the panic, which is just what they want. The violation of young girls and young wives, and the cruel killing of helpless non-combatants, have been too terrible for words. All this makes one the more indignant with those who continue to repeat the old parrot-cry that nations become soft and sensuous without war. There is no greater offender in this respect than the average Church of England parson. He should follow the track of the German Army in Belgium if he would wish to know which part of a man's nature is most fostered in war time."

Those who doubt the truth of common reports, and even the official protests made by the Belgian Government to the civilised world, might trust Mr. Phelips. He is a fair-minded gentleman, as his book shows, and has nothing to gain by any kind of misrepresentation.

Are a number of the leader writers on the daily press Roman Catholics? One of the five daily papers, each claiming the largest circulation in the world, referred to the murder of "*priests*, women, and children," by the German soldiers. As the rest of the article was devoted to the "most hallowed French shrine," Rheims Cathedral, the Protestantism of the writer is not unduly obtrusive.

In the *Saturday Journal* for September 19, Mr. Lee Danvers undertakes to defend, in the most extravagant language, the blindest belief in a future life. In a reckless mood, he denies the existence of Atheism altogether, and asserts that, though Christianity may be assailed, "human life has been built upon it these nineteen hundred years," with the result, we affirm, that Europe is at this moment in such an awful welter of savage cruelty as has never been experienced before since the world began. But Mr. Danvers is not a reliable witness on any point. Here is a sample of his extreme recklessness and dense ignorance:—

> "The Bible may be full of faults and contradictions, but it has been the biggest power in the world for hundreds of centuries."

"*Hundreds of centuries*" could not possibly be improved upon. One hundred centuries is a period of ten thousand years, while two hundred centuries cover twenty thousand years. Thus the Bible is, at the very least, twenty thousand years old. Was ever such folly indulged in out of Bedlam? And yet Mr. Danvers is the best defender of the Faith the *Saturday Journal* could find.

Rev. Nelson Bitton, an ardent missionary advocate, has just published a little book on *The Regeneration of New China*. He says we must save China from the "coldly intellectual ideal man of Confucius," and give it Christianity, which is, of course, the only thing that can save it. What a horror Christians seem to have of things "intellectual." The use of that word is, apparently, enough to damn anything in the eyes of most. And what *is* the "coldly intellectual ideal man of Confucius"? Confucius made ample allowance for love and duty to friend, family, and the State. He taught that our sentiment should be guided by the intellect, but so does anyone who is not either a fanatic or a fool. And why should China exchange Confucius for Christianity? Look at the nations that already have Christianity! Consider their treatment of one another—let alone their treatment of outsiders! How much good-will or trust is there among them? Hatred of a third may drive two of them together, but does it go any farther than this? What colossal cheek for anyone, with the present European war in being, to invite a non-Christian nation to adopt *their* religion! What a recommendation for anyone outside a lunatic asylum!

The *Christian World* points out that the Baptismal Service of the *Church of England* was originally written under the idea that every child really belonged to the Devil, and the original form of the service ran:—

> "I command thee, unclean spirit, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, that thou come out and depart from these infants."

Baptism was thus a method of getting rid of the Devil within the child. This portion of the service was afterwards omitted, but let anyone seriously consider the ethical value of a creed which could solemnly regard every child born into the world as the property of the Devil!

Sighing for more worlds to conquer, the Rev. A. J. Waldron, the irrepressible Vicar of Brixton, has taken to the pleasant pastime of writing "puffs" for a patent medicine, which is advertised as being useful for men, women, and children. In the olden days the clergy advocated prayer, now it appears they pin their faith to patent prescriptions. Which number of the "Jelloids" does the Vicar of Brixton take—one, two, or three?

The *Daily Mail* has been using bold headlines to describe an apple, which is believed to be the largest on record. It weighs 2 lb. 2 oz., and measures 1 ft. 6 in. round, and is over 5 in. high. The *Mail* would have needed red ink to do justice to the apple that caused all the trouble in Eden.

A few poor Jesuites have died lately. Here are some of them. Rev. Joseph Hargrove, of Royston, Herts, left £7,592. Ven. Edward Barber left £5,745. Rev. Edmond Fisher, of Graveley Rectory, Cambridge, left £19,406. Rev. W. Thomas Penfold-Dixon, of Eastbourne, left £49,886. "Leave all, and follow me," said Jesus. They did it.

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To Correspondents.

President's Honorarium Fund, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £208 4s. 0d. Received since:—H. Good, 6s.; J. H. Sanders, 4s.; A. T. H., 5s.; B. Siger, 3s.; Arthur Feltrup, £5; Concordia, £1.

T. H. Elston.—No, it was not Harnack but Haeckel. We shall have something to say on the matter next week. Only a puppy would offer insolence to so great a man.

R. H. Yeldham.—Darwin has been defended by his son, so there is no more to be said.

B. Eiger.—Thanks for wishes.

Concordia.—A beautiful name.

F. Rossith.—Glad you were so interested in the "Priestley" article.

A. B. Moss.—Sorry to hear that Mr. Heaford is progressing so slowly.

H. George Farmer.—Thanks. Shall appear next week.

E. B.—Your cuttings are always welcome.

W. P. Ball.—Much obliged for cuttings.

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Lecture Notices must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Friends who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

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Sugar Plums.

Queen's (Minor) Hall has been taken for next Sunday evening (October 11) for a lecture by Mr. G. W. Foote. Details are not ready as we go to press. They will appear next week.

Mr. George Macdonald, editor of the New York *Truth-seeker*, in an excellent article on the war, says it is natural to blame the mad-headed Kaiser for all the bloodshed. "But," he says, "Editor Foote, of the *Freethinker*, in a few pithy sentences, places the responsibility where it belongs." Some forty lines from our pen are then reproduced. We are glad that our American comrade endorses our diagnosis.

The Monk and the Woman.

A Public Address by M. M. Mangasarian to the Free Religious Association (Rationalist), Chicago.

One of the most popular plays of the present season is the dramatisation of Robert Hichens' *The Garden of Allah*. It is the story of a monk, a woman, and the desert. I am under the impression that the author of the book is a Catholic, though I may be in error. But the talented lady, Madam de Navarro, or Mary Anderson, the name by which she has become better known, who helped in the staging of the play, is surely one.

The play has drawn phenomenal audiences, of which a very large percentage, I am told, were Catholics. If I am not misinformed, even priests attended the performances, which, I believe, is not a frequent occurrence. On the whole the play has given great satisfaction to the members of the Catholic Church, although some of its minor details they have criticised freely. When I went to see the performance my main object was to learn what it was that attracted the multitude. Was it the scenery? The Orientalism of the spectacle? Or was it the strangeness of a monk making love to a woman—in public?

The theme of the play is the same as that which we find in *Thias*. A certain Father Antoine has taken an eternal vow of silence—we can form an idea of the man from the nature of his vow—and has shut himself up within the four walls of a Trappist Monastery. Father Antoine has forsworn marriage as well as speech. It is well-known that in the Orient some people make eunuchs of themselves. These are neither men nor women. They are an artificial race. In one of the texts of scripture, Jesus recommends to his followers the example of the eunuch. On the other hand, Victor Hugo, in a powerful passage, not only expresses his disagreement with the Oriental Christ on this matter, but he condemns also the Catholic Church for making celibates of its priests. The difference between a monk and a eunuch is this: the eunuch is a man whose body has been *damned*, that he may not marry; the monk is a man whose soul will be *damned* if he marries. But the monk in Robert Hichens' story is willing to risk the damnation for a woman. He therefore leaves his prison-house, discards his garb, casts aside his vow, and becomes a *man*. After a brief acquaintance, he proposes to the woman of his choice, is accepted, and together they pitch their tent in the African desert.

Of course, the woman does not know that her husband was at one time a monk. Had she known of this fact, judging by her subsequent conduct, she would have married a less holy man. But she had seen nothing about her husband to lead her to suspect that he was less or more than an average human being. As long as she remains ignorant of his secret they are both quite happy. Happiness is so exquisite and so rare a thing that it makes even the desert beautiful. Happiness should always be encouraged, even if it be that of a married monk. But why did Father Antoine select the desert for his honeymoon? I wonder if it ever entered the mind of the author of the story that the desert was the first love of the monk? Did he not renounce the world when he first became a monk? Was not his monastery isolated from the rest of the world, a sort of wilderness? Is not a monk barren, celibate, childless, a desert? By taking his wife to the desert, the monk, unconsciously perhaps, was trying to compromise. He had left the cloister for the world; but the world was too real, too practical, too large for him—and so he compromised on the desert.

In the midst of their blissful existence a visitor at their camp recognises the monk, calls him by his name, and threatens to divulge the secret of his life to his young wife. This raises a crisis in the life of the monk. If the monk ever needed the help of his religion it was then. Instead of saying to his meddlesome guest that he had nothing to be ashamed or afraid of, that in marrying the woman of his choice he had only proved himself to be greater than all the traditions of ancient times, he whips out a revolver and threatens to kill his accuser. But the wife compels the secret from the lips of her husband, and then follows a scene which I suppose both the author and the dramatiser consider as the strongest in the play, but which was very disappointing to me. Had she just learned that her husband had been a murderer instead of a monk, I do not think she could have been more shocked or alarmed. She shrieks and becomes hysterical when it dawns upon her that the father of her baby soon to arrive was at one time a consecrated man. Well, if I thought that this silly female in the story represented woman in general I would not want to speak to another woman. But what a magnificent opportunity she let slip through her hands! When her husband, white with fear, and bitten by remorse, lay writhing at her feet like a trampled worm, she should have placed her hand upon his brow and bid him arise to his feet, and then opening her arms she should have said to him, "Come to me, nothing shall separate us. The heaven of the gods is not attractive enough, nor their hell fearful enough, to tear us apart." That would have been a woman.

(To be continued.)

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The Evolution of Flowers.

THE mutual adaptations of flowers to insects and of insects to flowers are almost, if not quite, as wonderful as those marvellous instances of Symbiotic union described in an earlier essay. These mutual accommodations have been developed as a result of the habit which so many insects display in visiting the blossoms of plants in search of their pollen. In fine, these compound phenomena suffice to explain the manner in which the floral adornments of the botanical kingdom have been brought into being.

In pre-Darwinian days the colors, the beauties, and the perfumes of flowers were looked upon either as the gifts of God to his chosen creatures or as the prodigal products of great Nature's boundless exuberance. But modern science is not satisfied with such facile explanations, and therefore replaces the imaginative theories of previous generations with a doctrine that is based on countless observations and experiments. Nor does the beauty of the blossom fail to awaken an æsthetic emotion in the breast of the instructed student of science; rather one may claim that the marvels unfolded by recent botanical inquiries add to the loveliness of the sweet-scented flowers of the garden and the wild.

That bees and butterflies sipped the nectar of blooms, and that bees stored pollen in their hives, were facts familiar to the peoples of antiquity. It is also true that among early Eastern races the fertilisation of the date-palm was artificially aided by "cutting off the male inflorescences just before the stamens ripened, and suspending them among those of the female tree; so avoiding the risks of ordinary wind fertilisation." But beyond this, little attention was paid to the story of floral life which modern science was destined to disclose.

As the eighteenth century neared its end, a thoughtful and observant naturalist, C. K. Sprengel, published his views to the world. He announced the discovery that very many flowers were specially adapted to attract the attention of insects. But he was before his time, and his views passed unnoticed for more than fifty years. Sprengel was dominated by the Design theory, and he sought from this standpoint to elucidate the facts he had brought to light. In the language of a leading contemporary biologist:

> "He recognised that the hairs which cover the lower surface of the petals of the wood-cranesbill (Geranium sylvaticum) protect the nectar of the flower from being diluted by rain, and he drew the conclusion, correct enough, *though far from our modern ideas as regards the directly efficient cause*, that the nectar was there for the insects."

Sprengel likewise noted the fact that the corolla of the forget-me-not is provided with a yellow circle at the opening of the corolla-tube, and he regarded this as a guide to the insects in quest of the honey which is stored in the base of the tube.

It has since been demonstrated that such "honey-guides" are to be found in nearly all blossoms entered by insects, and also that they are usually of a color quite distinct from the main coloration of the flower. Seeing that these honey-guides served the purpose of directing the insects to the nectar lying in their vicinity, Sprengel shrewdly surmised that the gaily colored blossoms answered the purpose of attracting the insects to the flowers themselves, and thus secured the presence of the creatures that were to be conducted to the sweet treasures within by the more specialised honey-guides. He also ascertained that certain flowers are incapable of self-fertilisation, and that the visits of insects were essential to that cross-fertilisation, apart from which, as we now know, such flowers are unable to set their seeds.

Another German botanist, Gärtner, made further advances along the path prepared by Sprengel; but the problem was not completely solved until the Englishman, Darwin, applied his master mind to the subject. The author of the *Origin of Species* realised in terms of innumerable observations and experiments that as a rule self-fertilisation is distinctly unfavorable to plants; that seeds so produced are few in number, and that the plants that arise from them, are poor in quality. When, on the other hand, the pollen, or male element, of one plant is carried to the female organs of another, the results are highly advantageous. In numerous species, as Sprengel had discovered, self-fertilisation leads to utter sterility. This Darwin demonstrated to be true, and he also showed that very few plants are as fertile when pollinated from their own stamens as with those of different plants of the same species, and that occasional cross-fertilisation was imperatively demanded by all flowering plants if they were to retain their normal vigor of life and growth.

The value of the visits of insects is now obvious, as these animals, in wandering from flower to flower, carry out the important function of dusting their wings or bodies with pollen, which they transfer from one plant to another, thus effecting that form of fructification which is so necessary to the health and strength of the plant race. Any floral variation which served to promote the visits of the insects helped also to secure the production of a greater abundance of seeds. One therefore understands why such an endless array of contrivances evolved for the sole purpose of attracting insects to flowers have blossomed into being, and why the scentless and inconspicuous blooms of the earlier plant world have been transformed into the wealth of richly colored inflorescences which have gladdened the earth in more recent periods of its history.

Not all the Phanerogams—the higher flowering plants—are dependent upon insect activity for purposes of sound and serviceable seed production. With the grasses, the hop, the catkin-bearing plants such as the willow and the hazel, the wind carries the pollen through the air from one plant to another. But in the immense majority of phanerogams, particularly those that bear colored flowers, insect fertilisation is indispensable. Moreover, the diversity of floral structure evolved for this purpose is well-nigh incredible. Some flowers expose their nectar to every visitor, and all insect honey-lovers are welcomed to the feast. Others there are among which the nectar is less open to view, but of which a cosmopolitan assembly of short-mouthed insects may easily partake. The magnolias are members of this floral group, and are sometimes dubbed "beetle flowers," as they are great favorites with the sweet-toothed Longicorn beetles. Some blooms are specially adapted to the visits of bees, which appear essential to their cross-pollination. The writer has watched the balsam blooms for several seasons, and has never seen any insect save the bee succeed in reaching the honey. In various flowers the honey-holding nectary lies some distance down, and can only be reached by the relatively long proboscis of the bee. And the structural arrangements of the blossoms are such that the insect cannot obtain the sugary sap without at the same time cross-pollinating the plant. In the meadow-sage the male organs lie concealed in the helmet-shaped part of the flower, but they bend down as soon as a bee alights on the lower lip of the blossom, and scatter their pollen over its body. Should the bee now fly to a more mature flower in which the female parts are ripe for fertilisation, the feminine structure "stands just in front of the entrance to the flower, so that the bee must rub off part of the pollen covering its back on to the stigma, and fertilisation is thus effected."

Various are the flowers which have evolved adaptations that are specially devised for the reception of a strictly select circle of visitors, while other floral adaptations bar the entrance to all insect-callers who are outside the recognised set.

Still more striking are those botanical organisms which have made themselves specially attractive to the fertilising activities of flies. The hairy arum of the Mediterranean is an extreme example of this. This flower smells like putrid meat; blow-flies crowd in, and they are imprisoned until they have fertilised

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the inflorescence. Many perish, and there seems small doubt that this plant not only utilises the services of the flies for fertilisation, but also to some extent absorbs the juices of their bodies. In our common birth-wort, as also in the cuckoo-pint, or lords and ladies, the phenomena are somewhat similar. These strange flowers display long corolla-tubes which lead to an extensive base, which contains both the male and female organs of the plants. The narrow entrance to the base of the birth-wort is thickly beset with rigid hairs, which all point downwards. Small flies quickly gather round the appetising odor of the blossom, and eagerly make their way to the promised feast, but when once arrived at their destination they find themselves entrapped. All efforts to escape are frustrated by the very bristles that facilitated their entry. But no sooner is the fertilisation of the flower effected than the bristles begin to wither, and the flies, having now served the procreative purposes of the plant, are permitted to regain their liberty. Many other fly-flower devices might be mentioned, but all have the same object in view—the transference of the pollen to the stigma, in order to ensure the perpetuation of the vegetable species.

Plant-forms very nearly related have evolved the most dissimilar methods for procreative purposes. The flower of the common Daphne "is adapted to the visits of butterflies, bees, and hover-flies, while its nearest relative (Daphne striata) has a somewhat longer and narrower corolla-tube, so that only butterflies can feast upon it." This is but one instance out of many in which blossoms are restricted to the visits of butterflies; and specialisation has proceeded much further than this, for some flowers favor the visits of daylight-loving butterflies, while others encourage those that appear only in the gloaming and the night. Flowers fertilised by nocturnal insects are usually white or primrose in color; they are consequently quite conspicuous in the half-light of a summer night; they send forth a fragrant smell after sunset, but remain quite closed throughout the day. This is the case with the beautiful evening primrose, whose twilight fragrance is so delicately sweet. The fine blossom of the bindweed is sometimes completely shrouded until day declines, and, although it is destitute of scent, it unfolds a pale glory as it courts the visits of the hawkmoth under the evening stars.

It was reserved to the orchids to reveal the most wondrous adaptations of the plant domain. The patient labors of Darwin in this one floral group are recorded for all time in his classic on their contrivances to effect cross-fertilisation, and to that work the interested reader may turn for a detailed description of their fascinating phenomena. We may sum up the first part of this article on the genesis and development of flowers by stating that the only conceivable explanation of the facts set forth is to be found in those numerous natural agencies which necessitate organic evolution. Of these, a main factor has undoubtedly been that of Natural Selection, and this truth is nowhere more abundantly illustrated than in the modifications to which the organs of insects have been subjected to secure the cross-pollination of plants. As we shall see, these insect transformations have proceeded *pari passu* with the adaptations which plant inflorescences themselves have undergone, and to these coincident phenomena the second part of our essay will be devoted.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be concluded.)

Primitive Marriage.—II.

(BY THE LATE J. M. WHEELER)

(Continued from p. 621.)

IN ancient Persia, sisters and brothers married, and even mothers and sons, such unions being required by religion for the production of persons eligible to certain offices. The ancient Greeks permitted all relations save parents and children to marry with one another. Thus, the six sons of Æolus are married to his six daughters; Iphidamus and Diomed to their maternal aunts; and Alcinous to his neice. In the ancient Hindu epic, the Mahabharata, the five Pandava princes, are all husbands of the one princess Draupadi. The Nairs of Malabar have communities of wives and husbands in common, and, the wisest fathers, not knowing their own children, leave their property to their sisters' children. The heirship of nephews is common in Africa, and in America among the aborigines of Labrador, and also among the Hurons and Iroquois. When these tribes have been asked to explain this custom, they have always replied that there could be no doubt of the relationship of the sister's children, whereas that on the father's side might be questioned. This seems to dispose of the suggestion that kinship through mothers may have arisen from a belief that the woman was mainly concerned in procreation, the bodily relation being so evidently stronger.

In Southern India various tribes allow all the brothers, as they grow up, to become the husbands of the eldest brother's wife, and conversely, the younger sisters of the wife become the wives of this conjugal community. According to Cæsar ("De bello Gallico," v. 14), the early Britons had the same habit. Of our Scandinavian ancestors it is stated in the Heimskringla Saga that Niord took his own sister in marriage, "for that was allowed by" the Vanaland law. Traces of Polyandry remained in the time of Tacitus among the Germans. Polyandry—that is the marriage of one woman to several men—and consanguineous marriage still prevail among the nations connecting Asiatics and Americans, Eskimo, Aleuts, Koniaks, etc. Among the Ostiaks no degree of relationship is an impediment to marriage; and though the son will not marry his mother, the father often takes his daughter to wife, and the brother his own sister. It was so with the aboriginal Californians. Community of wives is limited to brothers and other relatives in Thibet. Polyandry, although very rare among animals, seems to have prevailed among all races of men among whom women were scarce, either through migrations or, a more potent cause, female infanticide.

An early prohibition seems to have been the custom, forbidding marriage to a half-sister having the same mother, though not to one having the same father. This implies how much less the male parenthood was thought of. Marriage between half-brothers and sisters seems almost the ordinary rule among ancient peoples. It is known to have prevailed among Canaanites, Assyrians, Persians, the ancient Greeks and Egyptians. Among the Jews (despite the late prohibition in Leviticus xviii. 9) the evidence is clear. It was practised among the patriarchs, Abraham himself having married Sarah, "the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother" (Gen. xx. 12). Nahor married his brother's daughter. Jacob had two sisters to wife at once. Moses' father, Amram, married his father's sister. The Levitical law was evidently unknown to pious King David, for when Ammon wished to force his half-sister Tamar, she urged him to speak to the king, "for he will not withhold me from thee" (2 Sam. xiii. 13). Brothers who are sons of the same mother are especially distinguished (Deut. xiii. 6 Judges viii. 19).

A survival of consanguine marriage is found in Deut. xxv., where it is expressly ordered that when a brother's widow is left childless "her husband's brother shall go in unto her and take her to him to wife"; and in the event of his refusing to do so, he has to have his shoe loosed and his face spat upon. Of the antiquity of this usage we have evidence in Gen. xxxviii. When Er, Judah's firstborn, died, the father commanded his second son, "Go in unto thy brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother." The second son refusing, the thing which he did displeased the Lord, wherefore he slew him. Judah now putting Tamar off from taking his

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next son, she disguised herself and made her father-in-law do his son's duty; he acknowledging "she hath been more righteous than I." The custom is also referred to in the story of Ruth. Ewald amends Ruth iv. 5: "Thou must buy also Ruth the Moabitess." The Bible reader will remember that the disgusting story of the patriarch Lot and his daughter is related without the slightest token of disapproval.

Casting off a shoe, it may be said, constituted the foregoing a right; thus the relatives of a bride still "throw slippers." The Arabs have preserved the ceremony intact. A proverb among them, when a young man forgoes his prescriptive right to marry his first cousin, is, "She was my slipper, I have cast her off" (Burckhardt, *Bedouins and Wahabys*, i., 113). Among the Caribs of Venezuela and in Equatorial West Africa, the eldest son inherits all the wives of his deceased father, with the sole exception of his own mother. Schweinfurth relates that the same custom obtains in Central Africa. On the Gold Coast the throne is occupied by the prince, who gains possession of the paternal harem before his other brothers. Thus Absolom took David's harem in the sight of all Israel before the old man had gone to glory, as a proof he wished his reign to be considered over; and when Adonijah asks his brother Solomon for Abishag, the comforter of David's old age, the wise Solomon kills him, as thus betraying designs on the throne. In the custom that widows passed to the heir with other property, and hence that marriage with the widow grew to be a sign of a claim to the deceased person's possessions, we have a reasonable explanation of what must otherwise appear irrational crime. The custom of inheriting widows is adverted to in the Koran, and Benchawi, in his commentary, gives the whole ceremony, which consists in the deceased's relative throwing his cloak over the widow and saying, "I claim her."

Among Hindus, the Code of Manu orders that on failure of direct issue "the brother shall with due rites take the wife." The law is repeated to meet the case of those who die before consummation of marriage, in which event the duty of "raising up seed" to the deceased devolves upon his brother. We learn, moreover, from the Mahabharata, that among the Kshatriyas, or warrior tribes, two forms of marriage prevailed. One was simply a union without ceremony, the other a forcible abduction of the women of a conquered enemy. The Kshatriyas were polygamists, and followed the custom of a man taking the wife of his deceased brother for the purpose of raising up sons to him.

Probably men's sexual instincts were originally uncontrolled save by physical necessity. The one law was that the weak had to give place to the strong.

> "The good old plan
> That he should take who has the power
> And he should keep who can."

The necessity of providing for offspring in their tender years would lead to the establishment of usages giving some permanence to unions. Marriage, and with marriage Law, arose because it was an advantage in the struggle for existence. The descendants of parents who held together and formed an incipient tribe would be able to "hold their own" against those who had no such bond of adherence. Habits of warfare and consequent woman-capture would lead to the restriction of incestuous unions. We need not resort to the theory of L. H. Morgan, that man early learnt the evils of interbreeding, for that can scarcely be said to be sufficiently determined by modern physiological science. The observation of Sir Henry Maine is, however, worth attention, that if the advantage given by exogamous marriage (marriage outside certain limits) be now a slight one, owing to facilities of artificial cure, it might be of great advantage to primitive mankind, to whom, before all things, a good natural constitution was a necessity. If close interbreeding is detrimental, the stern process of natural selection would force it into notice, or at any rate give an advantage to those who acquired habits of exogamy. Nor need we, I think, conclude with Lang that exogamy is "connected with some early superstition or idea of which we have lost the touch, and which we can no longer explain" (*Custom and Myth*, page 258; 1884). Love of contrast, as well as of conquest, would lead to habits of wife-capture, which would be further necessitated by the scarcity of women consequent upon female infanticide, migration, and wife-stealing by other tribes. The policy of Moses towards the Midianites of slaying the men and reserving the young women was universal in ancient and savage warfare. Lang finds it

> "difficult to conceive that the frequent habit of stealing women should indispose men to marry the native women they had at hand. That this indisposition should grow into a positive law, and the infringement of the law be regarded as a capital offence, seems still more inconceivable."

Lang appears to overlook the great influence of sexual jealousy which must operate powerfully where wives are taken from a narrow home-circle, and which would soon institute rules for the prevention of feuds. The acquisition of a mate from abroad would prevent jealousy at home; the stealing of a wife would be the best title to possess one. A man who is denied a mate until he has proved his courage by capturing one, satisfies his want and achieves a reputation at the same time. We may see how such a law would grow up in the fact that among many tribes the chiefs consider themselves exempt from the limitations imposed upon others. In Siam, the seventh degree of blood affinity is the limit within which marriage is prohibited, with the important exception that the king may marry his own sister, as among the Yncas of Peru, the Lagide dynasty, etc., and even his own daughter (Sir John Bowring, *Siam*, vol. i., p. 185). Of course, the danger of disturbing the succession is the cause of such arrangements being allowed; yet when we remember that the king is descended from, and inherits the privileges of, the patriarch or house chief, we may see in his exemption a survival of earlier usage.

Amongst most races, both exogamy and endogamy prevail—that is, there is both an inner and outer limit to marriage; thus princes by custom must marry within the blood royal, but must not, without a dispensation, marry within the ecclesiastical Table of Prohibited Degrees. Even among very low races, endogamy and exogamy co-existed, as among Comanches, New Zealanders, and Californians. In India, a Hindu must neither marry out of caste nor marry a wife whose clan name is the same as his own: a prohibition which bars marriage among relatives in the male line indefinitely. This shows the prohibition must have come in force when kinship was so little understood that it could best be denoted by the family name. Similarly in China, a man may not marry a woman of his own surname, so that relationship by the male side, however distant, is a barrier; while on the female side it is no barrier, however close. This prohibition is undoubtedly very ancient, for the Chinese trace it to the time of Fou-hi, 2207 B.C. Fou-hi is related to have divided the people into one hundred clans, and prohibited any of them intermarrying. Previously to his time, descent has been traced through mothers only, and this, as we have previously seen, we have reason to believe has been everywhere the rule. A recent observer, Mr. Jamieson (*China Review*, vol. x., No. 2), has, however, noticed that the Chinese are also endogamous. "Externally they are endogamous—they refuse marriage with any surrounding tribe; internally they are exogamous—they refuse marriage with anyone whose surname shows him to be of the same stock." The pride of race, which is probably the chief cause of endogamy, seem to be later than the rules of exogamy, and laws prohibiting marriage with the mother's kin seem to be earlier than those prohibiting marriage on the male side. I have already noticed the custom of marrying half-sisters on the father's side, which prevailed amongst most ancient nations.

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The nature of the prohibition in ancient nations and savage races shows that kinship was understood in a different way from our modern system. The limit was everywhere the family name, a limit which excludes many kinsfolk and includes many who are not kinsfolk at all. In Australia especially, and in America, India, and Africa to a slighter extent, that definition of kindred by the family name included serpents, alligators, kangaroos, birds, fish, plants, vegetables, and what not. Natives of Australia call these objects their kin, "of one flesh" with them. Is it not then possible, as McLennan suggests, "that the prejudice against marrying women of the same group may have been established before the facts of blood-relationship had made any deep impression on the human mind": consequently earlier than the patriarchal stage? Savages know the persons they may not marry by their totem, or by tattoo-marks. If a savage sees a maid with the same tattoo-mark, or crest, as his own, he knows he must not touch her. If it is, however, different, he makes her his own without scruple, the law of exogamy indeed compelling him to seek abroad for wives.

(To be concluded.)

National Secular Society.

Report of Monthly Executive Meeting held on Sept. 24.

The President, Mr. G. W. Foote, occupied the chair. There were also present: Messrs. Barry, Cohen, Cowell, Cunningham, Davidson, Judge, Lazarnick, Neate, Quinton, Roger, Rosetti, Samuels, Silverstein, Thurlow, Miss Kough and Miss Stanley.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed. The monthly cash statement was presented and adopted.

New members were received for the Edmonton Branch and the Parent Society.

The Secretary received instructions *re* propaganda at Leeds.

The President reported the serious illness of Mr. W. Heaford, and the following resolution was carried unanimously:—

> "This Executive learns with much regret of Mr. Heaford's illness, and trusts to hear of his speedy and complete return to health and to activity in the cause to which he has so long devoted himself."

The issue of a cheap pamphlet dealing with the war from the Freethought standpoint, suggested at the last meeting, was again discussed, and the President inquired whether the Executive wished him to write a pamphlet germane to the present aspect. The answer being unanimously "Yes," he consented to do so, and also gave permission for a recent editorial in the *Freethinker* to be reprinted as a leaflet.

After a general discussion, the following resolution was moved:—

> "That this Executive, without presuming to judge in particular cases, protests in the strongest way against the gross violation of the rules of the Hague Convention which is going on in the present war, and calls upon all civilised nations to demand that those rules shall be respected."

The Secretary reported the receipt of a grant from the Secular Society, Ltd., of £10 to the National Secular Society.

The Secretary received instructions to arrange for the Annual Dinner to be held at Frascati's Restaurant. Other matters of business were transacted.

E. M. Vance, *General Secretary.*

Correspondence.

"DEMOCRACY AND WAR."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—Your correspondent, Mr. A. J. Marriott, raises an important question in connection with the war. With his permission, and in the hope that I do not trespass on forbidden ground, I would like to bring to his notice a book entitled *National Guilds*, by A. P. Orage, published by Bell and Sons, 5s. net. It can be obtained at most libraries. My only reason for this suggestion is a personal one, and it is this: I find that the economics of National Guilds are the only kind to harmoniously blend with the ethics of Freethought. I am in agreement with your correspondent's views, and, furthermore, I firmly hold that a return to craft and industrial guilds would incorporate Norman Angelism and give status to democracy and, consequently, its children. After status, all things would be possible—even the prevention of international warfare.

Christopher Gay.

Maps.

I traversed Christian Europe's page,
Each bloody advance, each red retreat;
Lemburg, Sabatz, Soissons, Liege—
I pondered—then turned back the sheet.
China spread vast, antiquely sage;
Strange truth! On Heathen field and hill
(Thought I) brood Peace and Wisdom still.

E. L. Brink.

The Trade of Piety.

"In the name of the prophet, figs!"—such is the cry
That echoes through an eastern city's streets;
And that it helps their sale who will deny
That knows how pompous words man's reason cheats
Piety is the badge your Mawworm bears
While offering his goods to simple folk;
And every dealer in religious wares
Uses his faith his selfish ends to cloak.
A compact with his God the saint doth make,
And for the trials which he undergoes
Bargains the joys of heaven he shall partake
And look down thence upon the sinners' woes:
The crown, the coronet, the judges' wigs,
"In the name of hocus-pocus, figs, figs, figs!"

B. D.

WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT ANGELS.

"Auntie, did the angels carry Charlie Jones's mother up to heaven?"

"Why, I think so, dear. Mrs. Jones was a good woman."

"She was an awfully fat woman. The angels must be strong."

Passengers in the train from Watford turned to look at the six-year-old boy who was bent on getting information. He was a manly little fellow, with a bright, pretty face that showed intelligence beyond his years. His young aunt seemed to be anxious to stop the flow of questions, but he was bound to know something more about angels then and there.

"How do you know there are angels, auntie?"

"Because we read about them. Wait until you can read and then you will know more about them."

"But why—why don't we see the angels? Did you ever see an angel?"

"Hum! Don't talk so loud, Charlie. Of course we don't see them, but we see their pictures. Don't you remember the angels in that pretty book that Uncle John sent you?"

"Yes, but—where do the angels get their pictures taken, auntie? Is there a gallery where they take pictures of angels—only just of angels?"

"Perhaps so. I don't know."

"Then why don't the angels put on more clothes when they have their pictures taken?"

"Oh, Charlie! Please be quiet! You will make auntie's head ache."

Charlie meditated in silence for a few minutes, and remarked:—

"I don't know why Mr. Brown said you were his ——"

"Euston!" shouted a porter, and as the train came to a standstill, the small boy got a shaking and a whispered warning that stopped all further talk about angels.

The Pastor: "Miss Ethel, you should be engaged in some missionary work." Miss Ethel: "Oh, I am, and have been for some time past." The Pastor: "I'm so gratified to hear you say so. In what field are you engaged?" Miss Ethel (proudly): "I'm teaching my parrot not to swear."

A recently ordained clergyman of the Church of England went into a tobacconist's and said: "Give me an ounce of 'bacey; I shan't get any in heaven." He may find plenty of smoke in another quarter.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, Mr. Drake, "The Meaning of Evolution."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill): 3.30, a Lecture. Regent's Park (near the Fountain): 3.30, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, W. Davidson, a Lecture.

COUNTRY

INDOOR.

GLASGOW BRANCH N. S. S. (Good Templars' Hall, 122 Ingram-street): 12 noon, Branch Meeting.



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Secretary—MISS E. M. VANCE.

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The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularisation of the State, etc., etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

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The destroyers of the old are the creators of the new.
—R. G. INGERSOLL.

The Lord of Hosts.

THE Christian Deity is the Lord of Hosts. He is also a man of war. He taught David's hands and fingers to fight. He planned those awful campaigns of the Jews against the original inhabitants of Palestine. He ordered the indiscriminate slaughter of captives, in which neither age nor sex was spared. He also ordered the massacre of the males and the married women, in some cases, and the retention of the virgins by Jewish soldiers and priests. On one occasion the Lord's share of the lust-devoted maidens was thirty-two. It is not to be supposed, however, that they passed into his harem. Of course, they were appropriated by his clerical representatives. These gentlemen stayed at home while the fighting was on, and prayed for victory, and when it was won they took their share of the spoil, whether it was gold and silver, or sheep and cattle, or "pretty virginities."

The Old Testament reeks with blood. Jehovah was quite the Jack the Ripper of antiquity. No wonder that the first great Christian bishop of the Goths would not translate into their speech the worst part of the wars of the Jews. He was afraid of heightening the blood-thirstiness of his people. But no such scruple damped the translating zeal of others, and every Christian nation now reads in its own tongue the foul story of Jewish barbarity, and the fouler story of all that wickedness being commanded by God.

This "blessed book" may almost be regarded as the murderer's manual. Yet it is put into the hands of boys and girls without the least reservation. Nay, it is *forced* into their hands, in spite of the protests of those who wish them to become conversant with a loftier morality than that of bandits and cutthroats. Is it surprising, then, that Christian nations are so ready to draw the sword? They are the greatest disturbers of the world's peace. They have carried the art of slaughter to the highest degree of perfection. They appear to feel that, if the Lord loves a cheerful giver, he has even more love for a cheerful fighter. They consecrate their battle-flags, they ask God to bless their arms, they beg his favor when they proceed to bloodshed. At such times they forget all about the sweet maxims of peace and goodwill which they make such a boast of in the intervals of their quarreling.

Whenever did Christianity prevent any nation from going to war if it felt disposed to do so? Directly the war-fever rages a considerable number of the clergy fan it, and most of the rest confine themselves to talking cheaply about attending to justice and mercy when the fighting is ended. Very few of them stand up and champion the cause of peace. They know how they get their livings, and they want to stand in well with their countrymen.

One of the strongest arguments against the existence of God is that he never interferes on behalf of progress. When man is bent on playing the beast, his deity gives him free play. He even allows his worshipers to pray to him for success in murder, without telling them that they ought to be ashamed of themselves. Any decent God would tell them, when they put the matter to him pointedly, that they are fools and wretches for trying to kill each other, and worse fools and wretches for asking him to bless them in their criminal madness.

Suppose half-a-dozen boys came to their father and told him that they were going to divide into two parties and fight each other to a finish. Suppose they said that one or two of them might get killed. Suppose they asked him to supervise the engagement. What would that father say? "Wait a minute, boys," he would say, "while I get that big whip. When I come back you will all want tough breeches."

It is about time we dropped that old deity who is "strong and mighty in battle." The world has had enough of him, or rather too much of him. He is really an old savage idol, painted and decked to look like Jove. Give him a chance, and he shows his blood. Off goes the modern raiment, and the naked savage is on the warpath. There is blood and lust and destruction. And when the orgy is over the old fellow puts on his cast-off clothes, and sits with a fine, bland smile, to receive the adoration of his devotees.

A change of gods would be better than nothing. But the best thing would be to have no God at all. Whatever deity men worship only echoes their own passions. He is an Edison machine, speaking back what is first spoken into it. He never says anything new or original. He informs us of what we know, and never tells us of anything fresh. He corroborates our opinions, flatters our emotions, and pats our characters on the back. He is never ahead of us. And why? Because we make him. We are not *his* creatures—he is *our* creature. And those who worship him, we repeat, are worshiping an idol. Far better would it be if we framed our ideal consciously and deliberately. It would then be always up to date, and somewhat beyond. It would be the essence of our best thoughts, our deepest principles, our noblest aspirations. Communing with that ideal, bringing ourselves to its test, even looking at it from time to time, would do us more good, and raise us higher in the scale of being, than could ever be done by bowing to the personification of the lower conceptions of our forefathers. They made their God; let us make ours, if we must have a God; or let us dismiss all gods, and worship, if need be, in the Temple of Humanity. It is simply farcical at the present moment for whole nations to be asking the same God for the same victory.

Meanwhile, let all Freethinkers wage war against the Christian superstition. Whatever good it may have done when it reflected the current ideas, it has long outlived its usefulness. It is no longer anything but a hindrance. It is powerless to help forward the real progress of the world. It is one of the many causes of discord and division. It leaves men and women at the mercy of a faulty, inherited ideal; and, by saving them the trouble of thinking and the responsibility of forming just judgments, it is ever drawing them back to the dark past instead of urging them forward to a brighter future.

G. W. FOOTE.

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"At It Again."

IN the *Freethinker* for September 20 I called attention to the mixture of piety and jingoism which the editor of *John Bull* had served up for the benefit or entertainment of his readers. Coming from such a quarter, the piety was more remarkable than the jingoism. It was so completely gratuitous. It was not necessary to bolster up the English case against Germany. That was strong enough without it, and it is always a mistake to saddle a strong case with doubtful elements. It was not needed to encourage the fighting spirit of the nation. That is strong enough of itself; and whether God gives us another chance or not—as Mr. Bottomley would say—it is fairly certain that the British people mean to see this thing through, and will beat Germany, at any cost, if that is at all possible. From all points of view the piety was unnecessary, and one can only conclude that as piety and militarism are both primitive and relatively uncivilised sentiments, both hang together, and a strengthening of one leads to a strengthening of the other.

In the issue of *John Bull* for October 8, Mr. Bottomley returns to the subject with what is really an apology for his pietistic outburst. "Piety," he says, "is not in our line." With this I quite agree, and hinted as much in my previous article. Only when a man is clear-headed enough to recognise what is not in his line, it is a pity that he does not keep off it. Professional pietists cut a sufficiently silly figure when they apply their Godism to current affairs, and where a professional fails an amateur is not likely to succeed. Mr. Bottomley further says he will not be deterred even though the *Freethinker* and other journals (I have not observed any other journal beside the *Freethinker* dwelling upon this point) tell him he is "running the Kaiser close in working the pious lay." This may be magnificent but it is not sense. No one is quite exempt from blundering, and although it may look courageous it really is not so. There is more courage in confessing a fault than there is in persisting in one. It is really wiser to confess one's faults and have done with it.

In passing, let me also express a regret that Mr. Bottomley sees fit to join in the now fashionable game of pouring abuse upon Nietzsche. Most of those who are engaged in this task have not read Nietzsche, and the few who have do not understand him, or fail to realise that Nietzsche himself had a whole-souled contempt for the modern German. They have certainly quite failed to grasp Nietzsche's gospel of superman. To write that Nietzsche aimed at setting up a "monstrous beastly idol of brute force and pitiless rapine," is to quite misunderstand his aim; or to say that the "crazy brain of its author.....rotted in its own filth.....in a Prussian madhouse," is to venture criticism in a field which I hardly think Mr. Bottomley is qualified to express an authoritative opinion. The great Vico died insane, so did Schumann, so did Swift, so did others that one might name. Tasso, Schopenhauer, Comte, Rousseau, Heine, Leopardi, Poe, Dostoieffsky, Newton, Southey, Cowper, all were undoubtedly neurotics. No one, however, attempts to belittle the genius or to set aside the work of these men on that account. One cannot argue that abuse of a genius, who is at the same time a neurotic, means degeneration; but it does seem to evidence want of judgment.

Mr. Bottomley denies that he has "got religion," but "at the risk of being further misunderstood," he affirms his faith, "firm and immovable" in "God's decree and providence." Not, he points out, in "the personal, puny God of orthodox creeds, but the infinite Deity of the Universe—the unknown, unknowable, incomprehensible, beginning and end of everything—the Godhead Infinite, Boundless, and Everlasting." Certainly there is nothing "puny" about this God, but why call it "unorthodox"? It is really a very orthodox kind of Deity. If Mr. Bottomley will read the Athanasian creed he will find that, so far as his Godhead is concerned, it is a fair modern summary of it, for that also says, "the Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible," to which one may add, and Mr. Bottomley incomprehensible. There is a still further likeness, for Mr. Bottomley says that "the man who in these days could use the name of God, and all that it connotes, in any spirit other than one of reverence and awe, is deliberately calling down upon his head the wrath of Heaven and the abhorrence of mankind." Which again reminds one of the Athanasian Creed with its "whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic Faith. Which Faith, except everyone do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly." So, unless we treat Mr. Bottomley's god with "reverence and awe" we shall call down upon ourselves "the wrath of Heaven and the abhorrence of mankind." To a beginner, the threat is no doubt terrifying. As, however, I have been running the risk for twenty-five years, I am afraid that I am case-hardened. At any rate, I am unmoved. God does nothing; and mankind can get on fairly well without him. It is, however, interesting to observe how difficult it is for a man, once he gets mixed up with gods, to avoid "cussing" those who disagree with him.

Like theologians in general, Mr. Bottomley having commenced by positing an unknown, unknowable, incomprehensible deity, proceeds to explain him. Really, if one believes in an unknown and unknowable something or other, the only sensible plan is not to know anything about it—not even that there is anything to know about. But Mr. Bottomley's God is so far known—to him—that he is aware of what are his plans. And those plans are that Britain is to lead the world with other nations—summed up as the Latin race—as helpers. Mr. Bottomley knows, also, that "He is directing the bloody battle of the nations now raging, which must end in accordance with a destiny written on the skies for all mankind to read." There it is! British, French, Germans, Russians, Belgians, Servians, Austrians, are all so many pawns in the game. It is God who is directing the battle. "He" inspired the Germans to go to war, "He," inspired the Allies to resist." "He" inspired it all, and our praise of the Allies is so much wasted breath. God is using us to wreak vengeance on the Germans; it is, says Mr. Bottomley, "His will to employ human instruments, and so he is using us to punish the Germans—whom he has previously made what they are, so that they might be punished." This must be so, or God would not be "the beginning and end of everything," certainly he would not be Mr. Bottomley's God, who is "directing our lives, and the lives of Peoples and all the Worlds, in the infinite, the fleeting Present, and the eternal Future." It would seem as though there were inevitable conflict between logic and a display of capital letters.

It would also seem, in spite of all that has been said, that Mr. Bottomley is not free from a sense of uneasiness that he has been talking rather too familiarly of God's plans about this, that, and the other, for he explains that when he invokes the name of God:—

> "With us it signifies the X of the universe—the originating, vitalising, restoring, ruling Force, whence flow all Life and Destiny. If, in orthodox fashion, mankind clothe it with the form of man, that is because they *are* men, and, in the depths of their conceit can think of nothing nobler. For ourselves we dare not give it form.....We will recognise that our poor head is not up to the task of grasping the problem and will shelter ourselves in God. And if we speak of 'Him' and 'He' it is simply because that is the only way in which we can express our conception of the highest embodiment of Being."

Now Mr. Bottomley is, as the children say, "getting warm." He is on the track of truth, but he doesn't seem to follow it up. Man does endow universal force, or forces, with human attributes—not by way of a compliment to the universe, or by way of expressing idealistic yearnings after a higher life, but

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wholly because to human ignorance the forces of the world *seemed* alive. Gods improve with the advance of civilisation simply because man himself improves, and he does not care to worship anyone worse than himself. But the "highest embodiment" is not God, but man. Man is actually the highest being we know. He is even the highest being we can think of. For when we talk of higher beings than man, all we really think about are beings higher than the men we know—that is, more perfect men. Even Mr. Bottomley's God is not higher than *man;* he is not better than *man.* He is only a superior kind of man. He acts as Mr. Bottomley's ideal man would. And therefore, quite naturally, he selects Britain for the leadership of the world.

Seriously, Mr. Bottomley would be well advised to leave the gods severely alone. Blather about God on the one side is no better and no wiser than blather about God on the other side. Where all, and if all, are carrying out God's will, what is the use of one section claiming superiority on that account? If I may venture to quote a German—Goethe—"If God is what he is, the world is what he would have it be." If there is a God, we are all part of the "plan." And a God who can arrange *such* a plan is really too contemptible to bother about. The Czar calls on God, and is sure of his favor. King Albert of Belgium also invokes God, and is certain he will respond. The Emperor of Germany is quite sure God is leading his armies—through him. King George is equally ready to call on God, and is just as convinced that he is in the good graces of Deity. They are all at it; and now Mr. Bottomley joins the chorus—not as one calling upon God for help, but as one who merely explains what are God's plans. Of all the crew, Servia alone seems to let God alone. She seems able to look after herself.

War is a business that is bad enough, and black enough, and withal stupid enough, without its being made still more objectionable by quite gratuitous nonsense. To rail at the Kaiser for having "blasphemously invoked the God of Battles," while at the same time using the same invocation, is pietistic cant of the worst description. And it is sheer playing to the cant of the moment to write that the contest is between "the ethic of the Galilean and the bestialities of Pagan culture." What we are seeing is a struggle of brute force, pure and simple, in which each side deludes itself with useless talk about "ideals." *We* are convinced that our objects are pure and unselfish; our opponents are also convinced that they are fighting in defence of a high ideal. The sensible observer is apt to reflect that there never has been a war in which exactly the same jargon has not been in force. What we are witnessing is not the contest between the ethic of the Galilean and Pagan culture; we are witnessing the consummation of international contests in land-grabbing in all parts of the globe, and of a wild competition in armaments—on the one side to retain territory already "acquired," on the other to grab territory now held by other nations. And this by nations which have been saturated in "the ethic of the Galilean," nations that have for centuries been narcotised by the belief in God, in order that they might be at the mercy of the cupidity of man. If there is a lesson to be drawn from a Europe blinded with ideals of military greatness and brain-bemused with religion, it is that the less we have to do with the gods the better. By himself man is certain to blunder enough and to be savage enough. But with the gods added he becomes infinitely worse. For they, in a civilised community, are little more than the embodiment of man's past errors and barbarities.

C. COHEN.

Vain Delusions.

THE *British Congregationalist* for October 1 is worthy of all commendation because, in its leading article, entitled "The Evolution of Barbarism," it disowns and refutes the belief cherished by so many leading divines in this country that Nietzsche and his philosophy must be held largely responsible for the war. We are delighted to transcribe the following sensible passage:—

> "Anyone who knows Nietzsche, knows also that he was unmerciful in his satire of much that the German philosophers of to-day and the Prussian element in Germany hold dear; that he abused and poked fun at the stupidity and egoism of his own countrymen in no unsparing fashion. He most assuredly has not been a favorite writer with the Kaiser, though doubtless the latter has studied him. He has been repudiated lock, stock, and barrel by the professors who have, during the last few years, written in support and have taught the Gospel of German development at the cost of honor, weaker neighbors, and civilisation generally."

Mr. Robert Blatchford evidently knows neither Nietzsche nor his philosophy. In his otherwise admirable article in the *Weekly Dispatch* for September 27, he says that "Germany has been inoculated with the virus of Nietzsche's cult of the blonde beasts." Then Mr. Blatchford adds, with an air of infallibility: "Nietzsche, an insane genius, taught that the State was founded by a race of blonde beasts." Now, if our friend had read and pondered *Beyond Good and Evil*, particularly the eighth chapter, entitled "Peoples and Countries"; *Ecce Homo*, which abounds in scathing denunciations of the German people; and *Human, All-Too-Human*, especially Part II., he could not possibly have written that sentence, because it contradicts in the most positive manner the teaching of Nietzsche, who never lost an opportunity to express his abhorrence of "State supremacy," "atavistic attacks of patriotism and soil-attachment," and the persistent disregard of the dictates of reason. He had a great admiration for France. In *Beyond Good and Evil* (p. 213) he tells us that "even at present France is still the seat of the most intellectual and refined culture in Europe, and is still the high school of taste." A few pages farther on occurs this remarkable sentence:—

> "There is also still in France a pre-understanding and ready welcome for those rarer and rarely gratified men, who are too comprehensive to find satisfaction in any kind of fatherlandism, and know how to love the South when in the North and the North when in the South—the born Midlanders, the genuine 'good Europeans.'"

Does that look like the product of an "insane genius"? Not having studied Nietzscheism himself, but relying upon extracts published in the *Times*, without their context, Mr. Blatchford possesses no qualification to sit in judgment on the Nietzschean philosophy. And how shockingly unjust it is to call Nietzsche an "insane genius," his insanity occurring only *after* his published books were finished. Mr. Blatchford's chronology even is quite wrong when he says that "Nietzsche was followed by Professor Treitschke." Nothing of the kind. It was Nietzsche that followed Treitschke. Before the former was known at all the latter was zealously preaching Pan-Germanism in Berlin, having derived his politics from Prussian contemporaries; and, as we have affirmed more than once, Treitschke was not an advocate of a new religion for Germany. He was so enthusiastic a Lutheran that he was convinced that the whole of Germany would eventually adopt Lutheranism.

All this has, of course, a direct bearing upon the barbarous war that now floods Europe with human blood. Mr. Kingscote Greenland, writing in the *Christian Commonwealth* for September 30, asserts that "the governing idea is that Germany must now wrestle, not as in Luther's day against Rome, but now against Christianity." But most assuredly that is not the governing idea at this moment. There are most vigorous opponents of Christianity in Germany, it is true; but it is false to say that they are the *raison d'être* of the present war. Treitschke was a Christian, and so are Bernhardi and the Kaiser. Now, in direct opposition to practically all Christian preachers in Great Britain, we venture to declare, without the slightest fear of any intelligent objection, that war is perfectly consistent with Chris-

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tianity, whether in its Catholic or Protestant form. Let us recall an interesting illustration. Henry V., King of England at the beginning of the fifteenth century, was an exceptionally pious man, whose piety manifested itself in the persecution of the Lollards. Their books were confiscated and their persons burnt. Henry was an excellent divine:—

"Hear him but reason in divinity,
And, all-admiring, with an inward wish,
You would desire the king were made a prelate."

But this pious king, despite the Galic law, aspired to the throne of France, though, because of his piety, he at first doubted whether he ought to go to war for it. Who were the chief instigators of a fight with France? Not mere politicians, but the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Ely. Listen to his Grace, as Shakespeare interprets him for all time. He is addressing the king:—

"Gracious lord,
Stand for your own; unwind your bloody flag;
Look back unto your mighty ancestors;
Go, my dread lord, to your great grandsire's tomb,
From whom you claim; invoke his warlike spirit,
And your great uncle's, Edward the Black Prince,
Who on the French ground play'd a tragedy,
Making defeat on the full power of France,
While his most mighty father on a hill
Stood smiling to behold his lion's whelp
Forage in blood of French nobility."

So spake that eminent servant of the Prince of Peace. The Earl of Westmoreland reminded his majesty that—

"Never King of England,
Had nobles richer and more loyal subjects,
Whose hearts have left their bodies here in England,
And lie pavilioned in the fields of France."

Hearing that the Archbishop waxed extremely bold, and with swelling pride exclaimed:—

"O let their bodies follow, my dear liege,
With blood and sword and fire to win your right;
In aid whereof we of the spirituality
Will raise your highness such a mighty sum
As never did the clergy at one time
Bring in to any of your ancestors."

The Bishop of Ely endorsed every word spoken by his Grace of Canterbury, with the result that Henry went over to France with an army. It is not necessary to tell the story of that bloody conflict on the fields of France nearly five hundred years ago, our only claim being that that war was entered upon at the direct instigation of the Christian Church. Henry's great consolation, before the battle of Agincourt, was the knowledge that all England was praying for his success. Having spent a long time in fervid prayer himself, he addressed his men thus: "Now is good time, for all England prayeth for us, and, therefore, be of good cheer."

When we say that Christianity has failed, our meaning is that it has never done anything for the world's highest good. Buddhism has always been an enemy of war, and when in power abstained from bloodshed. Christianity, on the contrary, has had more experience in persecution and war than in any other form of activity. The sword has been at once its greatest friend, and humanity's worst foe. "Oh," some people object, "it is not Christianity that is responsible for these stupendous evils, but the lack of it, Christianity having never been tried yet." That is an old objection, and as worthless as it is old. It is a familiar adage that scarcely any two Christians agree as to what Christianity is; but it is an absolute certainty that nobody knows what that Christianity is which has never yet been tried. Professor David Smith confesses that, sometimes, when he considers what has been said and done in its name, the wonder with him is that Christianity has survived, and in its survival under such circumstances he discovers an evidence of its Divine origin; but we maintain that what has been said and done in its name has been said and done under its spell. We do not believe that the Kaiser is a hypocrite, and he solemnly declares, in unmistakable terms, that he is at war to establish the kingdom of God on earth; but what we contend is that the Christianity professed by him and his countrymen is precisely the same as the one professed by King George and many of his subjects, and that it can be made to support any form of government under the sun. Dr. Smith asserts that Christianity is eternal and invincible; but where on earth is it if its absence is responsible for the war? If a God of love sitteth as king for ever, how are we to account for the fact that hate is supreme in Christendom? It can only be accounted for on the assumption that the God of love and the Savior of the world are nothing but myths. We frankly admit that, as a human system, Christianity has been a tremendous success. It has set mankind at variance with one another with a vengeance. But, as an infallible remedy for the world's maladies, it has been a colossal failure. Its doctrine of Divine love redeeming the human race is the veriest dream ever heard of.

J. T. LLOYD.

A Battlefield Book.

"To bear all naked truths,
And to envisage circumstance, all calm;
That is the top of sovereignty." —KEATS.

TIMES of war and stress are usually supposed to be fatal to philosophic calm, and it is curious that the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius, the great book animated by high purpose and fortitude, should have been largely written at odd moments in a tent on the battlefield. Indeed, many of the maxims in the *Meditations* were jotted down in the actual theatre of the present war—as, for instance, at Carnuntum, on the Danube, a few miles from Vienna.

Monarchs have rarely been philosophers. Frederick the Great delighted in the society of Freethinkers, and attracted the best brains of Europe to his court. The Empress Catharine of Russia befriended Denis Diderot, and Marguerite, Queen of Valois, to her eternal credit, held out her hand to the "intellectuals" of her day, at a time when to avow heterodox opinions was a matter of life and death. Once only, however, has a philosopher sat on the world's throne and realised the dream of Plato, who sighed for the fulfilment of his ideal of a philosopher-king.

Marcus Aurelius, the Roman Emperor, was no feather-bed soldier, nor did he review his troops solely within the safe purlieus of the parade-ground. His philosophy was thought out amid the storm and stress of actual battle and the elation of real victory. What others learnt in calm, he learnt in tempest. The most perfect expression of "the gospel of those who do not believe in the supernatural" was produced to the dread monotone of war. Far away on the wide Roman marshes might be heard the endless, ceaseless sound of beating horses' hoofs and marching feet of men. The barbarians were gathering in multitudes, and no man could say what the morrow would bring forth.

The Emperor died in the camp. "Why weep for me?" were his last words, characteristic of the noblest Roman of them all. His legacy to posterity was his book of *Meditations*, which was never intended for publication, and in which he recorded his reflections on life and death. Burdened with the weight of Empire and of Rome, he penned such words as these—not to be read at the distance of twenty centuries without an accession of strength: "Every moment think steadily as a Roman and a man to do what thou hast in hand with perfect and simple dignity." And again, "Do every action of thy life as if it were thy last."

This life, he tells us, is all that concerns us:—

"Though you were destined to live three thousand or, if you please, thirty thousand years, yet remember that no man can lose any other life than that which he lives now, and neither is he possessed of any other than that which he loses."

Epicurus bade his followers depart from life as a satisfied guest from a banquet. Marcus Aurelius, in sterner language, bids us leave life's stage as an actor who has performed his part. It is the same

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view of things which has caused the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius to become one of the most prized of books. It is this wise Secularism which takes tired people back to Marcus Aurelius when all other religions and philosophies have failed them. What a book might be written of the great men who came to the *Meditations* in the bad moments, when fame and fortune and honor itself seemed unreal. For, by the irony of fate, this austere wearer of the imperial purple has become the great consoler of men. His golden book of the *Meditations* is one of the most precious heritages handed down the centuries by the masters of the world.

Oh! the charm of Marcus Aurelius. He was more than a mere writer, for he bound men by something stronger than a chain of roses, the thrill of the dance, or the sparkle of Falernian wine. It is not his grace of language that causes men to read his book to-day. It is not merely his philosophy that causes men to turn to him from all other wisdom. It was not to Lucretius, with his world-grip of human destiny, or Virgil, with his tears of mortal fortune, or Horace, who sings so well of banquets, the laughter of women, the joy of summer days, but to the austere soldier-emperor, that men turned in the last resort to which they are pushed so often "with close-lipped patience for their only friend."

The waters of thought slip silently away, and it is not a little amazing to realise that the ideas of this Roman Emperor should still have sufficient vitality to fire the hearts and brains of men and women of our own generation. It is a splendid achievement—power over millions of all ages, races, and sympathies. Small wonder that Renan, a writer of nice distinction, has spoken of the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius in terms of more unmixed eulogy than he has ever bestowed elsewhere.

The *Meditations*, be it remembered, were never intended for publication. They are simply the Emperor's commonplace book, where he entered his reflections, often quite unconnected, on life and death, and the questions that knock at every man's heart. The little volume was considered for long a literary curiosity. It fitly headed the very brief list of the writings of kings, a class not in any way remarkable for literary genius. Critics talk of the Greeks as being the teachers of Marcus Aurelius. It is true; but the golden book of the *Meditations* could only have been written by a Roman. The strength, the tenderness, the humanity, the resignation, these are the gifts of the lords of human things, the masters of the world.

Matthew Arnold pointed out that the *Meditations* are counsels of perfection. But they do not claim to be other than self-communings. The maxims should be read, as they were written, one at a time. Aurelius addressed them, not to any reader, but to himself, as the sentinels and supports of a conduct of life. The present moment is one in which such advice is priceless, for in all the world's literature there is no other book so full of perfect sanity. It is because the *Meditations* are a bracing tonic in a time of moral slackness that the book ranks among the assets of our day. The pomp of Rome has long faded "like snow upon the desert's face"; but the great Emperor's words of wisdom remain a most precious legacy, because he saw life steadily and saw it whole.

MIMNERMUS.

Credibility of the Old Testament Scriptures

WHAT memorials remain to give us light into the originals of nations and the history of those ages we commonly call the first ages? The Bible, it will be said—that is, the historical part of it in the Old Testament. But even these divine books must be reputed insufficient to the very purpose by every candid and impartial man who considers either their authority as histories or the matter they contain. For what are they, and how came they to us? At the time when Alexander carried his arms into Asia, a people of Syria, till then unknown, became known to the Greeks. This people had been slaves to the Egyptians, Assyrians, Medes, and Persians, as these several empires prevailed; ten parts in twelve of them had been transplanted by ancient conquerors, and melted down and lost in the east, several ages before the establishment of the empire that Alexander destroyed; the other two parts had been carried captive to Babylon a little before the same era. The captivity was not indeed perpetual, like the other; but it lasted so long, and such circumstances, whatever they were, accompanied it, that the captives forgot their country, and even their language—the Hebrew dialect at least, and character—and a few of them only could be wrought upon, by the zeal of some particular men, to return home when the indulgence of the Persian monarchs gave them leave to rebuild their city and to repeople their ancient patrimony. Even this remnant of the nation did not continue long entire. Another great transmigration followed, and the Jews that settled under the protection of the Ptolemys forgot their language in Egypt, as the forefathers of these Jews had forgot theirs in Chaldea. More attached, however, to their religion in Egypt (for reasons easy to be deduced from the new institutions that prevailed after the captivity among them) than their ancestors had been in Chaldea, a version of their sacred writings was made into Greek at Alexandria, not long after the canons of these scriptures had been finished at Jerusalem; for many years could not intervene between the death of Simon the Just, by whom this canon was finished (if he died during the reign of Ptolemy Soter), and the beginning of this famous translation under Ptolemy Philadelphus. The Hellenist Jews reported as many marvellous things to authorise, and even to sanctify, this translation as the other Jews had reported about Esdras, who began, and Simon the Just who finished, the canon of their scriptures. These holy romances slid into tradition, and tradition became history; the Fathers of our Christian Church did not disdain to employ them. St. Jerome, for instance, laughed at the story of the seventy-two elders, whose translations were found to be, upon comparison, word for word the same, though made separately, and by men who had no communication with one another. But the same St. Jerome, in the same place, quotes Aristeas, one of the guard of Ptolemy Philadelphus, as a real personage.

The account pretended to be written by this Aristeas of all that passed relating to the transaction was enough for his purpose. This he retained, and he rejected only the more improbable circumstances which had been added to the tale, and which laid it open to most suspicion. In this he showed great prudence and better judgment than that zealous but weak apologist Justin, who believed the whole story himself, and endeavored to impose it on mankind.....

Thus, when we consider these books barely as histories, delivered to us on the faith of a superstitious people, among whom the custom and art of pious lying prevailed remarkably, we may be allowed to doubt whether greater credit is to be given to what they tell us concerning the original, compiled in their own country, and as it were, out of the sight of the rest of the world, than we know, with such a certainty as no scholar presumes to deny, that we ought to give to what they tell us concerning the copy.....

Apion, an Egyptian, a man of much erudition, appeared in the world some centuries afterwards. He wrote, among other antiquities, those of his own country; and as he was obliged to speak very often of the Jews, he spoke of them in a manner neither much to their honor nor to that of their histories.....

The Jewish history never obtained any credit in the world till Christianity was established. The foundations of this system being laid partly in these histories and in the prophecies joined to them or inserted in them, Christianity has reflected back upon them an authority which they had not before, and this authority has prevailed wherever Christianity has spread. Both Jews and Christians hold the same books in great veneration, while each condemns the other for not understanding or for abusing them.....

These scriptures (the Old Testament scriptures) are come down to us broken and confused, full of additions, interpolations, and transpositions, made we neither know when nor by whom, and such, in short, as never appeared on the face of any other book on whose authority men have agreed to rely.....I will venture to say that I do not assume so much as is assumed in every hypothesis that affixes the divine seal of inspiration to the whole canon; that rests the whole proof on Jewish veracity; and that pretends to account particularly and positively for the descent of these ancient writings in their present state.

It is strange, but it is true; not only the Jews differ from the Christians, but Jews and Christians both differ among themselves, concerning almost every point that is necessary to be certainly known and agreed upon in order to establish the authority of books which both have received already as authentic and sacred. So that whoever takes the pains to read what learned men have writ on this subject, will find they leave the matter as doubtful as they took it up.

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The creation of the first man is described by some as if, pre-Adamites, they had assisted at it. They talk of his beauty as if they had seen him, of his gigantic size as if they had measured him, and of his prodigious knowledge as if they had conversed with him. They point out the very spot where Eve laid her head the first time he enjoyed her. They have minutes of the whole conversation between the mother of mankind, who damned her children before she bore them, and the serpent. Some are positive that Cain quarrelled with Abel about a point of doctrine, and others affirm that the dispute arose about a girl. A great deal of such stuff may be easily collected about Enoch, about Noah, and about the sons of Noah; but I waive any farther mention of such impertinences as Bonzes or Talapoins would almost blush to relate.....

No scholar will dare to deny, that false history, as well as sham miracles, has been employed to propagate Christianity.

Sure I am that experience, from the first promulgation of Christianity to this hour, shows abundantly with how much ease and success the most opposite, the most extravagant, nay, the most impious opinions, and the most contradictory faiths, may be founded on the same text and plausibly defended by the same authority.—*Lord Bolingbroke, "On the Study of History."*

Acid Drops

A few weeks ago we referred to a patriotic "round robin" signed by Professor Haeckel and other eminent Germans in science, literature, art, and philosophy, denouncing England, and her hatred and jealousy of Germany, as the cause of the present terrible war. A portion of the "round robin" was published in the *Times*, and Professor Haeckel was certainly amongst the signatories. We have been asked whether Haeckel was not a misprint for Harnack. Our reply is "Certainly not." It will be remembered that we offered a few words of criticism pointing out that the "round robin" in question overlooked all the diplomatic proceedings and correspondence leading up to the war, including Germany's attack on France and the violation of the neutrality of Belgium. We added that Mr. M. M. Mangasarian, who was then in London, had written to Professor Haeckel, asking if this document represented his ideas of the situation.

In spite of the fact that a long list of distinguished Britishers replied, as it were, to the German professors with a sort of "you're another" round-robin, it occurs to a contemporary of ours that the quarrel would be incomplete without *his* word on the bold, bad Haeckel. There was a time when the firm to which our contemporary belongs almost lived on the publication of English editions of Haeckel's works, but that day is a good deal past, and an opportunity presents itself of illustrating La Rochefaucauld's definition of "gratitude." This is what we read:—

> "All Rationalists in this country warmly repel Professor Haeckel's violent and wholly unwarranted attack upon England.....But in consideration of the great services which he has rendered to the cause of Freethought, our personal view is that no action should be taken in the matter until the equilibrium of Europe is once more re-established."

Since Æsop's frog was there ever such a case of personal distention. But that will go down. Haeckel's size is natural.

The distention calls for surgical treatment in another way when the same writer refers to "our good friend, Mr. Eden Phillpotts." We don't know how Mr. Phillpotts takes this, but we know how his admirers must. There is a puff, too, of Mr. Blatchford's famous pamphlet as "the nearest approach to correct prophecy in the whole annals of literature"—when Mr. Blatchford distinctly states that he was not a prophet at all, that he published nothing original, but merely put into popular English for a popular audience what the military and naval experts had been saying for years.

"Vanoc" of the *Referee* is good enough to admit that "England is worth fighting for." Thank you, "Vanoc," thank you! We say that as an Englishman. You are also good enough to add that your eulogy is "in spite of hooliganism, atheism, class hatred, shams," etc. Thanks again, "Vanoc,"—this time as an Atheist. We should have been very sorry to gain your praise.

History used to be a fairly frequent accomplishment amongst educated people. We believe it must be very much rarer now. A poet in the *Times* (rather a rare thing) the other day coupled Cæsar and Attila. Gods! What a desecration! Cæsar was one of the greatest of men—Attila merely one of the bloodiest. It will not surprise our readers to learn that the poet in question was pious; there was nothing of the infidel about him.

The smug and super-hypocritical Protestantism of this country is not to have it all its own way in attributing German militarism to Materialism and Atheism. The *Catholic Times* crops up with the theory that the German atrocities are really due to Protestantism. Its argument is that Protestantism makes for the breakdown of religious authority, and so opens the way for all kinds of evils. It says that the German Catholics will be horrified when they realise the horrors committed. As though Catholics had not a hand in perpetrating these horrors! We may remind the *Catholic Times* that Catholic soldiery in times of war have shown themselves among the most brutal in the history of the world. Witness the "Wars of Religion" during the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries.

The "unco guid" are shocked at the pious callousness of the Kaiser's troops, yet the spirit in which Samuel "hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord" is the spirit in which Louvain and Termonde were made ruins. Christians are like the Bourbons, "they learn nothing and forget nothing."

The leader-writers attribute the Kaiser's downfall to his devotion to the "Bismarckian gospel of blood and iron." They might also add the Christian gospel of blood and fire.

"The only ideal of the German Emperor is an ideal of iconoclasm," says the pious *Daily Mail*. Yet the Kaiser ever has the name of "God" upon his lips, and the belts of his soldiers bear a pious inscription.

No one with the least spark of sympathy in their nature can feel anything but horror at the devastation—whether deliberate or accidental—of Belgium and certain parts of France. But we are quite at a loss to see why it should be called "Anti-Christian" or "Unchristian." *Christian* wars have always been accompanied by similar scenes, and often worse scenes than even the present war has furnished. It is, indeed, a truism that the more religious the war the more brutal and unrelenting the slaughter. In these wars in which religion has played a large part, the area over which the present war is now raging, has been more than once involved. Here is a sample, taken from Motley, describing the taking of St. Quentin in the sixteenth century:—

> "To a horrible carnage succeeded a sack and a conflagration still more horrible.....The women.....were stripped almost entirely naked, lest they should conceal treasure which belonged to their conquerors, and they were slashed in the face with knives, partly in sport, partly as a punishment for not giving up property which was not in their possession. The soldiers even cut off the arms of many of these wretched women, and then turned them loose, maimed and naked, into the blazing streets.....The streets were already strewn with the corpses of the butchered garrison and citizens; while the survivors were now burned in their houses. Human heads, limbs, and trunks were mingled among the bricks and rafters of the houses, which were falling on every side.....The work of killing, plundering, and burning lasted nearly three days and nights. The streets, meanwhile, were encumbered with heaps of corpses, not a single one of which had been buried since the capture of the town. The remains of nearly all the able-bodied male population, dismembered, gnawed by dogs, or blackened by fire, polluted the midsummer air."

From the Crusades to the Balkan War no better guide for a soldiery bent on pillage and murder could be found than a short *resumé* of all those wars in which Christian feeling has played a prominent part.

President Wilson's invitation to all Christendom to join him in praying to God for peace contains the following passage:—

> "I, Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States of America, do designate Sunday, the 4th day of October next, a day of prayer and supplication, and to request all God-fearing persons to repair on that day to their places of worship to unite their petitions to Almighty God that.....he vouchsafe His children healing peace again and restore once more that concord among men and nations without which there can be neither happiness nor true friendship, nor any wholesome fruit of toil or thought in the world."

This is very nicely put, but surely a man like Dr. Wilson cannot exactly believe all this nonsense. He may believe it as President of the United States; a man in that position has to believe all sorts of things officially; but does he believe it as a scholar and a philosopher? We have our doubts. It must have crossed his mind, if it has done no more, that God's intervention would be more efficacious in

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preventing war than in stopping it after it has broken out. Holding a horse in check before he starts running away is far easier, and far more sensible, than pulling him up half way down a steep hill.

What a magnificent description of his father Hamlet gives in the wonderful closet scene with his mother:—

> "See, what a grace was seated on this brow;
> Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himself;
> An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;
> A station like the herald Mercury
> New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;
> A combination and a form indeed,
> Where every god did seem to set his seal,
> To give the world assurance of a man."

The loftiest part of this glorious passage was brought to Mr. Robert Blatchford's memory (see last week's *Dispatch*) by —well, what does the reader think? Nothing less—and nothing more—than the high heels of a French girl's boots! Was it not Thomas Paine who said there was only one step from the sublime to the ridiculous?

Anyhow, it is as well to quote Shakespeare correctly. Such a passage in such a poet deserves at least that compliment. "Heaven-kissing hill" appeared in the *Dispatch* as "heaven-kissed hill," which spoils both the meaning and the music. The responsibility for this bad blunder may rest upon the newspaper officials. But it may *not* rest upon them. It may rest upon Mr. Blatchford—who once confessed (in a passage of arms with the editor of the *Freethinker*) that he had difficulty in recognising much meaning or music in Shelley. Shelley!

The *Daily Chronicle* will have to look to Harold Begbie, who aspires to be the poet of "the greatest war that ever was." "By Their Fruits," a "pome" of his in Monday's issue, contained the following stanza—one of five, all about as good—or bad:—

> "Prussian Vulture,
> Scream of culture
> O'er the ashes of Termonde!
> Satyr searches,
> Maids and churches
> Violated, like your bond!

This is not poetry, but it is sailing devilish near the wind. At this rate there will soon be a demand for an illustrated edition of Mr. Harold Begbie's poetry, but his success (in this line) may prove the *Chronicle's* undoing.

The following story, the *Indiaman* (September 18), on the authority of the *Empire*, says is strictly true:—

> "A pious missionary went to a remote village and started bazaar-preaching. The simple villagers, who had never seen a white man, came by the hundred to listen to him; they also found his halting knowledge of the vernacular somewhat amusing. But there were days when he could not go, and the Catechist took his place, and the crowds vanished. Then the good man's wrath was kindled, and he rebuked the poor Native Christian for his lack of zeal in preaching the good tidings. 'How is this, Nogen Babu,' he demanded, 'when I preach there are hundreds present, but when you take my place there is hardly anyone present?' The trembling Catechist replied: 'Sir, have you never seen a bear-dance in our village? When it is a brown bear there is hardly anyone present, but when a white bear dances there are hundreds present.'"

Nogen Babu was no fool.

We cut the following from the *Daily Mail* (Sept. 29):—

> "A remarkable service was held in Hereford Cathedral yesterday in celebration of the eightieth birthday of the Bishop of Hereford. The service was led by the Rev. A. Duncombe, aged 85; the first lesson was read by Canon Copes, aged 83; the second lesson by Canon Palmer, aged 84; the Epistle by Prebendary Lambert, aged 82; and the Gospel by Prebendary Hanbury, aged 85. Their total ages totalled 419 years. Among the congregation were Mrs. Bather, aged 92; Mrs. Giles, aged 87; Mrs. Littledale Smith, aged 86; and Mrs. Hanbury, aged 84."

What an inordinate time some of these good Christians do keep out of heaven!

A few poor professional Christians culled from the "Wills and Bequests" of recent numbers of the *Times*: Rev. Henry Danvers Macnamara, the Rectory, Queenhithe, Upper Thames-street, left £5,008; Rev. Charles James Bradshaw, Whitchurch Rectory, Ross, Herefordshire, left £7,060; Rev. James Drew, 2 Brandon-villas, Bristol, left £1,954; Rev. Francis Percy Hutchesson Powell, Union Hall, Co. Cork, left £10,296; Rev. Charles Cusac Halley, West Malling, Kent, left £2,820; Canon Alexander Grimston, Stillingfleet, York, left £5,498; Rev. Robert Williams Thrupp, West Worthing, Sussex, left £49,784. "Blessed be ye poor"—especially Thrupp, the forty thousand pounder!

A number of well-intentioned Christians are still busy discussing whether war is right or wrong, justifiable or unjustifiable, and whether killing an enemy in warfare is "murder" or not? None of them seem to realise that their trouble originates in the utterly impracticable nature of Christian *teaching*. We emphasise "teaching" because Christian practice has got over the difficulty by ignoring it. To the man of common sense war may be either right or wrong; killing a man may be either justifiable or unjustifiable. There are easily conceivable circumstances in which no one would hesitate to take life; and what is true of the relations between individuals is equally true of the relations between nations. This would be plain enough even to Christians if they were not saddled with an absurd and impracticable mass of teachings. It is perfectly true that love is, ultimately, more powerful than hatred, and is more enduring; but it requires suitable circumstances for operation, and these must sometimes be secured by force.

The absurdity arises when people, not content with justifying a particular war, begin to talk of the "moral uplift" of war, of its "purifying" effects, and of its influence in making both individuals and nations better. This is a very plain absurdity. Whether justifiable or not, all warfare involves a certain amount of de-civilisation. It may be necessary, in self-defence, or in defence of one's home, to kill a man, but it is absurd to argue that one is made better by killing. And it is just as ridiculous to assume that by drilling and arming thousands of men, filling them with lust for blood, and encouraging them to kill those against whom they bear no individual ill-will, that we are purifying them or providing them with a "moral uplift." War may be necessary, and so far justifiable, but the price we pay for it is that of individual and national retrogression. And we fancy that none are so ready to recognise this as thoughtful men who know war from actual experience.

Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett makes, in the *Daily Telegraph*, an interesting—although unintended—comment upon those who imagine that the horrors of the present war will be enough to prevent wars in the future. He says:—

> "The whole thing is becoming too ghastly to be really true. The whole civilised world is becoming so acclimatised to death that the mere news that another 2,000,000 human beings, each armed with a weapon capable of firing ten shots a minute, and supported by every form of infernal death-dealing cannon, are about to exterminate one another, excites but a mild interest. It is accepted as an everyday event, like a football match or a boxing championship. Such is the struggle before Cracow which is now commencing."

Those who argue that the horrors of war will end war are blind to both the teachings of history and the facts of human nature. Gentleness is not born of brutality nor peace of war. The peace that succeeds war is really the lethargy that follows exhaustion, but it does not breed a genuine desire for peace. People may become habituated to horrors as to everything else, and the proof of this is seen in the fact that already, as Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett says, we are accepting the slaughter of thousands as an everyday event, and treating that of hundreds as a trifling affair hardly worth consideration.

The present state of affairs offers a fine opportunity for ill-informed people to publish anything that they dislike. Atheism and Materialism have naturally come in for special attention. Germany is Atheistic and Materialistic; hence all its faults. Others have fallen foul of Mr. Norman Angell, with a very obvious non-understanding of what he teaches. Nietzsche is blackguarded generally—often by ill-informed newspaper scribblers who have not read him, and wouldn't understand him if they did. Even Darwin has not escaped. Some geniuses have discovered that the worship of brute force is a logical application of Darwinism, and that, therefore, Darwin is partly responsible for the ideal which Germany has set before herself.

It is all very silly, and we hardly think it was necessary for Major Leonard Darwin to have gone to the trouble, in the *Times*, of vindicating his father from any such charge. Darwin taught that the fittest survives, but he was the last one to believe the best kind of fitness is that which is summed up in brute force. Fitness seldom expresses more than mere biological efficiency, and is so far little more than the statement of a truism. To say that an animal survives because it is the fittest, and that it is the fittest because it survives, are practically identical statements. The problem for the moralist is, first, what actually constitutes fitness in

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a given environment, and, second, what qualities are best, and so ought to acquire the quality of fitness. In other words, how can we make "fitness" and "best" identical? Now, Darwin was the last man in the world to ignore the fact that mere physical fitness as represented in brute strength was involved in human evolution. As human society advances, "fitness" becomes more mental and moral, and, proportionately, less physical. The brute gives place to the man. Those who do not already know Darwin's opinions on the subject should read the third, fourth, and fifth chapters of the *Descent of Man*—chapters which by themselves are enough to establish Darwin's reputation as a thinker of the first magnitude.

Nothing like cheek! The *Catholic Times* asks:—

> "Is there left enough moral force in Europe to look upon the Government of Europe from the moral point of view? Can the Christian Churches unite, if only in the matter of pursuing and ensuring international peace, repressing armaments, curbing kings, and encouraging the reign of the principles of Christ? Can the Christian Churches so far forget their divisions as to invite the Papacy to become the head of a European Federation charged with the duty of checking ambitions and preserving peace?"

For cool impudence this is almost unbeatable. Fancy anyone seriously suggesting that the only way to inaugurate a better state of things is for all the Churches to unite and invite the Papacy to become the head of a European Federation! As though the Churches ever could unite for such a purpose! And even if they did, it is certain that the last state would be worse than the first. There is plenty of moral force left in Europe, but its healthiest expression is outside all the Churches, and that will always operate to keep any Church from assuming a position of supremacy.

The *Christian World* says that when the war is ended, it will be important for all the Churches of both Germany and England to be at one in working for the suppression of militarism. We do not see why it is specially important for the Churches to be on hand when the day of settlement arrives, and we do not fancy they will be consulted. In any case, unless the Churches falsify all their past history, they will do very little towards suppressing the curse of militarism. The clergy are generally on hand in every military pageant, when war is in the air they usually do their best to fan the war spirit, and are never slow to furnish justification for any and every war that comes along. Just before the present war broke out German and English clergymen were fraternising and professing unbounded love and admiration for each other, but the war came just the same. German theologians of prominence have issued manifestos denouncing England and justifying Germany, and English theologians have done exactly the same. In these matters, so far as any real good is concerned, the clergy of either country count for very little. They can usually be found dancing to any tune that the passion of the moment or the interest of their church calls for. Find out what is popular and profitable, and one can pretty well guess what the clergy will have to say.

A writer in the *Sphere* observes:—

> "A large part of every clergyman's salary is paid to him for saying 'Thou shalt not kill,' and 'Turn him the other cheek,' without any consideration of extenuating circumstances whatever. Hence, during war time, if he is also recruiting or beaming on recruiting meetings, he is not earning his money. One may honor him for these military efforts—but one must be permitted to ponder a little, too."

Of course, this writer does not exactly blame clergymen for acting as recruiting agents, but he does make it plain that a clergyman's profession inevitably makes for a certain amount of hypocrisy, and that is certainly clear to anyone who considers their teaching and their practice with an unprejudiced mind.

American papers say that a scientist has discovered a method of bleaching the negro's skin, and under this treatment it will become as milk. The Christian Church claims that it can whitewash the colored man's soul, and this scientist says he can modify his complexion. This happy union of science and religion should enable the American Christian to grasp the African's hand instead of kicking him under the coat-tails as heretofore.

"Ninety-seven per cent. of the admiration that is now felt in this country for the Emperor of Japan is due to the fact that in going to war he did not announce a special partnership with Almighty God!"—*New York Herald.*

The Yellow Press drops into truth much as Silas Wegg dropped into poetry. Writing of the Kaiser's piety, the *Daily Mail* says "Nero is never more dangerous that when he mounts the pulpit and tickles our ears with the maxims of a trite morality." It is so very safe to write in that strain of the Kaiser—but are there no others?

The Bible is supposed to circulate without external assistance, and purely on account of its inherent value. The income of the British and Foreign Bible Society last year was £275,447, and there are many other similar organisations financially interested in circulating the scriptures. Yet, in spite of this enormous outlay, backed by "Omnipotence," the Bible is becoming "a back number."

It is reported that the Pope has telegraphed to the Kaiser, "When you destroy the temples of God you provoke the divine ire, before which even the most potent armies lose all power." We should have thought that a God worth bothering about would have been more concerned at the destruction of homes and the loss of human life, but we are, perhaps, mistaken. Much as we admire the artistic merits of the old cathedrals, there seems to us something radically wrong when the world shrieks with horror at their destruction, and accepts as a matter of course the slaughter of many thousands of human beings.

We are glad to see that the Hindoos, the Japanese, and the Senegalese are so generously combining to save European civilisation from smashing up. At present they are aiding Christian Europe by force of arms. But we have no doubt that they will realise the necessity for missionary work of a more peaceful kind once the war is over, and we may expect to see some sort of a league formed in order to instruct the Christian world in the art of civilisation. There are times when each nation is called upon to give of its best, and there is a certain moral responsibility devolving upon the "heathen" which we hope they will realise and effectively discharge.

In spite of the war the missionary societies continue their appeals for funds, and point to the necessity for carrying the Gospel to the heathen. Naturally, the "Heathen" when they see the beneficial results of the Christian Gospel in Europe, will greatly long for a share in the blessings it produces. As the lantern and the cinematograph are now both in use in missionary work, we would suggest that a series of pictures straight from the seat of war would prove an invaluable adjunct to the missionary.

The British and Foreign Bible Society announce that they issue the Scriptures in embossed type for the blind in thirty-five languages. They omit to add that the ordinary editions are suitable to the mentally blind.

"Doubtless many books are bought for no better motive than the sake of appearances," says a writer in *T. P.'s Weekly*. Including, we presume, dainty editions of the Bible and of the Anglican Prayer-Book.

A number of Salvation Army officers have been attached to the Canadian Army as "chaplains." The non-militant Salvation Army officers will have a chance of seeing real "blood and fire."

Almost the entire English press turned Catholic for half-an-hour in order to write pious nonsense concerning Rheims Cathedral, which was partially destroyed by the Kaiser's holy Huns. To English Protestants, the real value of the building was architectural, and not religious. Had Rheims Cathedral been a jerry-built tabernacle, there would have been no need for jeremiads.

"Old Moore" has published his forecast for 1915, and the prophet promises a quiet year. We hope he is right; but the present state of affairs is enough to wake up the shepherds on the back hills, and to frighten the winkles out of their shells.

"The Japanese have shown," says a contemporary, "that they are masters of the art of waiting." This will be news to the patient Christians, who have been waiting for the second coming of Christ for nearly two thousand years.

It is said that the handsome soldiers of the Czar carry icons into battle, under the belief that they afford protection during the conflicts. Doubtless, they answer prayer as readily as "The Prince of Peace."

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To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £215 2s. 0d. Received since:—E. Pinder and Friends (Leicester), £1 3s.; C. Heaton, 5s.; F. M. L., 10s.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—Bethnal Green Branch, 5s.

E. B.—Thanks for cuttings.

E. RICHMOND.—We quite understand.

H. J. H.—You will recognise your initials when you see them. We thought it best not to be more explicit.

W. P. BALL.—Your cuttings are always welcome.

W. D. CARVER.—*John Bull* is, at least, not like the mean part of the press that fears to recognise our existence.

J. M. WOOD.—It is a question of what would interest the bulk of our readers. There are enough of the oily, self-seeking "gospel preacher" species over here. When we run short of them we will borrow illustrations from your part of the world. We would prefer, if you don't mind, to receive news of progress from your locality. Thanks for your good wishes. And recollect that in this old country, with all sorts of conventional claims on the pockets of people who have got anything in them, it is always difficult to raise money for advanced causes.

L. BARKER.—We only see the name of one working-class member on the Prince of Wales's National Relief Fund committee. The upper classes know how to keep the administration of "charity" in their own hands. Their use of the Prince of Wales's name (poor lad!) in this case was a clever dodge for disarming criticism.

B. T. HALL.—We ceased acknowledging the Ramsey Fund for reasons assigned. It is no part of our business to watch and check such lists.

E. RICHMOND.—Of course there are other causes at work. There always are. We cannot find any actual solution of continuity in nature. We make it ourselves—mentally.

E. PINDER.—Thanks for your pleasant and encouraging letter.

A. J. MARRIOTT.—Thanks for the reference, though it is rather late.

G. BROADFIELD.—We go by public facts. If the Kaiser believes all he says about himself and God he *is* mad—your opinion notwithstanding. And our business is to attack Christianity as we find it in the utterances and actions of conspicuous Christians. Other monarchs are mad, too, in their degree. We are quite impartial.

J. PARTRIDGE.—We fear it cannot be dealt with in that way. They wouldn't let you lecture on the war, and what else (directly or indirectly) would fill the Town Hall at present?

R. NORTH.—We note the misprint of A. F. Orage for A. R. Orage, who *is* the editor of the *New Age*, but *not* the author of *National Guilds*.

R. TABRUM.—We are very pleased to hear from so old a Freethinker—old in both years and service—and still more so to learn that your health continues satisfactory. We hope that good health will continue. Thanks for your good wishes on our behalf. We are not exactly in need of encouragement, but the sympathy of one's friends is always appreciated.

C. HEATON.—Pleased you derive so much enjoyment from reading the *Freethinker*.

H. GARTHWAITE.—Very sorry your Obituary notice was received too late for insertion in this week's issue.

OWING to unexpected circumstances we are obliged to hold over a good deal of correspondence until next week's issue.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and not to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote's Queen's (Minor) Hall lecture is "off" after all. Just when we thought there was to be fine weather a bolt fell from the blue in the shape of a returned cheque and a refusal to sign the agreement. From the first the Queen's Hall people had stipulated that Mr. Foote should not "refer to the war." This seemed *too* strict, in the case of an old and tried user of the place, and a remonstrance was made to that effect. To lecture *on* the war, or *about* the war, was one thing, and we can quite understand the management objecting to the hall being used for that purpose in the present heated state of the public mind; but to refrain even from referring to the present war, even by way of impartial illustration on another topic, seemed quite too much for human flesh and blood on both sides of the platform. However a *viâ media* was suggested and seemed likely to be acceptable. Mr. Foote proposed to lecture on President Wilson's neutral invitation to the whole Christian world to pray to God for peace on one and the same day (Oct. 4). But the Queen's Hall people wouldn't have "Praying for Peace" at any price. We don't complain—the Queen's Hall people are justified in looking after their own interests. On the other hand, Mr. Foote cannot expect the public to show a frenzied desire to hear him just now on some old stock subject like the Antiquity of Flatirons. His exclusion from the public platform is therefore likely to continue for some time. Fortunately, the Leicester Secularists have a hall of their own, and Mr. Foote is due to lecture there on November 8.

We are delighted to learn that Mr. W. Heaford is making more rapid recovery than was expected. His doctor hopes to pull him through by Christmas.

We don't exactly see what the Bradlaugh Fellowship has to do with the Ramsey Testimonial, but we are asked to announce that the latter will be presented at a Social Meeting of the former in the Borough of Shoreditch Radical Club, 43 New North-road, N., on Wednesday evening, October 14, at 8.30.

Mr. Palmer's second article on "The Evolution of Flowers" stands over till next week. It cannot be fitted in this week's make-up.

A British soldier, who happens to be utterly unorthodox, was in the trenches under heavy fire on September 14, 17, and 21 (we must not say where), though we would like to know the feelings of an Atheist in that situation. We make the following extracts from his letter:—

> "I have seen men killed on either side of me, also taken part in the burial of numerous dead (English and German). I may not give the name of the action, but I will do so later. Although we all carry name (identification) plates, and a nominal religion, religious rites are not usually performed, and no one seems to care much or be the worse. The behavior of all, as you have often pointed out, varies with temperament, some being more nervous than others. Personally, I've not felt frightened yet. Only regret that I should be taking part in these brutalities. I did not think of them as such in years back, when I enlisted. I am writing this during an evening's shelling of the trenches, and although I have thought over things during the past few days, I still do not feel the need of a God, and do not believe in a future heavenly existence, and find but little to regret in my life."

This correspondent, helping to bury the dead near cross-road crucifixes, says he was struck with the irony of the Prince of Peace smiling down on the victims of war.

Viscount Bryce's fine letter on "Neutral Nations and the War" in Monday's *Daily Chronicle* reminds us that he was for some years our much-respected Ambassador to the United States, and long before that the author of a classical book on the *Holy Roman Empire*. It speaks well for the United States that what it asks of us is not a titled simpleton or a purse-proud millionaire, but a man of genius and character, and it is prepared to do its best to return the compliment, which it has generally been able to do—just as able as we have, one thinks. Something good was expected on the war from "Mr." now "Viscount" Bryce, and the hope of his admirers was not disappointed. Here is a noble passage:—

> "It is only vulgar minds that mistake bigness for greatness, for greatness is of the Soul, not of the Body. In the judgment which history will hereafter pass upon the forty centuries of recorded progress towards civilisation that now lie behind us, what are the tests it will apply to determine the true greatness of a people?
>
> "Not population, not territory, not wealth, not military power. Rather will history ask: What examples of lofty character and unselfish devotion to honor and duty has a people given? What has it done to increase the volume of knowledge? What thoughts and what ideals of permanent value and unexhausted fertility has it bequeathed to mankind? What works has it produced in poetry, music, and the other arts to be an unfailing source of enjoyment to posterity?
>
> "The small peoples need not fear the application of such tests.
>
> "The world advances not, as the Bernhardi school suppose, only or even mainly by fighting. It advances mainly by Thinking and by a process of reciprocal teaching and learning, by a continuous and unconscious co-operation of all its strongest and finest minds."

This is better reading, even for working men, than Blatchford's worship of "the little brown rifle."

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Primitive Marriage.—III.

(BY THE LATE J. M. WHEELER.)

(*Concluded from p. 637.*)

IT is both interesting and instructive to note the extent to which procuring wives by capture prevailed in ancient times, and among modern races in a low state of civilisation, and survivals of which may be found in the marriage customs of all countries. Abduction is the common theme of ancient story, as in the Ramayana and the Iliad. "Beauty and Booty" were the allied watchwords of the Homeric age. The Bible contains an instance in the twentieth chapter of Judges. The women of the tribe of Benjamin had been destroyed; and as they could not marry Gentiles, and the other tribes would not give wives, the difficulty—which Israel made its own difficulty—was solved by the wholesale slaughter of the inhabitants of Jabez-Gilead, whose population yielded 400 virgins; and next by the men of Benjamin enacting a rape of the Sabines for themselves, each man seizing and carrying off one of the daughters of Shiloh to be his wife, on an occasion when the women met for a festival. These were the days when each man "did what was right in his own eyes." Sir George Grey says of the natives of Australia:—

> "The early life of a young woman at all celebrated for beauty is generally one continuous series of captivity to different masters, of ghastly wounds, of wanderings in strange families, of rapid flights, and of bad treatment from other females among whom she is brought a stranger by her captors."

Abduction is, however, looked on as a kind of homage, and to play at it is the favorite sport of boys and girls.

J. A. Farrer, in his *Primitive Manners*, contends that the form of capture is mainly a concession to maiden bashfulness among early races. Yet, as I have already indicated, there are but slight indications of this native modesty, which itself has been rather the result of severe repression and punishment for "going astray." He also says that the custom sometimes affords a bride a real chance of escape from a bridegroom she dislikes. I fear, however, that the instance of this found in the Travels of Dr. Clarke (vol. i., p. 483) is almost as unusual as it is interesting. Dr. Clarke says:—

> "The ceremony of marriage among the Kalmucks is performed on horseback. A girl is first mounted, who rides off at full speed. Her lover pursues; if he overtakes her, she becomes his wife, and the marriage is consummated on the spot; after this she returns with him to his tent. But it sometimes happens that the woman does not wish to marry the person by whom she is pursued; in this case, she will not suffer him to overtake her. We were assured that no instance occurs of a Kalmuck girl being thus caught, unless she have a partiality to the pursuer. If she dislikes him, she rides, to use the language of English sportsmen, 'neck or nought,' until she has completely effected her escape, or until her pursuer's horse becomes exhausted, leaving her at liberty to return, and to be afterwards chased by some more favored admirer."

Among the Tunguzes and Kamschatdales a matrimonial engagement is not to be considered definitely concluded until the suitor has overcome his beloved by force, and torn her clothes—the maiden being bound by custom to defend her liberty to the utmost. Also, among the Bedouin Arabs, it is necessary for the bridegroom to force the bride to enter his tent. Burckhardt says:—

> "Among the Sinai Arabs a bride defends herself with stones, and often inflicts wounds on the young men, even though she does not dislike the lover; for, according to custom, the more she struggles, bites, kicks, cries and strikes, the more she is applauded ever after by her own companions."

A similar custom existed among the French, at least in some provinces, as late as the seventeenth century, and some of our own rustic beauties have been known to consider kicking and screaming as almost as indispensable as tears. Among many races it is a point of honor to the bride to resist and struggle, however willing she may be.

Among the Kols of North-east India, in public market, a young man with a party of friends will carry off a girl, struggling and screaming, but no one not interested interferes, and the girl's female friends are apt to applaud the exploit. Among the Eskimo of last century the form of bride-lifting was in use, nor was its serious meaning forgotten, for sometimes a Greenlander, desirous of a second wife, would simply pounce upon an unprotected female, or, with his friends' help, carry off a girl from a dance. The custom of stealing women, especially heiresses, prevailed in Ireland and Scotland down to the seventeenth century, and "is glorified in a whole literature of songs and ballads." (Lecky, *History of the Eighteenth Century*, vol. ii., p. 366).

Lord Kames, in his *Sketches of the History of Man* (vol. ii., p. 59), has noticed the curious and significant marriage custom which lingered in Wales even in his own day, perpetuating the memory of ancient violence:—

> "On the morning of the wedding-day the bridegroom, accompanied by his friends on horseback, demands the bride. Her friends, who are likewise on horseback, give a positive refusal, on which a mock scuffle ensues. The bride, mounted behind her nearest kinsman, is carried off, and is pursued by the bridegroom and his friends, with loud shouts. When they have fatigued themselves and their horses, the bridegroom is suffered to overtake his bride. He leads her away in triumph, and the scene is concluded with feasting and festivity."

In the Description of Westmeath, Sir H. Piers, writing in 1682, says of the Irish:—

> "On the days of bringing home, the bridegroom and his friends ride out and meet the bride and her friends at the place of meeting. Being come near each other, the custom was of old to cast a short dart at the company that attended the bride, but at such distance that seldom any hurt ensued. Yet it is not out of the memory of man that the Lord of Howth, on such an occasion, lost an eye."

The idea of capture is, of course, more discoverable among a race like the Tartars, where the bridegroom is pursued with stones and javelins, than among ourselves, where the happy man is only pelted with rice or slippers.

A review of the instances, to which a large number indicating further links of transition might have been added, which may be found in Sir John Lubbock's *Origin of Civilisation*, and in J. F. McLennan's *Studies in Ancient History*, induces us to think that abduction in spite of parents was the earlier form, that next came the making of compensation to escape vengeance, and that this grew into the making of presents beforehand and the system of purchase. In Homer we find the capture of wives from opposing tribes, their purchase from those who are friends, and the interchange of marriage presents, which is the germ of matrimonial contracts, and, later, develops into an organised system of dower.

The substitution of purchase for capture points to such an improvement in the condition of life as is implied by the existence of commerce by barter. It seems to have become usual whenever men have passed from the hunting into the pastoral stage. As representing the transition period between capture and purchase, we may take the Kirghaz and Circassian tribes, among whom capture exists generally as a form, but on occasion as a fact; the ceremony of capture being always gone through, and actual compulsion resorted to if the lady's parent should not accept the price offered for her hand. In Afghanistan a man may, by either the rape of a lock of his sweetheart's hair, snatching away her veil, or throwing a sheet over her, declaring at the same time that he claims her as his wife, secure her, provided he can pay the stipulated sum.

Among the Toorkmans, the necessity of paying a high price for a bride leads to frequent elopements. The parents and relatives, however, pursue the lovers, who have made for the nearest camp and become united, and the matter is adjusted by an intermarriage with some female relation of the

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bridegroom, while he himself becomes bound to pay so many camels and horses as the price of the bride. The young lady, after her Gretna Green union, returns to her parents' home, and passes a year in preparing the carpets and clothes which are necessary for a Toorkman tent, and on the anniversary of her elopement she is finally transferred to the arms and establishment of her lover. We here see a stage of transition from the system of actual abduction to a mere symbolism, of which stage traces remained in Sparta in historic times. In Sparta the young wife was not, immediately after the marriage, domiciled in her husband's house, but cohabited with him for some time clandestinely, till he brought her to his home. Burckhardt tells us of a custom which prevails among the Mezeyne tribe of Arabs in the Sinai peninsula. A girl, after being carried off and wrapped in a cloak, is permitted to escape from her tent and fly into the neighboring mountains. The bridegroom next day goes in search of her, and remains often many days before he finds her, while her female friends are apprised of her hiding-place, and supply her with provisions. If the husband finds her at last (which is sooner or later, according to the impression he has made on the girl's heart), he is bound to consummate the marriage on the spot, and to pass the night with her in the mountains. The next morning the bride goes home to her tent, that she may have some food, but again runs away in the evening, and repeats these flights several times, till she finally returns to her tent. She does not go to live in her husband's tent till far advanced in pregnancy. Unless pregnant, she may not join her husband till after a full year from the wedding day.

The transition to the honeymoon trip may be seen among the Soligas (India), where, "when a girl consents to marry, the man runs away with her to some neighboring village, and they live there until the honeymoon is over. They then return home and give a feast to the people of their village" (Buchanan, *Journey from Madras*, vol. i., p. 178).

In all cases the girl is carried off by the man; but among the Garos of Bengal we find a similar custom, only it is the bridegroom who is abducted. He pretends to be unwilling, and runs away, but is caught by the friends of the bride, and then taken by force, in spite of the resistance and counterfeited grief and lamentation of his parents, to the bride's house. So also among the Ahitas of the Philippine Islands. If her parent will not consent to a love-match, the girl seizes the young man by the hair of his head, carries him off, and declares she has run away with him. In such a case it appears that marriage is held to be valid, whether the parents consent or not.

The obtaining of a wife by purchase indicates, as I have said, a great improvement. For one thing, there is less female infanticide where the daughter is a marketable commodity, and in course of time the flocks, goods, or money which were given as an equivalent for the surrender of paternal rights become a provision for the daughter's own use. Yet in this stage the position of woman is still a very degraded one. Her lord and master can say with Petruchio:—

> "She is my goods, my chattels; she is my house,
> My household stuff, my field, my barn,
> My horse, my ox, my ass, my anything."

The Bedouins think it scandalous to demand the daughter's price, or, rather, polite to keep it in the background. Burckhardt goes so far as to say that the Bedouins are perhaps the only Eastern people who can be entitled lovers. This is incorrect; yet even among them woman is regarded as much inferior to man, and when once married becomes a mere servant. Their position among Christian Slavs is not better. The Albanians consider that as they purchase their wives they have despotic power over them, and that they may not only beat them at pleasure, but dismiss them on paying a fixed sum—ideas which have been known to crop up in Western Europe. In ancient Russia, as part of the marriage ceremony, the father took a new whip, and after striking his daughter gently with it, told her that he did so for the last time, and presented the whip to the bridegroom, to whose tender mercies she then passed.

Among the Mongols marriages are arranged by parents without consulting the parties most concerned; and when all is settled they say, "I have bought for my son the daughter of so and so"; or, "We have sold our daughter to such and such a family."

When the price has been paid the daughter becomes the property of the purchaser, but she remains with her family until the time for performing the marriage ceremonies, which include the "capture" of the bride by the friends of the bridegroom.

In China the woman has no concern in the choice of a husband. When married he is her complete master, and may strike her with impunity, may starve her, sell her, or let her out for a longer or shorter period, as is the common practice in the province of Tche-Kiang. Divorce is almost at the husband's pleasure, being allowed for barrenness, adultery, disobedience to husband or his parents, talkativeness, theft, ill temper, or inveterate infirmities. No wonder the women are devotedly religious, for they hope they may thus become males in their next stage of existence.

In Babylon and Assyria wives were to be purchased by auction, pretty maids fetching high sums, while it is said some ill-looking ones had dowries presented with them. The Thracians bought their wives in the time of Herodotus, and Aristotle asserts it was once customary in Greece. Moses allowed a father to sell his daughters for slaves or concubines, provided the purchaser were an Israelite (Exodus xxi. 7). It is probable that in early times the Hebrew wife had no power of obtaining a legal divorce, as, even at the date of the Talmud, the wife could do no more than compel her husband to give her the letter of separation, which he on his part (according to Deut. xxiv. 1) could use against her at any time. Even in Rome, so clearly, says Gibbon, was woman defined not as a *person*, but as a *thing*, that if the original title was deficient, she might be claimed like other moveables, by the use and possession of an entire year. In one of the forms of marriage among the Romans capture survived as a form, and in another, purchase survived as a fact.

In Saxon England marriage by purchase is referred to in the laws of Æthelbirht as though it was the usual custom. The principal ceremony was *handfaestnung*, or pledging hands, which was done in the presence of the friends of the bridegroom and bride, and then the former received his wife from her father in return for the price which had previously been agreed upon. If a man found, after marriage, that he had been deceived, he was entitled to send back the lady to her parents, and claim a return of the money he had paid for her. The mercantile nature of the transaction was afterwards sought to be concealed by calling the sum paid by the husband *fosterlean*, as though it were a return for the father's expense in providing food and education of his daughter; and it was expected to be paid at the time of espousal, instead of marriage. In the ninth and tenth centuries a great improvement was made, women of the upper classes acquiring the right to dispose of themselves in marriage. Sir Thomas Smith, however, in his *Commonwealth of England*, bk. iii., ch. 8, gives the following custom of old English law as remaining as late as 1549: "The woman at the church door was given of her father, or some other man of the next of her kind, unto the hands of her husband, and he laid down gold and silver for her upon the book, as though he did buy her." Among the Germans marriage was anciently a purchase, the suitor paying over the price to the person in whose power the maiden or widow chanced to be (J. Grimm, *Deutsche Rechtsalterthümer*). It was so in Ireland and Norway. In the Netherlands, in Spain, and in Longobard law, traces of the purchase of brides still exist. In France it was the law before the Great Revolution, "le futur époux devrait offrir

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une somme aux parent de la fille" (the future husband should offer a sum to the girl's parents). It is perhaps scarcely necessary to add that buying and selling in marriage is not yet extinct in Belgravia.

The Monk and the Woman.—II.

A Public Address by M. M. Mangasarian to the Free Religious Association (Rationalist), Chicago.

(Continued from p. 633.)

WOMAN was educated by the Church, and the Church never educates a woman to play a great part. What betrayed the identity of the monk was liquor. It is well-known that in many of the monasteries the inmates spend a considerable part of their leisure in the manufacture of cordials. A very substantial income is derived from this source. Instead of writing text-books to enlighten the world's ignorance, or inventing machinery to lighten the world's toil, they make of the monastery a quasi brewery or distillery. Father Antoine had left his prayer-books and rosaries behind him when he escaped from the monastery, in fact everything that might reveal that at one time he was a monk he had cast aside, but he had not been able to part also with the liquor he used to make and drink when he was a holy man. His weakness in this matter proved his undoing. The guests at his tent, drinking of the Trappist concoction, discover that their host was at one time a monk. "You," exclaims the merchant traveller, who suddenly recognises in Father Antoine the Trappist monk who had contracted to pray for him, "You promised to pray for me. You have broken your contract with me and your vow to God," and he casts upon him a withering look, a look of disdain, a look of contempt—of horror and of execration. A viper might have provoked his pity, but a monk who has broken his vow, never. And the whole audience seems to arise and point its finger of scorn at the apostate monk. The whole Roman Catholic Church seems to be there on the stage with its awful anathema against the renegade. A shudder falls upon sun and moon even, and heaven and earth stand aghast at the spectacle of a priest who has renounced his vow. A terrific storm, the like of which even the desert had seldom experienced, is invoked to express the protest of the elements against the unholy marriage. The night Julius Cæsar was assassinated there was not half the commotion that there was on this occasion. In short, the coming of a monk and a woman together almost wrecks the universe. But what was all this about? A monk marries. Is there anything extraordinary in that? Is not a monk a man? Can cowl and cloak suppress human nature? But the purpose of all this theatrical fuss was to strike with terror any other priest contemplating his emancipation. It was meant, also, to impress the spectators with the solemnity and sacredness of Catholic teaching, and to warn them from ever disobeying its commandments by listening to the voice in their own souls.

When we analyse the situation, however, we find that there was not the least foundation for all this ado. What, for instance, were the charges against the monk? He was accused, in the first place, of having broken his promise to pray for a certain merchant. Suppose the monk had said *this* to his accuser before that vast audience: "You say, Sir, that I promised to pray for you, and that I am to be condemned for not keeping this promise. Pray for yourself henceforth. Will not God hear your prayer as he will mine? And if you can pray for yourself, why should you ask me to do that which you can do for yourself?" There seems to be an idea that the efficacy of prayer lies not in the thing asked for, but in the man who asks for it. But that would make of the Deity a capricious Oriental ruler, who has to be approached through his courtiers or favorites before he will hear any petitions for help. In the Orient, a man's plea may be just and reasonable, but that is not enough. He must have what, in political parlance is called "a pull," at the Divan. On the other hand, his request may be unjust, but if he has the right backing at the royal court he may hope for success. But if God is not like an Asiatic Sultan, why hire anybody to pray for us? If our request be just, will he refuse it? If unjust, could he be made to favor us for the sake of the priest or the pope? To ask a monk to pray for us clearly proves that we are not sure that God only considers the reasonableness of the request, irrespective of the person who makes it. But that is the kind of infidelity we should be afraid of. I would rather have the heavens empty than that such a God should reside there. But ignorance looks upon the priest as the mediator between God and man. The Latin word pontiff means a bridge. The Pope is pontifex maximus, or the chief bridge. The purpose of a bridge is to span a chasm. Between man and God there is an impassable gulf—an abyss, and the priest is supposed to be the bridge that connects the divided shores. The Deity, too, must cross this bridge to communicate with us. He needs the priest just as much as we do. God and man are represented as separated that the priest may bring them together. The Deity is unapproachable without a priest. He is a consuming fire, and is located on the summit of a smoking and burning mountain, in order that the people may fear to appear in person in his presence and employ the offices of the priest. Now we understand why people hire "holy" men to pray for them.

In reply to the second charge, the monk could have said: "You accuse me of having broken my vow to God. But I am not sorry for that. What I am sorry for is that I should ever have been so weak, so uninformed, so indolent, so selfish, and so dead to the challenge of life, to the promptings of the life-force in me, as to have taken such a vow. Hundreds of others, among them some of the world's foremost men, flung aside their vows and ceased to be monks that they might become men—Bruno, Erasmus, Luther! I had vowed never to speak. Well, I am afraid of a religion that would punish me for breaking such a vow. I had also vowed never to love—to live like a withered branch, to sit at a sepulchre all my life, instead of watching at a cradle. I am sorry for the religion that would compel me to fulfil so foolish a vow. It was wrong to have exacted such a promise from me in the first place, and doubly wrong to make it binding on me now that my eyes have been opened, and my heart has been touched." Oh, if that tremendous audience could have heard something like that from the lips of the accused monk! And then turning to the woman, soon to be a mother, which evidence he could have used as a proof that heaven, instead of frowning upon his union with the woman he loved, has blest it, suppose he had said to her: "You are more to me than church or creed. I would not live on earth without you, and heaven without you would be a hell." But the monk does not talk like that. He, too, has been educated by the Church. Had he been a Pagan acting on the Greek or Roman stage, he would have expressed himself in some such way as I have indicated. Or, had he even been on the French stage, at the Odeon in Paris, or at the Theatre Francais, he would have risen to the full stature of his newly gained freedom. But on the American stage, with its puritanical atmosphere, handicapped by political considerations, he can only stammer with trepidation of the heart, and crouch and cringe like a slave who feels upon his bare flesh the sting and smart of the lash. A thousand pities! If you wish to see how the parochial schools can whip all manhood, all independence, all defiance and initiative and high spirits out of a man, see that play. If you would have your son or your daughter brought up to be the sport of superstitious fears, send them to the parochial school.

Prevailed upon by his convent-trained conscience, and his superstitious wife, the emancipated monk returns to his cloister. That is to say, to his vow of silence and celibacy. I call the vow of eternal silence immoral. Think of any man with red blood

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in his veins swearing to hold his tongue, when even the stones are eager to burst into speech. But to hold the tongue is the best way to destroy the mind. The tongue is the mind's chief instrument. Without it the mind might as well not exist at all. Let us never make our peace with a religion that would gag us if it could.

But it is the woman who helps the Church to catch the runaway monk. It is the woman who delivers up the escaped prisoner to his jailors. It is the woman who orders the doors of the cloister to turn upon their rusty hinges and shut in, this time for ever, the man whom love and the light of the big world outside his monastery had set free. I ask you to look at the hand that caught the liberated monk and locked him up again. Look at that hand. It is soft and gentle, with tapering fingers like a woman's. It is a *woman's hand!* To capture the bird that has flown the cage, to smother the mind that has been awakened from its slumber, the Church uses the hand of a woman. The heart and the hand of woman have been the great allies of the Church during the long centuries. A way might be discovered to prop up the planets without the law of gravitation, but neither the Catholic nor the Protestant Church can stand without woman. It is one of the strangest facts of history that in return for what woman has done for religion she has received only insults and injuries from the Church. The world's great religions have not been fair to women. In almost everyone of the creeds woman figures as the tempter of man and the wrecker of the world. According to the Bible, Eve pulled Adam and the whole human race out of paradise. But for her, man would have remained a god to this day. Observe again, the contemptible rôle which the Bible assigns to Job's wife. While he himself is like adamant against the machinations of both Jehovah and Satan, the most formidable combination ever formed against any one person, his wife, instead of lending him a hand, instead of encouraging him in his unequal combat against a Jehovah-Satan combination, taunts and teases him: "Curse God," she says, "curse him and die." Shame on the authors of that questionable story! Yet that is the rôle which most religions assign to woman. She is meant to drag man down, to cause him to slip and fall.

(To be continued.)

Dean Ramsey relates that the Earl of Lauderdale was alarmingly ill, one distressing symptom being a total absence of sleep, without which the medical man declared he could not recover. His son, who was somewhat simple, was seated under the table, and cried out, "Sen' for that preaching man frae Livingstone, for fayther aye sleeps in the kirk." One of the doctors thought the hint worth attending to, and the experiment of "getting a minister till him," succeeded, for sleep came on, and the earl recovered.

The Kaiser's Remonstrance With God.

To God thus murmured Kaiser Billy:
"Come, now, you're treating me but illy,
  And not, God, as you ought to:
Not like the Atheist French am I,
I never did your power deny,
And never failed to glorify
You as my patron and ally,
  And still in prayer besought you.

Am I, your devotee so long,
Who never failed to make a song
  About your friendly 'havior,
To be deserted in my need,
And left in vain my cause to plead?
If so, I must revise my creed,
Your over-lordship supersede,
  And find some other Savior!

It isn't fair to me, you know
(Just think how much to me you owe!)
  So scurvily to treat me;
To let my schemes all go awry,
My cunning plots my hopes belie,
Russia and France my power defy,
And Britain all my threats decry,
  And little Belgium beat me!

You can't think this the proper way
The constant service to repay
  Of your friend and idoliser;
Grateful you surely ought to be,
To be so often linked with me;
Then why not issue your decree,
And favor me as formerly?—
  Your disappointed Kaiser?"

B. D.

Sonnet to Mr. Will Crooks, M.P.

On his leadership of the House of Commons, when the Home Rule Bill became law.

[Mr. Whitley (Deputy-Speaker) then informed the House that the Royal Assent had been given to the Government of Ireland Act. Mr. W. Crooks (Lab., Woolwich) called out, "Mr. Deputy-Speaker, will it be in order to sing 'God Save the King'?" Receiving no reply, he took silence for consent, and started singing the National Anthem.]

When that historic moment had passed by
  Which brought us, on its long-awaited wing—
  So long, it seemed for ever tarrying—
The glorious dawn of Ireland's liberty;
  And when, inspired to hear some noble thing,
Men paused, and looked around expectantly—
'Twas then that Crooks (ah, bathos deep!) did cry:
  "Permit us, sir, to chant 'God Save the King.'"
Thy King should take thee, Will, to be his fool,
  His Court's prime jester. Who so fit as thou
To move the mirth of royalty and rank?
  With cap-and-bells let Labor make its bow,
And, for reward, reap that just ridicule
  Which mocks the democrat turned mountebank.

S.

Correspondence.

SOLDIERS' RIGHT OF AFFIRMATION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Some time ago, in a note on "Religion in the Army" in the *Freethinker*, I said that *I was of opinion* that a Freethinker desirous of joining the Army had a legal right not to have a religious denomination imposed upon him, by taking advantage of the Oaths Act (1888) at his attestation. This I now find to be correct, as I have come across the following statement in the *National Reformer* for June 16, 1889. It occurs in Charles Bradlaugh's presidential report to the N. S. S. Conference for that year, and reads as follows:—

> "There being some misapprehension as to the affirmation of allegiance amongst soldiers, militiamen, and volunteers, the Secretary of State for War has recently recorded his decision, in accordance with the Oaths Act, and this is now circulated in Army Orders."

This information may be of some service to prospective recruits for Kitchener's new Army of a million and a half.

H. GEORGE FARMER.

Obituary.

We regret to report the death, in his fifty-seventh year, of Mr. John Thomas Walters, of Ingersoll House, Gilfach, Bargoed, Monmouthshire, which occurred on September 24. Mr. Walters was a valiant Freethinker, and a constant reader of our journal, and for many years rendered invaluable service as an ardent propagandist. Like every other Secularist of strong convictions, he had to suffer much persecution for his advocacy of Freethought. But no opposition had the effect of cooling his zeal in the spread of "the best of causes." Such was his honesty and sincerity, however, that even his opponents were obliged to respect and admire him. His neighbors and friends, in great numbers, paid their tribute of admiration for his sterling character by their attendance at the funeral, which took place on Tuesday, September 29, when a Secular Service was conducted at the grave-side—E. M. VANCE.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Mr. Cowell's, 44 Jenner-road): Monday, Oct. 12, at 8.30, Business Meeting—*Re* next season's plan of propaganda, etc.

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THE
Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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Liberty sustains the same relation to all our virtues that the sun does to life.—R. G. INGERSOLL.

Freethought and the Army.

FROM the present extraordinary activity of the Churches, it is evident that they are using the War just as the newspaper proprietors and blanket manufacturers are doing—as a means to business. Even the poor soldier comes in for their attention. He is being supplied by them with a daily prayer, printed on a conveniently sized paper, to admit of its being carried "inside his cap." There I'll wager it will remain, unless Tommy wants a light for a "Woodbine." Why on earth can't these people leave the soldier alone? He doesn't want parsons and prayers, and never did. The life and training of the soldier, notwithstanding that the Bible is part of his kit and the Church one of his parades, does not admit of religion in the definite, personal sense. The ordinary soldier usually enlists between the ages of nineteen and twenty-five, a period in life when the mind becomes finally clinched on most things. Of course, he brings with him whatever religious thought or feeling he received at home or at school, and this persists for a time, but gradually slackens before the all-absorbing forces of stern routine in official life and its sequential escapement—the utter freedom of his private life. Like the individual in the early *gens*, the soldier becomes part of the fabric. All that concerns him is his consent with the fabric, whilst his individual life is of small importance; hence its tendency to freedom. In short, the soldier is more concerned with his rifle than his soul. And yet he is none the worse for it. If ever you should visit Edinburgh Castle, just climb as far as the battery, and immediately below you will find a bastion, carefully laid out as a cemetery for soldiers' dogs and other pets. On the slopes of Green Hill—not that one "far away, without a city wall," but at Woolwich, near London—there is another such ground for soldiers' horses. Read the tender, and sometimes affectionate, inscriptions on the slabs there, and you will understand the soul of the soldier better than these stiff-collared parsons. Tommy will probably swear or grumble at the intrusion of his chaplain, but for his horse or dog there is ever a kindly word and pat of the hand.

The soldier is a thorough Pagan. His religion (by the card) only belongs to him as his regimental number does. After his weekly church parade—which is simply a "parade" to him, since he shows no interest in the service—he takes no further view of religion, save that he may pull down his Bible for a dusting before he lays it out with his socks and shirts at "kit inspection." The voluntary evening church service does not attract *one in a thousand*.* As for the chaplain, he is the soldier's *bête noir*. Even when he comes in a social guise, with his free teas at the Soldiers' Home or tickets for an entertainment, he is usually suspected of a tract up his sleeve.

From the same force of circumstances which I have already laid down, it would appear that the soldier is no more open to Freethought than religion. But here it must be pointed out that the authorities take precious care to keep him in entire ignorance of the former whilst the latter is forced upon him by "King's Regulations." When Liberal papers are kept off the soldiers' reading-room tables, there is small chance for Freethought papers. The lending libraries are just as bad, since the shelves teem with bad fiction, military history or text-books, and divinity. Yet in spite of this conservatism, Freethought has made a certain headway in the Army, although it has invariably met with stern opposition from the authorities. "A Colonel," writing in a current Rationalist contemporary, says that "he has never met with anything approaching religious persecution" in the Army, and considers it improbable.

My own intimate knowledge of the Army, extending over many years, compels me to disagree with this. I could specify innumerable instances of religious persecution, but one case will serve. I remember a certain unit that had a number of well-educated young men who were Freethinkers, and openly professed their ideas, even to the extent of distributing literature on the subject. These young enthusiasts were systematically persecuted on account of their opinions, and one of their officers openly boasted that it was his intention to "root them out." He and his bigoted subordinates were fairly successful, for under the most despicable tyranny many of these young men left the service, whilst others found employment in other units.

Yet I suppose one ought to be thankful that these military Freethinkers have only this "moral suasion" to contend with nowadays, for I remember coming across some curious laws on this point when I was collecting materials for my books on military music, one of which dealt with soldiers who wilfully absented themselves from divine service. For this offence the seventeenth century Articles of War punished them by boring the tongue through with red-hot irons!

Strange to say, I have just had placed in my hands the will and testament of a certain Private B——, of the Gordon Highlanders, who is "off to the front." This Private B—— belongs to the class of intellectual Freethinkers in the Army that I have spoken of. Although brought up a Christian, he had, by independent study, become a Freethinker. He served many years with the Gordon Highlanders in India, and throughout the South African War. Finally he left the service and settled down to civil life, taking an active interest in Secularist propaganda. A few weeks ago came the news of the British retreat from Mons, where the Gordon Highlanders suffered rather badly. This disaster to his old regiment and comrades immediately aroused in him the idea that it was his duty to be with them, regardless of cost, and in a few days he had re-enlisted in his old corps. Of course, the word "patriotism," like "pluck," is a very elastic term; but if this is not a case of genuine patriotism, I don't know what is.

The final instructions in the will of Private B—— read: "When I am reported killed, or dead, or if missing and I fail to turn up at the finish of the War, then I wish you (the executors) to enforce the provisions I have made in my will." He further says: "I will have died a Secularist, as I have

* I made this computation some years ago in a garrison town.

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lived." The provisions of his will include the gift of his books and papers to the local Branch of the N. S. S. or the *Freethinker*, at the executors' discretion.

This document makes interesting reading in comparison with an insolent article that recently appeared in the *Globe*, which stated that our Army's heroism at the front was the outcome of its Christian training, and challenged Atheism to show a similar result. Well, Mr. Hired Scribbler of the *Globe*, I present to you Private B——, of the Gordon Highlanders, just to go on with.

H. GEORGE FARMER.

Christian Ideals.

IN the war with Russia, Japan for the first time demonstrated its right to stand on an equality with the Christian nations of the world. Previous to the war, all the Christian Powers were quite willing to bestow a qualified admiration on the Japanese as a clever, ingenious, and artistic people; but as to their being accepted as the equals of Christian nations, *that* was a thought that never dawned upon them. The Japanese were not white; they were not Christian; they had done nothing to prove their worth; and so, in the estimation of Europeans, they must content themselves with a subordinate position. The Japanese, not having, as is the case with China, to face the obstacle of an absence of militarist tradition, saw the general position with clear eyes, and took steps accordingly. They recognised that in certain branches of science the West was ahead of the East. They saw also that in the art of manufacturing weapons of destruction the Christian nations were far ahead of the rest of the world. They found themselves brought into contact with Christian peoples, who were ever on the lookout for "acquiring" new territory, and that the only way to make their own independence secure was to meet them with the same weapons of brute force. Finally, they saw that to learn all that could be acquired in the shape of using mechanical devices for killing human beings, no better teachers existed than the followers of the "Prince of Peace." Japan studied the West, and took from it all that was useful to it. It took all it knew about guns, and battleships, and commercial exploitation. The religion of the West and the morality of the West it left alone.

The war with Russia ensued, and "Heathen" Japan flung back the forces of "Holy" Muscovy beaten and demoralised. When it came to the art of killing, the Japanese showed they were pupils of whom any Christian nation might be proud. They could kill quickly and efficiently. And all the Christian nations were loud in their praise. At last, they said, Japan has shown its worth. What was impossible before is possible now; for now that Japan has shown that it can fight, that it can slaughter as readily and as efficiently as we do, now we admit that she is entitled to rank as one of the civilised Powers and become one of us. In every other respect save that of demonstrating efficiency in war, Japan was no better after the war than it was before—in some respects it was worse. It had demonstrated nothing save that it could conduct a war. And it was Christian nations that made efficiency in the art of warfare the supreme test of a nation's worth. Amongst some tribes of savages a man is never reckoned to have quite "arrived" until he has killed his man. How much higher was the test that was applied here!

Let us take another illustration of the same point. Certain of the nations of Europe are grouped as the "Great Powers." They claim, and are accorded, first place in the councils of Europe—even of the world. They call themselves the "Great Powers." On what do they rest their claim? They are all, be it observed, *Christian* nations. In virtue of what do they claim greatness? Is it because they are supreme in art or literature or science? Surely not. In each of these directions the small nations produce as good work as the larger ones. Is it because certain European nations are morally better than others that they claim greatness? No one would be foolish enough to make that claim. The morality of Sweden, of Denmark, of Norway, of Belgium, of Holland, is as good as that of England, of France, or of Germany. Why, then, do they call themselves the "Great Powers"? Examine carefully the basis upon which this claim rests, and it is found to be threefold. Certain nations have more money, they possess more territory, they can put in the field and on the sea larger armies and navies than other nations. Therefore they claim to be the "Great Powers" of Europe. They do not even trouble to make the claim that they are wiser and better than the other nations, and, therefore, ought to lead. No; they take it for granted that when they have exhibited their bank-balance and their brute strength, that is enough to convince the world that their claim is a valid one.

In any other sense than that of possessing most money and being able to command a greater measure of brute force, these nations have no valid claim to be called "Great Powers" at all. Apart from cash and carnage, the claim of national greatness would be so difficult to make good on behalf of any *nation* that it would probably never be made. Great men and good men are born everywhere, and flourish everywhere, more or less, and at various seasons. To-day one country leads, to-morrow another. In one country we have a great writer, in another a great musician, in another a great scientist. Who is there to definitely decide which is the greater nation? Clearly it is not on account of moral, intellectual, or artistic greatness that countries are reckoned as first class, second class, or third class powers. If Germany is decisively beaten in the present war, it will become, in all probability, a second class Power. If it is not so beaten, it will remain a first class Power. In either case, it will be the same Germany. Nay, there are few people, in this country at least, who will deny that a Germany in which Militarism was for ever crushed would be really a better nation than a Germany victorious and with militarism in the ascendant. Yet we should unhesitatingly class as a "Great Power" the worse Germany, and as second class a Germany purified and altogether better. Mark, it is not Germany beaten that would call herself a second class Power. It is the rest of Christian Europe that would insist upon her being so regarded, because she had shown herself unable to beat others, or to hold her own in a contest of brute strength.

Here, then, cleared of all disguise and cant phraseology, are the standards of value by which Christian government has taught the people of Europe to measure greatness. Plenty of trade—obviously a good thing given certain qualifying conditions, wealth, and fighting capacity. Individuals, of course, adopt other standards of value, but Christian nations know of no other as a rule of practice. In season and out of season they have been preached. Our statesmen have talked of England's greatness, when all they had in mind was the area of our territory, the volume of our trade, the strength of our armed forces, and the extent of our wealth. It has not dawned upon them, still less has it dawned upon the average man in the street, that we might rule over even more territory, possess greater wealth, and command still more powerful forces, and still be, in all essentials, a very little nation indeed. And yet the nations in which these notions of greatness flourish are *Christian* nations, and they have been, and are, governed by ideals as materialistic—in the vicious sense of the word—as any that ever dominated individuals.

No one could detest German militarism—or the militarism of any other nation, for that matter—or could long more heartily for its downfall than I do. But let us be fair even to Germany. Her sin lies not in the fact of her ideals being of a *kind* unknown to, and unhonored by, the rest of Christian Europe. Her sin lies in her having allowed these ideals to

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govern her more completely, and to overcome competing ideals more thoroughly, than has been the case elsewhere. She has a more severe attack of a general disease; a more powerful faith in militarism than exists elsewhere. We are not witnessing, in reality, the influence of a Bernhardi, or a Treitschke, or, as ill-informed journalists write, of a Nietzsche. We are seeing in the Germany of to-day the power of a teaching and of ideals that has never ceased to exert a commanding influence on the Christian world. In that world wealth and brute force have been worshiped with a more or less whole-hearted devotion. The worship has been usually disguised, but it has been there. German Junkerism simply shows the hideous thing stripped of all its disguise.

The cant and the folly and the absurdity of it continue. People are writing and talking as though the triumph of the Allies will mean the end of all war. I only wish I could believe it to be so. But I am convinced that it will mean nothing of the kind. Already we have been warned by Earl Roberts that it is a delusion to imagine that we can do with a smaller Army or Navy when the war is over. And others are calculating as to the amount of increase that will be required. Win or lose, it is certain that the Militarist party in this country—and it must not be forgotten that we, too, have our Militarists—will find their hands strengthened for a time. Our success will be taken to justify their outlook on life; our failure would be used none the less cogently to point the same moral. Of course, wars on the scale of the present one simply cannot be waged at very short intervals, but preparations for war will continue—and that is an evil that is almost as bad.

War is not killed by war, any more than brutality is cured by brutality. It is strange that a Freethinker should have to dwell on this point to Christians, but the necessity for it is patent. What effect in the direction of ending war had the post-revolutionary wars at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries? In what way did the Franco-Prussian war make for the cessation of war? How did the Boer war or the Russo-Japanese war tend to teach the nations the folly of war? They simply utilised them as lessons to be applied in future wars. Each war has usually sowed the seeds of further conflicts. People become habituated to its horrors as they become habituated to other horrors. War may be ended in one way, and one way only, and that by the growth of intelligence and a genuine civilisation.

"It would clear up our ideas about many things," says Spencer, "if we distinctly recognised the truth that we have two religions." For "religions" substitute "ideals," and we have the position excellently described. As Spencer goes on to explain, there is the religion of enmity and the religion of amity. To the latter we give the place of honor, but the real homage—that of practice—is paid to the former. We have the ideals of honor, of truth, of justice, of progress that govern genuinely cultivated minds in all nations and classes. But far more powerful to the mass of people are the ideals of wealth and of mere power. It is the man who has "made his pile" who is generally admired; the nation that is strongest on the plane of brute strength that is given first place. Not admired, or willingly given, it will be said, rich and powerful nations simply take first place. Not altogether so. What individuals and nations work for is what men generally admire. If individuals strive to become millionaires or multi-millionaires it is surely because they are living in a world where greatness is generally reckoned in terms of cash. If nations strive for more territory and still more territory, or aim at military supremacy, that, again, is because these things are accepted by the world as a certificate of worth. Nations aim at that which gives them a standing in the eyes of other nations of the world generally. The fault of to-day is that every nation which ranks as a "first class power," or has any reasonable likelihood of taking that position, is fighting for supremacy on the lower, instead of the higher, plane. Viscount Bryce declares that "small peoples have done, and can do, as much for the common good of humanity as large peoples." I am inclined to the opinion that at present they are doing more.

C. COHEN.

Unreasoning and Irrational Faith.

IN Exodus xvii. 8-16 there is preserved an exceedingly interesting legend about Moses and the war with the Amalekites. Possibly the whole narrative is legendary, but the following portion of it most assuredly is:—

> "And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed."

If such a statement were found in the Koran or in a Hindu Scripture, an orthodox Christian would not hesitate to pronounce it unbelievable. Because it occurs in the Hebrew Bible it is regarded as literally true. Indeed, the Rev. John A. Hutton, M.A., of Glasgow, tells us that "nothing could be more foolish than to dismiss a story like this with the objection that it savors of superstition, or that it belongs to a stage of human progress which lies now far behind in the useless background of history." Of course, nobody could expect that Mr. Hutton, a preacher of the Word, would express any other opinion; but we are greatly surprised at the manner in which he tries to justify that opinion in the *Christian World* for October 8. His article, which fills two columns, is simply an outburst of religious emotionalism of the most irresponsible character. He goes to the length of informing us that, if we argue with him and try to prove how unreasonable his feeling is, he will not listen to us, because no argument, however well-grounded, appeals to him. And yet the story, as it stands, is as silly as it can be. As long as Moses held up his hand, Israel won; but the moment he let it drop, Amalek prevailed. The preachers maintain that Moses uplifted his hand in prayer, though that is not stated; but even on the assumption that such is the meaning, the story becomes more absurd still. Is it conceivable that a God worth believing in would take one side while his servant prayed, and the opposite side when the prayer ceased? We are not told how long the battle lasted. All that is said is that "Moses' hands were heavy," or that, in other words, he got tired of praying for Israel, with the result that Amalek began to gain ground. The story proceeds thus:—

> "Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven."

Such is the story which Mr. Hutton believes to be literally true, and such is the picture of God with which it concludes. To us the story is ludicrous, and its picture of God hideous. Naturally, the reverend gentleman makes no allusion to the unspeakably cruel and revengeful Deity therein described, nor to the multitudes of horrible atrocities and immoralities alleged to have been perpetrated at his command. But no matter what anybody may think of this or any other Bible story, "the fact is," Mr. Hutton assures us, "we *will* pray for those who are fighting our battles, and those who are fighting our battles will fight the better because we pray and knowing that we pray." Then he adds:—

> "The question is, are we, out of respect to one side of our nature, and that a side which has only quite recently come into power, to thwart and deny another side of our nature, and one which has accompanied us all the way, lifting us up from impossible dungeons of failure, urging us to go on into darkness, and when we fall, to rise again—I mean the instinct to claim the help of God?"

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Only a believer in the supernatural could have framed such a question. For us the supernatural is non-existent, as is also that side of our nature which is said to discern it. "The instinct to claim the help of God" is a pure myth. The Buddhists, of whom there are some five hundred millions, do not have it, and the same is true of tens of thousands of other Atheists scattered up and down the world. The fact is, that in the absence of a belief in God, no one ever dreams of seeking his aid in any emergency. The spiritual side of our nature is an invention of the metaphysicians, and no facts have ever been forthcoming to prove its reality. We are aware that Mr. Hutton is not listening, but others are, and the truth is dawning upon growing numbers of thinking men and women that the Christian God is as deaf and dumb as was Baal of old. Not only there is no instinct to claim Divine help in time of need, there is also no Divine Being to grant the help asked for.

To return to the story, we learn that Mr. Hutton believes it merely because the compilers of the Bible "passed" it as worthy to hold a permanent place in their collection; and they were men "who knew very well the difference between religious practices which were simply superstitious, irrational, ministering to low ways of living, and other practices which expressed and defended some instinct of the human race, so precious that it must not die." And yet the reverend gentleman knows, as well as we do, that the men who handed down the religious literature of the Jews were themselves profoundly superstitious. They believed that God had chosen their nation out of all the nations upon earth to be his own peculiar people, and that only through them was it possible for the rest of the world's inhabitants to receive any Divine favors. Now, ponder the following passage:—

> "There was something in that story which seemed to those wise and altogether able men of a later time to be of such consequence to the general human well-being that they allowed it to stand. And one has only to listen to the beating of his own heart, one has only to attend to the private admonitions of his own conscience in days of suspense and fear, to confess that the story stands for something which no honorable man can gainsay."

At this stage, as is clear, Mr. Hutton turns interpreter, and the interpreter is always a dangerous, bewildering, and misleading individual. As it stands the story means, in the reverend gentleman's own words, "that once upon a time when Israel was hard pressed, the hands of Moses were held up in prayer for Israel, and that it so happened that so long as his hands were uplifted Israel prospered, and when his hands sank down Israel failed." In other words, God played with the two contending armies, now befriending the one and now the other, just as Moses prayed or did not pray. But as interpreted by this ingenious modern preacher, the story stands for something radically different, and "that precious thing" we must allow him to state in his own way:

> "I cannot rid myself of the idea, or belief, or obsession, call it what you will, that *my* personal behavior during these days has a direct influence upon the conflict in Europe. I feel that I also am engaged in that conflict, though with ghostly arms. If to-day I were to fail morally, were to do something which I knew to be wrong, and were I to read to-morrow that this day our arms had suffered, I should feel invincibly that it was I, my personal moral failure, which turned the fortune of battle. I should feel that I had gone asleep at my post, that I had given ground, just as truly and decisively as though I had turned my back as a soldier in the actual field."

Can anyone recognise the simple old story in that elaborate modern guise? The interpretation embodies a great principle, though the expression of it is culpably extravagant. We are convinced that Mr. Hutton overestimates the influence of his own personal behavior, just as the Kaiser underestimated his British foe; but it is perfectly true that we are all members one of another. If the reverend gentleman were to fail morally, or to do what he knew to be wrong, in the privacy of his Glasgow study, we can comfort him with the fullest assurance that his personal fall would have no direct influence whatever upon the fortunes of the War. We go even further, and assert that it would not exert even an indirect influence of any sort. As we have said, there lies a most important principle in the interpretation, but the interpretation is not contained, even germinally, in the original story. The unmistakable meaning of the story is not "that Moses on the mountain top and the Israelites in the plain are bound together in one spiritual fortune," but that God smiled on Israel when Moses' hand was up, and on Amalek when it was down; and that is a story which has no corroboration "in every uncorrupted conscience." That we are members one of another is by no means "the whole point of the story," and to maintain that it is, is to be guilty of wresting Scripture with a vengeance. "Let us live purely, with simplicity," is an excellent advice, and no one can do better than follow it to the highest possible extent; but purity and simplicity of life, truthfulness, honesty, honor, sympathy, and love are as much displayed by unbelievers as by believers; and by whomsoever exhibited they make for the uplifting and purification of society. But that there exists a God who hears and answers prayer is the vainest of all imaginings; and if there did, in what a deplorable quandary he would find himself just now. He would certainly not know what to do.

Does Mr. Hutton really think that battles are decided by the behavior of people who are themselves not engaged, or that battles are lost or won, not by the strong and striking arms of the fighters, but by the arms uplifted to God of those who are left behind? Then the history of war gives a flat contradiction to his belief. Germany smashed France in 1870 because she had a stronger and more efficient army. And in how many wars has might triumphed over right? Mr. Hutton admits that prayers may not be answered according to the asking, which necessarily means that they may not be answered at all. It is not prayer, but work, that tells. In war, piety does not count; it is the strongest and best-directed force that wins battles. It has always been so, and so it will be now.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Rose of Freethought.

> "Look to the blowing Rose about us—'Lo,
> Laughing,' she says, 'into the world I blow,
> At once the silken tassels of my Purse
> Tear, and its Treasure on the Garden throw.'"
> —OMAR.

A HEAP of stones, crushed and shattered, moss-covered, lying amid a tangle of weeds and creeping plants; a crumbling cross—the mute evidence of the ruin.

Among the wreckage lies an old cannon, rust-worn but still frowning grimly as in the days when it belched forth death and destruction, and human lives were sacrificed in the heat of the devilish passion.

Amidst the tangle of vegetation and sundered masonry grows a wild rose. It has obtained a foothold upon the demolished walls of the church and has thrown its protecting branches about the old cannon as though trying to conceal it, or soften its menacing aspect.

It makes a picture full of meaning.

Now let us take a glance backward—back into the pathless, tangled forests of an age when there lived in dismal caves, a manlike animal, sharing its shelter with bat and serpent, with wolf and hyena, and fighting for the bones and torn flesh with his fellows. Ages pass. The man-beast has groped his way from cave to hut. The ever-changing conditions of life, the resistless power of evolution, have caused a glimmer of reason to penetrate the stupid brain. Experience shall henceforth be his guide and teacher.

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Gradually the brain develops; painfully and with many a backward stumble the man gropes his way. Communities form, nations are built up only to be disrupted in the conflict of ideas and ideals. Man is learning a little, forging slowly ahead; nature, always true to herself, sacrificing the unfit, be it individual, tribe, or race.

Let us now return to the ruin by the roadside.

In almost every country there are ruins of temples erected for the worship of some form of god, the propagation of some superstition. Each and all have had their history, which tells how they flourished and finally fell into decay, strife-blackened and blood-stained, and at last weed-grown, moss-covered masses of rubbish.

The ruin we have described was a Christian church—the crumbling cross proclaimed the fact. Think, then, how that cross drips with human blood. Think of the torture and misery, murder and rapine the religion of the cross has caused.

And why?

Simply because an idea had entered the mind of man, and it had to be fought for, preserved or destroyed. Millions of men, women, and babes have been sacrificed in the triumph of the cross. Blood has flowed like water for the glory of the Prince of Peace, and the anguished cries of the innocent and helpless have echoed down the path of civilisation.

As we ponder upon these things, before our mental vision comes a picture of martyrs to what they consider right, and a reasonless mob determined to perpetuate the crazed imaginings of their ignorant brains.

We see scheming priests planning the enslavement of mankind, designing rulers degrading the people for their own selfish purposes—the people themselves trying to turn back the wheels of progress.

We see the battles, the carnage, the murders and assassinations, the banishments and tortures; we see the fagots lighted, the instruments of torture brought out, and we see the sombre winged vulture hovering over many a field of death.

Yet through all of this awful period, struggling for a foothold, there is a tangled plant which plunged its roots into the soil of human intelligence with the first glimmer of reason that filtered into the stupid brain.

It has struggled on and on, and in spite of being purposely trampled by deluded man, or ruthlessly torn by war and carnage, it has managed to gain a place among the crevices and rocks of human intelligence, and now spreads its green branches, drooping with the weight of the fair and fragrant blossoms of Truth and Wisdom, over the muzzle of the old spirit of murder and intolerance.

It is the Rose of Freethought, a noble plant which, rising above the ruins caused by persecution and superstition, gives to the world its delicate fragrance, and leads men's thoughts to higher and nobler things.

Freethought in its relation to natural phenomena s intellectual, but in its application of the results of nvestigation it is emotional—the purest impulses of the heart.

Freethought searches out the truth. It must know what and why, and when it has answered those questions it endeavors to raise man to a higher plane.

Freethought, seemingly so heartless and cold, is really pulsating with human sympathy. The Freethinker, if he is worthy the name, observing conditions of ignorance, poverty, or misery, seeks for a remedy; while Christianity, founded upon the murder of the innocent, leads logically to heartlessness and brutality.

Freedom, mental, moral, and physical, is man's birthright. It must sooner or later prevail. We may dam the stream or divert its course, but sooner or later the waters must find their way to the great ocean of Life.

GEO. H. LONG.

—*Truthseeker*, New York.

Correspondence.

THE EXPULSION OF UNCLEAN SPIRITS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Referring to the "Acid Drop" on p. 632 of the *Freethinker*, commenting on the former Anglican practice, during the baptism of infants, of driving out unclean spirits from them, I subjoin an extract from the service of Infant Baptism now in use in the Roman Catholic Church, which may be of interest to your readers:—

[Before entering the Baptistry the priest says:]
I exorcise thee, every unclean spirit in the name of God the Father †, Almighty, and in the name of Jesus Christ His Son †, our Lord and Judge, and in the power of the Holy † Ghost that thou depart from this creature of God, N, which our Lord hath vouchsafed to call unto His holy temple that it may be made the temple of the living God, and that the Holy Ghost may dwell therein.—Response: Amen.

[Then the Priest moistens the thumb of his right hand with saliva from his mouth, and therewith makes the sign of the Cross † on the right, and afterwards on the left, ear of the child that is to be baptised, and says, once only:]
Ephtheta † that is †, be thou opened.

[And then signing the nostrils, he adds:]
For an odor † of sweetness.

[Lastly, in a louder tone of voice, he says:]
But do thou depart, O devil; for the judgment of God will come.

[He then, by name, questions the person to be baptised, saying:]
N, dost thou renounce Satan?
Sponsors.—I do renounce him.
Pr.—And all his works?
Sp.—I do renounce.
Pr.—And all his pomps?
Sp.—I do renounce them.

[The priest then dips his thumb into the oil of Catechumens (B) and with it makes the sign of the Cross † on the breast, and between the shoulders, of the infant, saying:]
I anoint thee † with the oil of salvation in Christ † Jesus, our Lord, that thou mayest have life everlasting.
Response.—Amen.

[The priest now removes the oil from his thumb, etc.]

I may also remind your readers that by the Seventy-Second Canon Ecclesiastical of the Church of England it is decreed that:—

> No minister shall, without the licence and direction of the Bishop.....attempt upon any pretence whatsoever, either by possession, or obsession, by fasting and prayer, to cast out any Devil, or Devils, under pain of imputation of imposture or cosenage, and deposition from the ministry.

It would appear from this that not only is the Devil officially recognised by the Church of England, but that if a bishop grants the formal licence any minister could enjoy the supreme satisfaction of exorcising Satan—a feat that any mortal might well be proud of.

E. B.

SOLDIERS' RIGHT OF AFFIRMATION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—*Re* Mr. H. G. Farmer's letter on the above in the *Freethinker* of October 11, I would like to mention that, having served a number of years in the Volunteers, and desiring—for certain reasons—to serve one in the Territorial Army, I informed my company officer of my intention to affirm when entering the new force. No difficulty was put in my way; in fact, while the orthodox fellows were sworn in in batches of ten and fifteen, I had a ceremony all to myself, much to the wonder of my comrades who stood by.

R. H. ROSETTI.

A contemporary tells a good story of clerical presence of mind. A curate entered the pulpit, and was about to preach one of the late Rev. Charles Bradley's homilies. He was for a moment horror-struck by the sight of the Rev. Charles Bradley himself in a pew beneath him. Immediately he recovered enough self-possession to be able to say: "The beautiful sermon I am about to preach is by the Rev. Charles Bradley, whom I am glad to see in good health among us assembled here."

Tompkins: "Do you believe in the immortality of souls?" Jenkins: "Well, not in the case of my shoes."

There is a growing impression that Lot's wife was only going back for her gloves.

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The President's Prayer.

Our readers will like to see the full text of President Wilson's call to prayer for peace. It may be an historic document—the last of the kind. We are indebted for it to our contemporary, the New York *Truthseeker*.

"By the President of the United States of America

A PROCLAMATION.

Whereas, Great nations of the world have taken up arms against one another and war now draws millions of men into battle whom the counsels of statesmen have not been able to save from the terrible sacrifice; and

Whereas, In this, as in all things, it is our privilege and duty to seek counsel and succor of Almighty God, humbling ourselves before him, confessing our weakness and our lack of any wisdom equal to these things; and

Whereas, It is the especial wish and longing of the people of the United States, in prayer and counsel and all friendliness, to serve the cause of peace;

Therefore, I, Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States of America, do designate Sunday, the fourth day of October next, a day of prayer and supplication, and do request all God-fearing persons to repair on that day to their places of worship, there to unite their petitions to Almighty God, that overruling the counsel of men, setting straight the things they cannot govern or alter, taking pity on the nations now in the throes of conflict, in his mercy and goodness showing a way where men can see none, he vouchsafe his children healing peace again and restore once more that concord among men and nations without which there can be neither happiness nor true friendship nor any wholesome fruit of toil and thought in the world; praying also to this end that he forgive us our sins, our ignorance of his holy will, our wilfulness and many errors, and lead us in the paths of obedience to places of vision and to thoughts and counsels that purge and make wise.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the city of Washington this eighth day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and fourteen and of the independence of the United States of America the one hundred and thirty-ninth.

WOODROW WILSON.

By the President:

WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN, Secretary of State."

President Wilson (the *Truthseeker* says) has "apparently forgotten that he is the official head of a secular country, in which Church and State are constitutionally separated." That's a bull's-eye.

ANECDOTE OF DAVID HUME.

The Rev. Dr. Carlyle, in his "Autobiography," tells the following story of Hume, with whom he was personally and intimately acquainted, and whom he declares to have been "of a social and benevolent temper, and truly the best natured man in the world":—

"When Mr. Robert Adam, the celebrated architect, and his brother, lived in Edinburgh with their mother (an aunt of Dr. Robertson's and a very respectable woman), she said to her son, 'I shall be glad to see any of your companions to dinner, but I hope you will never bring the old Atheist Hume here to disturb my peace.' But Robert soon fell on a method to reconcile her to him, for he introduced him under another name, or concealed it from her.

When the company parted she said to her son, 'I must confess that you bring very agreeable companions about you; but the large, jolly man who sat next to me is the most agreeable of them all.' 'This was the very Atheist,' said he, 'mother, that you were so much afraid of.' 'Well,' says she, 'you may bring him here as much as you please, for he is the most innocent, agreeable, facetious man I ever met with.'

This was truly the case with him; for, though he had much learning and fine taste, and was professedly a sceptic, he had the greatest simplicity of mind and manners, with the utmost facility and benevolence of temper, of any man I ever saw. His conversation was truly irresistible."

The Earl of Carnarvon, at a banquet, in proposing "The Health of the Clergy," said that "in these days clergymen were expected to have the wisdom and learning of a Jeremy Taylor." His lordship was next day reported to have said: "In these days clergymen were expected to have the wisdom and learning of a journeyman tailor." This seemed more natural to the newspaper men, for divines like Jeremy have long been extinct.

Acid Drops.

Dr. T. K. Cheyne has written a book entitled *Reconciliation of Races and Religions*, in which he contends that peace among the nations must be preceded by friendship among the Churches. The doctor will find this a very long way to Tipperary.

The late George W. Steevens's impression of the Kaiser was that of a man "who felt himself slowly turning into ice," so impassive was the German monarch. The description sounds like futurist journalism, or an attempt to describe the feelings of Lot's salted wife—after a thunderstorm.

Mr. Holbrook Jackson says that "the Kaiser still goes about patting his God on the head"—"but Germany no longer believes in God." "Angels and ministers of grace defend us!" Do not the German Catholics eat their god?

The Rev. D. Ewart James, of Southend-on-Sea, has been using adjectives about Germany's "hellish creed." We do not quarrel with the reverend gentleman's description, but we must remind him that the religion of Germany is the religion of England.

The Bishop of Barking says the war will afford openings in commercial life for young men and women, such as there had never been in the past. There's commercial acumen! If the Bishop's creed be true, it will afford far more openings to the place "where there is no winter."

The dear clergy are everywhere attributing the excesses of the German troops to culture. What has "culture" to do with militarism, even in our own army? A tale is told of an officer of a crack regiment, being examined, and being asked to write an order on his banker for funds. After half-an-hour's trouble the result was: "Dear Cox [the name of the bankers] I am stony. Will you please send me some oof."

We are not surprised at the ignorance—real or assumed—of the ordinary newspaper writer concerning Nietzsche. It is his business to repeat the cant of the moment, whatever it may be. And as it has become fashionable to charge Nietzsche—mainly, we think, because of his hostility to Christianity—with responsibility for German misdeeds, every newspaper, from the editor downward, feels called upon to repeat the senseless slander. Still, we were surprised to find so eminently great a writer as Thomas Hardy lending his name to the superstition, and bracketing Nietzsche with Bernhardi and Treitschke. With these Nietzsche had little or nothing in common, and the merest intelligent dipping into his writings would show this to be the case. A very prompt correction to Mr. Hardy's statements came from the pen of Mr. C. M. S. McLellan, who concludes his letter to the *Daily Chronicle* with the pertinent remark that "if for no other reason than to stop the present generation of Berlin professors laughing at us, something ought to be done to prevent our literary men persisting in their unwarranted repetition of a senseless libel."

Mr. Arnold White is a gentleman who has a strong liking for charging people in bulk. He does not seem to care much for particular charges against individuals, but he does enjoy going for a whole sect, or nation, or race. Some time ago his favorite object of attack was the Jews. Not certain bad Jews, or undesirable Jews, but the race; and at that time it was suggested—by Mr. Zangwill, we believe—that one object of the movement to get the Jews back to Jerusalem was to rob Mr. White of his material for a living. The War has now given Mr. White the opportunity to turn his attention to the Germans; and while the object of attack has changed, the method remains unaltered. In the *Sunday Chronicle*, Mr. Arnold White suggests that when the War is over all the Germans in this country should be at once deported, and, presumably, England should be a closed country so far as Germany is concerned. The proposal is, of course, an impossible one, and any country that adopted such a policy would forfeit all claim to be called civilised. It is only interesting as showing how people lose their heads, or what serves them as such, during a period of war.

Newspaper readers have their "ha'porth of horrors" just now. Nine-tenths of the reading matter is devoted to battle, murder, and sudden death, and the ordinary news paragraphs are sometimes as lively as the following: "There were 2,500 victims of the earthquake at Konia, Asia Minor." Providence appears to be more paternal than usual.

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Mr. Robert Blatchford, writing in the *Weekly Dispatch*, has a neat paragraph concerning the horses in the war. "The battle-horse in Job," he says, "whose neck was clothed with thunder," is described by the poet as "shouting ha, ha! with the captains, and laughing at the shaking of the spear. But I fancy it was the poet who laughed and not the charger."

Father Bernard Vaughan says the Allies are "struggling under a hail of bullets and shells for the Christianity of Christ." As there are many thousands of Freethinkers and Jews in the ranks of the Allies, we think the great St. Bernard is mistaken.

An English bishop was turned out of a German town on the ground that he was a "useless mouth." The phrase is as uncompromising as a bayonet thrust, but it applies to the black army generally.

The Organising Secretary of the Christian Evidence Society has just issued a little pamphlet on *Popular Attacks on Christianity*. His information concerning Freethought societies and Freethought advocates is extensive and peculiar. He says they are energetic, which we cheerfully admit; they are well organised, which is open to question; and they are pretty adequately financed, at which we are greatly surprised. So far as we are aware, an adequately financed Freethought advocate would be a bit of a curiosity. His fellow-advocates would probably want to meet him once a week. For our part, we are ready to swear that the incomes—from Freethought—of all the Freethought writers and speakers in Great Britain combined does not equal the salary of many a popular preacher.

Incidentally Mr. Drawbridge's pamphlet gives a curious insight into that gentleman's intellectual make-up. The object of open-air meetings, he says, is (*a*) To secure a crowd and *to keep the audience from attending his opponent's meeting*; and (*b*) *to go on speaking hour after hour and to outlast his opponent*, and thus, when the rival meeting closes, to secure his opponent's audience in addition to his own. We have italicised certain words here because they are what psychologists call test sentences. They indicate the writer's mind. They show that, in his view, public propaganda is a combination of the cheap-jack and the prize-fighter. The main object is to beat your opponent, tire him out, and then secure his audience. For our own part we are strongly of opinion that any speaker in any cause who is inspired by that policy is likely to do more harm than good. They can only serve to disgust decent and thoughtful people, and if the sentences above quoted truly indicate Mr. Drawbridge's mind, he must be quite an ornament to the church, and a useful recruiting agent—for Freethought.

Mr. Drawbridge says, incidentally, that "if the existence of a loving Heavenly Father and of a future life were felt to be at all certain, or even to be highly probable, the masses would find it almost, if not quite, impossible to treat these supremely important facts with calm indifference." Quite so; and it should strike Mr. Drawbridge as casting a strong doubt upon the veracity of both doctrines that so little certainty is felt concerning them. If there is a God, it is his plain business to make his existence clear—that is, if the belief is of importance to anybody. As he has not done so, and does not do so, it seems a safe conclusion that it does not matter—especially as no one seems a bit the worse for being without him. And we are afraid that Mr. Drawbridge's ideal of outtalking an opponent and stealing his audience will hardly carry conviction to the "masses." They may admire the power of his lungs, or the tenacity of his purpose, but they may be left questioning the strength of his intelligence.

"Special constables will parade to-night at ten o'clock, and armlets only are to be worn," says a provincial paper. It sounds like a report from the Garden of Eden.

"To hell with the Hohenzollerns and the Hapsburgs," writes a Louisville (U.S.A.) editor. How discourteous Christians are! Some of the decent persons in that tropical place might object to the arrival of such psalm-smiting bigots.

The dear old *Guardian* recently had an article on "The Military Mind and Religion," in which it said "the old classification for Sunday parade was Church of England, Roman Catholic, and Fancy Religions." Just so! With the inclusion of Indian regiments, the list of the fancy religions should be extended considerably.

Sir Claude Macdonald, who, owing to his having been our Ambassador to Japan, speaks with authority, administers a sharp rap to the German theologians who protested against "Heathen" Japanese being brought against them. He writes as one who was in Japan during the whole time of the war with Russia, and says:—

> "The whole world knows with what splendid valor our Allies fought, but it is not known as generally, as I think it ought to be, how straightforward, honest, and dignified, and how loyal to us was the conduct of these negotiations; it is not generally known how appreciative of the stubborn valor of their opponents and chivalrous to them in defeat, how cheery and patient in their own sufferings were the 'heathen' Japanese. It is not known perhaps, as I know it, that fullest information regarding wounded Russians in the hospitals of Japan, for transmission to their friends, was immediately obtainable, the nature and gravity of the wounds, and, in some cases, even the temperature of the patient being telegraphed. The present Viceroy of India, the Ambassador of St. Petersburg, can bear me out in this. I venture, therefore, to think that some Christian nations, not forgetting Germany, have too much to learn of the Christian virtues of chivalry, courtesy, and honesty from heathen Japan."

A deserved rebuke, excellently administered. And, as Sir Claude intimates, deserved by other nations beside Germany. The only room for cavil lies in labelling the virtues indicated "Christian." Certainly Japan owed nothing to Christian nations in this direction.

In their haste to be smart, some journalists fail to be complimentary. Thus the *London Mail*: "The Kaiser says that God is on his side. But he has the very devil in front of him." We wonder who that is meant for—the French, the British, the Belgians, or the Russians?

The *International Review of Missions* points out that one of our oldest missionary societies has, during the past eight years, largely increased its staff, and spent more than £250,000 in the previous eight years. In spite of this, there has been no increase in the number of native church members. We are not surprised. Still, if more money has been raised and more missionaries employed, some of the main aims of these societies have been realised.

In the same magazine another writer deals with the growth and decline of religions in India. He points out that there has been a marked increase in the number of native Christians in the Punjaub. The cause of this does not seem difficult to find. The colonisation on some newly irrigated land was, through the action of missionary societies, confined to Christians. And when Christianity became the door to occupancy of the land, there was an immediate increase in the number of converts. The manufacture of "Rice Christians" in India has always been a favorite occupation of the missionary societies.

The Barmouth County School Governors have decided that German is no longer to be taught in the schools under their control. Presumably, these gentlemen consider this patriotism. We consider it downright stupidity—but the one often does duty for the other.

We are glad to see, on the other hand, that the Lancashire, Cheshire, and Derbyshire Association of Headmistresses have made a strong and much needed protest against a proposal that a "Children's Army" should be raised to collect for the National Relief Fund. Begging by children, for any purpose whatever, is wholly bad, and if a child is starving and begs, the law treats it as an offence. But some people, so soon as the blessed word "collection" is named, seem to think that any and every method is justifiable. If begging must be done, let it at least be done by adults.

It is quite evident that God has got something to do with the European War, although exactly what, and why he is doing it, no one seems quite sure. The latest view is that of the Vicar of Streatham, Rev. E. Jervis. He writes in *St. Peter's Magazine* that the war is one "against spiritual wickedness in high places. The sins of Russia, the persecution of the Church in France and Wales, and the general and growing forgetfulness of God cry aloud for vengeance, and we must, as a nation, see in our misfortunes and our sufferings the chastening hand of the Almighty." As Germany is not mentioned, we take it that Mr. Jervis believes that the Kaiser is right when he claims that God is on his side. He is evidently the instrument of God who is being used to chasten us. But what an instrument! What a chastening! And what a God!

Canon Scott Holland retorts on the German theologians and their manifesto by asking what they have done to

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create and secure peace? He asks why have they allowed militarism to dominate Germany and make it a menace to Europe? These are very pertinent questions; but why limit their application to Germany? What have they done in other countries to make peace secure? There are enough of them in every country in Europe to make war almost impossible if they lent themselves to the task. Fifty thousand preachers in this country alone, genuinely determined to cultivate the temper of mind that makes for peace, might act as an educative force for the whole of Europe. It is not the German theologians alone who fail to justify their existence. The indictment is equally true of every clergy all over the civilised, and uncivilised, world.

The *Catholic Times* gives currency to a Press Association report that while in Rome eighty-five per cent. of the people are in favor of the Allies, the leading figures among the minority are "the cardinals and high dignitaries of the Church, who are pro-German simply because they would like republican and anti-clerical France to get a good beating." The *Catholic Times* explains this on the assumption that the cardinals believe "French hostility to religion is one of the main causes of the terrible chastisement Europe is undergoing." This may be so; but hostility to religion is not confined to France, and there seems no adequate reason why French hostility to religion should annoy God Almighty more than hostility elsewhere. And it is just like God's way of doing things to cause cathedrals and churches to be bombarded because people are hostile to religion!

The *Catholic Times* itself favors the view that the War is the result of man hurling "defiance at the Almighty." "The nations have merited punishment by their defiance of God and neglect of religion." "Printing presses in this country have been turning out millions of atheistic and anti-Christian publications for a number of years," etc., etc. Therefore, because France—and in a smaller measure England and Germany—have neglected God, Belgium is being devastated! That, we presume, is to show what *we* deserve. Now, if England will only suppress all these Atheistic and anti-Christian publications, re-endow the Catholic Church, and make any attack upon Christianity a criminal offence, God will forgive us, and we may once more enjoy the peace and security and happiness of—say, the Middle Ages.

It seems that a protest has been addressed to the *Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, and *Daily Mail* against their issuing Sunday editions. However excusable this might be during war time, it is felt that these Sunday editions may go on even after the War is concluded. The *Church Times* says that it had hoped the War would have recalled the nation to the due observance of the Lord's Day, and the publication of newspapers on Sunday is a serious hindrance to religion. The *Church Times* might also call the attention of the Government to the fact that battles are being fought on Sunday, without the least regard to the demands of the Christian faith. Indeed, some of the most important engagements so far have taken place on the "Sawbath."

Mr. R. J. Campbell repeats, with approval, Ruskin's saying that "the soldier's trade, verily and essentially, is not slaying, but being slain." That is the kind of thing that Mr. Campbell, with his taste for feebly forcible rhetoric, would endorse. But, with all due respect to Ruskin, it is quite false. The soldier's trade involves the *risk* of being slain, but his business is, obviously, not to be slain. That would involve the curious conclusion that the best soldier was the one who went and got himself killed as quickly as possible. A soldier's trade is to kill. He often risks his own life in the process, and must always be prepared to take the risk, but if he can do it without risk, so much the better. The whole art of war is to kill your opponent with as little loss to yourself as is possible. We are quite aware that there is always a danger in epigrams, as applied to practical matters. It is difficult to get the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in a single sentence. We admit that a man does not join the army merely for the sake of killing somebody—at a price. The case is far more complicated than that. And the soldier's object is, perhaps, rather to disable and defeat than to destroy the enemy, but the steps that have to be taken for the one object are extremely likely to lead to the other. It would be interesting if some one like the late Sir Arthur Helps—a charming and by no means shallow writer—would write a Conversation on this subject, or submit it to some other form of analysis. Meanwhile, the pious "patriotism" of preachers like Mr. Campbell—which is only distended egoism after all—will help no man to form reasonable opinions on this (or any other) question. Nine times in ten, at least, men of his profession are panders to the community that finds them bread—and the rest.

"With God for the King and Fatherland" is said to be inscribed on a missile belonging to the very latest big gun which may be called the Kaiser's Mascot. The gun carries eight miles, and the shot weighs half a ton. And "with God" is a particularly appropriate inscription on the specimen exhibited in Berlin. No wonder William says God will stand by him. He leans on the Deity on one side, and his smash-all gun on the other.

We have been favored with a copy of *A Plain Talk With Girls* by the Rev. James L. Gordon, D.D., Pastor of the Central Congregational Church, Winnipeg — "published through the kindness of J. B." We hope J. B.'s kindness is a real one to the reverend gentleman; it is a very questionable one to anybody else. It is full of sickening gush; it represents nature falsely, and tells falsehoods to support the deception. The following story occurs on the last page:—

> "The mother of David Hume, a simple-hearted Scotch woman, following the example of her son, became an unbeliever and an agnostic, but on her death-bed she penned a letter, in which were to be found these words: 'Oh, David, my son, give me back my religion, my Bible, my Christ, my God.'"

The word "agnostic" is a note of alarm to a well-informed reader. It was not known until its invention by Professor Huxley more than a hundred years afterwards. We have read pretty well everything that can claim the least authority regarding David Hume, and we are as sure as a non-infallible person can be that the only truth in this pious story which comes from Winnipeg is that there was a famous sceptic called David Hume, and that he had a mother whom he loved and respected. All the rest is, to the best of our knowledge, a pious invention. It proceeds from the great Christian factory of lies for the glory of God—and is a very poor one at that. We do not accuse the Rev. J. L. Gordon of having manufactured it himself—we should ascribe its production to a more original pen. We ask him to inform us on what authority he presents this remarkable story to the world? Or does a discourse to girls justify any nonsense and any untruth, in his estimation?

Rev. A. C. Spurr went out to the antipodes to save Christianity from "infidelity." Presumably he left it perfectly safe here. But it must have got into danger again, for the reverend gentleman has returned home, and is delivering a course of Bible lectures on Thursday evenings at Regent's Park Chapel. His second lecture should excite a good deal of interest. It is on "What is left of which we are certain?" It will be a clever feat to spread that minute substance over such a considerable area. An hour's lecture on nothing! Lord Rochester wrote a poem on it, and a very good one too; but Mr. Spurr is not Lord Rochester, and Lord Rochester's poem on "Nothing" is not an hour long.

According to the "puff" on the back of his syllabus, Mr. Spurr will make an endeavor to reach ROCK BOTTOM. (Thus in the original.) Is this a reference to what Moses saw on Mount Sinai?

The *Manchester Guardian* reports a sermon by the Rev. H. J. Barker, of local celebrity—if any—on "Germany's Atheism." She had lost her faith in God,—which, by the way, is a huge joke, for God and the Kaiser are constant companions, if the latter's word is good for anything—and the result was what we see in the newspapers. England had a more "simple faith" in God and the Bible, and the result was her comparative safety from war's alarms. But is not this a pulpit fallacy? Is not the reverend gentleman confusing Providence with the Straits of Dover?

A good story is welcome even from a battlefield. The following appeared in Tuesday's *Daily Chronicle*, as borrowed from an article by M. Georges Berthoulat in the *Liberté*:—"The army corps whose base he was visiting has two chaplains—a Catholic priest and a Jewish Rabbi. They seemed to be very good friends as well as the best of good fellows. One evening they were kept on the battlefield looking after some wounded, and found it impossible to get back to the lines. After looking round, they found an abandoned farm with a single ragged pallet. Here they spent the night side by side; and, as they went off to sleep, the priest remarked to the Rabbi: 'If there were only a photographer here!—the Old and the New Testament as bedfellows.'"

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To Correspondents.

President's Honorarium Fund, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £217. Received since:—W. L. R., 8s. 3d.; Twenty-Five Years' Subscriber, 15s.; G. L. B., 10s.

G. L. B.—Glad that you both still find the *Freethinker* a "weekly treat." Thanks for the rest of your pleasant letter.

Mildred Winters.—There were Atheists in the French Revolution, but no *party* of Atheists, unless calling them so backwards makes them so.

W. P. Ball.—Your batches of cuttings are always welcome.

J. Bateson.—Where and when did the sect you mention really have any power of persecuting?

W. L. R.—Our shop manager will try to get a second-hand copy of the book and send you. Thanks for your encouraging letter.

Twenty-five Years' Subscriber.—Pleased to have your appreciation and good wishes after all this time. Mr. Cohen's articles merit all your praise, but we fear you won't see one from his pen on the subject of prophecy, in which we don't think he is much interested.

X. Y. Z.—The lines are Wordsworth's. We cannot give you the precise reference at the moment. But if you care to read the poet right through (supposing you have not done so) to find them, you would be repaid.

John Mosley.—Men of God are fond of charging Atheists with intellectual pride. Few would accuse *them* of such a crime; there must be something to work on in the beginning.

M. Steinberger.—You agree with us as to the greatness of Cæsar, who, by the way, was an avowed Freethinker. There is nothing in Attila to be mentioned in the same breath.

Herbert Gartrwaite.—Glad to know your father regarded us with "great respect." You will understand that we had to shorten the obituary—especially in relation to the Omar Khayyam stanzas—beautiful as they are.

T. Barker.—Dropping bombs on Paris in the German way seems sheer devilry. Killing a few girls in the streets cannot affect the main issue of the war, and injuring Notre Dame is injuring what technically belongs to France but, in reality, to the world.

J. Higgins.—Next week.

H. B. Samuels.—We could not possibly undertake the intermediate work of introduction. On the whole, we think it would be better, in such matters as that of the Belgian refugees, for Freethinkers to act in co-operation with their fellow-citizens.

The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

The National Secular Society's office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

Lecture Notices must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Friends who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 6d.

Sugar Plums.

There is likely to be a paucity of "Sugar Plums" while this terrible war lasts. Fighting is always the most fascinating thing to human interest. Christianity would have made no more headway than a hundred other religions without the story of Calvary. "The blood of Christ" settled *that* struggle for existence. After a lapse of nineteen hundred years blood still has its old attraction. Prize-ring fights and suffragette arson are "off." The real thing has taken their place. And what can be expected with regard to a movement like Freethought? Its "glad tidings of good news" must wait for a more convenient season.

During the stormy and dangerous days of the French Revolution a good many people, who had nothing the matter with them physically, found it difficult, and even impossible, to keep out of heaven—or whatever was written in the Book of Fate or Providence as their place of destination. When the Revolution was over, and a matter of memory, one old gentleman was asked what *he* had done in it, and he replied, "*J'ai vecu*"—"I have lived," or more idiomatically, "I pulled through it." It will be something the same with a good many advanced journals during the present war. Some have disappeared already, others are in a bad way, some will be able to say "J'ai vecu" at the end. They will have managed to "live," which is always the hardest thing to do in this world, and the one in which man always fails at the last.

We believe the *Freethinker* will be one of the "pull-throughs." But it will not be without its trials. It has not yet suffered as much as we expected, but a gradual continuous drop amounts to a good deal in time. We repeat our invitation to our friends, and *its* friends, to counteract the natural effect of the war by doing their very best to promote its circulation by introducing it to their friends and acquaintances. Many people would soon be regular readers of this journal if they only knew of its existence. We make an earnest appeal to our friends in this direction.

Another thing. Freethought lecturing is knocked on the head just now. People want to hear about nothing but the War. That is, *most* people. There is a "remnant"—though they are not enough. Obviously, therefore, we shall have to meet any deficit on the *Freethinker*, etc., out of the President's Honorarium Fund. Will our friends who mean to subscribe, but have not done so yet, take the hint?

A very distant correspondent writes to us that when visiting London seven years ago he called at 2 Newcastle-street, and was much surprised at what he saw there. He expected to find

> "a big building served with lifts and lift boys, and clerks here and general johnnies there, and having to pass between big machines striking off books, leaflets, etc. But instead I found the cream of the English tongue managed and controlled in such humble circumstances. It was almost beyond belief. If ever I saw the miraculous it was at 2 Newcastle-street.....I hope to see you in better surroundings some day."

We have this correspondent's "sympathy in every direction."

The *English Review* for October reached us rather late. Perhaps the gem of it is Mr. R. B. Cunninghame Graham's prose pastoral. It is a very deep and delicate study of an old-fashioned English farmer. Mr. Austin Harrison writes powerfully on "The Kaiser's World War," and there are able and interesting articles by Mr. L. March Phillipps, Mr. Edward Thomas, Mr. Arthur Ransome, Mr. E. V. Lucas, and Mr. E. S. P. Haynes,—the latter, however, on "Christianity" not being all it might be. There are also some stanzas by a poet who publishes too seldom—Mr. Aleister Crowley.

The Testimonial to Mr. W. J. Ramsey will take place on the date of the actual publication of this week's *Freethinker*. We are sorry we could not attend. We hope, however, that some competent pen will be moved to send us an early report of the proceedings. We were present "in spirit," as the saying is.

We dropped our old friend, Mr. W. Heaford, a hasty post-card to assure him that we were thinking of him with much sympathy, and we are glad to receive a reply from him couched in a more cheerful and almost optimistic tone. He is looking forward to a more rapid recovery than was at first thought possible. He is looking forward to the time when he will be strong enough to move about and obtain the stimulus of change and fresh air.

WHITED SEPULCHRES.

The preacher prayed in woeful tone
For the thief in the felon's cell,
And told of his punishment here on earth
And his endless days in hell;
But the thief that sat in the best front pew
That he might be seen and heard—
Of the Shylock thief of the hopeless poor,
The priest never uttered a word!

And he told of the harlot steeped in sin,
And the rum-seller's awful doom;
And he said if they didn't cease to increase,
Hell would run short of room;
But the pirates that have stolen the earth,
And their brothers' blood have shed—
Oh! the parson smiled as he winked at them,
And never a word he said!

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The Monk and the Woman.—III.

A Public Address by M. M. Mangasarian to the Free Religious Association (Rationalist), Chicago.

(Concluded from p. 653.)

IT is regrettable to observe how this Bible prejudice against woman has tainted the thought of even the foremost of our poets and dramatists. Goethe's Faust, for example, starts with the intellectual mission to wrest from close-mouthed nature her secrets. But Gretchen strikes the pen from his hand and the thought from his brain, and he degenerates into an ordinary pleasure-seeker. Shakespeare creates a Hamlet whose thought has all the straightness and swiftness of the arrow, but a pretty girl, Ophelia, almost wrecks his reason. It is the Bible story of Samson—strong, free, unconquerable—shorn of his strength by a woman, over again. Delilah's lap becomes Samson's grave. Betrayed by a woman, his eyes are dug out, and the crowd that yesterday shuddered at the mention of his name, now makes of him a clown. The ancient Greeks were free, to a considerable extent, from this superstition about woman. Æschylus, for example, does not give to Prometheus, in his warfare against the gods, a woman to deviate him from his task. No Gretchen or Ophelia or Delilah stands between Prometheus and the fire he seeks to steal for the enlightenment of the world. Nor has Prometheus a wife like the wife of Job to approach him with the treacherous advice, "Curse God and die."

Yet, notwithstanding the mean rôle which the Oriental religion assigns to woman, she is the mainstay of that religion. This raises an interesting question: Why is woman more superstitious than man? It will be admitted that, generally speaking, women are more timid than men. This may be the result, to some extent, of her physical condition, but is more largely due to the manner of her education. The fact remains, however, be the cause what it may, that women are more easily frightened than men, and I believe that is why they are more superstitious. It is as true as any proposition in mathematics that where there is fear there is superstition, and where there is *more* fear there is *more* superstition. I will revise my statement if you can find me a brave woman or a brave man who is also superstitious; or, if you will find me an easily frightened person who is not also superstitious. Rutherford Alcock, in his work on Oriental Religions, says that the majority of worshipers in the temples of Japan are women and children. In India, nine-tenths of the pilgrims are women. Herbert Spencer writes that among certain primitive tribes the women believe in more gods than the men. That is quite true also of the Catholic women. They believe in more saints, in more divinities, than their Protestant sisters. Indeed, the Catholic Church could very justly be called the *female* church *par excellence*. The religiosity of women, then, may be explained by the fact that, being more exposed to perils, it is easier to excite their fears. They will pray and beg for help much quicker than men. This is also true of children. Tell little boys and girls that the lightning is after them, or that the thunder is looking for them, and they will bury their heads in their mother's or father's lap, sobbing and shaking with fear. The Church is anxious to have the children because, on account of this susceptibility to fear, they are very promising subjects for its teachings. To establish my point that fear is the food superstition thrives upon, let me call your attention to the example of the sick. As a rule, the majority of people send for a priest when they are sick. This further proof that it is fear which feeds and fattens superstition is furnished, I say, by the behavior of the majority of people when they fall sick and think that they are going to die. Do they not invariably send for the priest? And is it not fear that brings the sick and the priest together in the death-chamber? When well, strong, and prosperous, they are brave, and feel no need for the priest. But when health and wealth are gone, and the terrors of the future, the terrors of the unknown are upon them, they begin to think of the priest. Superstition is nothing but the panicky state of the mind—it is the stampede of the faculties.

The more frightened we are the more exacting is the priest in the presence of some great danger. Our extremity is his opportunity.

No priest or preacher is ever so eloquent as when speaking at a funeral, or when summoned to the death-bed. The more frightened is the dying, the more eloquent is the divine. Even stout-hearted men and women have been known to succumb to the eloquence of the priest, when at death's door. "Wait until you come to die," is the stereotyped argument against healthy and robust unbelievers. And it sometimes happens that when a Rationalist is down on his back, the priest succeeds in converting him. If he fails to convert the dying, he rarely fails to capture his corpse if the deceased is a distinguished personage. When Mark Twain was alive, they could not get him into a church; as soon as he was dead, his body was taken to the Brick Presbyterian Church on Fifth-avenue, in New York City. Darwin was too large for any church during his lifetime; but no sooner was he dead, than he was given a church funeral in Westminster Abbey. Let us appreciate the brave struggle of those glorious infidels, who even in the valley of the shadow of death triumphed over fear and the priest, and fell asleep with the flag still in their hands. Blessed be the memory of those who even in death, with feeble pulse and sinking breath, remained loyal to reason—the only emancipator from fear!

While watching the performance this thought also came to me very forcibly, that religion and happiness do not as a rule go together. Religion, that is to say, the kind preached in the Churches, both Protestant and Catholic, will not permit us to enjoy ourselves in this world. Just when we feel that we ought to be happy, religion steps in with a reason why we should not be happy. The gods are jealous of human happiness, and they leave nothing undone to make this world "a vale of tears" for us. In fact, they know that their existence depends upon our being cast down and dejected. Not until we cry "out of the depths" will they hear us. These two people in *The Garden of Allah* had every reason to be happy; they were still young, they were both in splendid health, and they were in love. But religion would not permit them to enjoy one another. It stepped in and separated them. It robbed the man of all his hopes and sent him back to the desolation and gloom of the monastery; and it shattered the woman's rainbow completely, leaving her heart-broken and disconsolate for the rest of her life. It also made of the unborn infant an orphan, depriving it of the companionship and support of a father. The belief that happiness makes people forget God, or that it leads them to look upon this world as their heaven, is the basis of the prejudice against it. Then again, the idea that the love of God is very much better than the love of man, or woman, or child, or friend, makes one discontented with such pleasures as life can give. The real does not satisfy us because of the imaginary. The fanciful love of God makes the real love of man or woman seem commonplace and even sinful. Home is real, but the thought of an imaginary heaven in the clouds often makes a man or woman give it up for a convent. Wife and husband and child are real, but an imaginary Savior dearer than wife, husband, or child has made monks and nuns of many human beings. The present is like a red, red rose, fragrant and radiant, but the worry of the hereafter has plucked all of its petals, leaving only the thorns in our hands. Heaven, like some far away mirage, has blinded us to the humbler joys of life.

Yet still in another sense is the popular religion detrimental to human happiness. You have, for example, often heard the preacher say to his hearers, "Do not do anything which Christ would not approve

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of," or, "Do not go where Jesus will not accompany you." But would not such advice keep one in a state of hopeless perplexity? Would it not make of life one long worry? Every time one is about to speak or act one must ask, "Will this please Jesus?" And, "What will he think of that, or the other thing?" Now, if it were a comparatively facile matter to find out the pleasure of Jesus on matters public or private, there would be some reason for wishing to consult him on every question that comes up. But how are we to ascertain what Jesus would have us do under a given circumstance? Does Jesus approve of the theatre? Would he go to the opera with us? Would he permit smoking? Does he believe in baseball, or cards? Would he take a little wine for his health's sake if he were living to-day? And what are his views on politics, the economic struggle, the trusts, the tariff, or the divorce question? Is there anybody who can supply this information to us? Jesus himself never left a line in writing, and he has not been heard from for the past twenty hundred years. The sphinx in the African wilderness is not less uncommunicative than Jesus. But "Consult the Bible," says the Protestant, and "Consult the church," says the Catholic. Ah, that means—consult *us*. For if each reader may consult the Bible for himself, why are there heresy trials in the Protestant, and excommunications in the Catholic Church?

Moreover, life is a much bigger thing to-day than it was when Jesus was living. New problems require new explanations. Life is too big a thing to be covered by the thought of one man or of one age. The Bible is a closed book; life, on the other hand, opens anew every day, and is still unfinished. To try to stretch or thrash the thought of a Galilean Jew of two thousand years ago to make it reach the heights and depths of modern life, with its ever-changing issues, cumulative and tremendous—would be enough to drive a man out of his wits. That more people do not go mad under the strain of theology is a compliment to the essential sanity of human nature.

Many years ago I found a young man, newly married, and with every prospect of a bright future, in great mental distress. I was his minister, and he came to tell me that he was afraid he had committed *the unpardonable sin*. Poor soul! He did not know what the unpardonable sin was, neither did I; but he had read in the Bible that there was such a sin and he imagined himself guilty of it, in consequence of which he suffered mental torture night and day. We have only to read the biographies of revivalists to come across just such pathetic cases. The example of the monk and his wife in the story of *The Garden of Allah* is an eloquent illustration of the power of the teaching of the Churches to destroy happiness. As already stated, these two soul-mates were just beginning to be serviceable to one another, and to enjoy the pleasure of each making the other happy. For happiness, to be enjoyed, must be shared. Besides, they were looking forward to the birth of their first child, and planning, no doubt, with many glimpses into the future, to give the visitor a sweet welcome. What could be a deeper joy than to watch over the gradual unfolding—the budding of the child mind. They were going to bend over its cradle, as the sun over the earth in the springtime. Yet with one stroke religion destroyed their happiness and turned their day into night. The apple was hardly lifted to their lips when the priest whispered in their ears, "Do not eat of it, there is a worm at its core," and he pointed their astonished gaze to the imaginary apple in the skies, so much better than any earthen apple. For the sake of that fictitious, heavenly apple, they allowed themselves to be robbed of the fruit that grew in their own yard.

When I saw the monk, under the influence of his misguided wife, re-enter his cell in the monastery, which is not much different from a living tomb—when I saw him part with the glorious world with all its joys of home and humanity—when I saw him turn his back upon the mother of his child soon to arrive—I recalled to mind these words of Jesus, spoken nearly two thousand years ago, and still hanging upon the horizon like a menacing cloud: "If any man hate not father, mother, brother, sister, wife, husband, or children for my sake, he is not worthy of me." I will spend what life I have still left me to change that divine malediction into a human evangel: If anyone love father, mother, husband, wife, or children more than the far-away gods, he shall be deemed worthy of the best and the highest that life can give. Love *me!* cry the gods. But what can our love do for a god? Is he not perfect in himself? Or is he so short of help or of happiness that we should worry about him? But man's love for woman, and woman's love for man is indispensable each to the others completeness. Nothing can take the place of the love of man for woman, or woman for man. Ye men and women! Break not your hearts for the gods, nor lose your world for their heaven!

The Evolution of Flowers.—II.

(Concluded from p. 635.)

As already indicated, several kinds of insects carry mouth-organs specially adapted for suction, and these have been developed through an adjustment to liquid food from the masticating organs of earlier insects whose descendants are still, in many orders, to be found in an unmodified state. It is a fair hypothesis that the Dipteria (flies) may have slowly evolved the sucking organs which many of them now possess through their habit of feeding on soft material and liquid food. And more recently still, several families of flies have become adapted to a honey diet, and have, in consequence, evolved a lengthy proboscis which reaches the utmost extremity of the nectary which lies at the base of the deep corolla tubes of various flowers. Among other insects other adaptations to meet the numerous demands of life may be seen. These, however, need not detain us, and we will glance at a few of the more important instances of the *rôle* played by insect agency in the evolution of floral structures.

Among these phenomena the activities of the moths and butterflies (Lepidoptera) occupy a high place. The suctorial proboscis of this multitudinous insect order has been specially adapted to a honey diet, and modern biologists are constrained to conclude that these interesting and ornate creatures would cease to exist in the absence of the nectar-holding floral organs of plants. With reference to the ancestry of the moths and butterflies, Professor Weismann states that:—

> "This large and diverse insect-group is probably descended from the ancestors of the modern caddis flies .....whose weakly developed jaws were chiefly used for licking up the sugary juices of plants. But as flowering plants evolved, the licking apparatus of the primitive butterflies developed more and more into a sucking organ, and was ultimately transformed into the long, spirally coiled suctorial proboscis as we see it in modern butterflies."

This is no mere conjecture, but a judgment based on a profound anatomical study of the whole Lepidopteron class in which several eminent men of science have co-operated. It was no easy task to trace the aborted organs, for nearly all the mouth-parts of diurnal and nocturnal Lepidoptera have dwindled to mere hints of their former existence. But sufficient of these organs yet remains to prove the affinity of the Lepidoptera with insects whose mandibles and other mouth-parts are still essential to their continued life. In the Lepidoptera the first maxillæ have undergone the most remarkable modifications; they are enormously strengthened and enlarged and are surprisingly dissimilar to the maxillæ of every other of the countless insect groups. These organs have, in this instance, become transformed into hollow,—

> "probe-like half-tubes, which fit together exactly, and thus form a closed sucking-tube of most complex con-

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> struction, composed of many small joints, after the fashion of a chain-saw, which are all moved by little muscles, and are subject to the will through the nerves, and are furnished with tactile and taste papillæ."

The spiral tongue or proboscis of the butterflies is the only mouth appendage that has undergone any material development. It is essentially a flower-feeding adaptation. If we view the life of the insect as extending from the birth of the caterpillar to the death of the winged adult, the butterfly's career becomes a short if brilliant episode in the metamorphosis of the species. The mature butterfly has merely to maintain itself on its purloined nectar until the female mates with her partner and deposits the eggs from which the succeeding generation develops. As there was no necessity for further structural change none has taken place.

But with the bees these structural modifications are not confined to the mouth appendages. The bee's social activities are conducted on an ampler scale; not only does it attend to its own immediate and remote necessities, but it also provides for its offspring. The honey gathering bees are probably the descendants of insects akin to the burrowing wasps. These latter insects do not nourish their broods on nectar, but on caterpillars and other organisms which are stung to death or simply paralysed and are then placed in the wasp's nest for the larvæ to devour as soon as they emerge from the egg.

A brief reference to the feeding organs of the primitive insects from which the higher bees have been evolved may help us to more firmly grasp the meaning of their later transformations. The mouth organs of beetles are made up of three pairs of jaws. The mandibles are the seizing and masticating jaws. These have played no part in the evolution of flowers as they in no way contribute to the formation of the suctorial proboscis either in butterflies or bees. The first and second maxillæ, as the other two pairs of jaws are termed, are modelled on the same plan as the mandibles, and in the bee the inner jaws have developed into the long vermiform proboscis which enables the insect to suck up the nectar of flowers.

This transformation of jaws into a suctorial organ is well illustrated by the burrowing wasps, as in these predaceous insects the under-lip has varied in the direction of a licking organ. With Prosopis, one of the bees, an insect which, unlike the burrowing wasp, feeds its larvæ on honey and pollen, this development has proceeded a little further still. It is only in the hive-bee that the transformation is complete. Therefore, we find that "of the three pairs of jaws in insects, only the first pair, the mandibles, have remained unaltered, obviously because the bee requires a biting organ for eating pollen, for kneading wax, and for building cells."

It may be claimed then, that the evidence that flowers have become adapted to the requirements of insects, and that insects have undergone structural and functional modifications to meet the necessities of flowers is abundant and conclusive. Nay, the very existence of gaily colored and perfumed blooms is dependent upon the visits of insects, while pollen and nectar gathering insects have been transformed in a thousand ways to cross-fertilise their favorite flowers.

Science is now in a position to assert that the ancestral forms of the higher flora were all anemophilous, as many catkin-bearing trees, such as the oak, birch, beech, and hornbeam still are. The pollen was carried by the breeze through the air, and sometimes, by happy chance, settled on the stigma of the female flower. In past geological times, before modern blossoms were in being, insects doubtless visited the male inflorescences of wind fertilised plants to plunder their pollen, thus reducing the chances of reproduction in the plants they plundered. But, in flying from flower to flower, they must have occasionally alighted on a female blossom, and thus assisted in the act of fertilisation. Wind fertilisation obviously is dependent upon favorable atmospheric conditions, so that when the chance insect pollination began to occur among ordinarily anemophilous plants, the foundations were established for that elaborate system of cross-fertilisation by organic activity which now so widely obtains.

Two ways at least were open to plants to turn the visits of insects to practical account. The male blossom was already the recipient of insect attention; the female flower might also offer an inducement to insect visitation, or bisexual blossoms could be evolved. As we are now aware, Nature adopted both devices. The former contrivance occurs in the willow, and insects are inveigled into the act of cross-pollination through the production in both male and female catkins of a primitive nectary in which honey is secreted. The insects roam to and fro among the male and female willow inflorescences and transfer the sticky pollen from the anthers to the stigma of the female bloom.

Cross fertilisation has, however, been more commonly secured by the development of hermaphrodite flowers. To the plant this method has greater advantages, as it is less likely to miscarry. All the earlier flowers were unisexual, although bisexual blossoms are now in the ascendant. As Professor Weismann writes:—

> "The beginnings of the modification of the unisexual flowers in this direction may be seen in variations which occur even now, for we not infrequently find, in a male catkin, individual blossoms which, in addition to the stamens, possess also a pistil with a stigma."

With the advent of these hermaphrodite flowers the conditions were established which ultimately led to the marvellous adaptations which so many of the higher floral structures now display. From a uniform green the floral organs evolved those striking colors which enable insects to see them at a distance. It has been experimentally proved that flowers which are extremely conspicuous are more frequently visited by insects than those less readily observed; while these last, as a rule, mainly rely on self-fructification. Attempts have been made to prove that insects are indifferent to the colors of flowers; but these endeavors, in company with others of a kindred character, have been completely overthrown by more recent inquiries of a most thorough and critical nature. Not that it is contended that color is the sole guide to insects in search of honey and pollen; perfume also plays its part, and calls its visitors from afar. Nor is this all. With the permanent establishment of ornate floral organs the struggle for existence between contending plants was intensified, and it became necessary to discriminate between the value received by the plants from the presence of the various insects. When once the certainty of insect visitation had been gained, it became a matter of consequence that such insects as those that simply stole the nectar without giving compensation for their purloined sweets should be excluded from the feast. Before insect specialisation began, the nectaries would be at the mercy of all that chose to come. The nectary was then placed at a more concealed part of the flower. And so this protective adaptation proceeded until only such insects as possessed a lengthy proboscis—which developed step by step with the lengthening corolla-tube of the flower—could obtain access to the deeply entrenched nectar lying within.

Lest it be thought that there is ampler utility in the presence of a medley of insect life, it may be mentioned that flowers that restrict themselves to the ministrations of a select set of visitors economise their pollen and secure a larger number of cross-fertilisations. Insects habituated to attend the wants of special flowers are more likely to roam from bloom to bloom in the same species of plant. The famous Hermann Müller noted from personal observation that, "in four minutes, one of the humming-bird hawk-moths (Macroglossa stellatarum) visited 108 different flowers of the same species, the beautiful Alpine violet (Viola calcarata), one after the other, and it may have effected an equal number of pollinations in that short time."

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Flower specialisation has, therefore, survival value, and it helps to elucidate the amazing adaptations of orchids and other floral organisms, as well as the remarkable elongation of the proboscis in butterflies and bees.

Those plants that proved most successful in attracting useful insects and, at the same time, managed to keep useless ones at a distance, furnished themselves with a powerful weapon for the preservation of their race. That these interesting and instructive phenomena cannot be explained by the design theory is frequently illustrated by their comparative imperfection. Innumerable flowers are deprived of their pollen and nectar by insects that render them nothing in return. Some of the most complex contrivances for assuring cross-fertilisation are completely nullified by wood-bees, bumble-bees, and other insects which pierce through the nectary from outside, rob the flower of its honey, and thus bring to nought the most elaborately prepared structures evolved for the purpose of promoting the production of its precious seeds. If these failures are ever to be overcome, they must be surmounted by further evolution. Protective devices developed by the play of natural forces will alone produce immunity to the wasteful pilferings of such insect marauders as these.

T. F. PALMER.

Belief and Knowledge.

MANY people make no distinction between knowledge and belief, but the distinction is one which it is important to bear in mind, especially in controversy. Some persons think they know a great deal because they believe a great deal, and such persons imagine others know less than they do, because such other persons only assert what they know, being reserved in regard to what they do not know.

One may believe much and know but little, and one may know much and have a very short creed. The man of large experience and knowledge is cautious and discriminating in accepting unverified statements. The ignorant man is less capable of calculating probabilities, and is easily imposed upon by false statements. It is easier to assent to an old creed, making the authority of a name or book serve in the place of proof, than it is to examine a subject, weigh evidence, and make that the basis of belief or disbelief. It is men accustomed, more or less, to the authority of creeds, and to the idea of the pre-eminent importance of believing this or that dogma, who pride themselves more on what they know, and more on the amount of the marvellous they can swallow, than on the amount of evidence they can adduce to sustain their views, or on the strength of the reasons they can give for adopting and adhering to them. Belief may exist without any real evidence, and in conflict with truth. But what one knows is always true.

A conviction is not to be treated as of no value simply because it is a belief. Beliefs move men to action, knowledge guides and corrects them. Theological teachers have prepared statements of what should be believed, declare disbelief, and even doubt, sinful in advance, and have then pronounced all who rejected their theological nostrum as deserving and destined to eternal suffering. How absurd! Men may be urged to examine, but to urge them to believe is to treat them like children. If the evidence of any claim is good, it will sooner or later be accepted by all rational minds. The man of science does not plead for converts. He does not demand belief. He invites investigation. He does not threaten men with damnation if they believe not. He assures them that they will be rewarded with possession of the truth if they will apply their minds to the study of his teachings.

Theology, by stereotyping old errors and antiquated methods, has become the enemy, not only of intellectual growth and material prosperity, but of social progress and natural morality. Science is radical and progressive. Theology is "the Bourbon of the world of thought." Science is knowledge classified; theology is ignorance petrified. Science is the friend, the benefactor, the "savior" of mankind; its mission is to bless and benefit the race; it hath its "victories no less renowned than war."

Theology has persecuted and murdered reformers, strangled genius, reddened the earth with human blood, and covered it with a mantle of darkness. Science is gaining ground every day; theology is as rapidly losing its influence over the minds of men. The realm of science is the region of natural law; the empire of theology is the region of the supernatural. The enlargement of the former corresponds with man's progress and enlightenment; the domain of the latter has for centuries, with the decay of superstition, been growing "small by degrees and beautifully less."

Theology claims to be able to give an explanation of this universe. Science, which deals with the observable and calculable, studies the order and sequences of the phenomena. The absolute nature of things is unknown, and the puzzle of existence man cannot solve. A mystery to ourselves, we are in the midst of mysteries we cannot unravel. We are all children in the dark, getting now and then a glimpse of the light.

The widest observation and experience in a lifetime, and the most complete familiarity with the results of all investigation past and present, will not remove the barriers to a solution of the problem of this universe; because no amount of knowledge possible to man can relieve him from the organically imposed limitations of human intelligence.

All our ideas of the external world are and must for ever be relative. We can know things only as they are related to us, as they are colored by our consciousness, and modified by the conditions of the human organism. So long as there is organism and environment, knowledge is possible only in the form of a relation—a relation between the subject, man, and the object, external nature.

We can know things only as they are related to the mind. By no power of thought, by no ingenuity of reasoning, by no effort of the will, can we scale or destroy the eternal wall which confines us to the region of the relative, and makes for ever impossible knowledge of the absolute, or of "the thing in itself."

—B. F. UNDERWOOD.

The Shadow of Buddha.

Adapted from Nietzsche.

WHEN Buddha died his shadow long was shown,
A spectral figure, fearful and immense,
Upon the wall of a vast cavern thrown,
Where worshipers still paid it reverence;
God, too, is dead; but ages yet will pass
Before his shadow fades and disappears.
When all men shall the vanished vision class
With the dim myths of man's barbaric years.

Long must we strive its influence to o'ercome,
And 'gainst its dull narcotic power contend,
Ere it shall cease the spirit of man to numb,
And warp his genius from its proper end:
Till man that shadow doth no more behold,
Never can he his better self unfold.

B. D.

Obituary.

We regret to record the death of Mr. Garthwaite, a veteran and well-known Freethinker, of Grimsby, at the age of seventy-two. He was a life-long abstainer, and one of the pioneers of temperance. He was respected by all who knew him, and beloved by all his family. His only regret in death was leaving "that pathetic figure"—a blind wife, to mourn his loss. He was conscious to the last moment of his life, and found an adequate support in his principles. The funeral was conducted by Mr. J. T. Lloyd, whom the mourners desire to thank for his sympathetic words and attitude.

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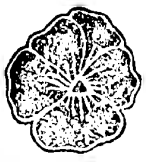
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Registered Office—2 NEWCASTLE STREET, LONDON, E.C.

Chairman of Board of Directors—MR. G. W. FOOTE.

Secretary—MISS E. M. VANCE.

THIS Society was ormed in 1898 to afford legal security to the acquisition and application of funds for Secular purposes.

The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularisation of the State, etc., etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

The liability of members is limited to £1, in case the Society should ever be wound up and the assets were insufficient to cover liabilities—a most unlikely contingency.

Members pay an entrance fee of ten shillings, and a subsequent yearly subscription of five shillings.

The Society has a considerable number of members, but a much larger number is desirable, and it is hoped that some will be gained amongst those who read this announcement. All who join it participate in the control of its business and the trusteeship of its resources. It is expressly provided in the Articles of Association that no member, as such, shall derive any sort of profit from the Society, either by way of dividend, bonus, or interest, or in any way whatever.

The Society's affairs are managed by an elected Board of Directors, consisting of not less than five and not more than twelve members, one-third of whom retire by ballot) each year, but are capable of re-election. An Annual General Meeting of members must be held in London, to receive the Report, elect new Directors, and transact any other business that may arise.

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NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

President: G. W. FOOTE.

Secretary: Miss E M. Vance, 2 Newcastle-st. London, E.C.

Principles and Objects.

Secularism teaches that conduct should be based on reason and knowledge. It knows nothing of divine guidance or interference; it excludes supernatural hopes and fears; it regards happiness as man's proper aim, and utility as his moral guide.

Secularism affirms that Progress is only possible through Liberty, which is at once a right and a duty; and therefore seeks to remove every barrier to the fullest equal freedom of thought, action, and speech.

Secularism declares that theology is condemned by reason as superstitious, and by experience as mischievous, and assails it as the historic enemy of Progress.

Secularism accordingly seeks to dispel superstition; to plead education; to disestablish religion; to rationalise morality; to promote peace; to dignify labor; to extend material well-being; and to realise the self-government of the people.

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Any person is eligible as a member on signing the following declaration:—

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Name.....

Address.....

Occupation.....

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Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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You ask in what poets can be useful. Simply this—in permeating civilisation with light.—VICTOR HUGO.

Please God.

WE should have enough to do to please all our readers. As a matter of fact we never tried to please any of them. We have only tried to please ourselves. It does not surprise us that some readers like what we have written in regard to this war, that others do not like it, and that a few would have us executed for treason felony. The last belong to the Christian Evidence variety of our enemies. One of these blackguardly creatures told his audience last Sunday that Atheists ought to be turned out of England as German spies, and all he could say in support of this was that Mr. Foote had publicly stated that he had not given a penny to the Prince of Wales' National Relief Fund and had not advised anyone else to give a penny. Even that person's audience wanted something more definite and satisfactory, and he saw he had better drop the subject. Other readers fancy we ought to support the Government through thick and thin, and devote all our time to aiding the recruiting sergeant,—as if *that* were *our* work in the world, when there are so many others who can do it better than we can, but cannot do some other things as well as we can, or, for that matter, do them at all. It doesn't require everybody to be on one job—not even a war. And the recruiting sergeant was never slack in England when soldiers were wanted for an early slap at our enemies. The third section of our readers who like what we have written are the great majority—the overwhelming majority; who love their own country without wishing ill to any other, who are prepared to defend the right when necessary without creating fresh wrongs, who are glad to hear the voice of calm-minded reason amidst the thunder-roar of infuriated if justified passion.

Patriotism was described by Dr. Johnson in the first edition of his Dictionary as "the last refuge of a scoundrel." We do not endorse this unconditionally, but the word is one to be watched. The common use of it to-day is perfectly ridiculous. It cannot be a national virtue; from the nature of the case it must be personal; it is the submission of the individual citizen to what is necessary to the welfare of the nation. It might have no relation whatever to any other nation on earth. But we note that Mr. Blatchford actually makes it an offence for foreigners not to love England as he does. He remarks shudderingly of certain German publicists that they hate England. If that is not a crime, what is? Yet he allows one of the regular contributors in his own paper to explain "Why he hates Germans." Then there is Mr. Bottomley, who almost uses the language of inspiration in denouncing the Kaiser and Germany for aspiring to the domination of the whole world. It is positively blasphemous on their part. But the blasphemy, after all, only lies in the selection. God has already assigned that supreme position to England. Mr. Bottomley quite agrees with the Kaiser in essentials; the difference is merely one of interpretation. But that has often been the case in the history of religious controversy.

Some people might incline to fancy that Mr. Blatchford's and Mr. Bottomley's patriotism—while sincere, passionate, disinterested, and so forth—has a good deal to do with the fact that they allowed England the honor of introducing them to the light of day. But that is a considerable element of most people's patriotism. Being born in this country rather than that decides one's speech—which is our instrument of thought, and perhaps the most important factor in our lives. It also decides several other important things, which need not be expatiated upon at present. And, after all, to love one country is better than to love none. But the Anglo-German problem lies a long way behind all that Mr. Blatchford and Mr. Bottomley have to say; and when the present war is ended by the decisive defeat of Germany, as we hope it will be, the old problem will still remain in the sympathies and antipathies, the friendships and rivalries, the co-operations and antagonisms, of two of the greatest nations of the world. The sword cannot settle that problem; nothing but reason, justice, and humanity can settle it; but their settlements are durable, they lay no foundations for the passing hour, but "build large bases for eternity."

In all probability, it appears to us, this war will approach its termination next spring. The millions of able-bodied men withdrawn from their occupations to fight and kill each other must be largely returned to the land to prepare for the next harvest. Even the Kaiser's friend, "The One Above," will hardly remove that necessity. Anyhow, the war is going on yet awhile, and the Allies, including Great Britain, should do their very best to get Germany soundly beaten by then or before. The tradition of German invincibility is rapidly melting away. Moreover, it seems, after all, that to raise human nature against you is the worst thing you can do in any war, let your army be ever so numerous, well-trained, and well-equipped. This is a phenomenon which we should like to consider closely on some future occasion.

This abominable war is a daily agony to many who do not shriek over it. They have found out, like the hero of *Sartor Resartus*, that there is very little use in crying over painful experiences. Danton's *de l'audace, encore de l'audace, et toujours de l'audace* is a better road to success in human affairs. We are glad, therefore, to note the spirit which Mr. Churchill expressed on behalf of the Government after the fall of Antwerp. But he is a clever man of the new generation, and should have done with the old-fashioned shibboleths of decadent piety. The "please God" in his peroration may have sounded well in the ears of the more ignorant and thoughtless part of his audience, but it must have jarred on the ears of the rest. It is farcical, to begin with, for Christian nations, ranged in hostile camps, to be praying to the same God for the same victory. Besides, if there be a God, everything *will* be as he pleases; Mr. Churchill need not trouble himself, or other people, about that. We advise him to let "God" alone—and get on with the business. "God's" attitude towards us involves his expectation of a similar attitude on our part towards him. But it is only Freethinkers who act in this way. Secularism, as Holyoake used to say, is the only religion that gives God no trouble.

G. W. FOOTE.

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Religion and War.

I AM neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet. I am also sadly lacking in what our sapient pulpiteers call the "mystical sense"—a quality which enables some people to see sense where others only see nonsense, and to observe things that are quite hidden to others of more normal vision. These shortcomings of mine may be responsible for my inability to see traces of the strengthening of religion that, it is alleged, has taken place as one of the consequences of the War. So far as one is able to observe, and so far as religion is concerned, people are just about where they were. The non-religious remain non-religious, the professedly religious continue to "profess," and the really religious go on in their old way, with, perhaps, a little stronger religious phraseology than usual. It must be admitted that the expression "Damn the Kaiser" is now very common, and as "Damn" is a religious expletive and implies some sort of a belief in a future life, may be counted as one of the indications that religion is reviving, but it may be nothing more than an exhibition of popular imagery, or may only illustrate the readiness of the religious man to use "cuss-words" if he can do so with any semblance of propriety.

Of course, in times of war the clergy must be fussing around, just as they fuss around at any other period of excitement and national interest. It is part of their business tactics. For their first business is to, somehow or other, persuade the public that they are essential to the situation. If, for example, they were to remain quiet until the War is over, no one would seriously miss them, although many might marvel at their unusual silence. But silence would never suit them. With them, out of sight or sound would soon be out of mind. Somehow or other they must keep themselves to the front. Their task is to persuade the public that, whatever happens, Christianity must be preserved; on that hangs the hope of the world. They must find a place in the sun for religion. And it is quite likely that their own continuous buzzing is taken by the clergy as an indication of the nation's interest in them and their wares. The old fable of the fly on the wheel is of perennial value and application.

Mr. R. J. Campbell, being a thorough-going "Mystic" of the modern variety, is always ready to find evidence for religion in anything that comes along. If the world is at peace, *that* is proof of the power of Christian love. If the world is at war, he is equally able to see how religion braces people up to great issues, and how much stronger religion will emerge from the conflict. People, he says, are asking "What had become of Christianity amid the clash of armies and the seeming impotence of all appeals to anything but brute force." Mr. Campbell is not at all dismayed. His mystical sense reveals to him that "people's thoughts are turning to Jesus in the instructive perception that when great events are toward them the world has to reckon with Him," and that "when the struggle is over the lordship of Jesus will be more firmly established than ever over the human race." How great is the value of faith! Ordinary people, looking at the world, quite fail to observe any increased manifestations of religion. Our soldiers march along singing "Tipperary" or some other music-hall ditty, and not hymns. In the trenches they laugh and joke—and swear—instead of saying prayers. They write home for papers and magazines, and make no application for tracts. None of them complain of the scarcity of parsons—although the parsons at home say that more ought to be with them. Many hundreds of soldier's letters have been published, and in none of them is religion more than mentioned. Yet Mr. Campbell discerns them turning to Jesus with greater eagerness than ever.

One cannot argue with faith, still less so with prophecy. But Mr. Campbell ventures on more definite ground, in which he points out *how* religion will profit through the coming struggle.

> "Men's minds are turning to religion in a degree unprecedented in our time; they are thinking of God..... Contrast the present with the immediate past.....But a little while ago we were threatened with an industrial war on an unprecedented scale; we were told that this autumn would see us in the throes of a national strike of a magnitude hitherto undreamed of. A bitter class hatred was engendered and being sedulously fomented. .....It was a spirit of truculence, of greed, of lawlessness, of ready resort to violence.....But see what has happened now. Under the stimulus of a great national need.....all ranks and classes have coalesced.....The spokesmen of the workers are standing on the same platform with peers and Cabinet Ministers to sound the call to arms. Young men are joining the colors in tens of thousands.....I say religion has never had such an opportunity, in my lifetime at any rate."

It is true that Mr. Campbell is only here saying what thousands of others are saying, but that does not make his inability to grasp the significance of the present situation less patent. To begin with, this cessation of internal strife is not peculiar to England, or to the Allies generally. It is equally true of Germany. There, too, the strife of parties within the State has ceased in order—as they say—to unite for the defence of the Fatherland. There is nothing unusual in this; it is quite in the common run of things. Attack from without—whether the attack be sought or unsought—has *always* the effect of uniting classes within the State to repel it. This phenomenon is met with in savage and civilised States alike. It is fundamentally the cohesion of the group against external shock, and a society would indeed be on the verge of dissolution that failed to exhibit this characteristic. That so many of our public teachers should express surprise at this occurring, simply shows their unfitness to lead the nation.

Everyone is rightly pleased that in the presence of a grave danger from without the first energies of the nation should be given to considerations of defence. This is as it should be, and one may recognise this without stupidly hailing the War as a great opportunity for religion or for anything of a progressive character. Mr. Campbell evidently counts it to the credit of the War that it stopped threatened labor troubles. So might we all if we felt that these labor troubles would not recur. But is this likely? Has there been any real indication of the establishment of permanently cordial relations between classes or between capital and labor? Has there been any marked inclination on the part of employers to pay better wages or to remove any of the things about which the labor war was threatened? Are merchants less ready to raise prices against the public, or financiers less desirous of pursuing their usual tactics? So far as one can observe, these things remain—when circumstances permit—as they were. There is a truce in the war within in order to pursue the war without; that is all.

Mr. Campbell must remember that this is not the first time the nation has presented a united front against a threatened attack. It was seen in the post-revolutionary wars. Then, as now, "all were for the State." And with what result on internal affairs? It is a mere commonplace of history that, instead of classes being brought closer together, retrogressive ideas were enormously strengthened by it. Four years after Waterloo men, women, and children were trampled on by cavalry at Peterloo for holding a political meeting. Men were transported or imprisoned for the offence of agitating for political reform or for attempting to form trades unions. All reform agitation was labelled "sedition" because, as it was said, it brought "the existing constitution of government into hatred and contempt."

And what of the South African War? Was there not the same call to patriotism? Did not men enlist then as cheerfully as now? Did not the army of clergy say of the influence of war then exactly what Mr. Campbell is saying now? And what are the facts? Well, we had railway strikes, coal strikes, transport strikes, and other strikes threatened. Instead of

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the war bringing about a better state of affairs, Mr. Campbell himself complains that people have grown more lawless and a bitter class hatred has been engendered. Naturally, one does not gather grapes from thistles, and one does not pluck from war those fruits that are the outcome of peace and peaceful pursuits.

Our Christian preacher thinks that war has lifted the English people up to a higher level because it has stilled the discords of parties and of employers and employees. Well, assume that this party and class warfare were altogether a bad thing, what sort of a testimonial does it offer to the social value of religion? Consider that we are living in a society that is, and has been for centuries, permeated with Christian teaching. Mr. Campbell himself was once a keen advocate for what he called "Social Christianity." And yet the only condition on which this religion-soaked community can co-operate cordially in the work of social life is that of being called upon to deal out death to another people. No amount of pressure will make them unite on the field of religion or on that of social life. Nothing but the old brute instinct of fighting will suffice. For, on the face of it, the present unity is not wholly that of love of home. If it were it would express itself to the same extent in the absence of war. It is made up largely of hatred of others, and it is upon that feeling that Mr. Campbell is basing his plea.

But is it a good thing that political and social disputes should cease and the community satisfy itself with the uniform monotony of a hive of bees? And, if it is a good thing now, why not after the War? Or, if undesirable after the War, why not undesirable now? The reply to these queries is that the cessation of internal conflict is only desirable in the case of a temporary reversion to a lower state of things, and all war is essentially that. We revert at once to a lower state of civilisation. Put the outcome of the present War at its highest value, and it is that of the defeat of one nation bent on dominating others, or of the chance for a number of nations to pursue their own line of development unmolested. And there it ends. But the warfare that goes on *within* a society is altogether of a higher kind. It is mainly the strife of ideals, whether in politics, in ethics, or in sociology. It is warfare in behalf of this or that ideal of social organisation. It is the fighting instinct of man raised to a higher level—a level on which theories replace rifles and ideas great guns. Mr. Campbell's Christianity does not enable him to grasp the simple truth that the cessation of this warfare in favor of an appeal to armed force is essentially a reversion to a lower stage, however inescapable that reversion may be.

What has been said does not in the least affect the question of our justification in going to war with Germany; neither is it inconsistent with the support of a given war, once that is seen to be inevitable. When an assassin is at one's throat no one but a fool would hesitate at putting off other things in order to deal with the danger of the moment. But only a fool would argue that killing assassins led to a lifting of human life to a higher level. I am only pointing out that however justifiable war may be it is action on a lower stage of culture, and carries with it its inevitable consequences. I am only pointing out that warfare does not make a nation great, even though not to go to war may at times spell ruin. War—which is, after all, Militarism in action—inevitably strengthens the conservative and retrogressive forces of social life. Belgium was not made great by war, and even Germany is wasting, or has wasted, in war and preparations for war, those elements of real greatness that it acquired during peace. Speak of a man becoming healthy through disease, and you but repeat the fallacy involved in saying that nations become genuinely great through war. At the present time the nation is passing through an acute crisis. But we shall certainly emerge none the less quickly or less profitably for recognising its real nature.

C. COHEN.

Christian Sophistry.

THE word "peace" occurs in the Bible upwards of two hundred times, but the term "war" is scarcely less frequently met with. Jehovah was "a man of war," "the Lord of Hosts," the God of Battles, and his chosen people Israel gloried in him as such, verily believing that he was on their side and against all their enemies. When Sennacherib attacked Jerusalem, Hezekiah set captains over the people, gathered them together, and addressed them thus:—

> "Be strong and of good courage, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him; for there is a greater with us than with him: with him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God to help us, and to fight our battles" (2 Chron. xxxii. 7, 8).

The historical portions of the Old Testament are mainly records of wars, and this was the reason why Treitschke loved the Book of God so much. The staggering fact, however, is that Israel, though Jehovah was its Almighty Ally, never became a predominant Power in the ancient world. In war it had as many defeats as victories, and was ultimately annihilated by the Romans.

But while the Historical Books abound in warlike annals, the Devotional and Prophetic Books give great prominence to the subject of peace. In Psalm xxix. 11 it is stated that "the Lord will bless his people with peace," while in Psalm lxxxv. 10 we are told that "righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Isaiah (ix. 6) speaks of the advent of a child whose name was "Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." In the New Testament the Lord of Hosts has been renamed "the God of peace." In 2 Cor. xiii. 11 Paul exhorts his readers thus: "Be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you." Christians maintain that Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, is the real Prince of Peace, and that as such he is on the throne of the Universe. How often have we heard the expression, "Have faith in the all-conquering Christ who reigns supreme." Great stress is always set upon the alleged omnipotence of the Prince of Peace. Even the Kaiser is only his vassal, he being King of kings, Emperor of emperors. Such has always been the contention of Christian theology. And yet this omnipotent Prince of Peace has never succeeded in securing peace for the earth. As Professor Cramb says, "In Europe, which really governs the planet, every advance in politics or religion has been attended by war." "War," he continues, "is at the root of Roman history. The Romans are the great inventors in the art of war; they are the first scientists in war." Then comes this weighty passage:—

> "This attitude of Rome persists down to the Middle Age—though then, in the Middle Age, war receives the added glamor of religion. To Mohammed and to his Arabs in the East war is not only in itself a heroism, it is the Divine act. And in the West, similarly, in the same period, you find the Roman Papacy adopting as the very central thought of its foreign policy a great religious war—the war of the Crusades. And if at that time you do find arising in Europe the notion of the 'Truce of God,' this Truce of God becomes simply the institution of a temporary peace between the feudal chiefs and barons; it is no repudiation of war in itself" (*Germany and England*, p. 54).

Much has been heard of late about the "Truce of God," for which we are said to be indebted to the Church; but in reality the "Truce of God" was merely a device to prevent war from interfering with the celebration of religious festivals, such as Sunday, Advent, and Lent, and to afford protection to monks and priests. At the Council of Clermont in 1095, a weekly truce was proclaimed for all Christendom; but at this very council Pope Urban II. acted as an eloquent and passionate advocate of war. He firmly supported the fiery appeal of Peter the Hermit, and effectually called upon Christendom to undertake what was called a holy war against the Saracens of Palestine, which lasted, off and on, for two hundred

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years, resulting in the sacrifice of some nine million lives. No, the "Truce of God" was not a condemnation of war, but a measure to provide against the infliction of any injury upon the Church by means of war. Writing in his old age to Voltaire, Frederick the Great said:—

> "Running over the pages of history, I see that ten years never pass without a war. This intermittent fever may have moments of respite, but cease, never."

Now, is not the inference inescapable that the Prince of Peace has been, and is, a mythic dream that possesses no reality at any point? This is virtually admitted in the utterance of eminent divines. In the *British Weekly* for October 8, Principal Whyte, of Edinburgh, delivers himself of the following extraordinary passage:—

> "Germany, that truly great country, has allowed herself to fall so far below herself during these God-forsaken years as to make it possible for one ill-minded man, by the mere lifting of his finger, to let all this hell loose upon Christendom. Come to the word and to the testimony, and you will there find the whole truth that lies at the bottom of all this terrible time. 'Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and all the glory of them; and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.' Only, alas, our Devil-tempted Kaiser did not have the grace to say, 'Get thee behind me, Satan.' And look at your newspapers every day for the fearful result to him and to the whole world of his covenant with Satan. The shining armor that the Devil put upon that miserable man has so dazzled his ambitious eyes that he cannot even yet see the yawning pit that the Devil has dug for him and for his domineering house. And, to all appearance, he will not humble himself, to see himself as both God and man see him, till his mailed fist has returned home on his own broken head."

We readily admit the exceeding eloquence and beauty of that extract, but we are bound to regard it as a tacit confession that the Prince of Peace is out of date. Had he really been King of Kings, the Devil would have had no chance whatever with the German Emperor. The Divine Prince of Peace would have so dominated his Imperial Majesty as to have made it impossible for Satan to get at him at all. Surely this is simple enough to be clearly seen by all sensible persons; but, alas, Christian ministers seem to be utterly blind to it. In one mood they assure us that the Lord sitteth as king for ever, that Christ is an irresistible force for good in society, and that we are living in a world redeemed by the blood of the Cross; but in another mood, confronted by powerful objections to such teaching, they aver that God does all his work through human instrumentality, that Christ, or Christianity, is only a leaven which necessarily works slowly. Jesus himself, they remind us, compared his kingdom to a mustard seed, "which is less than all seeds," and to leaven which is *hidden* in the meal of human nature, the tediousness and comparative ineffectiveness of whose working is characteristic of it. The feeling against war and for universal peace, with whatever check and set-back, has been growing stronger and stronger, and the result of this war will be to strengthen it still more. We are perfectly familiar with this plausible fallacy, which is resorted to merely as an excuse for what is described as the *apparent* failure of Christianity. The truth is that the majority of people still believe in the moral grandeur of war, and look upon it as the school of the heroic virtues. They do not wish to end it; and they laugh disdainfully at the comparatively small number of enthusiasts who dream of, and try to work for, universal peace. The love of battle is still in man's blood, nor is it going to be cast out by the present war, though the number of those who love and desire peace may be substantially increased as the result of it.

The Rev. Arthur Pringle, in an article in the *Christian World* for October 15, quotes these apostolic or semi-apostolic words: "We see not yet all things put under him, *but we see Jesus*." Upon Mr. Pringle be the responsibility of wilfully wresting this Scripture (Hebrews ii. 8, 9) to make it convey a false impression. We take it as quoted, and observe that to see Jesus, apart from his Conquest, is to behold a "phantom rising as the mists arise." The subjection of all things to Christ remains an unfulfilled prophecy because Christ himself is only a theologically constructed personality, possessing no objective reality whatever. We have seen Jesus a thousand times ourselves, and enjoyed blissful fellowship with him, but only in imagination. We have seen people go mad with joy at the vision of him; but if for any reason they stayed away from church or chapel for a couple of months they lost sight of him, and the sense of his reality weakened to such an extent that it would take them a long time to get to see him again. To the emotions, trained in religion, the Prince of Peace is altogether lovely, and people learn to love him passionately, especially those who wait on emotional ministers. But what on earth is the value of a Prince of Peace when there is no peace? He is serenely looking on while his disciples are slaughtering one another by the thousand daily in his name. He may be "a phantom of delight" to superstitious people, but a phantom for all that. We see myriads of men and women flocking every day to places of worship to intercede with a being who never takes the slightest notice. The exercise doubtless produces exceedingly agreeable sensations in many of those who engage in it; but of practical results there are, and can be, none.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Armed Peace of the Plants.

THE battle of life rages as it has ever raged since sentient things put in their first appearance on our planet. Offensive and defensive weapons have been developed in all departments of floral and faunal life. The keener the competition and the deadlier the strife, the more complex have the means become among organic forms for protection and attack. The titanic contest now proceeding between human animals on the European Continent is but an amplification and intensification of those defensive and aggressive phenomena which have enabled favored floral and faunal species to survive in Nature's ubiquitous slaughterhouse.

In one of the works of the great Russian writer, Turgeneff, a sanguine character encounters Mother Nature deeply pondering in one of her chosen retreats. He asks her to tell him why she meditates so deeply, and she raises her stone-cold eyes to his face. She then informs her human questioner that she is considering how best to furnish fleas with more powerful muscles, as they are not adequately equipped for the exacting demands of existence. The inquirer is stupefied by her answer. But what of the race of man, great Nature's most peerless product? he stammers. What are her intentions concerning the coming happiness of humanity? She gazes at him with complete indifference as she calmly replies that she is alike the begetter and destroyer of all breathing things. In her eyes, not one of them has pre-eminence over another; all are created with the certainty of ultimate extinction.

In multitudinous ways animals of every order adapt themselves more or less successfully to their surroundings. Protective and aggressive coloration, mimicry, nauseous smell, and unpalatable taste are a few only of the countless devices adopted to temper or circumvent the hostile conditions of life in which organisms find themselves cast. In the light of these phenomena, as a famous biologist says, "we can scarcely avoid the impression that the forms of life are made of a plastic material, which, like the sculptor's clay, can be kneaded at will into almost any desired form."

The foregoing reflections are strengthened by a study of the armed adaptations evolved by vegetable organisms so as to secure immunity to the devouring activities of herbivorous animals. And when one calls to mind the endless array of zoological organisms whose life is entirely dependent upon its plant food,

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one is almost astonished to find that the floral domain has managed so successfully to cope with its huge army of animal foes. Directly or indirectly, the whole animal world flourishes at the expense of the vegetable kingdom. Moreover, animals, whether herbivorous or carnivorous, could never have entered into being had not their advent been antedated by the appearance of plant life.

It therefore follows as a logical necessity that, had plants remained undefended against this horde of directly or indirectly destroying animal organisms, which wages a ceaseless war on the floral world, the latter, as its animal enemies multiplied, would soon have been swept from the surface of the earth. Hence we find that plants have evolved defensive devices to ward off these antagonistic influences, and many and various are the fortifications which have been erected by the flora during its struggle for its place in the sun on the continents and islands of the globe. That these botanical contrivances are truly astounding the following fully substantiated facts will prove beyond the possibility of doubt.

Various plants protect themselves from the ravages of herbivores through the secretion of poison in their leaf-sap, in roots, branches, stems, and fruits. Cattle and horses, elephants and deer, hares and rabbits, all avoid on pain of death the poisonous juices of one plant or other. The belladonna is studiously avoided by many herbivorous mammals, and the same is true of such deadly plants as the henbane, the spotted hemlock, the danewort, and various others. But the presence of poison is not a sufficient guarantee of safety, so these poisonous plants send forth a disgusting odor, which warns the grazing animals of their danger, with the result that the baleful plants are left severely alone.

There are many untoward plants, however, that have not yet evolved any warning sign to animals approaching them; at any rate, no such danger signal can be detected by the human sense of smell. Nevertheless, these plants, which include the meadow-saffron, several species of spurge and gentian, the black hellebore, and the blue aconite, are all shunned by the various forms of deer, the hares, and the marmots, while our domesticated goats, sheep, cattle, and horses rarely touch them. That this aversion is due to transmitted experience seems probable from the following circumstance, which occurred in the Rhine valley at Aar:—

> "On the rocky grass slopes of the valley, the poisonous hellebore (Helleborus viridis) grows in great abundance, and the sheep of that region, which were wont to graze on the slopes, avoided these plants. But some sheep from another part were imported into the valley, and these ate the hellebore, with the result that many died."

Even if these plants emit a warning odor, or display any other danger sign, these sheep were too inexperienced to profit by it. Everything considered, the theory of an inherited tradition of the hellebore's poisonous nature most fully accounts for the facts.

Preparations produced from many seeds are of considerable economic importance to man, but such ethereal substances in their natural state appear to afford protection to the plants against the seed-stealing proclivities of many birds. It has been proved that a sparrow which swallowed a few cummin seeds quickly succumbed. This is very significant in so omnivorous a bird. Again, numerous plants, such as ferns, mosses, and others, prove extremely bitter to the taste, and are rarely molested save in circumstances of dire necessity. Various grasses, the bilberry, the rhododendron, and other flora render themselves immune to animal attack in a similar way; while, curiously enough, plants with cup-shaped leaves, which retain dew and rain-water long after the moisture has evaporated from the majority of plants, are in this manner afforded more than a modicum of protection. Grazing animals manifest a marked preference for dry herbage, possibly because of the disease germs which lurk in damp soil and vegetation.

Of world-wide distribution are those plants that proclaim an armed peace through their display of spines and thorns. A deeply interesting description of the multitudinous devices of this form of floral armature is given by Kerner in that celebrated botanist's *Natural History of Plants*, a work splendidly adorned with figures and plates; and to some of these defences, so beautifully described by several eminent biologists, we venture to direct the attention of the botonically inclined.

The most casual observer must have noticed that spines and prickles appear only on those parts of the plant most vulnerable to herbivorous animals. Young plants bristle with these fortifications, as do the lower parts of those of more mature growth. "The holly, for instance," says Weismann,

> "has crenate, spinose leaves only to the height to which grazing animals can reach; beyond that the leaves are smooth-edged and spineless, like those of the camelia. It is almost the same with some wild pear-trees, which are quite covered with thorns as long as they are low, but afterwards grow a thornless crown."

The rosebush, on the other hand, as it never attains any considerable altitude, is protected throughout by thorns. In those cases in which the leaves themselves bear spinous processes, these are so arranged as to best withstand the onslaught of grazing animals. Water-snails and other organisms are the enemies of the aquatic Victoria regia, and the immense floating leaves of this plant have adapted themselves to meet this danger through the development of long spines on their under-surface, which reach a length of several inches, particularly at the upturned margin, where the molluscs might break through and steal.

In many shrubs native to the Mediterranean coast, foliage leaves are altogether absent; their functions have been usurped and their place supplied by the verdant twigs and branches, which so arm the bushes at all points that herbivorous creatures are frightened off. Among our indigenous flora, the broom furnishes an example of this mode of defence.

Where the spines stand out on the leaves themselves, there is remarkable dissimilarity in their mode of arrangement. In such tropical flora as the yucca and the aloe, as in many of our own grasses, the reed-fashioned leaf is modified into a spine. Kerner refers to a species of Southern Alpine grass, which is quite common in the district, that wounds cattle so severely that they return from their pastures in a bleeding state. The herdsmen naturally wage war on these truculent plants, and in this they are assisted by the cattle, as they uproot the noxious herbage and cast it to the ground, so that it withers away. To quote Kerner:—

> "I saw thousands of the tufts which had been rooted up by oxen, lying, dried and bleached, in the sun.....It must not be supposed that the animals accomplish this clearance deliberately; but it may indeed be admitted that they root up the patches of Mat-grass in order thus to obtain the enjoyment of the other plants growing between them, and avoid the risk in doing so of wounding their mouths."

The entire leaf-edge of many plants has been transformed into a spiny defence, as in the holly and the thistles. Others have evolved barbed hooks, which function is saw-like fashion, and some of these leaves are "made sharp by deposits of silicic acid, as in sedges, whose sharp edges are moved to and fro in the mouths of ruminants, and thus injure the mucous membrane."

The stinging hairs of the nettles are provided with an elastic base, but with easily broken rounded heads. These snap at the slightest touch, when the sharp point of the fractured hair pierces the skin of the animal that has brushed against it, and the poisonous secretions of the hair are poured into the wound. As everyone who has tenderly handled the nettle of the countryside is only too well aware, the "sting" produces a most unpleasant sensation, and may generate the nettle rash on the skin. There are tropical nettles, however, that are much more formidable than this. Several species, such as Urtica stimulata in Java, and others, bear hairs which cause

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diseases similar to those which follow from snake bites, and may even induce lockjaw. Needless to add, the consequences are much more serious when these pain-creating hairs become embedded in the highly sensitive mouth organs of herbivorous animals than when merely thrust into the human skin. They may therefore be regarded as a fairly successful fortification against the encroachments of grass-feeding creatures. Truly enough, "we never find our nettle patches eaten away, and even the donkey, which eats thistles freely, turns away from the stinging-nettle." But such cunningly contrived defences fail to secure these plants from their insect foes; but insect depredations are not sufficiently serious to affect the general prosperity of the nettle family.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be concluded.)

Acid Drops

Rev. R. J. Campbell appears to believe that German brutality can only be paralleled by going back before the advent of Jesus Christ. Has he never heard of the Crusades, of the Thirty Years' War, of the Expulsion of the Huguenots, of the butcheries of Alva in the Netherlands, of the awful cruelties and exterminations wrought by the Spaniards in America? We might add to the list tremendously, but these samples should be within everyone's knowledge. A large license of ignorance is allowed to the Christian preachers, but there is a limit even to their privileges in this respect. Mr. Campbell should be aware of the historic infamies just mentioned. He should also be aware that they were all perpetrated by Christians. There is no need to go back beyond the Christian era for instances of the most frightful cruelties. The history of Christianity is full of them. Pagan records are not nearly as bloody and barbarous. Mr. Campbell should be well acquainted with this fact, and if he is, he is simply indulging in a common vice of the clergy—playing on the ignorance of his hearers, and lying for the glory of Christ, and indirectly for the glory and profit of Christ's professional apostles.

People are asking, says Mr. R. J. Campbell, where is God in the present European conflict? Well, if we are to trust the Germans, and the Russians, and the British, he is right in the thick of it. All of them claim his aid, and all of them will say that they have got it. Mr. Campbell, however, asks the question from a slightly different point of view. He admits that it is useless playing fast and loose with the question of responsibility. "If God could prevent a thing happening and does not prevent it, he must be regarded as having, in a true sense, caused it.....Even if he is absolutely passive, he is causing the world-struggle by simply permitting it to go on." This is what we have often said ourselves, and we began to anticipate Mr. Campbell's answer. But having stated the question fairly enough, he says that he does not propose answering it, but by and by, when we meet Jesus face to face, "everything will be made clear." So we come back to the old religious hocus-pocus after all. It will all be cleared up in the next world. Meanwhile, we must go on believing it is all right. An excellent doctrine for fools and fanatics.

Now that St. Petersburg has been changed to Petrograd, the Continent suggests that Europe should be renamed "Abattoir."

Mr. Alexander, the one-time fellow-missioner with Dr. Torrey, says he knows of numbers of men in the British Army in France who used to indulge in rough talk, but "who now sit around, pass round a candle, and read the Word of God." Of course, we should not dream of doubting Mr. Alexander's word; but there are others who are more sceptical. And it is well that Mr. Alexander should have placed on record a fact that has escaped the notice of all the newspaper correspondents, and which the men in their letters home have forgotten to mention.

There has been a great deal of talk about the increase of religion since the War started, although none but the clergy seem to have observed it, and churches do not appear to have been overcrowded. A resident in a cathedral city writes to the *Church Times* in order to discover how far this is true. He asks whether church-goers have extended their attendances, have non-church-goers begun to attend, and have infrequent attendants become more frequent? He says that, judging from his own experience and from what he can gather in other parishes, the answer to these questions would be, No. He adds that if parish priests would tell the bare plain facts, they would have to admit that the alleged increase of religion is quite mythical.

The curate of a church at Earlsfield writes to the *Church Times*, stating that they have been compelled to close the church, except when service is proceeding, owing to the many thefts that have taken place. He says there isn't very much to steal, yet lace is stolen from the altar. New Testaments, water-bottles and tumblers, money-boxes rifled, and sometimes the boxes taken as well. It is evidently a case of watch and *prey*.

The Germans are partial to repeating Napoleon's sneer at England as being a nation of shopkeepers. The Prussians overlook the fact that they might be called a nation of butchers.

The hymn-books used by Christians are popularly supposed to cheer up the pious folk, and it is a curious thing that the word "blood" appears on nearly every page.

What Secularists these Christians are! Prayer is very well in the pulpit and on the platform, but when the troops are to be comforted the pious folk don't leave it to "Gawd," but send the soldiers tobacco and cigarettes.

Christians have started a National Food Fund to prepare for the lean years. Have they forgotten the eminent person who fed five thousand people with two sardines and a few bath-buns?

The most absurd restrictions are imposed by the authorities upon lecturers just at present, for they are not allowed to refer to the War, but it seems that the Bishop of London, Pastor Russell, and other creatures of the same ilk, are permitted to say what they please. The authorities know that the clergy may be trusted to bleat in chorus with the majority.

It is a curious fact that the clergy is the only body of professional men whose incomes are unaffected by the war. They have always interpreted the "lord's" prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread—with a little butter."

A writer in the *Christian Commonwealth* remarks that "War has certainly had a very beneficial effect on the social affairs of mankind." In support of this he instances the War of Liberation in America, and the defeat which "the tribesmen of Mahomet" met at the hands of Charles Martel, and but for which we might "be studying the pages of the Koran in our Universities." Neither illustration is very fortunate. With or without the war between North and South, slavery in America must have broken down. All economists know that it was ceasing to be profitable, and could only be made profitable by the acquisition of new territory. It was to get this that the South really threatened to secede. And it is certain that the economic and moral forces at work would have destroyed slavery in America just as they destroyed slavery in British possessions.

With regard to the defeat of the Mohammedan forces, it is quite a matter of speculation how far civilisation benefited by that. It by no means follows that had the reading of the Koran been general at our universities, the state of things would have been vitally different to what ensued from the reading of the Bible. Pretty much the same influences that have weakened the influence of the Bible and Christianity in the West, would have weakened the influence of the Koran and of Mohammedanism. And all students of Mohammedan history are aware that it was the very influence of the Christian nations that strengthened the power of the retrogressive party among the Mohammedans. Moreover, it must always be remembered that when "the tribesmen of Mahomet" conquered Egypt, instead of that proving injurious to civilisation, it led to the only civilisation worth talking about during the Middle Ages. For centuries the Mohammedans cultivated science and literature, and the arts of commerce, while they were being more or less neglected in Christendom. The two examples, as we have said, are singularly unfortunate. It is, indeed, one of the ironies of things that war seldom brings benefits that could not be acquired without it.

Rev. Dr. Len Broughton has opened a dispensary as an adjunct to Christ Church, Westminster, and says that in

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time he hopes to realise his ideal of a Christian hospital. We should not think that this would be a very expensive institution. All that is required is the rent. The only physic recommended in the New Testament is faith and prayer, and there should be enough of that at Christ Church. We expect that, as usual, Dr. Broughton is mixing faith and physic in his new dispensary, and we know which he would regard as indispensable.

Mr. Horatio Bottomley is getting very familiar with the Christian vocabulary. After using the name of "God" freely for some weeks, he issues a poster with the alluring title, "Hell with the Lid Off," which, by the way, is borrowed from John Burns's description of Chicago. It all sounds like the Christian child's first steps to religious knowledge.

Monsignor Barnes, a prominent Catholic, writing in the *Daily Mail*, says the Prussians are really Huns, and have never become Christians. This is unkind! Of course, the Kaiser's pious speeches are all concoctions, and the numerous churches in Prussia are as unsubstantial as the mansions in heaven.

In a leading article on the War in the *Daily Mail* entitled, "What the East End Thinks; Actual Conversation," it says, "The free librarian had just served the headmaster with *The Age of Reason*." We should like to know the name of that library, for Freethought works are not common in such institutions.

It is said that when Cardinal Merry del Val was a small boy his ambition was to become a tram conductor. As a man, he professes to conduct people to the gates of heaven.

That Christian gentleman, Prince Oscar, a son of the Kaiser, plays the lute. His brother, the Crown Prince, spells it "loot."

"The agnostic or the freethinker is really, unknown to himself, soaked in Christianity and Catholic ethics." This pearl of wisdom comes from Monsignor Barnes, who cannot be accused of being "soaked" in ethics. A lunatic-asylum attendant does not necessarily get "soaked" in the delusions of the patients.

"I am sending you the Bible which saved my life," writes a private soldier to his sweetheart at Godalming. He was wounded at Aisne, and the bullet went through the book and into his hip. Paine's *Age of Reason*, or a pack of cards, would have done as well.

Mr. Robert Blatchford's war articles in the *Weekly Dispatch* have been mutilated by the censor, but "Nunquam" has had his revenge by heading his communication "In the Town of Nowhere." This rather discounts his testimonial that he is "proud of the War Office," for in other and better-known towns that institution has not been inundated with unsolicited testimonials.

The Bishop of London, just returned from ten weeks amongst the troops (in a safe position, of course, and without a rifle), and addressing an audience of ladies on the old text about the meek inheriting the earth, which looks rather worn out nowadays, took a professional view of the present terrible conflict between the Christian nations of Europe. In spite of the fact that they *are* Christian, his Lordship asked "if the British Empire were to pass what would be the dominant religion of the world?" What is the Kaiser? A Christian. What is the religion of Germany? Christianity. We would back the Christian Churches to keep their end up, whatever happened on the European battlefields.

"I would rather die," Bishop Ingram says, "than see England become a province of the German Empire." We hope he will never have to face the alternative. But it is not the way of Church clergymen to be so particular. When the Church of England lurched to and fro between Catholicism and Protestantism under Henry VIII., Edward VI., Mary, and Elizabeth, only a hundred and twenty men of God showed the slightest independence. The rest of about twelve thousand obeyed the royal orders and changed every time they were told to. The Vicar of Bray has always been a common character. Even the Bishop of London, we fancy, would discover, in the words of Molière, that "there are always accommodations with heaven."

Dean Inge is a very able man (in his way) and he loves to drop a bombshell amongst his orthodox brethren. Sunday last saw him performing this little game at Westminster Abbey. After remarking that since the beginning of August we have seen nothing in the newspapers but "triumphant and unpunished devilry," he went on to observe the change for the worse that has taken place in the rules of war in Christian practice since the days of Plato. Two thousand three hundred years ago that great Pagan philosopher laid these laws down in his *Republic* for the conduct of civilised warfare:—

> "Non-combatants to be spared, no houses to be burnt, no farms to be devastated, the dead to be honorably buried, no trophies of war to be placed in the temples of the gods."

That was the humane teaching of Plato. Now look at the practice of "those who dare to claim the favor of the Christian God." Their spokesman (the Kaiser, to wit) utters the following "terrible words":—

> "Cause the greatest possible amount of suffering. Leave to the non-combatants nothing but their own eyes to weep with."

What if this brutal gospel is brought to England, and Westminster Abbey is served like the Cathedral of Rheims, and Oxford like Louvain? Who knows? Christianity has not saved the world yet. That is clear enough. That it *will* save the world, as Dean Inge maintains, is only a prophecy, and a prophecy against the facts.

All sorts of good Christian people are looking after Tommy Atkins in the name of "charity." He would not require this charity if he were treated with justice by the Government. His women-folk are shamefully treated, but he will have a Christmas pudding (if he lives so long) and will eat it in celebration of the Birth of Christ—an event that never happened except in the imagination of the early believers—the same sort of people who recently supplied evidence of the 250,000 Russian soldiers brought from Archangel to Boulogne *via* England. The testimony was quite circumstantial in both cases—and perfectly false.

The Christianity of the Kaiser has now been placed beyond doubt. The Bishop of London said, during the course of a sermon at St. Paul's, that the German Emperor is in his personal life a consistent Christian, and one who seldom makes a speech without bringing in the name of God. We hardly think that British Christians will thank the Bishop for the information. They would prefer him to be held up as an Atheist masquerading as a Christian.

Canon Peter Green, of Manchester, has been recently dealing with the old question of the "problem of evil"—and with the usual results. He says that the philosophical problem may be insoluble, but the religious one is most certainly not. This is quite a reversal of the facts. There is, indeed, no philosophical problem of evil. The fact of evil in the world is of no greater philosophical significance than the existence of anything else. It is only one of many facts that call for examination. The "problem of evil" is wholly a religious question, and only arises in an attempt to harmonise the existence of God with pain and wrong. Unsophisticated human nature has generally felt that if there is a God the world should be different to what it is. If there is not, it is idle to complain. And the task of theologians in all ages has been to harmonise the existence of God with a world which is either a negation of his providence or a condemnation of his character.

Canon Green fares no better than others at this task. It is, for example, a simple demand that pain and suffering should be proportionate to desert, that the guilty should suffer—if anyone—for their own sins, and the innocent should never be punished for the guilty. This is what all social organisation aims at, and common sense and ordinary morality endorses the ideal. Canon Green says this would not be a gain. Because, "first of all, it would rule out the Cross. And then it would rule out all the heroes and martyrs of humanity, those great souls with whom self-sacrifice for others has been a passion." As the "heroes and martyrs" are only called to redress the imperfections of the "plan of creation," one would imagine that even a clergyman would recognise that a condition of affairs that rendered them unnecessary would be preferable. Sacrifice is of no use in itself, otherwise the suicide would be the equal of the martyr. No one has anything to say against the man who exhibits self-sacrifice, or who plays the part of a martyr, it is against an arrangement that makes the sacrifice necessary that criticism is directed. A mother sacrificing herself for her child is a noble sight, but a contented and happy home where such sacrifice is needless is a far better one.

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Canon Green is a most audacious and illogical defender of the faith. He quotes Huxley's famous saying that if God would make him always act perfectly at the cost of making him a machine he would welcome the change. The Canon challenges that view, because "if where there is no choice there can be no sin, equally where there is no choice there can be no virtue." But what about God and the orthodox Christ? Can they also sin if they choose, and if they cannot will to do wrong, which is the generally accepted view, is it beyond them to lead virtuous lives? Canon Green's doctrine of free will is at once inconsistent with known facts, and contrary to reason.

The chief characteristic of this dignitary of the Church is his cheap dogmatism. Can you fancy a sensible man saying that "God can do everything except force a sinful man to be good"? What, then, is the meaning of the Christian salvation? As sinful men we are said to be spiritually dead; but has a dead person ever *wished* to become alive again? The dead have not the power of choice, and if they are ever to become alive, it must be as the result of having life infused, or forced, into them from without. Even an earthly physician does not say to the sick, "Do you wish to be made whole?" but forthwith proceeds to fight the disease with all the might of his science. But at the back of all this lies a much deeper and more fatal question—Why are there sinful men if their Creator and preserver is a good and onimpotent being? This question the Canon cannot answer.

According to Rev. H. F. Mackay, of All Saints, Margaret-street, a number of clergymen have written to their Bishop asking whether it is advisable to have any harvest thanksgivings this year. We understand that the Bishops have replied in the affirmative. They point out that the harvest has been unusually good, and no doubt see in this a special dispensation of "Providence." So the harvest thanksgivings will be as usual, and we would suggest that special mention should be made of the harvest that King Death is reaping in Northern France. That, too, is the finest for many, many years, and it is as well not to ignore any of the things with which "Providence" is favoring us.

What a hopeless muddle Christendom has got itself into at last! It no longer knows where it is or what it stands for. The War has suddenly flung it into a state of perfect topsy-turveydom. Prior to its advent we thought we knew what civilisation meant, but now nobody knows, though everybody imagines he does. The famous French savant, M. Henri Bergson, says that the Allies are fighting for civilisation and against barbarism, while the equally distinguished German philosopher, Professor Eucken, whom Dr. Horton recently pronounced the greatest thinker of the age, is equally certain that it is Germany which is defending the cause of civilisation and culture, and wrestling against barbarism. Russia, too, believes the same about herself, while Dr. Clifford and Sir Robertson Nicoll declare that Great Britain has drawn the sword for Christianity against German Atheism and Materialism. The curious thing is that the official religion of all the countries concerned, except Japan, is Christianity. What a lovely religion Christianity is, and how beautifully it unites all who profess it! Professor Eucken is a zealous Christian, and yet sneers at England, calling it "a nation of shopkeepers."

A London morning paper—Liberal in politics and illiberal in nearly everything else—drops tears of pity over the ex-Empress Eugenie, who has "for the second time seen her country invaded by the Germans." Thus is history written for the orthodox mob by the orthodox journalist. In 1870 the French crowd in Paris shouted *à Berlin* and the French army set out *à Berlin*, which they never reached, any more than the German army has reached Paris in the present war. And that "Spanish woman," as the French Freethinkers and Republicans called her, contributed more to bringing about that terrible catastrophe than any other human being except Bismarck,—who, by the way, admitted in after years that he had forged a telegram to King William that made war inevitable. The "Spanish woman" had the Emperor under her thumb; she, in turn, was in the hands of the Jesuits, who had their own quarrel with Bismarck and the Germans. She acted as their tool. She called it her war—*C'est ma guerre, à moi*. She said it then; let it be so now. She shall not be robbed of the honor. She sent myriads of men to death. She sowed the seeds of bitter hatred between France and Germany. A natural want of sympathy was turned into an incurable antipathy. She lives to see Nature's logic in the course of human affairs. If she is a victim, she is a victim of her own misdeeds. "Poor royal lady!" the lickspittles say; but Truth cries, with sternly pointed finger, "C'est ma guerre, à moi."

A soldier's letter was published in the *News of the World*, in which the writer said that "the German prisoners considered the British soldiers almost supernatural in their ability to take cover." This is not a bad tribute, and if the French Catholics have any gratitude they will put a statue in Notre Dame to "Saint Thomas Atkins."

Bishop Baynes, Chaplain to the Notts and Derby Mounted Brigade, writing in the *Clarion* on "What is the Duty of the Christian Citizen?" says Christ's idea of non-resistance "is a very true and very potent method when adopted with wise discretion." Unfortunately, Christians have always believed it is more blessed to give black eyes than to receive them.

Secularism is better than Christianity. Gospel temperance at Southend, backed up by Omnipotence, produced an average of eight "drunks" per week. The closing of licensed premises has reduced this number to one weekly.

At a Theosophical Meeting at Westcliff-on-Sea a speaker said the thought-form of the Germans started in 1864, crystallised in 1870, and the later results are seen to-day. A schoolboy of fourteen could have informed that lecturer that there was a Prussian army in the days of Frederick the Great, and it was a formidable body then. Mahatmas appear to be as innocent as mermaids.

An Organists' Association has been mooted in several quarters lately. If this results in a practical organisation, the dear clergy will not be able to get their music for the price of a second-hand surplice.

The generals that will try the troops on the Continent will not be the German leaders, but Generals Cholera and Typhus, who have made their appearance on the scene of war. God's tender mercies are over all his works.

It is reported that the Kaiser issued the following address to his Eastern Army:—

> "Remember who you are. The Holy Spirit has descended on me, because I am the Emperor of the Germans. I am the instrument of the Most High. I am His sword, His representative. Woe and death to those who resist my will! Woe and death to those who do not believe in my mission! Woe and death to cowards! Let all enemies of the Germans perish! God demands their destruction, God who through me commands you to fulfil His will."

On this *Public Opinion* remarks that the Kaiser has shown himself as "the supreme Atheist." We do not know on what ground the author of such an address can be called an Atheist—unless it is on the principle that when a man does anything you detest, give him a label that you dislike.

They rose in Freedom's rare sunrise,
Like Giants roused from wine;
And in their hearts and in their eyes
The God leaped up divine!
Their souls flashed out, naked as swords,
Unsheathed for fiery fate:
Strength went like battle with their words—
The men of 'Forty-eight.
Hurrah
For the men of 'Forty-eight.

The Kings have got their Crown again,
And blood-red revel cup;
They've bound the Titan down again,
And heaped his grave-mound up.
But still he lives, though buried 'neath
The mountain—lies in wait,
Heart-stifled heaves and tries to breathe
The breath of 'Forty eight.
Hurrah
For the men of 'Forty-eight.

—*Gerald Massey.*

He put a penny in the plate
Each Sunday did this man,
To buy a mansion in the skies
On the instalment plan!

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To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £218 13s. 3d. Received since:—G. Britton, 2s.; A. H. Smith, 4s. 6d.; H. T. C., £1 1s.

WELSH RATIONALIST.—We have been saying the same thing ever since the War broke out. Christians are capable of anything as controversialists, and most things as propagandists and defenders of their faith. Nothing could be meaner or more fraudulent than their pretence that Atheism is responsible for German despotism and the infamous cruelty with which it has treated Belgium. They have been shown again and again that they are wrong, and it is obvious that the Kaiser and his friends are a queer set of Atheists; but they are used to telling every lie that suits, and *while* it suits, and in spite of correction, no retraction will ever be made. Lying for the glory of God is the most ancient of Christian virtues. Lying for the advantage of the Church comes close on its heels.

CHRISTIAN PATRIOT.—We don't publish our "charities," but we *have* published the fact that we have given nothing to the Prince of Wales's Fund. We have also given some, but not all, of the reasons for our policy. On the other hand, we have not got our name advertised in the papers as a subscriber to a "Public Distress" fund and then made up for it (and more) by rearranging our business establishment—all at the cost of the employees, who should be the last and not the first to suffer from a national calamity. We don't know what we may be driven to in the end, if this war drags out a miserable old age, and dies eventually of inanition; but up to the present no one in our employ receives a penny less wages than he did before the war. You see there is patriotism and patriotism—and we prefer our own.

J. C.—The *Freethinker* has always avoided politics as politics, and devoted itself to Freethought in relation to philosophy and ethics. It is no part of our business to praise or blame Mr. Asquith, Sir Edward Grey, or other members of the Cabinet as politicians. We have said that England was forced into this war by Germany; and now we are in it we must make the best of it, and let the Kaiser know the real value of "General French's contemptible little Army." That goes without saying. But anybody who wants us to howl the patriotism of the Yellow Press, or the naive and pathetic patriotism of Mr. Blatchford and Mr. Bottomley, will be disappointed. We simply cannot regard every Englishman as a hero and a saint, and every German as a ruffian and a blackguard. If the world were built on that simple plan, all political and social questions would soon be settled. It is the childish theory of the sheep and goats over again. At the same time, we hate cruelty—especially personal, gratuitous, deliberate cruelty—with every drop of blood we possess, and we are filled with disgust at the brutal wickedness which the Germans have imported into this contest. We look upon the Kaiser as a criminal lunatic. We have said all this before; what is the use of going on saying it? Our special task is to fight Christianity, and if we don't show from recent and passing events what an utter failure it is in its boasted mission of bringing peace and goodwill on earth; if *we* don't do it, who *will?* Bear in mind, however, that matters are mixed in actual fact, and that it is impossible to deal with religion without referring occasionally to other subjects with which it happens to be associated. You will appreciate our policy better if you go on reading the paper, which you say you like already.

A. B. Moss.—Pleased to see you are to preside at the Bradlaugh Fellowship Dinner at the Boulogne Restaurant, Gerard-street, W., on Wednesday, October 28. We note that the tickets are 2s. each.

E. B.—Thanks for welcome cuttings.

G. S.—We had to do a little shortening.

H. BLACK.—We have not heard anything about Freethought lecturing at Manchester this winter.

C. W. MARSHALL.—Thanks for the cutting, but the Kaiser and the Bishop of London are both getting bores.

D. GRANT.—The new-premises trouble is still before us. Alas!

E. S.—Glad you have read the *Freethinker* for twenty-seven years, think it the brainiest paper published, and hope it will go on at least another twenty-seven years. Not under the present editor, though, for goodness sake.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Presentation to W. J. Ramsey.

AN interesting and pathetic ceremony took place at the Borough of Shoreditch Radical Club on Wednesday, Oct. 14, during a "Social Party" of the Bradlaugh Fellowship. This was the presentation of a sum of nearly £70 to W. J. Ramsey, subscribed and collected by his comrades and friends in the Secularist, club, and political movements. B. T. Hall, secretary of the Club and Institute Union, occupied the chair, and opened the proceedings in a brief speech of singular force and felicity. He was followed by George Standring, Arthur B. Moss, Edith M. Vance, and E. Garrity, all of whom dwelt upon various phases of Ramsey's work for progress during half-a-century. When the presentation had been made, "Bill" (as everybody called him) returned thanks in a very affecting little speech. He declared that while his brain continued to be unaffected he should always remain a Secularist; if he became an idiot he might also become a Christian; but in any case he asked his friends to remember him as he had been for fifty years, a willing worker in the cause of human progress and freedom. While he lived he would do what he could for the good old cause.

G. S.

THE INFINITE UNIVERSE.

Revolving worlds, revolving systems, yea,
Revolving firmaments, nor there we end:
Systems of firmaments revolving, send
Our thoughts across the Infinite astray,
Gasping and lost, and terrified, the day
Of life, the goodly interests of home
Shrivelled to nothing; that unbounded dome
Pealing still on, in blind futility.
No rest is there for our souls' winged feet,
She must return for shelter to her ark—
The body, fair, frail, death-born incomplete,
And let her bring this truth back from the dark,
Life is self-centred, man is nature's god;
Space, time, are but the walls of his abode.

—*William Bell Scott.*

BELGIUM, 1914.

Oh, Thou art pitiless! They call Thee Light,
Law, Justice, Love; but Thou art pitiless.
What thing of earth is precious in thy sight,
But weary waiting on and soul's distress?
When dost Thou come with glorious hands to bless
Tho good man that dies cold for lack of Thee?
When bringst Thou garlands for our happiness?
Whom dost Thou send but Death to set us free?
Blood runs like wine—foul spirits sit and rule—
The weak are crushed in every street and lane—
He who is generous becomes the fool
Of all the world, and gives his life in vain.
Wert Thou as good as Thou art beautiful,
Thou couldst not bear to look upon such pain.

—ROBERT BUCHANAN.

SCRAP-IRONIES FROM INGERSOLL.

A man said to me the other day, "I am a Unitarian Universalist." "What do you mean by that?" said I. "Well," said he, "the Unitarian thinks he is too good to be damned, and the Universalist thinks God is too good to damn him; and I believe them both."

When a thing gets too idiotic to be preached in the pulpit, it is handed down to the Sunday-school superintendent and taught to the children. When it is too absurd for the children we give it to the missionaries, or send it down south for the colored brethren.

Nothing is so prolific, nothing can lay or hatch so many eggs as a good, healthy, religious lie.

I once happened to be in the company of some Baptist elders, and they wanted to know what I thought of baptism. I answered that I had not given the matter any attention. But they pressed me, and finally I told them that I thought, with soap, baptism was a good thing.

The Church has reduced Spain to a guitar, Italy to a hand-organ, and Ireland to exile.

Many people think they have got religion when they are troubled with dyspepsia. If there could be found an absolute specific for that disease, it would be the hardest blow the Church has received.

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Beneath the Silent Stars.

IT is now near the "witching hour" of midnight, September 13-14, 1914. I am writing this in a large astronomical observatory high on the summit of this mountain in the mighty Sierra Madre range in Southern California, that terrestrial paradise of fruit and flowers. I have been looking nearly all of the evening in the great 16-inch Alvan Clark and Sons magnificent telescope, at the Galaxy. As I now write, I turn my eyes toward the south and behold this supernal band and belt of stars. It is standing in majestic splendor above the Pacific Ocean. Its shimmer and sheen, its display of stars, adorn the Goddess of the Night in regal robes of cloth and pearl. And she drags the careless garments in the distant southern waves. So clear is the air that the stellar millions swing low and grace the sea by rotary motion of the earth. There are now known to be at least one billion suns in the Milky Way. I have been sweeping the lenses of the huge telescope from right to left, left to right, for hours. I have seen many millions of stars, each a giant sun, pass in review. Diamonds, by literal millions, have been seen in the blackness of the sky. And millions are rising over mighty peaks in the east; and more millions are vanishing in watery wastes in the remote west. A hundred sentinel peaks are standing around and about observatory peak; while deep canyons yawn on either side of the building. The great white dawn indeed contrasts with the utter blackness of the canyon's mouths and deep abysses—blacker than Egyptian night. And the stillness, silence, and absolute solitude, always on a summit at midnight, is so intense, so overpowering of all ordinary things, that the imagination goes racing, and one can almost imagine that he hears the very axis of the earth in its majestic turning. And it is here in this inconceivably majestic presence that I write my books. Peace, sweet peace, is always here. I look at the stars, and then upon our local wheeling planets. I have just been looking at a transit of a satellite of Jupiter. Soon Saturn will rise, when I must explore its giant rings and its system of ten moons. And thus I have looked and watched the stars by night during forty-four years, and studied their mathematical laws by day. Every motion of every moon, planet, and sun is governed by ironclad, mathematical laws. Every law has been proved over and over again by the most profound mathematicians, down to the minutest detail. And the laws of the spectroscope in analysis of the chemical elements of the stars are known. And all laws agree—so that the whole number now known—more than six hundred supernal laws of Nature have been discovered—fit together into a grand harmonic system. The chief work of the mind of man is their discovery. Then these men, all master mathematicians, strive to learn more of the simply amazing law-maker, the inconceivably mighty mathematical mind behind all of the sidereal universe, behind every motion from electrons to suns. Every effort is made by terrific concentration of mind in study of mathematics during ten, twelve, fourteen, eighteen and, at times, to twenty hours daily, to find more equations, more differentials, more splendid integrals, and more astonishing facts. These are they who know, admire, and stand in the true majesty of man, finite mathematician before infinite mathematician. Not one worships the Master Mind. It is too ridiculously absurd.

Every mathematician studies a mental process totally opposite to "worship." No mathematical researcher crawls along on his knees, or stomach, praying and worshiping; he rises, stands erect as a man, and with the mighty calculus in his hand, explores the infinite mind in search of more laws. With a horror beyond description one of these men of the master mind would look upon the murder of an animal, look upon its running blood; and then at the smoke of its burning flesh as a "sweet smelling savor unto the Lord." That kind of a god or lord has no attractions for a real student of the Laws of Nature. Yet every religion (there are 1,024) is based in running blood, in hideous sacrifice.

Mentalists so well know each minute fraction of the total cause, that all is to them as clear as day. Two great fundamental causes exist, but these two have innumerable phases and branches. First, the original mark of the beast in man, fighting beast. Second, the appalling book commonly called the Hebrew Bible. But it was not written by Hebrews, but by priests in cities now buried in Arabia, all along the west bank of the Euphrates. Some are from twenty to thirty feet deep at present beneath river deposits. The writers were blood-soaked priests, totally ignorant of even one law of nature. These bloody sacrificers wrote the ritual of the book of blood—the Bible. I went to a fascinating lecture on Mesopotamian Archæology. Hundreds of pictures were shown on screens of excavated temples from sites of Nineveh, Babylon, and other cities of greater antiquity. In all cases of exhumed temples, there stood the hideous altars; places for cutting throats of animals, places for the blood to run, and places for fire. Same old bloody story from as far back as seven thousand years from now. One of the sickening facts revealed by excavation of vast temples of antiquity is the sculptures on the great buildings. Thus, grand buildings are everywhere marred by sculptures in marble of hideous hawk and serpent-headed gods; and gods with heads of birds, dogs, bulls, and apes. They mummified the Apis bulls in Egypt, and crocodiles, with cats and hawks.

Our river of sacrificial blood has steadily flowed from remote prehistoric times, and is still flowing: for animals are now being sacrificed in India, as I write here at midnight. Europe and America are at this minute dominated by horrible Asiatic books, breathing murder, war, and sacrifice. The horrible Hebrew-fighting god Jehovah, is the model for the Krupp cannon-makers, and for those monsters posing as human who order them to be turned upon other humans. Their text-book was written by men in an age when captured kings had their eyes gouged out by the hand of the king making the capture. The exhumed temples show the conquering king in the act of gouging with spears held in his own hand. Any other job would, naturally, be performed by slaves.

This dreadful book is still pouring its blood into modern times. It is one direct cause of the present war in Europe. Fighting, murdering gods, who sent out lying prophets, of course, require fighting, blood-drinking kings. The men responsible for the existing war in Europe are assassins of human welfare and civilisation.

The man able to control his emotions, and not allow one tear to fall when kissing his little girl good-bye, to meet death in war for his king, is ranked as the highest type of patriot by king and priest-ridden Europe. But actually the king is this man's arch-enemy. To serve blood-drinking monarchs is an insult to all that is good in humanity. Every monarch is not the protector and friend of a man suffering in the army, but an enemy. To be a patriot is to be taken away from family to drill for war. To drill is to be subjected to horrid, foul-mouthed oaths and vile abuse of brutal officers. The tiresome marches, drill, drill of body and the crushing of mind, self-respect, down into a slave-like being, is the military fact of fighting monarchies. The horrors of drills to men and horses are the curse of Europe.

The Armageddon is here all right, and the new dispensation—almost. Modern men are about to dispense with their arch-enemies—kings and priests. And advanced man is on the eve of dispensing with religion for all time. My wondrous series of letters from many parts of the world show that men are making ready to wipe out religion and substitute two things: morality and study, and the teaching everywhere the Laws of Nature. Within fifty years all men and women will stop teaching stuff they know

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to be false, to their own children. This to-day is a curse beyond compare, lying to children, as bad as the making of women slaves, and their buying and selling into horrible, hated marriages. The day free from rule of putrid Asiatic and savage laws is beginning to dawn. This is the new dispensation. Let man now rise and destroy every arsenal and gun factory on earth. And melt up the metal in every battleship, for soon we will run out of iron, and have no more dynamos, motors, and electric machinery of any kind; for iron alone is magnetic, and it alone can be used to build the precious dynamo. Without iron, telegraphs and 'phones, electric lights and railways must go. And the mad dogs sink thousands of tons of man's most valuable metallic possession to the bottom of the sea in naval battles. Insane suicide is the order in Europe now. So well known are the workings of mind that a skilled mentalist can almost follow the very thoughts in the paranoic brain of a bloody king. The laws of that terrible disease, paranoia, have been explored in detail, and it is now known that the present war is directly due to paranoia induced by the Bible. Now that all those who think are disgusted with prayers of kings to their gods to give victory to their side—by wholesale murder of others—the time is ripe for final annihilation of all traces of religion from this planet.

And then I went up to a moving picture show and saw Russian priests pouring out hideous blessings upon thousands of men, arranged in regiments. When full of blessing, they took trains that hurried to the battle-field, to be torn to pieces by machinery. And had Jehovah been there he would doubtless have blessed the priests. Yes, kings can slay ten million men—thus committing the chief crime in human history—and then the red, crimson, black, and jet-black stain of crime can at once be made a little whiter than wool by mediators between Jehovah and man by "hired priests." And this terrific doctrine is under full sway here in the twentieth century, a century of science, and in the majestic presence of proven mathematical law. Go to, now; exterminate religion from this blood-soaked world; substitute rigid laws of nature, each shown to be true, and then obey them at any cost. For science demonstrates that a broken law carries its own consequences, without hope of escape.

> "Paris, September 2, Midnight.—The text of the proclamation, issued by the Minister of the Interior, is as follows:—
>
> "Frenchmen: For several days our heroic troops have been engaged in fierce combat with the enemy. The courage of our soldiers has won for them several marked advantages, but in the north the pressure of the German forces compelled us to retreat. This situation forces the President of the Republic and the Government to this sad decision. In order to safeguard the national interests, the duty of the public power is to go away from Paris for the moment. Under the command of its eminent chief the French army, full of courage and spirit, will defend against the invader the capital and its patriotic population.
>
> "But the war must be pursued at the same time on the rest of French territory.
>
> "The sacred struggle for the honor of the nation and the reparation of violated rights will continue without peace or truce, without a stop or a failure. None of our armies has been broken.
>
> "If some of them have suffered only too evident losses, the gaps in the ranks have been filled up immediately from the waiting reserve forces, while the calling out of a new class of recruits brings us to-morrow new resources in men and energy.
>
> "Endure, fight, such should be the motto of the allied armies, English, Belgians, Russians, and French.
>
> "Endure, fight, while on the sea our allies aid us to cut our enemy's communications with the world.
>
> "Endure, fight, while the Russians continue to carry a decisive blow to the heart of the German Empire.
>
> "It is for the Government of this Republic to direct this resistance to the very end.....
>
> "Frenchmen, all be worthy of these tragic circumstances. We will win final victory. We will obtain it by our unrelenting will, by our endurance, by our tenacity. The nation which does not desire to perish and which does not retreat before suffering or sacrifice is sure to conquer."

The Magna Charta in England and the Declaration of Independence in America, as great as they are, do not quite equal this majestic proclamation of the French minister. It does not contain the blood-distilled word "god." I have no words to express the majesty of this thing, this master production of the French statesman. After a hundred centuries of constant use of the word god in declarations of war by kings, and by priests, at the instant of hurling millions of men at each other's throats, here on September 2, 1914, the minister of a nation at time of removal of the Government from the capital, in distress, does not call on any god. So great is this event, that it marks the beginning of the end of religion. No tongue or pen can now hope to describe in centuries to come the far-reaching effect of this precious proclamation of the minister of France. No hideous cross or icon is mentioned. No flowing blood of a slain god, no putrid hypocrisy, no senseless mummery of long stereotyped words and formulæ of priests, no deadly superstition of the past, appears in this ever-to-be historic document. The attention of the reader is specially called, thus: a great, highly cultured nation, a great and beautiful city filled with magnificent works of science and art, with exquisite scientific instruments, telescopes, microscopes, spectroscopes, paintings, sculptures, inscriptions, all, everything that is in harmony with the Mind of the Universe, is threatened with destruction. The civilisation of centuries was on the eve of annihilation—the Government threatened, and slavery of all who survived murder, apparent. It is worthy of all admiration now and for all time to come, of all, that the minister of the threatened nation did not call on any god. He called on brave men.

This document is new in human history. Each word ought to be engraved on a stone slab; and this put into a fire and deluge-proof building, for future generations of liberated and free human beings. This priceless proclamation is a turning point in the entire career of man, the opening of an age of science and of the reign of nature's inexpressibly magnificent laws, pure and true; that is, the men of England will be killed off, and the women can just take the ballot and vote. Mentalists have known for years that this Armageddon ushering in a new dispensation—minus kings and priests—was coming. They knew mental laws, and were aware that the war must come. See this: We have Asiatic books, filled from lid to lid with ambiguities. Councils of the learned have often met to decide what the verses mean. Thousands of scholars have tried their hands in attempted explanation and have failed. Of course they failed to harmonise ravings of paranoiacs in writings that are directly opposite. Yet they pay out millions of dollars to send these useless, ambiguous productions that they do not understand to the heathen. And this starts up quarrels and disputations among them. The United States Government should rise to protect its own people, and prohibit another cent being sent out of this country for the purpose of carrying religion to any person whomsoever. Not one cent for outside religion—but millions for children's true science-schools here, and thousands of hospitals. Take care of our own little harassed and neglected slave-children, and let the heathen be free of theology. This is surely due to the fact that missionaries do not want the Chinese and Hindus in this country, but want to circulate around with them in heaven.

Now, this is a solemn and impressive moment—it is midnight here on this peak; and by curious laws of pure mountain air perspective, the glittering stars appear to be near—that is, the summit seems to be standing amid stars. No pen can write words of description of my beautiful and peaceful surroundings. It does appear impossible that men should fight in this beautiful world. Here is a midnight message from out the solitude and silence of a mountain far and away from all cities and struggling humans. If it must be that men must die to bring

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great reforms to mankind, then the death of each French soldier dying under this proclamation of the minister of his nation is of the highest value to this and all generations so long as man shall inhabit the earth.

PROF. EDGAR L. LARKIN.

—*Truthseeker* (New York).

Who Saw Him Fly?

IT is alleged by Christians that a few days after the resurrection Jesus ascended bodily into heaven. But where is Heaven?—with a capital H, if you please. Nobody knows. All Christians are agreed, however, that it is somewhere "up above." But where? When I was a boy I witnessed what was then considered a very extraordinary performance. I saw a "flying man." He did not go up in a machine like the modern aeroplane; he had a special patent of his own. He manufactured a machine with wings, raised himself by the aid of a balloon, and, all of a sudden, cut himself free and flew for a minute or two in the air; when, one of the wings failing to act, he was precipitated headlong to the earth beneath and carried away a mangled and bleeding corpse.

I assert that I saw him fly, and thousands of people from all parts of London witnessed the spectacle. I have, in recent years, seen many airmen flying around London and at the seaside, but sometimes the most skilful of them come a "cropper," as the saying goes. Flying Jesus was the only man who ever flew up and never came down again. He must have gone up and up through infinite space. If Jesus ascended into heaven his ascent must have been witnessed by thousands of spectators. Yet who saw him fly? "Profane" historians are silent about an occurrence which, if it happened, was one of the most extraordinary in all history. Why do they not mention it? Because it never took place. The story is pure fiction. A mere glance at the evidence produced by the Gospels will suffice to show that neither Matthew, Mark, Luke, nor John was an eyewitness of the ascension. Indeed, Matthew says nothing about it. John is also silent, while Mark and Luke merely declare that, when Jesus had finished talking to his disciples, he was received up into heaven and sat on the right hand of God.

Now, if any of the evangelists had witnessed so important an event as the ascension, is it likely that they would have recorded it in a narrative of two or three lines? Moreover, if the miracle had really occurred, one would think that the testimony of thousands of independent witnesses would be forthcoming. Yet no such evidence is adduced. Most of the evidence we have for the extraordinary occurrences recorded in the Gospels is merely hearsay evidence—it is like the evidence that was adduced for the mythical Russian troops that passed from the north of Scotland to the south coast by train and then on to France—in every case somebody knew somebody who knew a friend who saw these Russians in a train with the blinds drawn down so that they could not be seen. That is the kind of evidence that Christians think is good enough to convince unbelievers that Jesus arose from the dead and ascended into heaven. If Jesus ascended, where did he go? Was he, in the flesh, able to defy the law of gravitation? Could he breathe in the attenuated atmosphere above the clouds? Did he shoot off in the direction of the nearest fixed star? And how long was he likely to travel before he reached his destination? The theologians have an easy method of dodging these difficulties. That eminent German divine, Dr. Bernhard Weiss, in his *Life of Christ*, vol. iii., ch. ix., says:—

> "Although he [Christ] showed himself to the disciples in a form palpable to the senses, the risen one had not a material body which could only have been lifted up by the destruction of gravitation; his glorified body was, from the first, removed beyond the conditions of earthly life. The celestial world, whose order of life Jesus adopted when he arose from the dead, is, according to the nature of things, exempt from the limiting conditions of earth."

Very ingenious indeed! But we should like to know how Dr. Weiss found all this out. Had he private sources of information on the subject. Perhaps, however, in these days of international strife, English Christians would not accept Dr. Weiss as an authority on the subject—but can they find a better?

The Freethinkers' explanation is not so ingenious, but it is more straightforward. It is easy to understand how, years after Jesus—assuming such a person ever lived—had died and his ashes had mingled with the dust, his followers invented the story of his resurrection and ascension; how, expecting and desiring a Messiah who would save them from the Roman yoke, the early Jewish Christians manufactured these legends of a risen and ascended redeemer, who was soon to return and restore the kingdom of Israel. When it is further remembered that the world was already familiar with the legends of the sun-gods, who rose again from the death of winter to midsummer glory, it will be seen how easily the ignorant masses could be persuaded to exchange Osiris or Adonis for the glorified Savior—Jesus of Nazareth.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

The German Professor.

THE German Professor's
The mildest of men;
He sits scribbling all day
In his stuffy book-den.

To his masters, no man's
More submissive than he;
What they order, he straightway
Performeth with glee.

Yet this mild Pedagogue
Who dares none to withstand,
Quite out-Herod's Herod
When he takes pen in hand.

A good patriot, he
Seas of lager will drink;
For his country he'll shed
The last drop of his ink.

He'll conclusively prove
That the great German race
In battle array
Can the Universe face.

For his country save force
There's no conscience or law;
Such things were contrived
Other nations to awe.

The Superman's State
Need no treaties respect;
And all scruples of honor
Should promptly reject.

What are honor and justice?
Names—nothing more;
When they stand in our way,
We must show them the door.

When you want to get *there*
You must hack your way through,
And behave like a run-a-muck
Drunken Yahoo.

"Frightful examples"
You must make as you go,
And more freely than water
Cause bloodshed to flow.

The buccaneer's ethics
Your ethics must be;
Necessity still
Will suffice for your plea.

In short, these mild Germans
Who reason so well,
Would make the world German,
Or make it a hell!

B. D.

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Salvation Soap.

There was a priest, and he was mad;
He told all men, however bad,
That he could make them pure and good
By means of certain human blood,
That formed a soap which, strange to say,
Would wash all faults and crimes away
From guilty men, whilst those who fell
Unsoaped with it went straight to hell.
All who used it would, he said,
Live merrily when they were dead,
And wings would sprout, and they should fly
To sweep the cobwebs off the sky.
And if they tired of this, then they
Should lounge on golden thrones all day,
Or strut about with lyres and crowns
And crimson robes and snow-white gowns.
Thus they should be, however vile,
Prime mashers in the heavenly style.
But they should wake where serpents hiss
If they used any soap but this.
Gulped down in pills, however crude,
'Twould serve as physic or as food.
One cake alone, if swallowed whole,
Cleansed Bill Sikes' coat or Borgia's soul.
For none but his was genuine;
All other soaps but deepened sin.
'Twas guaranteed by king and pope
As far surpassing Pears's soap.
E'en Lily Langtry's puffs were nought
To those that he received unsought.
More foolish was the written stuff
Than Cleaver's silly punning puff.
Use this soap once, and straight, one swore,
On heaven's fair strand you're "washed ashore."
Guiteau deposed that, for his part,
It cleansed the cockles of his heart;
For in its cakes he saw full well
The Oily One of Israel.
Peace, too, proclaimed its virtues oft
Amidst well-lathered saints aloft;
It soaped his conscience reconciled,
Made innocent as any child.
Thus martyrs many blessed that soap
That greased their path from the long rope
To heavenly washhouses where they
With blood-soap washed three times a day
Till made resplendent as the sun
In moral beauty every one.
Never such a boon was known
As this new soap that stood alone.
One trial bleached the blackest skins;
Much more, it cleansed all petty sins.
It washed the tongue of fibs and libel;
'Twas guaranteed so in the Bible.
Its precious cakes were bread and wine,
Its wafers flesh and blood divine;
'Twas Elixir of Life, indeed;
'Twas everything that man could need.
'Twas Heavenly Salve, Salvation Squills,
And Sinner's Soap, and Last Day Pills.
All these in one—'twas patented
To heal the quick and raise the dead.
Without it all would go to pot,
For such was all men's (s)'oapless lot.
Thus impudent old Soapy roams
And pesters women in their homes,
And works their feelings up to buying
By threats of swift and awful dying,
Mingled with dabs of his soft soap,
As samples of the greater hope.
'Twas vaunted with so bold an air,
It sold like wildfire everywhere.
And wise men wondered what could be
This patent blood-soap stamped J. C.,
With which the priest went up and down
The streets of that deluded town,
Till soap and sinners duly sold
Had filled his pockets full of gold;
Which made some doubt, 'tis fair to add,
Whether that priest was really mad,
Or only artful, like the cheat
Who swindles clowns in every street.

W. P. Ball.

How is it? Is man only a mistake of God? Or is God only a mistake of man?—*Nietzsche.*

The Dead Soldier.

Calm be thy slumbers, my soldier-boy sleeping,
Thy pillow of earth be as yielding as wool;
Thou art safe in the harbor, the Lord thy soul keeping,
And the flow of God's tears laves the gash in thy skull.

Thy soul in the cool of the eve is reclining,
By odorous trees in the groves of the Lord;
And thy poor, battered body the furrow is lining
With the scarlet that oozes from wound torn and gored.

They prayed in the homeland for God's good protection,
Thy mother, thy sweetheart, for their boy at the war;
"If it please thee, good Lord," was their hearts' sad porrection
That trailed after the prayer like the tail of a star.

If it please thee, good Lord! And thy corpse is the answer!
Thou hast gone through the gates to be passed by us all;
Thou hast died by the point of some fury-sped lancer,
And we—we may die by a germ or a fall.

Bellona is rampant, her harvest is reaping:
The hosts of the slain cover valley and hill;
And the God of the fireside in hiding goes creeping,
The God of the world is the God that can kill!

With the thunder of doomsday, thy flesh will awaken,
Thou corpse, poor corpse, stretched out stiffened and cold;
To the bosom of God will thy body be taken
And—thy blood will spurt out as his claws thee enfold.

James L. Raymond.

ANOTHER EXPLANATION OF JONAH.

Everybody knows the Rationalist's interpretation of the Jonah story as that of the prophet putting up for three nights at a pub with the sign of the whale, and being eventually kicked out. Another interpretation, and one more in accordance with the thoughts of the early makers of myths, is suggested in Ignaz Goldziher's *Mythology among the Hebrews*. Goldziher says, "When in ancient times men, dwelling by the seashore, saw the heavenly fire-ball in the evening dip into the sea, and the next morning issue shining at the opposite point of the sea-line, what other idea could he conceive of this but that down in the sea the sun was swallowed by a monster, which spat out its prey again on the shore?" Isaiah says that Jahveh shall punish Leviathan and slay the dragon that is in the sea (xxvii. 1); and, Didst thou not kill the monster (rahabli) and wound the dragon (tannin)? This is the old combat of Bel and Tanit, or Bel and the Dragon, which we still have on our crown pieces as St. George and the Dragon (the victory of Light over Darkness), what I may venture to call the primæval myth. Goldziher says, "The most prominent mythical characteristic of the story of Jonah is his celebrated abode in the sea in the belly of the whale. This trait is eminently solar, and belongs to the group on which we are now engaged. As, on occasion of the storm, the storm-dragon or the storm-serpent swallows the sun; so when he sets he is swallowed by a mighty fish, waiting for him at the bottom of the sea. Then, when he appears again on the horizon, he is spit out on the shore by the sea-monster."—*Lucianus.*

"I shall be happy to answer the questions of anyone with religious difficulties," said the sky-pilot at the close of an *al fresco* discourse in Hawick Market-place. There appeared to be but one perplexed mind among the listeners, a gentleman of well-known sporting proclivities. He said: "I should like to ask by what means Samson caught the three hundred foxes whose tails he tied together, and sent them adrift among the Philistines' corn, when it took the Duke o' Buccleuch's hounds a haill day to catch ane?" The sky-pilot wilted. He either could not or would not answer, but simply said, "Let us pray!"

A clergyman, who recently called upon a young widow to condole with her upon the loss of her husband, placed considerable emphasis upon the proposition that the separation was merely temporal, and painted in vivid colors the happiness of friends reunited after death. When he stopped for breath, the sorrowing one heaved a deep sigh, and quietly remarked: "Well, I suppose his first wife has got him again, then."

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EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 3, J. W. Marshall, a Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill): 3.30, a Lecture.

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By C. COHEN.

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THE
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The paradox and scandal of the world is that for eighteen centuries, since the adoption by the Continent of Christianity, European history has been a tale of blood. To resolve that paradox, to abate that scandal, to substitute concert for conflict, and to teach mankind to grow great in common, is the international future of civilisation.—HON. GEORGE PEEL.

The Churches and the War.

SIR ROBERTSON NICOLL, editor of the *British Weekly*, purposes dealing in a series of articles with "the Christian message to a nation at war." We should have thought that message—or messages—was plain. For, in truth, both in the Bible and out of the Bible, there are two messages. There is the exhortation to war, with its pictures of defeated peoples and ravishing armies, and there is the gospel of non-resistance, of turning one cheek when the other is smitten, with its promise of the earth to the meek as a reward for their meekness. And to do the pulpit justice, it has reflected very faithfully these two and hopelessly irreconcilable views. It has preached peace and encouraged war. It has denounced warfare as unchristian and acted energetically as a recruiting agent. It has talked at large of the overmastering power of Christian love and supported the theory that the only way to maintain peace is to have an Army and Navy so powerful that no other Christian nation dare attack it. No one can say that the nation has been short of messages from the Churches. It might have been better had there been legitimate ground for complaint in this direction.

There is no information in Sir Robertson's opening article on one point worthy of a little attention. That is, to supply some test by which we may tell what is the genuine Christian message to a nation in time of war. If we listen to the message of the Society of Friends, the answer is that war at all times and under all conditions is wrong, and no real Christian will engage in it. Sir Robertson does notice this position, and I will deal with his comment later. If, on the other side, we are to take the English State Church, then the message is that every war in which England has been engaged was a just one. For, so far as I am aware, the English Church supported all our wars without discrimination. Still more important is it to know whether the Christian message as delivered in Germany or that delivered in England is the authoritative one. Apparently, German theologians are united in the belief that their war is a thoroughly just one, and, therefore, they may be sure that God is on their side. English theologians are quite united in the belief that all the righteousness is on our side, and that God will assist us to smash our enemies.

So far, good; only one is, from the religious point of view, apt to get a little confused. So far as laymen in this country are concerned, we are all agreed that the sooner and the more effectively German militarism is broken the better. And if that serves as a prelude to the break-up of all other militarisms, most of us would be the more pleased. But the layman has to make up his mind on the facts before him, and in the light of experience. Presumably, as the "Christian message" is given a place by itself, it has a message—if only one can discover it—of a peculiarly distinctive kind. The worst of it is that, up to the present, Christians are not agreed as to what it is. And one fears that, when Sir Robertson Nicoll has unloaded himself, it will at most be the layman's message, decorated with Christian texts more or less ingeniously twisted to meet the present situation. Apart from this, one sees scarcely any necessity for writing a number of articles to state the "Christian message." It is scarcely illuminating to see the "spiritual" leaders of Germany and Britain hurling anathemas at each other in the name of their God. It reminds one of a couple of savage tribes going out to war, each party carrying its own special "Joss" for protection. Only there is this distinction: each tribe carries a different "Joss." Not being civilised, savages do not see the wisdom of two opposing armies praying to the same God for victory.

Sir Robertson says he is writing his articles because Christians complain, either that the Churches are giving people no guidance in the present crisis, or the advice given is very contradictory; while yet others complain that if Christian ministers had done their duty war would be impossible. I sympathise with Sir Robertson when he says it is unreasonable to expect that Christian ministers should have made all evil impossible. Quite so; but, on the other hand, it is certain that if there had really been a "Christian message" in favor of the higher civilisation, and if Christian ministers had preached it, the lavish preparations that have made the present war possible could not have gone forward. Consider what the power of the hundreds of thousands of accredited Christian preachers throughout Europe would be if their influence had been resolutely directed, generation after generation, in favor of peace. What part have they played, as a matter of fact? In the main the peace movements of Europe have been directed by heretics. The Society of Friends form the one exception to the general run of Christians in this direction. But one may safely say that the more orthodox the Church, the less it has done to educate the public mind on this matter. It may be said that the clergy could never have stopped war, even had they been so inclined. That may be so; but at least they could have made their attitude clear. They could have said, "We recognise our inability to stop war and preparations for war, we recognise, also, that there may be occasions when war is forced upon a nation, as one may be compelled to use force against a footpad, an assassain, or a lunatic. But, recognising all this, we decline to associate Christian teaching with it; if war must be, so be it, but that should not blind us to the fact of its brutality, its barbarity, and of its evil effects on the lives of the people."

Had this been done generally by the clergy, all the glamor of war would, by this time, have disappeared. Its "glory" and its glitter would have been recognised for what it is. Nations might still have gone to war, but it would have been regretfully at least, and with no false ideas of its grandeur and ultimate profit. Instead of this, the clergy of all denominations have provided that ethical and religious sanction without which war would either disappear

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or become very infrequent. For people do not, after all, go to war for mere plunder. That may be the object of a *clique*, but for the mass of people it must be disguised by some form of idealism, by an appeal to glory, to patriotism, to civilisation. Even Germany, militarised as it has been, has been compelled to recognise this. Nations fight in the name of ideas and ideals, and the ideals that effect them are those to which they are accustomed. The offence of the clergy is, then, not that they have failed to prevent this war. That was clearly beyond their power. Their offence is that they never seriously tried to stop war. More, by their teaching they have given war that ethical and religious justification which has made the perpetuation of warfare an easy matter. In the Middle Ages mail-clad Christian Bishops often went to war in the name of religion. To-day they do not go to war, but they bless its implements—which supplies the sanction without the personal risk.

I have said what the Churches might have done, but no one with the history of the Christian Church before them would expect them to act in the manner suggested. For the Church has never discouraged war in principle, and not very often in fact. Lecky, striving to account for the militarism of mediæval Christianity, attributes this to the influence of Mohammedanism. He says that "the spirit of Mohammedanism slowly passed into Christianity, and transformed it into its image." This explanation is on quite Christian lines. It attributes the evil features of Christianity to the influence of another religion, the good it is content to claim as its own. But it is quite false. Mohammedanism is not more warlike than Christianity is, and it has usually been far more tolerant in its conquests. Moreover, Lecky himself supplies the refutation of his own statement, and in the very next sentence to the one quoted. He explains the infection of Christianity by Mohammedanism on the ground that "the spectacle of an essentially military religion [Mohammedanism] fascinated men who were at once very warlike and very superstitious." But if these Christians were already very warlike and very superstitious the alliance was already there. They had nothing to learn, unless it was a more intelligent direction of their military energies.

The truth is, that the peaceful proclivities of the Christian Church are a pure myth. On the whole, the Christian Church is probably more peaceful now than it has been throughout its entire history. What is the first picture of Christians that present themselves in history? It is that of a number of theological disputants conducting their dissent with a fury and an intolerance that disgusted the cultured and tolerant Roman world. Later, we see precisely the same spirit exemplified over a large and widening area. In ferocity of disposition, in ingenuity of torture, no one and no religion has ever outdone mediæval Christianity. Is it likely that a Church such as this could ever make for peace, or could form a genuine bulwark against war? If, as Lecky says, it was predicted by some of the early Christians that the establishment of their religion would lead to perpetual peace, it could only be on the ground that there remained no fresh people to conquer. And on that ground even the Kaiser is willing to give the world peace. The truer view is put by Lecky himself, and against his summary of the facts his apology for militant Christianity loses all force:—

> "In looking back, with our present experience, we are driven to the melancholy conclusion that, instead of diminishing the number of wars, ecclesiastical influence has actually very seriously increased it. We may look in vain for any period since Constantine in which the clergy, as a body, exerted themselves to repress the military spirit, or to prevent or abridge a particular war, with an energy at all comparable to that which they displayed in stimulating the fanaticism of the Crusaders, in producing the atrocious massacre of the Albigenses, in embittering the religious wars that followed the Reformation.....With the exception of Mohammedanism, no other religion has done so much to produce war as was done by the religious teachers of Christendom during several centuries.....Religious fanaticism was a main cause of the earlier wars and an important ingredient in the later ones. The peace principles that were so common before Constantine, have found scarcely any echo except from Erasmus, the Anabaptists, and the Quakers; and although some very important pacific agencies have arisen out of the industrial progress of modern times, these have been, for the most part, wholly unconnected with, and in some cases have been directly opposed to, theological interests."

It is the Church's record against the apologies of the theorist.

C. COHEN.

(To be concluded.)

Confusion Worse Confounded.

IT is impossible to ignore the War even for a week, because there is no other subject of sufficient density to obliterate it. The religious press devotes itself almost exclusively to the discussion of its various phases, and the pulpit recognises no other theme. Even theological disputes are for the time being kept in abeyance. Persistent attempts are being made to justify the War on Christian grounds. All are agreed that Germany's share in it is incapable of vindication, Germany having deliberately substituted Corsica for Galilee, or, as the editor of the *Daily News and Leader* put it, having returned to Odin, her ancient warlike divinity. Either the adoption of Atheism or a reversion to Paganism must be held responsible for that great country's mad appeal to the sword. Those who know Germany at all are aware that such a view is wholly erroneous. Dr. Orchard, for example, does not hold it in the form in which it is usually expressed. While admitting that it contains some truth, he maintains that we must "look deeper for the real causes of the present crisis." Then he says, as reported in the *Christian Commonwealth* for October 21:—

> "He believed that the material resources which modern science had placed at our disposal had destroyed our spiritual imagination and led to a complete misunderstanding of Christianity. As a result there had been an attempt to found a new religion, one that had betrayed us from beginning to end. This new religion had taught (1) that Christianity was intellectually inadequate, that its doctrines were unable to explain life and history; (2) that its ethic also was inadequate for a life like ours, and later that that ethic was absolutely pernicious; (3) that Jesus Christ was a myth, and that there never was any such person."

We confess that we are at a loss to know to what movement that extract refers. We have not heard of any new religion answering to the description therein given. It is undeniable that there is a movement in this country, headed by Professor Gilbert Murray, the object of which is to revive the Greek ideals, to restore the rich joy in living which characterised the Greeks, and once more to glorify strength and wisdom rather than weakness and folly. Professor Murray foresees the possibility, if not the probability, of the adoption of the ideals of ancient Greece by Great Britain in the near future. It is well known that there is a similar movement on foot in France and Germany, as well as among the educated classes in Russia. If Dr. Orchard has this movement in mind, he forgets, or has not learned, that the overwhelming majority of the people who take part in it are convinced pacifists, who, if they had their way, would make war a literal impossibility.

The astonishing fact is that clergymen imagine that the moment a man renounces Christianity he of necessity becomes a savage who thirsts for the blood of his fellow-men and draws the sword at the slightest provocation, forgetting that Christians have always been the most warlike people on earth. With the history of Christendom before him, dare Dr. Orchard contradict that statement? Unfortunately, the reverend gentleman will not read history just now. It is wonderfully easy to assert

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that "the Kaiser's idea of God has not been Christianised at all"; but what about the Church's idea of God for the last fifteen hundred years? A familiar Christian hymn opens thus:—

"The Son of God goes forth to war,
A kingly crown to gain;
His blood-red banner streams afar!
Who follows in his train?"

We should not be surprised were we to be told that such a martial verse requires "spiritual interpretation"; but it is a literal description of what has always been done by people with the love of Christ in their hearts. And yet because the Germans declared war a couple of months ago, they are said either to have "reverted to pre-Christian times in search of a nobler religion, and adopted the Judaic conception of the God of Battles and Lord of Hosts," or to have "turned to the old Greek world, with its religion of gaiety, without the sense of sin, of battle, valor, and self-assertion, for a faith that was to save the world"; but this is fair neither to Judaism nor to the religion of ancient Greece. Will Dr. Orchard deny that the God of Battles is with us still, believed in and appealed to, or that great prophets of Judaism confidently predicted that a time was coming when men would "beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks"? Does he not know that after two thousand years of a Christianised God that prophecy still remains unfulfilled? Not only has Christianity not abolished war, but wars have been more numerous and more atrocious under Christianity than under any other religion on the planet, while the war that is now devastating Europe is the biggest, bloodiest, and most barbarous in all history.

Dr. Orchard's injustice towards the religion of Greece is inexcusable. He calls it "a religion of gaiety, of battle, valor, and self-assertion." Does he not remember how ardently Athens believed in freedom and the emancipation of the oppressed, how every Greek was exhorted to aim at the highest form of virtue and goodness? Has he forgotten the famous speech of Themistocles, in which he "contrasted what was noble with what was base, and bade them, in all that came within the range of man's nature and constitution, *always* to make choice of the nobler part"? (Herodotus viii. 83). Has he forgotten the high value the Athenians set on generosity, kindliness, chivalry, humanity, and the championship of the helpless and oppressed? We invite him to read Herodotus viii. 3, ix. 27, and particularly to ponder the plays of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. Theseus was king of Athens, but this is how he describes the city to the Theban herald in the *Suppliants*:—

"Nay, peace, Sir Stranger! Ill hast thou begun,
Seeking a Master here. No will of one
Holdeth this land; it is a city, and free.
The whole folk year by year, in parity
Of service, is our king. Nor yet to gold
Give we high seats, but in one honor hold
The poor man and the rich."

The Greek religion glorified love and vicarious service, and laid stress upon the duty of disciplining the spirit.

Dr. Orchard falls foul also of the Lutheran Church, holding it largely responsible for the present situation, because of its conservatism, uncatholicism, and out-of-date creeds. Certainly we hold no brief on behalf of the Lutheran, or any other Church; but we beg to remind the reverend gentleman that it is an Evangelical Christian Society, and that the Evangelicals form 58 per cent. of the population of the German Empire, and the Catholics 39 per cent., leaving only 3 per cent. to be Atheists, Materialists, or Freethinkers. The point is that Christianity is still supreme in the German Empire, and that the war is being waged under its ægis. Harnack and Eucken profess the Christian religion, and both firmly believe that their country is engaged in an entirely righteous struggle.

We conclude that the endeavors to clear Christianity of responsibility for the present tempest have failed completely, while Freethought shines forth as a thoroughly pacific agent, its ideal being to bring all questions of dispute between nations, as well as between individuals, before the bar of enlightened and impartial reason, that they may be settled without having recourse to brute force.

J. T. LLOYD.

A Day of Prayer.

An Open Letter to President Wilson.

BY M. M. MANGASARIAN.

I.

MR. PRESIDENT: The writer is an admirer of your many qualifications for the exalted office to which you were elected by the people. It is a blessing in these trying times to have a man of culture and a good heart at the helm of Government. Because of my loyalty, in general, to the ideals you cherish, I feel that I may offer a few comments on your "Day of Prayer" without abusing the privileges of an American citizen.

As your proclamation, calling the nation to prayer, is a most extraordinary document, and as it raises issues which seriously concern every lover of free institutions, I shall endeavor in this and in other letters to follow, to show the perils to which a nation is exposed when its chief magistrate undertakes to play the rôle of a priest. In this connection, I shall also avail myself of the opportunity to comment on certain newspaper editorials which have defended your proclamation.

The appeal to the supernatural by the representative of a Government avowedly and constitutionally divorced, root and branch, from any and every form of public worship, is indeed very regrettable. We are wondering what will be the next object for which you will summon us to prayer. If ever the habit of praying for things grows upon us, it will certainly unfit us for action and initiative. Besides, if wars among nations are to be stopped by American prayers, why may not presidential elections, for example, which often stirs up the country from centre to circumference, and threaten its prosperity, be also made a subject of official prayers? Instead of choosing our own presidents, why not ask the Deity to choose one for us, as in the olden days? And what would prevent a Catholic president, should we ever have one, from recommending the Mass, the sacraments, or a pilgrimage to Rome, to the American people, as you have recommended church-prayers to them?

Of course, there is no objection to the Churches praying on Sundays, or for that matter, on every day in the week, and for anything they please. In fact, what are churches for, if not for praying? But for the American Government, in the person of its chief executive, to set apart a Day of Prayer is, in a sense, just as much a nullification of the American constitution insuring religious neutrality on the part of the Government, as the violation of Belgium territory by the Kaiser was of political neutrality. The latter pleaded necessity—What is your excuse? Without wishing to exaggerate, I would say that for the American Government to appoint, through its President, a Day of Prayer, is an infringement on the Constitution. It is treating the glorious document bearing the signatures of the fathers of our Republic, and which guarantees absolute neutrality on the part of the State in matters of religion, as "a scrap of paper."

During my stay in London, a Mr. Leach, M.P., made a motion in the House of Commons to the effect that a day of fasting and prayer be appointed by the Government. His proposition was turned down by the Premier upon the ground that the different denominations were attending to that matter. Why could not the American President, too, have left what praying was needed to the Churches? The neutrality or impartiality you re-

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commend in matters of politics you have not observed in matters of religion. While urging us not to take sides with or against the Allies or the Germans, you have taken sides with the Churches against the American Constitution. It would not be a good defence to say that the Thanksgiving Proclamation is also a summons to prayer. Quite so. But two wrongs, Mr. President, do not make a right.

—Chicago.

(To be continued.)

The Armed Peace of the Plants.—II.

(Concluded from p. 678.)

THE armatures, so conspicuous throughout the thorn group of plants, present many interesting features. It is a noteworthy fact that these defences are invariably arranged so as to secure the amplest protection to the most important and the least guarded plant structures. Many species of bush would be entirely extirpated by grazing animals were they not fortified with thorns. The buckthorns, the sloes, and the barberry are examples of this, and in the last of these the young buds are screened from danger by three thorns which project their dagger-like points in three directions. Certain tropical mimosas are furnished with strong, sharp thorns; their leaves are sensitive, and at the slightest touch they close up and retire behind a citadel of thorns, which completely covers them from injury.

With many prickly bushes the young shoots of the early year remain green until the autumn, when they harden into thorns, and these serve to shelter the shoots of the coming spring. With others, the leaf-stalks are transformed during the summer into thorns. In the Tragacanth, the vernal foliage is surrounded by a circle of thorns composed of the transformed leaf-stalks of the departed year, and these remain attached to the plant after the leaves themselves have fluttered to the ground.

That spines, thorns, and similar floral appendages are not indispensable to vegetable growth is shown, among other plants, by the cactuses, whose leaves are completely changed into spines. The green stem of the cactus alone carries on the functions of assimilation. In the drought-stricken and stony soil of the Mexican plateaux the cactus is the almost solitary representative of the floral world. Although in such barren surroundings the plant's juicy stem is a constant temptation to famished animals, these "rarely venture to approach them, and it is only when tortured by thirst that horses and asses occasionally knock off the spines with their hoofs, and so reach the soft tissues rich in water." But even this is attended with danger, as the powerful spines often penetrate the hoof and occasion great agony to the animals.

In their dry environment the sap of the cactus is protected against dessication by the plant's dense epidermis; the sole ascertainable function of the spines is to render the vegetation immune to the attacks of parched and hungry animals. The agency of Selection has unquestionably served to promote these defensive growths, which are absolutely essential to the life of the species. All plants that failed to produce them perished in these inhospitable regions. Nor are these phenomena special to Mexico. Prickly plants are a distinguishing feature of the arid coast areas of Southern Europe, in Spain and Corsica, as well as in Africa and other lands. The nearest relatives of these forbidding plants that are native to the well-watered districts of Northern Europe are destitute of spines; vegetation of innumerable orders is there richly represented, and the struggle for existence has not been sufficiently keen to compel the appearance of such defensive weapons.

The utility of protective appliances is plainly apparent in the predominating plants which form the "shrubbery" that is never absent from the near neighborhood of the Alpine herdsman's hut.

> "There, where the cattle daily assemble, and where the soil is continually being richly manured by them, we always find a large, luxuriantly growing company of the poisonous aconite, the bitter goosefoot, the stinging-nettle, the thistle, the ill-smelling atriplex, and some other inedible species, while the palatable herbs are gradually exterminated by the cattle which daily gather round the hut."

As every gardener bitterly realises, many of our best-loved plants are ever at the mercy of a legion of insect pests. This very year the ravages of plant-lice, slugs, green caterpillars, and black flies have proved appalling. This lack of immunity to organic destruction is doubtless to some extent due to the circumstance that many of our domesticated floras have largely lost the defensive adaptations natural to their wild state. Moreover, the eliminating operations of unrestrained Nature, which extirpate those plants which fail to accommodate themselves to her rigorous demands, are materially modified by the protecting hand of the husbandman. As a consequence, the cultivated floras are less able to defend themselves from the attacks of their ubiquitous assailants.

Science is deeply indebted to the painstaking researches of the Jena botanist, Professor Stahl, for its present knowledge of the ways and means employed by plants to withstand their enemies' onslaughts. These agencies are both chemical and mechanical. The tannic acid secreted in the clover-leaf scares off many of the gluttonous snails. That the tannin provides the protection the plant enjoys is proved by the fact that when the chemical is washed out the snails eagerly devour the leaf. This explains the circumstance that slugs and snails are most destructive after a heavy fall of rain. Not that this device secures complete immunity to the clover; the field slug (Limax agrestis) is contemptuously indifferent to the presence of the tannin, and greedily devours the leaves in the dryest of seasons. Still, the tannin deposit is of immense service to those plants that secrete it. Ferns, mosses, and other growths which contain tannin are avoided by herbivorous mammals, and the same chemical is usually effective against snails in the saxifrage, the strawberry, various aquatic floras, and others.

Plants which contain acids, particularly oxalic acid, such as the wood-sorrel and the different varieties of begonia, usually escape persecution. Stahl showed that when slices of carrot were smeared with acid, the snails, which are so extremely fond of this vegetable, positively refused to touch it. Many plants elaborate ethereal oils in their covering hairs. Among these is the herb-Robert, and as a result—

> "Even the almost omnivorous field-slug does not attack this plant, and, if it be placed upon it, escapes with all dispatch from the ethereal oil, which burns its naked skin, by covering itself with mucus and letting itself down to the ground by a thread."

Plants also guard themselves from the assaults of snails with mechanical contrivances. Their stalks are furnished with bristles, which prevent the snails from crawling upon them. The meadow-comfrey secures itself in this way in the most successful manner. Its stalk is thickly coated with sharp bristles, from which the predaceous snail retreats in dismay. Other plants have failed in preventing snails from ascending their stalks, but measures have nevertheless been taken to cope with their devastations. In these cases the leaves are not infrequently tough and indigestible. The stoneworts secrete lime, which the snails abhor. It has been experimentally established that if the lime contained in the leaves is dissolved, the snails will then feed ravenously on the plants. Test inquiries among a varied array of vegetable species have yielded similar results to the one just described.

There is one other protective adaptation out of the immense number now known which must not remain unmentioned. This remarkable device also serves to withstand the menace of snails. In the tissues of many floral organisms "microscopic crystal-like needles of oxalate of lime, pointed at both ends," are to be met with. These needles—"Raphides," as they

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are termed—unpleasantly affect the sensitive masticating organs of snails, so much so, indeed, that such needle-containing plants—as the arum or cuckoo-plant, the snowdrop, the narcissi, and the squill—are only eaten by snails when faced with absolute necessity. Even the all-voracious field-slug gives these plants a wide berth.

In company with all other known adaptations, these raphides furnish no support to the Design theory. It is true that the raphides afford a large amount of protection, but the defence is frequently broken through. They ward off the attacks of rodents and ruminants; locusts shun them, but many caterpillars specially select these plants as their favorite food. The vine-leaf and the wild balsam, among other plants, contain raphides, but their presence signally fails to safeguard them from the attacks of insects. The caterpillar of the butterfly, Chærocampa elpenor, whose natural food is the leaves of indigenous European plants, has become an eyesore to the fuchsia lover. This beautiful plant is a native of South America, and its tissue often contains raphides; but the female butterfly has now adopted the habit of depositing her eggs on the foliage of this floral favorite, and the caterpillars no sooner hatch out than they set to work to destroy the leaves.

Nearly all the higher wild flowering plants seem to some extent to be protected against the plundering snails. Why, then, do these molluscs increase and multiply to such a degree that they have become a chronic pest to the cultivator of the soil? As already intimated, our domesticated flora is in many instances deprived of its natural defences. The edible lettuce is attacked and eaten with impunity. In some wet seasons scarcely a lettuce is to be seen which is free from snails. Again, slugs and snails frequently begin their banquet when the plants are decaying and their protective substances have been dissolved by the rain and dew. But the fact remains that any device to outwit the slugs can never be entirely successful. As the plants evolve their defences, their enemies slowly but most certainly adapt themselves to the changing conditions of floral life, and thus the struggle constantly goes on.

As Stahl has discovered, many snails have developed into "specialists."

> "Thus, the large slug of our woods eats the poisonous fungi which are rejected by other snails, and in the same way there are many other specialists which, however, are not likely to eliminate unaided the plants to which they have adapted themselves. There are certainly also omnivorous forms, like the field-slug.....and Arion empiricorum, the red slug, but just because these eat so many kinds of plant they are less dangerous to any one species."

That these protective plant adaptations find their sole explanation in terms of evolution shines forth with crystal clearness. The innumerable contrivances adopted by the various floral species assist them in life's ceaseless strife. Their evolution is determined by their utility, and consequently Natural Selection has necessarily played a predominant part in their development. That the selective principle has operated most powerfully in their production is proved by the fact that every available mode of armed peace has been elaborated in the vegetable kingdom. Furthermore, Stahl has shown that many of these defensive devices are not indispensable to the healthy existence of plant life. Maize, for example, if deprived of its natural acid, still continues to flourish. The acid is, therefore, not an essential part of its make-up, but acts as a weapon against organic interference. The wild lettuce still arms itself against attack, while the cultivated vegetable has lost its defences through disuse.

The plasticity of protoplasm—the material basis of life—was emphasised in an earlier article. The foregoing survey of the fortifications erected by floral structures strengthens the contention that the plastic powers of plants are made possible by their highly unstable states. Thorns, spines, hairs, bristles, bitter substances, ethereal oils, and tannin compounds are all utilised in the truceless warfare between the kingdom of plants and its ever alert and hungry antagonists.

T. F. PALMER.

The Burden.

A GROUP of women were standing at an alley mouth in a slum part of the city. Some of them were soldiers' wives; all of them were related to regimental numbers; and all of them, very probably, had given, or would give, birth to soldiers.

Their faces were white, hard, coarse, and ugly. Five or six of the women were suckling infants; and the babies also were dirty and ugly. The picture did not induce one to admiration; it tended rather to anger and disgust.

Christianity may be, as it advocates never tire telling us, an indispensable asset to social well-being; perhaps; but we may be pardoned wondering what these people have to lose with the decease of the religion of love and kindness. In fact, Christianity might hide its head in shame at its own ignominy. It should, to be honorable, commit suicide. The contrast between its verbal morality and their horribly uncouth immorality is so striking that we are forced to laughter and tears; for at one end the contrast is terribly unnatural, at the other it is bitterly comic. Should not Christianity have been beside these women? Would Christ have been cheering with loud hurrahs the departing soldiers; or would he have been administering *words* to these women in their slum alleys and courts and closes?

They were speaking about the War; not the War that means picturesque reports in the press; nor the War that resolves itself into interesting sport for the middle class, and into honor, glory, and fame for the aristocracy; but the real War, that which means unutterable misery, anxiety, sorrow, and suffering, all the tortures of uncertainty, and all the impoverishments that can be imagined, and many unthinkable. They knew what poverty was; but they were becoming every day more trained in its powers. Hunger had never been far from their slum doors; it was nearer now. Misery was a boon companion of theirs; strangely enough they were always conscious of its presence even when they enjoyed life in a "pub.," or in the chamber of "all-too-human" animalism; but misery had brought a pal from the grey land; and the women were now doubly guarded by the phantoms of worry and want.

It was an opportunity for organised Christianity, a chance for the purse-full lovers of Jesus Christ. It was their burden.

That these women should feel honestly affectionate to men does not, of course, astonish us; even animals can love. What does astonish us, however, is that they should bear *their* burden of increased poverty so uncomplainingly. It is strange how social customs seem to conspire with Christianity to give it an easy time, to keep it secure. With a little more spunk these suffering women could make a bold attempt to force the realisation of some of the famous precepts of the Christian religion; and they would simply be endeavoring to force what God in Jesus Christ commanded his children to perform. But if their morality is slave morality so also is their spirit slave-spirit; and Christianity and Christians are afforded assistance to escape from their God-imposed burden, and are indignant when we unhesitatingly brand them cowards.

Moreover, these poor, miserable women are enduring pain because their husbands, their fathers, and sons are fighting Britain's battles. According to repute, their soldier-men are preserving Britain's greatness. Rumor has it they are safeguarding the excellence of British religion and the freedom that emanates from the soul-inspiring teachings of Christ. We are gravely informed that our Christianity is at stake, and that the soldiers of the King have become the soldiers of God. All kinds of hitherto undreamt-of

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evils assail us, and the male relatives of these women are our noble defenders. And the eyes of the women are heavy with a dread fear; their hearts—poor downtrodden hearts they are—crushed and bruised and broken on the wheels of heredity and environment, and, mocked by those whose lives move through airy regions apportioned them by similar forces, are full of care and anxiety; and their weak, ill-nourished bodies and brains feel dimly only approaching calamity.

One of them was weeping sorely. Information had been given her but a little ago that her husband had been killed in battle. She refused to be comforted. At last, exasperated by the continuous crying, a companion upbraided her, saying, "Shut up! You know where *your* man is; we don't."

There was a hardness in the words that made them grievous to the ears. Born, no doubt, from prolonged strain in a nature too crude for any nuance of more delicate feelings, they epitomised the whole ghastly tragedy. It was not knowledge these women craved; nor was it the satisfaction it would give them. Each knew they would suffer just as much as the more fortunate possessor of the official intelligence. Each knew that, despite any news, before them lay travail and stress, and that relief of any satisfactory kind would only be found in the hardships of industrialism into which more of them would be drawn.

Never did it dawn upon the attenuated minds of these women to demand the justice that springs from the thousand-and-one compliments paid to the men on whom they were more or less dependent. Never did it enter their thoughts to imagine the honor that should be theirs. Never did they dream of a time when the wealthy portion of the Christian nation would honestly recognise the duty they owed to the mothers, the wives, the children of the men upon whom they lavished so much inordinate praise. These women never imagined that the people who had most to lose should, honorably, in justice even to themselves, be decent enough to materialise their thankfulness.

And so in their misery there was no ray of hope. Theirs was the weariness of the slave. Slave consideration they got: it was the charity of the Lord's children, the charity that negates mammonism, and becomes a passport to paradise; the charity that eases the burden of divine commandments, that cancels Christian responsibilities, the charity that turns our Lord Jesus Christ into a laughing-stock, and if God did exist, and had interested himself sufficiently in modern knowledge to the extent, perhaps, of conquering Eastern prejudices, would stink in his nostrils and turn his face purple with righteous rage.

One does not need the art of coscinomancy to discover God's feelings at the present time. But maybe he is too busy turning up the books of life and ticking off the Christians Christians have murdered for the glory of God and the safety of the various Fatherlands!

In the balance against this charity, the detestable sweepings of the streets of Christian morality, there swings a heavy weight, compounded of the "fine fellows" who are the relatives of these living, slum-dwelling ghouls of female humanity, and the innumerable enjoyments that spring from British freedom, and all the other terrible losses we would suffer if the enemy were successful.

It is a lesson in the hollow farce of the religion of love. It is a light shed on the damnable hypocrisy of the children of Jesus Christ. Their cowardliness is the low type—the sneaky, twisting, treacherous type—that crawls sickeningly round its burden, and away from it. They know what the joyful task is, and they hedge it. Every one of them tells us the words of the Lord can be obeyed, and in the doing of them there comes peace and happiness beyond all understanding; and the burden of the commands of God is lying the while on an unused side-track, awaiting the never-coming of those who should shoulder it. Every day the burden increases in size and adds weight. Every day it becomes more tragic and grotesque. Every day Christian cowardice and Christian disobedience to the heavenly commander-in-chief are accumulating more self-manufactured opprobrium. Every day there is another plague-spot on the white flesh of Christ.

The moanings of these women rise to heaven, and fall like stones. Their miseries spread through generations yet unborn, doing, even now, in the lightless recesses of convoluting matter, the death-in-life work of a devilish civilisation. And the reward for their unheroic suffering is beautifully wrapped in the silver cloud lining of celestial promises.

Christianity, if it be true, if it be a thing of social value, if it be founded—as we are told—upon the most glorious teachings of the most glorious man who ever lived, if it would save itself from the contumely of every rationally minded man, if it would shield its Christ from contempt and its God from ridicule, must shoulder its burden. It has power—social, financial, and organising power; its arms reach to the lowliest hamlet; it probably has brains. The burden awaits its coming. We Freethinkers are pessimistic; but we are interested.

ROBERT MORELAND.

Acid Drops.

A very interesting experiment is suggested by the Mayor-Elect of Blackpool—Councillor William Cartledge. He proposes to democratise the Mayoral Sunday by not favoring any particular church, but inviting representative citizens to accompany him to a specially organised service held in one of the large theatres. Will this catch on? We must wait and see. But we must confess, in common justice, that many Christians may object to this experiment on principle, without being bigoted or ill-natured. Let us be fair, even to the enemy.

Talking about being fair, even to the enemy, we venture to warn our readers once more against the moral danger of a false patriotism which follows so easily from a state of war, and from the partisan news which appears in all our daily papers. The Kaiser may be a criminal lunatic—we have already stated our belief that he is; the Germans have undoubtedly introduced shocking brutality into their conduct of the war; and the only principle they seem to acknowledge is their own interest and convenience. Nevertheless, we are sure that there are good Germans as well as good Englishmen, and the policy that nations descend to in war—when they are ashamed of themselves and things are going against them—must not always be taken as typical of conduct in peaceful civil life. Everybody has seen some of the clever Berlin caricatures. They make many Englishmen angry—which, of course, is their object; they make other Englishmen laugh, for, after all, the world is too dull a place to lose a good joke in, even at our own expense. Now there are Germans, as well as Englishmen, who are angry about these caricatures. Here is a letter from a German officer to the *Cologne Gazette* on this matter—reaching us through the *Westminster Gazette*:—

> "In distributing the post to the troops I have again and again noticed postcards which, in vulgar fashion, exhibited contempt of the French, English, and Russians, whom we have beaten. The effect of these postcards upon our men is very remarkable. Practically all of them expressed their disgust, and I have even seen a soldier with tears in his eyes. We see how victories are won, and with what enormous sacrifices. We see the unspeakable misery of the battlefield. We rejoice indeed over the victories, but our joy is mitigated by the memory of the sad pictures which we have almost every day before our eyes. Our enemies, moreover, have, in truth, not earned such ridicule. If they had not fought so bravely we should not have had such losses."

Now, that is a very manly writer. In spite of twenty wars one could shake the hand of the man who wrote it. And if all the details be true, there are other soldiers in the German Army than those whose exploits get into the English papers. The censorship lets all that sort of thing pass; the wrong as well as the right, the false as well as the true. What it does not let pass (until it is too late to be useful and too stale to be interesting) is the real news that all the world knows before it is allowed to reach the ears of the people it most concerns.

Dr. Fitchett, a Methodist preacher, who is author of one

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or two "War" books, enlightens the general public as to Europe's greatest need. He says:—

> "A little more of religion would simply revolutionise Europe. What all the Great Powers need is a sense of the relationship to a Power above them—the Power that rules the world in righteousness—a God, to use Mr. Balfour's phrase, that actually does things, that takes sides—the side of right against wrong, of justice against injustice."

Dr. Fitchett is evidently a believer in the old prescription, "Take a hair of the dog that bit you." Otherwise, we should imagine that a little more religion, added to what there is already, would precious near be the end of all things. And if there is one thing that *all* the Great Powers—except France—are convinced of, it is their nearness to a great "Power." They have all said so. They are all convinced that he is inspiring them. And each one is certain that he is *the* one for whom this "Power" is reserving his choicest favors. We suppose, however, that Dr. Fitchett, being what he is, could not well say anything different from what he does say. When we have been for years repeating the same stupid phrases these acquire a specific value from mere repetition.

The advertising effrontery of the Salvation Army almost passes belief. Its latest exploit is to announce that since the outbreak of the War 180 men had enlisted from a single "shelter." As these were more or less casual visitors, driven there by sheer poverty, we are at a loss to see in what way the "Army" deserves credit for the enlistment.

Mr. R. J. Campbell professes to be a very liberal-minded theologian, and prides himself on the City Temple being a liberal institution. But it is very hard for a theologian to rid himself of his theological prejudices, as the following from a speech of Mr. Campbell's shows:—

> "When Mr. Bernard Shaw came last to this society, he addressed a meeting in the City Temple which got me into no end of trouble afterwards. The opening words of his address were something like these: 'Although addressing an audience which meets in a Christian edifice, I have to confess frankly at the outset of our proceedings this evening that I am not a Christian.' I remember the shock which these words gave me; a chill was instantly cast over the assembly. I think the feeling was that if Mr. Shaw was not able to profess himself to be a Christian, he might, at least, have been silent on the subject and respected the feelings of his audience."

Now, we do not think that Mr. Campbell could have been under very strong delusions concerning Mr. Shaw's religious opinions, although we admit that he had been playing some queer antics in that direction. Moreover, Mr. Campbell, as a liberal theologian and a professed lover of freedom, ought to have been less susceptible to shock, and the City Temple audience to chills. Shocks and chills because a man says he is not a Christian does not indicate a very robust love of freedom. A mediæval inquisitor could only have been shocked at such a confession, although we admit that the one who made it would not have complained of "chill" afterwards.

It is to be observed that this liberal assemblage would not have felt aggrieved had Mr. Shaw kept his opinion to himself, and so probably deluded some of his hearers. And it was certainly not the nature of the language that gave shocks and chills. That was as mild as mild could be. No, they did not mind so much a man not being a Christian; what they objected to was his saying so. As usual, heresy plus hypocrisy may pass. Heresy plus honesty must be condemned. Mr. Campbell was shocked, the audience was chilled, its feelings outraged, all because a man said plainly that he was not a Christian. Mr. Campbell and his followers ought to have known better; had they not been Christians they would have known better. No member of the gathering would have hesitated to avow himself a Christian. He would not stop to think that, perhaps, the speaker's feelings might be wounded. Of course, we do not believe they would have been; but what is sauce for the goose ought to be sauce for the gander. Perhaps, though, they placed the non-Christian on a higher level than themselves by recognising that he would be the first to claim that everyone present possessed the right to say what he believed without troubling about the shocks and chills to which unemancipated minds are subject.

The *Christian World* falls foul of Rev. Conrad Noel for saying that Protestantism has made no distinctive contribution to the Christian religion, and that Protestantism "tends invariably either to complete Atheism or the Catholic Faith." It strikes us that both of these statements contain no more than the truth. There is nothing in Protestantism that is not in Catholicism, and all over Europe it is precisely Atheism on the one side and Roman Catholicism on the other that is eating into Protestantism. The *Christian World* says that the whole movement of Foreign Missions owes its impulse to Protestantism. We should have thought that the *Christian World* was well aware of the fact that missionary effort has been part of the regular work of the Catholic Church ever since it existed. India, China, North and South America, were blessed—or otherwise—with Catholic missionaries long before Protestantism existed.

The *Christian World* is equally wide of the truth in saying that Protestantism contributed to Christianity breadth of thought, and Catholicity of spirit, and freedom of conscience. Where? As such, Protestantism has been quite as much opposed to genuine freedom of thought as has Roman Catholicism. Look at Scotland and Geneva under Calvanism! Look at New England under the Puritans! Or look at the attitude of Protestants in this country in relation to heresy! The historic truth is that Protestantism represents a mere side-stream in a general current of European thought. In the revolt against Christian mediævalism, and the return to the healthier ideals of antiquity, we see this working itself out in art, in literature, and in sociology. Protestantism was a mere offshoot from this general tendency. And it narrowed the tendency instead of broadening it.

Lecturing at the Memorial Hall, Farringdon-street, Professor Adams Brown said that "a nation in agony was a proof, not of God's indifference, but of his interest." We hope that those Belgians who are in England in consequence of the devastation of their country will be properly appreciative of God's interest in them. But in this case it is evident that the Kaiser was right, after all. He *is* God's instrument. For it is the German army that is responsible for the agony of Belgium, and that agony is a proof of "God's interest." Well, we have always said that the less people have to do with the gods the better.

The English papers gleefully relate that German soldiers carry charms and mascots to protect them against bullets. What do they expect? Are there not twenty millions of Catholics in Germany, besides followers of other fancy religions?

The late Monsignor Hugh Benson commended smoking among ladies, and some of his co-religionists were shocked at his attitude. They might have remembered that the Catholic Church teaches that unregenerate men and women will smoke for ever—in the next world.

Archdeacon Holmes, preaching at St. Paul's Cathedral, said "God is my puzzle." Just so! And when the reverend gentleman has solved that jig-saw, he might try the tangle of the Trinity.

The "blood and fire" of the Salvation Army is popularly supposed to be confined to the jerseys and flags of these non-military warriors. Mr. Harold Begbie, however, appears to think otherwise, and in some exquisite lines in a recent "poem," he says:

> "Ho, a bloke can stand some slaughter
> When he knows he's born again."

The new lighting regulations have transformed London into A City of Dreadful Night, and the police, particularly at Deptford and Camberwell, have great difficulty in preventing disorder and looting. Piety is not a restraining influence without the assistance of some big "bobbies."

The Bishop of Sheffield attributes the European War to a decline in the belief of the "teaching of revelation." Why is this? The German and Austrian peoples believe in the Bible-God as much as the Bishop, and the worst excesses of the troops of the two Kaisers can be easily paralleled in the Old Testament.

A characteristic story is told in a British soldier's letter from the War. Some artillerymen who had lost their way came across a crowd whom they suspected to be Germans. It was dark, but they heard someone sing out "Where the hell are you going to?" "Then," he says, "we knew we were with friends."

"Our fellows," another Mr. Atkins writes, "have signed the pledge because Kitchener wants them to. But they all

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say, 'God help the Germans, when we get hold of them, for making us teetotal.'"

According to the London Press, the King of the Belgians now wears only the French military medal and the Russian Cross of St. George. Dear, Dear! His Majesty is almost as scantily clothed as King David when he danced before the ark.

The Bishop of Chelmsford, speaking at St. Mary's Church, Prittlewell, said that "Church and State should be co-partners in elevating Southend, and in making it a holy city in reality and truth." There is no need for "Church" and "State" to distress themselves, for there are enough Semitic features in the town to justify that title already.

According to the truthful, if not thoughtful, newspapers, the Czar of all the Russias has forbidden the drinking of alcohol in his dominions "for ever." "For ever" is a big phrase. We thought eternity was in the hands of "God." It now appears that Czars can handle it too. But we would back the vodka. Read the Bible. Man was made of dust—it was a dry job—and he's been thirsty ever since.

The *Daily Mail* has, with its customary restraint, given its readers some of its ideas on "damned German culture." Apart from the filmy-eyed innocence of confusing militarism with culture, it is a pity that the *Mail* is so provincial. Goethe said, "How can I hate, unless I am myself filled with hatred?" We commend this awful remark to the urbane leader-writer on the *Mail*.

"Have a War Wedding" runs a bold advertisement in the daily papers. It sounds like an invitation to emulate the Old Testament ideal of polygamy.

The old "infidel" deathbed story is played out now except to the intellectually lowest of the low amongst the very dregs of Christianity. No journal but a *Christian Herald* or a *War Cry* would venture to print one, yet thirty or forty years ago, not to go back farther, it was a popular form of Christian delectation. Soldier and sailor letters during the present War contain little reference to religious ideas of any kind by fatally wounded men who are approaching the "great beyond"—just as we hear no more of the Bible that stopped the bullet which would have gone through Jack's or Tommy's heart. The men who were saved by the aid of a raft from the torpedoed *Hawke*, and only picked up the next day a long way from the catastrophe, huddled round the fattest of their number all night and cheered themselves up with unheavenly songs like "'Tis a Long, Long Way to Tipperary" and "They All Love Jack." Not much piety in this, but it helped to pull them through all right.

There is a better, a more poetical, a subtler story in Dr. Haden Guest's "Among the Wounded" in last week's *Reynolds'*. Dr. Guest is conducting a hospital for the wounded in France. They have all sorts of patients and all sorts of attendants in the place. The common fight for the country has brought them all to a democratic level. The motor-car placed at the service of the hospital by the Government is driven by a Marquis—a *live* Marquis—who is a "full private" in the army. Another attendant, looking after bedpans, being asked by Dr. Guest what was the price of electric light in Paris, paused in his work to say he didn't know,—his valet always paid his electric light bill! These pleasant stories are followed by some dreadful accounts of the injuries and sufferings of the wounded, and then comes the following paragraph, which ends the article:—

> "I do not want to create the impression that the work has only its gruesome and its gloomy aspects. There are many cheering incidents, prominent among which I must place the bravery of the French lady who stayed behind at Brayn to nurse the wounded after the town had been evacuated. The demeanor of the wounded, too, is wonderfully cheerful. One case will remain in the memory of all the party. It is that of a French soldier, from whom we had amputated his two legs and one arm. The other arm would have been taken off, but death forestalled us. The only words one heard from that soldier were apologies for the trouble he was giving. The only words, save for one grim joke. As he lay in bed with his solitary limb, he remarked to his attendant: 'A pity I have not another arm! We might play cards!' That man had the face of a saint."

"We might play cards!" We might make the best of what life I have left, and mitigate your *ennui*, and save myself from the boredom of merely awaiting the executioner. So fine, and so French! And the man had the face of a saint. And why not?

Yone Noguchi, a Japanese poet, has been recording his impressions of Western life, gathered as the result of a rather lengthy visit to Europe and America. He says that the belief that Western civilisation was built on a higher and sounder footing than Japanese is now "knocked down and killed." He points out that "during forty long years the Western poets, preachers, and philosophers have been singing and writing on the general peace and brotherhood, and every church striking its holy bell on every Sunday and Christmas Eve." With what result? "When they preached peace, it was only at the time when they could not practise [their] barbarous policy; those forty years of peace were only a sort of truce. It was never a peace for peace's sake, but the time of preparation or suspension of hostilities in the interim between one war and another."

Mr. Noguchi comments on the fact that for fighting two wars in twenty years the Japanese have earned the name of a warlike nation, have been labelled dangerous, and commented on as the "Yellow Peril." He retorts that the schools of the West are far more dangerous than the East, "where Confucius's analects are not a dead language."

> "Confucius's teaching is that we should recompense injury with justice, and kindness with kindness; and his doctrine is to be true to the principles of our nature, and the benevolent exercise of them to others. Even when we, as a people or nation, could not strictly observe his teaching, we believe that we have never acted aggressively.....It was the German Emperor who drew a picture calling us Yellow Peril, when we won a fight from China; if we had been a yellow peril, as he said, it meant only against the white race of the West. But what the German Emperor is doing now is, certainly, a mighty peril against all the humanities of the whole world."

He asks what would happen if any second or third-rate countries in the East were to imitate the Western example. His conclusion is that Japanese should be glad that they have a country in the far-away East, that contact has robbed him of respect for Western civilisation, and that the "immediate and most important determination should be a refusal to the Western invasion."

A book has been published with the ironic title, *The Unpetitioned Heavens*. It is appropriate that such a volume should be a work of fiction.

Mr. Fergus Hume, the author of the sensational novel, *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab*, is an ardent Theosophist, and frequently lectures on occult subjects. His admirers have always preferred his exciting cab-rides to his wanderings after the Mahatmas.

Southend-on-Sea, which a year ago attained the dignity of a County Borough, has adopted a new coat of arms, which is distinctly ecclesiastical. A critic in a local paper says, "I doubt if it is wise to place on permanent record as emblem of torture, the gridiron, often used by one Christian sect towards another (doubtless with the best intention), even though it is placed in sinister." A palpable hit!

The dear clergy will note with pleasure that Providence is as lively as ever. About 3,000 people were killed by the earthquake on October 3 at Burdur and Isbarta, Asia Minor. This piece of playfulness is in no way connected with the pernicious writings of Nietzsche.

"Wife Murder Over a Halfpenny" is a startling headline in a contemporary. People betray no emotion when they hear that "God" was sold for thirty shillings.

The provincial police have been very busy "rounding-up" foreigners. If they were still living, Christ and his twelve disciples would be "roped in" by the boys in blue.

Mr. Harold Begbie, writing in the *Daily Chronicle*, says Americans have small respect for traditions. Great Scott! Are all the churches and tin tabernacles erected to the memory of George Washington?

Heinrich von Treitschke, the Berlin professor who has so excited the spleen of the English parsons, was a Lutheran. That fact will never prevent the theologians telling tarradiddles, and they will continue to call the Herr Professor "an Atheist."

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To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £219 18s. 9d. Received since:—H. T. C., £1 1s.; Robert Stirton and Friends, Dundee (quarterly), £1 3s.; S. Valentine Cannter, £1 1s.

Cape Town (per F. Silke): F. W. R. Silke, 12s. 6d.; G. A. Chisnell, 2s. 6d.; H. K. Jones, 2s. 6d.; H. Pentz, 2s. 6d.; (Mrs.) H. T. C., £1 1s.; K. C. C., £1 1s.

Leicester (per J. Ainge): S. Leeson, £1; W. Leeson, 5s.; D. Winterton, 2s. 6d.; — Barclet, 2s. 6d.; A. Wade, 2s. 6d.; J. Ainge, 2s. 6d.; W. Clark, 1s.; A. Letts, 1s.

F. SILKE.—If you cannot do all you would for Freethought do what you can. You never know what opportunities may arise. The book you mention has long been out of print. Sorry we cannot supply it.

S. T. ELLIS.—We wrote an article on the Lamb story once in the *Freethinker*. It was told by Hazlitt. The pious rendering in the goody-goody book you refer to is a reckless perversion.

E. MORGAN.—Shall be sent as desired. Pleased to hear that, after two years' reading, this has become *the* paper for you.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

K. C. C.—Much obliged for your kind letter. Fortunately, we are fairly "fit" for our work, and there is so much of it, both before and behind the scenes, that we have no time for mourning over any troubles.

J. AINGE.—Thanks for your efforts in behalf of the Fund.

H. T. C.—Sorry for the delay.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss Vance acknowledges a parcel of useful clothing from Mr. and Mrs. King (Luke x. 37).

ROBERT STIRTON.—Accept our warm thanks for your continued interest in the matter.

H. G. FARMER.—Thanks for article and letter.

T. MOSLEY.—May be our fault, but we don't see your point. Huxley certainly did make that affirmation.

T. LONSDALE.—We have never charged anything for N. S. S. advertisements, but we like to get them before Tuesday.

W. DOUGLAS.—Casuistry is a very interesting study, but it does not help us much in the practical affairs of life. Alphonse Karr (we think it was), being asked if he was opposed to capital punishment, replied, "Yes, but I want those gentlemen the murderers to begin."

E. B.—Thanks, though we can't use them till next week.

E. EDWARDS.—In our next.

MAUD CLARK.—There is much truth in your letter.

SOME correspondence stands over till next week.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote's first lecture this season will be delivered at the Leicester Secular Hall next Sunday evening (Nov. 8). Further details will appear in our next issue.

Mr. Sydney A. Gimson, President of the Leicester Secular Society, has been closely engaged of late as Chairman of the local Committee for helping Belgian refugees. We are glad to see that the Sunday evening meetings at the Secular Hall are still sustained. We were not sure of this until we received, for the first time, a copy of the September-December syllabus a few days ago. We note that the platform to-day (Nov. 1) is to be occupied by Mr. F. J. Gould, who should draw a good assembly to hear him on "Abraham Lincoln in Peace and War."

Mr. Mangasarian has resumed his work for the Free Religious (Rationalist) Association of Chicago. His weekly discourses are now delivered in a large building, the Garrick Theatre, which holds some 500 more people than the hall he has been lecturing in during the last few years. This is a tribute to his powers of advocacy and to the growth of Freethought in the great central city of the United States. The Association's monthly program contains one page out of four from Mr. Mangasarian's pen, besides his addresses which are published in a monthly organ called the *Rationalist*. We are happy to reproduce Mr. Mangasarian's open letter to President Wilson from the October program, or rather the first part of it, which will arouse in most, if not all, readers a taste for more.

We congratulate two good friends of ours, and two good Freethinkers, formerly of Southend and Margate, and now of Brighton (Mr. and Mrs. S. V. Cannter), on their late narrow escape from being hung, drawn, and quartered. They were arrested in a train as German spies. An intelligent English policeman saw them looking at a map. That was enough. What did it matter that both have a very un-German appearance, and talked what the schoolboy called "English English"? The map did it. They were liberated, however, after about four hours' detention. And we dare say they have had enough of intelligent English policemen for one lifetime.

Our veteran friend, Mr. J. W. de Caux, J.P., of Great Yarmouth, in a recent letter says: "I have never read the *Freethinker* with greater pleasure than I have recently. I am at one with you regarding the war." Mr. de Caux tells a humorous story, which is not altogether humorous. One of his premises is let to a merchant who lives at Ostend, and of course the poor landlord gets no rent, but the Yarmouth Corporation demand their ground-rent from the unfortunate Englishman all the same. He suggests that they should send the bill to the National Relief Fund, but they want their pound of flesh from him—as of course he expected, for it was only one of his apposite little jokes, after all.

Glasgow N. S. S. Branch members hold a meeting to-day (Sunday, Nov. 1) at 12 noon in the Good Templars' Hall, 122 Ingram-street.

We are happy to state that the *Freethinker's* circulation keeps up fairly well. But all the weight of the drop there is falls upon the poor Editor and proprietor. This is one of those cases in which the Editor works for the proprietor whatever happens, and the proprietor pays the Editor—when he can. At other times they weep together. Up to the present, however, contributors have not been called upon to join the melancholy concert. Will our friends do their best to give the paper an advertisement by introducing it, as far as possible, to their friends and acquaintances? This is the most effective form of advertising, and it is also the cheapest.

We are still ready, and more than ready, to send six consecutive copies of the *Freethinker* post free to any name and address that our readers may send us as of persons likely to be interested and perhaps to become regular subscribers. We have gained a good many readers, first and last, in this way.

Mr. Foote will probably have an important statement to make next week on matters arising out of the death of Mrs. C. Bowman, which is referred to elsewhere. A meeting of the Directors of the Secular Society, Ltd., must be held first.

Some idea of Mr. Foote's work behind the scenes may be gathered from the statement referred to in the previous paragraph, and why there is not always an article of his in the *Freethinker*, although his pen is always represented.

THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

In the education of children and in the leading of nations there is nothing more stupid and barbaric than prohibitory laws and regulations. In my circles I would rather endure faults and weaknesses until they had made room for better qualities than merely get rid of the faults, and leave nothing sensible to take their places. Man naturally loves to do that which is good and practical, if he only can.....He does vicious things only when kept in idleness from *ennui*. It displeases me to see children repeat the Ten Commandments. There is the sixth, for instance: "Thou shalt do no murder." As though men had the least desire to kill one another. But is it not a barbarous thing to forbid children to commit murder? If it read: "Take care of the life of others; remove what might be injurious to them; help the other, and save him at risk of your own life! If you do him harm, think that you harm yourself."—*Goethe.*

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God's Views on Women.

GERTRUDE ATHERTON, an American authoress, says of men: "They admire God because he made himself of their gender, and knew what he was about when he invented woman." According to the Bible, however, woman was merely an afterthought of creation, and "brought sin into the world and all our woe," shortly after her appearance on the scene. She owes to man the rib for her manufacture. Eve, says Paul, was in the transgression. She had the curse which involves most suffering, and "He shall rule over thee" was a prophetic portion thereof. From first to last the Bible is a he-book. God is masculine, and his only begotten child is a son. Why did he not beget a daughter to right the wrong Mother Eve is said to have committed? The Roman Catholics have endeavored to supply this omission by elevating Mary to a position of more importance than God the Father himself.

Throughout the Bible women are treated with contempt. All God's favorites were polygamists. Women were bought and sold in the same way as other merchandise. Rebekah was virtually bought by Abraham's servant for Isaac. In the Ten Commandments a man's wife is classed with his ox, his ass, or anything which is his. In the chapter following the Decalogue permission is given to fathers to sell their daughters into slavery. Sarah gave Hagar, her female slave, "to her husband, Abraham, to be his wife," and when he was tired of her he cast her with her child into the desert. "And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bond-woman."

The patriarchal system had long been established when the Bible was compiled, although there are traces in the Old Testament records of a far earlier matriarchal stage, when kinship was traced through mothers, fathers being uncertain. The power of the father was supreme, extending, as in the case of Abraham, to life and death. He never thought of consulting Sarah as to whether he should sacrifice her only son. According to the divine laws dictated by God to Moses, all that a husband had to do if his wife found no favor in his eyes was to "write her a bill of divorcement, give it in her hand, and send her out of his house" (Deut. xxiv. 1). The woman had no power of appeal. Her husband was accuser, judge, and jury. No remedy is offered to the woman if her husband finds no favor in her eyes. A female child was held to be an extra defilement to a woman, and an additional atonement was required.

Painters depict angels as feminine, but the Bible angels are all males. The three who appeared to Abraham were mistaken for men. The one who wrestled with Jacob is called a man. The angel that announced a child to Manoah's wife was "a man of God." The angel that announced to Zachariah the birth of John was a male, and so was the one who appeared to Mary. It is curious how often angelic visits were followed by births.

The preacher who writes in the name of the sensual sultan Solomon declares: "One man among a thousand have I found; but a woman among all those have I not found." This is put forward as God's word, and his opinion of his handiwork. Burns made God a better compliment when he wrote of Nature:—

> "Her prentice han' she tried on man,
> And then she made the lasses, O!"

The women most praised in the Bible are Rahab, the harlot, who betrayed her own people, and Jael, the wife of Heber, the Kenite, who basely assassinated a man who took refuge in her tent. If women had written the Bible, they would not have selected such heroines as these. No wonder some of them desire a revised Woman's Bible of their own!

God surely never meant women to read his holy volume, or he would have expunged the many shameless stories and filthy words which it contains. A decent Deity would hardly have had the effrontery to inspire such narratives as those of Lot and his daughters, Tamar, the Levite's concubine, Bathsheba, Abishag, Aholah and Aholibah, and the details of Ezekiel, Hosea, and the Song of Solomon, if he had expected feminine readers. Had the Bible been written by women, be sure we should have had a different representation of them. Perhaps we might have read that it was Adam, not Eve, who was in the transgression.

The New Testament regards woman in much the same light as the Old. Paul says, "But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man" (1 Corin. xi. 3). In his Epistle to the Ephesians v. 22, he commands, "Wives submit yourselves unto your husbands as unto the Lord." That is to say, the submission must be unquestioning and complete. "For," he repeats, "the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church..... Therefore, as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands *in everything*." No despot could require a larger charter than granted by Paul. Again, he says, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection" (1. Tim. ii. 7). He affirms, in the most pronounced terms, that the position of woman is a subordinate and servile one. "I suffer not a woman to teach" he exclaims with masculine arrogance (1 Tim. ii. 12).

In the seventh chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, where Paul deals with the marriage relation, he puts that institution on a purely bestial basis, and says, "He that giveth a virgin in marriage doeth well, but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better." Not a word as to the possibility of a girl having a will of her own in the matter. In a succeeding chapter (xi. 6-10) he insists that "the woman" must either be covered (wear a veil, as they do in the East) or "let her also be shorn." "For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man." The verse which follows, "For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels," has puzzled the commentators. It is illustrated by similar precepts in the Koran. Paul, like Mohammed, thought that even the angels might fall into the snares of female beauty. A little further on (xiv. 34, 35) Paul again says, "Let your women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law." Paul well knew that the whole tenor and spirit of the Bible touching the status of woman is that her main mission is but to minister to man—his inferior, not his equal.

Our "great exemplar" was a male, who never married. The references of Jesus to the sex are entirely of a monkish character. "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" he brutally exclaims to his mother. His chosen disciples were men, though he let women minister unto him. He taught that marriage was an inferior state, praising those who made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake (Matt. xix. 12). In the Apocalypse we find the elect of heaven are those "not defiled with women" (Rev. xiv. 4). The Catholic Church has always taught that unnatural celibacy is the higher state of life, and the early Christian Fathers unite in contemning the characters of women. Tertullian calls her "the gateway of hell." Through the ages when Christianity was predominant she was regarded emphatically as the temptress, the agent of Satan, to lead men from the holy life. Of the nine millions who, it has been computed, were slaughtered in the persecution of witchcraft, probably only one in five hundred was a male.

The teachings of the Bible have contributed to make slaves of women and tyrants of men. There are abundant signs that this old teaching will not suit the present day. Women, who desire the emancipation of their sex, should cease to work for the

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religion, which has built its churches on their prostration, and have the courage to affirm that Paul's authority has no influence with them.

(The late) J. M. WHEELER.

The Design Argument.

IN THE LIGHT OF ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY.

[We have long meant to introduce this essay to our readers. It was written a good many years ago by a learned Hindu resident in America and published by the Truthseeker Publishing Co., and is perhaps the best popular reply to the Design Argument in existence.—EDITOR.]

THE design argument, that is, that there is a special design, particular intention, in Nature, for the good of all creatures, and especially for the good of man, who is made, as the religionists assert, to praise and glorify the Creator, has long been presented by the theologians to prove the personal being of God; his omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence, which, in plain words, means his infinite power, his infinite knowledge, and his presence everywhere; so also, to prove his infinite love and merciful kindness, his infinite skill, wisdom, justice, holiness, unchangeableness, his eternity, and all the infinitely fine attributes that imagination can invent and manufacture in a language—attributes having meanings or no meanings at all, and of which one can form an idea or no idea whatsoever. And upon this false understanding and this absurd belief rests the whole fabric of the various religions in the world, with numberless creeds and castes, sects and factions, all of which divide man from man, poisoning the minds of one toward another, and creating dissensions and quarrels, wars and persecutions. This illogical, this unscientific and unreasonable understanding, this false belief in God and his so-called attributes, is the cause, as I have just said, of all the religions and their sects with all their infinitely evil consequences—curses, lies, falsehoods, pride, hopocrisy, hatred, and miseries under various forms and names.

This huge tree of evil, of monstrous dimensions, has spread its branches far and wide, from hemisphere to hemisphere, devastating human happiness by creating, enforcing, and encouraging falsehoods, narrow-mindedness, hate, and intolerance in the extreme, and thus desecrating the otherwise most tolerant, the purest, and the noblest of souls.

I wish to strike at the very root of this tree of evil, instead of chopping off its tender foliage and twigs.

I assert that Medical Science, viewed impartially and with an unbiased mind, shatters the very foundation of this fabric of false belief and deception practised upon the mind of man, by the ignorant and the cunning, for many ages past and from time immemorial.

I wish to consider the design argument anatomically and physiologically, that is to say, in relation to our body, in relation to its structure and to its functions. It is quite clear, however, that in a single discourse, like to-day's, we can consider only a few points of the subject.

The theologians aver that the body of man—both in its structure and its functions—points out to us a great and perfect designer, a kind and wise father, an almighty and all-merciful creator. They prove their assertions by statements like these:—

1. The total or utter helplessness of the child, say they, is well-known. And, therefore, in order that it may not break its limbs by falls and accidents, God has, through his infinite mercy and forethought, formed the bones of its body so elastic and pliable that even by a severe blow or an accidental fall, which would break the limbs of the strongest of men, those of the child go unhurt. There is the mercy of the great loving Father exhibited, in protecting the helpless child of his.

2. Not only that, but the proof of his infinite loving kindness is much more extraordinarily shown by the provision he makes for the child, in the breast of its mother, even long before the child is born. This provision is milk—the food which contains all the ingredients necessary to sustain the life of man—and admirably fitted for the nourishment of infants. This milk is being created along with the child, which is gradually developing in the mother's womb. How wonderful!

3. Then, again, the child can suck the milk out of its mother's breasts without any teaching on the part of man. Who teaches the child to suckle then? It is God, the merciful, the benevolent and the most tender-hearted Father and Mother of the child. He is far kinder than the child's earthly parents.

4. Now, the fourth point that they want to force upon the attention of the people is the thickness and the strength of the skull in which the brain—the most important of the organs of the body—is lodged. The skull instead of being formed of one bone only, is formed of twenty-two bones, of which eight form the head and fourteen form the face. Although the bones, especially of the head, are soft and separate from each other in infancy, they grow firmer and thicker, and join together as the age of the child advances. Why did God form the skull of several bones and not of only one bone? Certainly to make the skull stronger, like the stones of an arch. Another purpose is to enable it to bear even a severe blow—an external shock—that the brain inside may not be easily hurt.

5. Now, about articulations, which in ordinary language mean joints. There are two hundred bones in our body, and these bones are joined together by ligaments, which serve as binders. Ligaments are strong, tough, white, and shining skins. Joining of bones is called articulation. God, out of his infinite wisdom and mercy, has managed the joints in a very wonderful manner. He has joined these bones together, more or less firmly, and supplied them with more or less ligaments, and given more or less elasticity to them, according to the purposes he has intended them to serve. One bone is exactly fitted to the other, and ligaments hold the ends of the bones together.

6. God has not only made joints, but in order that they may work well, has also oiled them, as we do wheel and axle of a carriage. There is a bag-shaped skin, called synovial membrane, around the joints. These membranes secrete a liquid substance which answers the purpose of oil and keeps the joints always soft. Some vessels give out this oil; others take it up when it has become unfit for use. What a marvellous contrivance is this! We have not to oil our joints. This oil is made when it is wanted, and supplied without any help from man. No man does it or can ever do it. It is God—the only most skilled mechanic—that does it, and who alone can do it. None else.

7. I shall now direct your attention to a very ingenious contrivance in the throat. We all know we breathe. The air goes down into the lungs and out again through the windpipe which lies in front of the gullet. To keep food from going into the windpipe, God has put there a kind of little door, technically called the epiglottis, which is intended to cover it (the windpipe) when we swallow food. But in case any particle of food should fall into the windpipe, the lungs contract and force the air through the passage to drive it out. What wonderful contrivance again!

8. The eighth point to which I shall draw your attention is the eye. The eye is the most important of all the organs of sense. To effect the movements of the eye in every direction there are seven muscles. We have two eyes to enable us to see better, and if we should lose the one, by an accident or disease, we have the other. The eye is placed in the front of the head, where it is most useful. It is carefully guarded by the bones which jut out all around it. The eye is protected by two shutters—the eyelids. They keep out the light of the sun when it is too powerful. The eyelids, as well as the eyelashes, keep off small bodies like dust and flies. The eye is wonderfully made by

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God of three coats called tunics, which are opaque, except the middle portion through which we see, and three transparent substances through which refraction of the rays of light takes place. Of these three transparent substances, which are called media, two are aqueous (watery), and the third which is called the crystalline lens, is in substance like half-melted gum. In shape it is like two watch-glasses with their hollow sides placed together. Had these aqueous humors or the lens been opaque, we could not have seen anything at all. So how wise and kind of God—the Father in heaven—to keep these things transparent, and enable us to see the glory of his creation, and to marvel at it.

9. The ninth point is about the processes of the healing of our body in case of wounds caused by cuts, burns, etc. This proves how God has designed means for the cure of his injured creatures. Take, for instance, the process called cicatrisation. In this, the wound is healed by the raw surface gradually becoming smooth and varnished over with a thin bluish-white layer. This is the first indication of the new skin. This process of healing spreads from the edges, or from any islands of skin that may have been left, or that may have been grafted by the surgeon. As it goes on, it draws the margins together by concentric contraction. After the whole has been skinned over, other important changes are gradually developed. The cicatrical tissue, which was at first thin, blue, and shining, becomes thicker, of a natural color, and covered over by a layer of epithelium; in fact, it approaches, though it may not attain, the character of true skin.

From this we can clearly see how God, through his infinite mercy, ingeniously endeavors to heal up wounds.

10. The tenth and the last, but not the least, point is about bodily pain. Pain, which man tries to avoid with all his power, which he hates and fears, proves, above all things, great wisdom of God, his great mercy, his perfect design for the good of man and man's happiness. Pain, is a very salutary provision; inasmuch as it teaches vigilance and caution, it gives notice of danger, and excites those endeavors which may be necessary for the preservation of self. It is the unmistakable and the true monitor. It points out to us exactly where disease is, where destruction of the tissue or the mismanagement of the functions is going on, and calls our immediate attention to the remedies. It gives us real signals of danger. It is decidedly intended—by that loving Almighty Father, from whom nothing is hid—for our good. Suppose our hand is on fire; if there were no pain, our hand would be burnt to ashes. Pain in a broken bone makes us keep it still, without which it could not heal. The evil consequence which sometimes arises from the want of that timely intimation of danger which pain gives is known to the inhabitants of cold countries by the effect of frost-bitten limbs. Some people have lost toes and fingers by this cause. They were totally unconscious of any local uneasiness at the time. Then, by this, it is emphatically proved that there is a great use of pain, though we don't like it, and that it is intended and appointed by the great and kind Father for our good, through his unbounded, unabating, and fathomless mercy.

I have, quite impartially, and as clearly as possible, tried to place before you some of the arguments that the theologians generally bring forward in relation to the structure and functions of our body, to prove the special design of God for the welfare and happiness of man.

Now, let us see how these ten points, these ten arguments of the theologians, stand the test of scrutiny, and whether they really serve to prove the design of some personal, benevolent being—God—for the good of man. Let us examine how far these points, these facts, stand before other facts, counteracting their influence. Let us impartially examine them, and see if they really prove that there is a God to design these things for the good of man or none at all; or, if there be one, whether he is not a great malevolent being, rather than a really benevolent one, or both—which is evidently a contradiction in terms.

Let us now try to take one point after another and examine it carefully.

The first point is with regard to the pliability, the quality of yielding to pressure, in the bones of children. Were the bones hard, like those of adults, they would be more easily broken by accidents.

In answer to this, I say that it is not true that God, out of his protecting care for infants and children, has made the bones pliable in order that they may not be broken, but they are not so easily broken because they are pliable. To be able to comprehend the subject properly, let us look at the composition of bones. The bone is composed of one-third organic or animal matter and two-thirds inorganic or earthy matter. The organic or animal matter gives to the bone elasticity or toughness, while inorganic or earthy matter gives the bone its hardness and solidity. This proportion of the chemical composition of bone is found in the bones of the adult. In the bones of the young people, animal matter predominates, and, therefore, although the bones don't easily break, they are less strong, and liable to be bent under the pressure of the body; while in old people, earthy matter predominates, and, therefore, the bones become brittle and are easily broken. Now, I ask, if God, through his infinite kindness, protects the bones of children from being broken, why does he not protect the bones of old people? Does he not see the necessity of protecting the old, in whom the bones are very liable to be easily fractured? I say, in their case, in point of bones, there is the real necessity of God's intervention and protection. Again, if one says, because the child's bone may not be easily broken, that God, out of his merciful kindness and love, has made it elastic and pliable, he will have to admit that because the old person's limb may be easily broken, God, out of his infinite wickedness and hate, has made the bones of the aged brittle and friable. If the designist is ready to admit the conclusion of the first argument, he cannot but admit, whether he wish it or not, the conclusion of the second also, which is mortally against him.

One might say that the aged person's bone breaks because, as age advances, earthy matter predominates over the animal matter, rendering the bone more and more liable to break, and, in old age, it is actually brittle. What wonder is there that it should break, then!

I say this is the very thing that I hold; in old age the bone easily breaks because it is brittle, for earthy matter predominates; so also in childhood it does not so easily break, because it is pliable, owing to the animal matter predominating. There is no interference of God or anybody in the matter. This is merely the course Nature takes.

Now, again, if it is admitted for a moment that God specially cares for children and protects them, how is it that he does not protect children from falls from windows and from burns by fire, by which so many of them die, and the reports of which we read in our dailies? Is it that he is unable to protect them if the falls are above a few feet in height? Then, again, it is not that the children are not at all injured by ordinary falls. They are often very seriously injured by them. Again, also, children die by a variety of other accidents, and by climatic influences and epidemics. Where is God's special providence for the protection of children then? Has God guaranteed himself only against the breaking of bones and not against any injury by cuts and burns and climate and what not?

The whole truth with regard to bones is that the bones are not already formed in infancy. They are, in the commencement, cartilages and membranes, and, as age advances, these cartilages and membranes go on ossifying—forming into bones. This process goes on from infancy to manhood, say up to the twenty-fifth year. As the process of ossification goes on, from day to day, the animal matter in the bone

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becomes less and less, while earthy matter increases more and more. Well, then, it is clear that as animal matter lessens and earthy matter increases, the bones get less and less soft and pliable, and more and more hard and strong, until the bones fully grow or are completely ossified, as it is technically called, when the technical composition of bone comes to be one-third animal matter and two-thirds earthy matter, as I have already mentioned. After this chemical proportion is completed, the turn of ossification is on the reverse. The bone then goes on losing animal matter and adding to it more of the earthy, thus rendering it less pliable and more brittle, and, therefore, more easily breakable.

This is the whole fact, the whole truth. No God loves and protects the child, and no Devil hates and destroys the old man. All this is only blind and and unfeeling Nature's course, through which all the stages of animal existence must go, such as the embryonic state, infancy, childhood, manhood, old age, and final decay.

The second point is about the provision in the shape of milk for the nourishment of the child in its mother's breasts.

If, I say, God out of his mercy and protecting care creates milk for the child even before it is born, how is it that many thousands and millions of mothers have not milk enough for the proper nourishment of the child, and many of them, both rich and poor, have no milk at all? Want of milk in mothers is the general and the loudest complaint throughout the world. Hence these millions of infant feeding bottles and tins and pots of condensed milk. Then, again, it oftentimes happens that when the child is living, there is, in fact, a very small quantity of milk, quite insufficient for its support, but immediately after the death of the poor child, there begins such a large secretion, and such an overflow of milk that the breasts are over-distended and rendered extremely painful. This state of distention sometimes brings on a high fever and makes the poor, lamenting mother ill. Why, I ask, is there so much milk in the mother after the child's death, after the poor, innocent suckling has gone, when it wants no more of it, while it was actually scanty and insufficient when the child was living? This provision, I say, is a provision of an insane being, if it is of any being at all. It is the wickedest of all the wickedness that even the wickedest man on earth can ever conceive of, if you can only bring the lamenting mother's grief to your mind's eye.

(To be continued.)

LUNAR POLITICS.

If a man asks me what the politics of the inhabitants of the moon are, and I reply that I do not know; that neither I, nor anyone else, have any means of knowing; and that, under these circumstances, I decline to trouble myself about the subject at all, I do not think he has any right to call me a sceptic. On the contrary, in replying thus, I conceive that I am simply honest and truthful, and show a proper regard for the economy of time. So Hume's strong and subtle intellect takes up a great many problems about which we are naturally curious, and shows us that they are essentially questions of lunar politics, in their essence incapable of being answered, and therefore not worth the attention of men who have work to do in the world. And he thus ends one of his essays:—"If we take in hand any volume of Divinity, or school metaphysics, for instance, let us ask, *Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or matter?* No. *Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact or existence?* No. Commit it, then, to the flames; for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion."

Permit me to enforce this most wise advice. Why trouble ourselves about matters of which, however important they may be, we do know nothing, and can know nothing? We live in a world which is full of misery and ignorance, and the plain duty of each and all of us is to try to make the little corner he can influence somewhat less miserable and somewhat less ignorant than it was before he entered it. To do this effectually it is necessary to be fully possessed of only two beliefs: the first, that the order of nature is ascertainable by our faculties to an extent which is practically unlimited; the second, that our volition counts for something as a condition of the course of events.—*Huxley.*

A Retort on the Spiritist.

You think of me as seeing no essential difference between mind and the material properties of the brain. As well might I think of you as seeing no essential difference between music and the material properties of the piano from which it is evoked. Because you assert that music is produced from the piano, do you, therefore, assert any kinship in nature between a piano-string and the aerial pulse it generates when struck? Or do you, therefore, assert an identity between such pulses and the relations among them which constitute cadences and harmonies? No more, then, do I, in asserting the dependence of mind on nervous structure, assert any kinship in nature between the matter of a nerve-cell and the actions that arise from it, or between these actions and those relations among them which constitute thought. Do you object to the parallel because the piano remains silent till touched, while the brain acts without external help? I reply that in either case the power is derived from without, and that the effect of the structure is simply that of transforming it. As the motion given to an automatic musical instrument passes through its specialised structure and comes out in the form of particular combinations of aerial pulses, simultaneous and successive; so the motion locked up in a man's food, added to that directly received through his senses, is transformed while passing through the nervous system into those combinations of nervous actions which, on their subjective faces, are thoughts and feelings.

But this analogy is far too rude to convey a true conception. Not with sensible motion, even though it be that of the invisible air, has mind any direct kinship; but only with insensible motions of kinds inconceivably more subtle and immeasurably more rapid. Not to combined undulations of ponderable substance, however rare, is mind to be assimilated; but only to combined undulations of the all-pervading imponderable substance which we know of only by inference from their effects. The activities of this imponderable substance, though far simpler, and in that respect far lower, than the activities we call mind, are at the same time far higher than those we call mind in respect of their intensity, their velocity, their subtlety. What has been gained in adaptability has been lost in vivacity. Though mind brings into adjustment the apparatus by which certain ethereal undulations emanating from the sun are brought to a focus, yet mind cannot, like these concentrated undulations, dissipate the diamond placed in that focus. Though mind is capable of devising an electric telegraph, yet it remains wholly insensible to those slight molecular agitations on the other side of the earth which transform themselves into sensible motions on this side. And now that the rates and volitions of our ideas have been measured, we learn that, though thought is quick, light is many millions of times quicker.

Your conception, O Spiritualist, is far too gross for me. I know not what may be the extent to which you have refined this creed which you inherit from aboriginal man. Disembodied spirit was conceived by your remote ancestors (as it is still conceived by various existing savages) as material enough to take part in battle, and even to be killed over again. Becoming less concrete and definite as knowledge increased, the idea of a ghost continued, till quite modern days, to be that of a being which could cause alarming noises and utter words. Even your quite recent ancestors, transparent as they supposed the substance of a ghost to be, nevertheless supposed it visible. Possibly you have still further purified their belief. But, whether you confess it or not, you cannot think of disembodied spirit without thinking of it as occupying a separate place in space—as having position and limits, and such materiality as is implied by limits. This idea, not commended to me by its genealogy, quite unsatisfactory in its nature and wholly unsupported by evidence, I cannot accept.—*Herbert Spencer.*

Obituary.

We have to announce the death of Mrs. Elizabeth Bowman, wife of Charles Bowman, late of Tower Hill, London, at West End Cottage, Ventnor, October 18, 1914, in the 87th year of her age. Mrs. Bowman's figure was familiar to the regular attendants at the Hall of Science and Athenæum Hall meetings.—E. M. VANCE.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

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We are not allowed to grow up before choosing our religion. We as little choose our religion as we choose to be born. It is done for us without our having part in it.—CARDINAL NEWMAN.

"God in History."

THE Rev. Dr. Adams Brown is the Professor of Systematic Theology at the Union Theological Seminary, New York. It is his profession to elucidate and defend the Christian religion, to refute all arguments against it, and to remove obstacles to belief in it. The Drew Lectureship in connection with Hackney Congregational College was established for the purpose of dealing with the subject of immortality; but Professor Brown, the appointed lecturer for this year, felt that, important as the question of a future life is, there is a prior question which forces itself upon our attention in this hour of unparalleled struggle and sacrifice, and so chose as his subject, "God in History." His discourse appeared in the *Christian World Pulpit* for October 28. The first proposition which he lays down is "that God is in history, and that through all the struggle and strife and sin of men and of nations he is in control"; but he does not even attempt to demonstrate its truth. What he offers us is not evidence of any kind, but a confession of faith, or a series of dogmatic assertions. Verses from the Bible are thrown at us in great abundance, but they are of no value whatever, except in so far as they show that their authors cherished the faith so proudly gloried in by our lecturer. If those Old Testament prophets, if Jesus and his apostles, and if the giants of the early Church believed that the march of contending armies, the rise of dynasties and the fall of cities took place by God's decree and for the execution of his purpose, what is there to prevent us from sharing so confident a conviction? We will here quote Dr. Brown's own words:—

> "I have spoken of our experience as unparalleled in human history, but the statement needs qualification. It is unparalleled in magnitude, but not in quality. Hunger is hunger, and pain pain, and death death the world over; in Palestine as in Belgium, in Rome as in Austria and France. And the anguish of hope deferred, the shattering of ideals, the bitterness of the 'I would, but ye would not,' were as poignant to the patriarchs and saints of the first Christian century as they can be to us to-day. There is nothing, I repeat, that any man or woman or child is experiencing to-day which has not been experienced by others over and over and over again. There is no challenge to faith in what we see which has not been met by faith in the past and vanquished."

We are surprised at the display of naivete which the erudite Professor makes in that passage. Is he not aware that the writers of the Bible and Christian theologians, down to very recent times, firmly believed in witchcraft? Is that any reason why we should regard it as true? Our forefathers held many views, the truth of which has now been fully disproved. The writers of the Bible and Christian divines for centuries were convinced that the earth was the centre of the universe, and that the heavenly bodies had been created on purpose to supply it with light and heat. Does Dr. Brown swear by that antiquated astronomy? We frankly admit that the belief in the Divine government of the world has been held by the majority of people in all ages; but our contention is that there is no better foundation for it than there was for the belief in witchcraft or the ptolemaic astronomy, and certainly the Professor does not succeed in showing any at all.

He opens the lecture by saying that "it is time for us to come to grips with facts." We agree, but regret to report that Dr. Brown, though acknowledging the facts, never comes to grips with them. Indeed, he lets the facts severely alone, and talks theology for an hour. He alludes to the "mysteries" of God's providence in history; and then proceeds to tell us what he sees as he contemplates them. The contemplation of "mysteries" can never be a profitable occupation. But Dr. Brown mentions the "mysteries" of Divine providence only to treat them as non-existent. He talks about God's providence in history as if he knew all about it. He pretends to be able to see three things in it: God at work for a moral purpose; God at work for a social purpose; and God at work for a religious purpose. Not one of those three things can we see, though we have looked our hardest for them. *Does* Dr. Brown see them? Let us try to find out. He says:—

> "When I say that God is in history for a moral purpose, I mean that his chief concern is the making and training of character. Not happiness, but discipline is his primary interest, and happiness, when it comes, is only the seal that the discipline is complete."

What is Germany? The rod of God's anger against Belgium, France, Russia, Great Britain, and Portugal, the razor with which he is shaving the heads and beards of these Powers. The Kaiser was perfectly justified in saying that he is the instrument of the Almighty, his sword, his weapon, his vicegerent; but will Dr. Brown inform us what the countries thus smitten had done to deserve so drastic a chastisement? Can he explain to us God's moral purpose towards Belgium in permitting the ruthless destruction of her towns and villages and the cruel slaughter of her people? Are the Belgians likely to improve morally by being robbed of their possessions, driven away from their homes, and compelled to roam as exiles in lands not their own? Are such chastisements worthy of an all-loving Heavenly Father? Dr. Brown refers us back to the history of Israel, whose misfortunes, he assures us, so far from "proving that God had abandoned them, were rather warnings which he had sent them for their good, stages which they must pass on their way to salvation." We have carefully studied the Old Testament, especially the Books of the Prophets, and we remember quite well how Amos (iii. 2) represents Jehovah as saying: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities." Does not Dr. Brown realise how infinitely absurd it is to depict the Father of the human race as choosing one little tribe in an out-of-the-way corner and lavishing upon it all the wealth of his affection, while having absolutely nothing to do with the rest except in so far as they could be employed as executors of his will towards Israel? Now, what became of Jehovah's chosen, peculiar people, whose misfortunes, however terrible, are said to have been but the proof of Jehovah's love? He

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often gave them cleanness of teeth in all their cities and want of bread in all their places; he withheld the rain when most wanted, and sent it when it meant disaster; he smote them with blasting and mildew, and directed the palmerworm to devour the multitudes of their gardens and their vineyards and their fig-trees and their olive-trees; he sent among them the pestilence after the manner of Egypt, slew their young men with the sword, and carried away their horses. These and worse calamities befell them as tokens of God's love and care. They were undergoing moral discipline, God's chief concern being the making and training of their character. Well, what happened to these people who were loved, chastised, and disciplined on so terrific a scale? They were lost to history forever. In their captivity they ceased to be a nation. What Dr. Brown calls God's moral purpose concerning them resulted in their complete destruction. Their misfortunes, so far from being stages in their journey to salvation, ultimately conveyed them to their national tomb.

It is impossible to conceive of a God of love permitting the present War and using it as a moral discipline to those engaged in it. The God of Amos and Dr. Brown is to us an intolerable monster in whom thinking people cannot bring themselves to believe. Suffering and sorrow are not blessings in disguise, but evils that require to be uprooted and cast off. The Christian teaching on this point is essentially immoral. This is how Professor Brown puts it:—

> "Suffering is God's means of training character. Far from its being a sign of his forgetfulness, the proof of his weakness or of his indifference, it is through suffering that God teaches his most important lessons and opens the way for the impartation of his choicest blessings.....Where other religions have shrunk from pain as the supreme evil, or turned aside from it as the supreme mystery, Christianity looks it full in the face and finds in it the price of salvation."

That is a damnable doctrine, and its prevalence in Christendom has resulted in the present painful crisis. It is the quintessence of folly to imagine that the unspeakable and unjust sufferings inflicted upon the Belgians are the price of their salvation, or that France's sorrows are the means of purging her moral character. All our sufferings and sorrows are of an exclusively human origin, and must be looked upon as signs of the imperfection and immaturity of our social life. Had Dr. Brown's God existed, such a state of things would have been inconceivable. He would have made a perfect man, who would have done right on every occasion, whose life would have been an exact copy, on a small scale, of his Creator's. There would have been no disputes between individuals or between nations, and war would never been heard of. But if we come to grips with facts, we shall learn that mankind has not yet completely emerged from the savage state, and that every now and then it slips back into it, and acts as if it had never left it. Once our animal passions are roused, our intelligence becomes their slave, and we fight on a scale of brutality beyond the reach of lower animals, and the stronger, better-equipped party invariably comes out on top. It is a fundamental error to imagine that the right always wins. It is might, skilfully applied, that generally carries the day; and might is not always at the disposal of right.

The only rational conclusion is that God is not and never has been in history. The facts are not on speaking terms with him. Neither he nor his purposes can reasonably be declared to be a factor in the progress of humanity.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Churches and the War.—II.

(Concluded from p. 690.)

IN considering the nature of the "Christian Message to a Nation at War," Sir Robertson Nicoll naturally finds himself confronted with those New Testament precepts that enjoin non-resistance. His method of dealing with them is neither new nor courageous. It consists in denying that they mean what they say—or perhaps one ought to put it—they do not say what they mean. When the New Testament says "Resist not evil," or "Give to him that asketh of thee," etc., it does not really mean what a plain and literal interpretation would imply. And, of course, by this rule of interpretation one can make the New Testament, or any other book, mean exactly what one pleases. Indeed, if only the Powers would have allowed the German Government to apply that rule of interpretation to the treaty guaranteeing the neutrality of Belgium, there could have been no talk of its violation. Treaties are only binding, with honorable people, so long as their terms are taken in a plain and literal sense. And unless the New Testament means what it says, or says what it means, it might as well be written in an utterly unknown language.

There is something exceedingly ingenuous in Sir Robertson Nicoll's defence of the New Testament teaching, and in his use of it as an aid for the recruiting sergeant. People, he says, are "in difficulty because they believe that all war is forbidden by Christ." Some of these he declines to bother with because they are not friendly towards Christianity, and, therefore, not worth bothering about. But there are others "whose conscience is tender," and they must be considered. A rather curious rule which decides that objections are not worth considering unless put forward by people who are eager to snatch at any apology that will excuse their swallowing the teachings to which objection is taken! So to these people with a tender conscience Sir Robertson Nicoll points out, that if we take "I say unto you that ye resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek turn him the other also," literally, then, it does forbid all resistance to evil. But are we meant to take it literally? To this the answer is, no; and the reason for the answer is, that if we take it literally it becomes foolish and impracticable. Quite so; but observe the simplicity of the argument. It is urged that such a precept is impracticable. Sir Robertson does not deny this, if we take it to mean what it says; so, therefore, it must mean something else. Charming! You strike the plain meaning of the text out because to admit it destroys its value. *That is the sole reason for not accepting the clear sense of it.* No other is given or is even possible.

Sir Robertson supports his position by pointing out that earnest Christians do not take the text enjoining indiscriminate almsgiving literally; and if not this text, why others? Quite so; if one may twist the meaning of one passage, one may twist the meaning of other passages. But this is clearly no answer to the man who denies the right to twist any passage. The editor of the *British Weekly* appears to be under the impression that no one believes that the New Testament means what it says. He is quite mistaken. There are many thousands who take that view of the New Testament, and for that very reason do not believe in it. Sir Robertson Nicoll says that when he discovers a man who will give to everyone that asks, he will "discuss with that man the meaning of the precept, 'Resist not evil.'" Meanwhile, he intends to go on expounding. This is very simple—and safe. You do not argue, you simply tell people. Those who do not agree with you will soon give you up as a bad job; those who do agree will gather round and hail you as an inspired teacher. It is an illustration of the principle of selection—the selected being the unthinking and the uncritical.

In last week's article I indicated that Sir Robertson Nicoll had a reply to the Quaker position. Here it is. He turns on the Quaker with the question:—

> "We put to ourselves the question whether a Christian could stand passive and see outrage done on mother, wife, sister, or child, and we say with a great certainty that he could not."

One sincerely hopes that Sir Robertson *is right*, and that no Christian would stand passively by in

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such circumstances. But it is not a question of what Christians *do*. In practice the matter adjusts itself easily enough. A man, whether he calls himself a Christian or not, placed in such circumstances, would act exactly as his instincts prompts him. He would not stop to consider what he should do as a Christian, or as anything else, he would simply *act*. But that is not the question. It is not a question of *what* Christians do, it is a question of what their sacred book says they *should* do. All that Sir Robertson succeeds in showing is that Christians do not carry out a number of New Testament precepts. There is nothing new in this. The *Freethinker* has been pointing it out for a generation. Christians do not turn the other cheek when one is smitten, they do not meet evil unresistingly, they do not give to everyone that asks them, they do not refrain from laying up treasures on earth, they do not trust to faith to cure disease. Everyone is familiar with these facts—too familiar, perhaps—for if they were less common their significance might be better appreciated. The curious thing is, that Sir Robertson Nicoll appears to have convinced himself that because Christian conduct does not square with Christian precept, therefore, Christian precept cannot mean what it says. Less sophisticated students of social phenomena would conclude, that if Christians have so universally ignored the plain meaning of Christian teachings, it must be because there is something radically faulty in the teachings themselves.

Mr. R. J. Campbell said, lately, while acting as chairman for Sir Robertson Nicoll, that teaching of non-resistance applied to individuals only. He said:—

> "As to the words of our Lord concerning non-resistance, I would submit that they apply to the individual, and to the resentment of personal injuries. I ask you to observe what the form of those aphorisms is. 'Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek turn to him the other also.' He did not say, Whosoever shall smite thy wife or thy child let him hit again. Our Master's words relate all the time to the resenting of our personal injuries."

So that while Sir Robertson Nicoll denies that the text means what it says, Mr. Campbell believes it is to be read quite literally, only its application is limited to individuals. The editor of the *British Weekly* evades the question, and ends by being ridiculous. Mr. Campbell faces it, and ends by being amusing. If a man may not resist an injury directed towards himself, why should he resist an injury directed towards others? And if each one is to be engaged in resisting injury directed towards someone else, and the someone else is willing to reap the advantages of that resistance, are people not all the time doing what the text prohibits? Moreover, the argument always urged in favor of non-resistance has been that you overcome hatred by love, violence by gentleness, abuse by meekness. And what real difference does it make to the wrong-doer if the hand that knocks him down is not that of the person injured, but only of his friend? Finally, if individuals are not warranted in resisting evil, how does a nation—a collection of individuals—become warranted in doing so?

The truth is that Mr. Campbell's explanation is one invented to suit the circumstances of the moment. The nation is at war, and many Christians are puzzled to square a war in which the names of Christianity and God are so freely invoked with New Testament teaching. If, therefore, Mr. Campbell says that the New Testament does not admit the appeal to force, he injures his standing in the the country. If he admits the right to use force, he weakens the value of the New Testament as an ethical guide. There is a *via media*, if Mr. Campbell had but the wit to see it and the courage to proclaim it. But, lacking these, like a true theologian, he invents an interpretation to suit the needs of the moment. No one is allowed to resist evil toward themselves; everyone is warranted in resisting evil towards someone else. It is resistance by substitute, with the effect on the evil-doer the same in either case.

And yet I believe that Mr. Campbell is nearer the truth than Sir Robertson Nicoll. Both are anxious just at present—although they may wish to reverse it later—to prove that the New Testament does not forbid war. Sir Robertson's method is to deny that the New Testament means what it says. Mr. Campbell's plan is to accept the meaning, but to give it a narrower range. It only applies to individuals. And that, I think, is nearer the truth. The precepts attributed to Jesus are counsels of perfection for individuals only. They were intended for those individuals who desired the higher religious life. There was nothing new in this being so. It is a very common aspect of Eastern religious life. It was not intended to apply to social life, or to international relations, because these are practically outside the New Testament purview. There is no social gospel in the New Testament; there is no theory of the State there; and, consequently, there is no teaching as to the relations between States. It is a gospel addressed to the individual; and it has broken down everywhere for the reason that, in ignoring the fundamental character of the social relationships, it necessarily remained ignorant of the nature of the individual.

The editor of the *British Weekly* and the oracle of the City Temple are merely playing the customary game of theological opportunism. Their real purpose is not to find out what the New Testament means, but what they can make it mean, so as to suit the present situation. The nation is now in a warlike mood, and so it must be shown that Christianity does not forbid war. When that mood passes, and if a peace-wave sweeps over the country, we shall be told, with equal assurance, that war in any form is decidedly anti-Christian. The Churches are at their old game. They do not lead, they follow public opinion. They do not educate, they distort. War and peace, slavery and freedom, anarchism, socialism, and conservatism, autocracy and democracy, anything and everything has been justified by an appeal to the fetish of the Churches. And the Churches are now what they always were—useless in times of peace, and a nuisance in times of war. Their chief, almost their sole, interest is to conserve their position, and retain a place of power that is justified by neither experience nor common sense.

C. COHEN.

The Man in the Moon.

> "Truly, the moon shines with a good grace."
> —SHAKESPEARE.

"THE lesser light which rules the night" has always been a favorite subject of contemplation. The more glorious sun had also, and has still, his worshipers; but, apparently, the moon has the greater importance assigned to her in the public mind. The superstitions to which her supposed influence has given rise are almost inexhaustible. She is supposed not only to determine weather, but to influence a number of other things. Our own immortal Zadkiel seems to think that there are few things, from pitch and toss to manslaughter, in which Phœbe has not a finger. His evergreen rival, Old Moore,

> "With the moon was more familiar
> Than almost any other fellow;
> Her secrets understood so clear
> That some believed he had been there."

It cannot, however, be said of either of these eminent men, as of the Rosicrucian in *Hudibras*, that, with all their knowledge, they are aware

> "Who first found out the man i' th' moon,
> That to the ancients was unknown."

Indeed, the ancients were so chivalrous that they identified the beauteous goddess Artemis and the chaste Diana with the moon. To them she was a virgin deity attended by her maidens, and her temple at Ephesus was one of the seven wonders of the

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world. Other times, other faiths. Byron poked fun at the older beliefs:—

"The ocean's tides and mortals' brains she sways,
And also hearts, if there be truth in lays."

The Heathen Chinee have a legend that a rabbit lives in the moon, and makes those shadows on its face which have so often attracted the attention of the curious and the amorous. This legend is transformed by the creed of the pious Buddhist into an equally pious hare, which met Gotama one day when he had wandered astray in a forest. The polite hare offered assistance, and Gotama replied that he was poor and hungry, and could give no reward for his kindness. The legendary hare replied in a manner worthy of a courtier of Le Grand Monarque: "If you are hungry, I am at your service; make a fire, kill, roast, and eat me." Buddha tested the animal's devotion by kindling a fire, into which the hare jumped. The hare was, however, not sacrificed; for the Teacher pitied it, plucked it from the flames, and hurled it to the moon, where it remains for ever, an awful warning of the danger of politeness in a wicked world.

The fancy of the American Indian shapes the marks on the moon into human form:—

"At the door on summer evenings
Sat the little Hiawatha.
Saw the moon rise from the water,
Rippling, rounding from the water.
Saw the flecks and shadows on it;
Whispered, 'What is that, Nokamis?'
And the good Nokamis answered:
'Once a warrior, very angry,
Seized his grandmother, and threw her
Up into the sky at midnight;
Right against the moon he threw her.
'Tis her body that you see her.'"

Some of the Pacific Islanders likewise believe in a woman in the moon. To the Scandinavian the shadows appear to be made by two children whom the moon kidnapped as they were returning from the well with a bucket of water slung on a stick between them. The Poles call the man in the moon Paul Twardowski, and have a long legend to account for his whereabouts.

The majority of civilised nations have delighted in sending Biblical characters to the lunary asylum. The Jews have placed Jacob there. Others have seen Isaac bearing the faggots for the sacrifice on Horeb. Italian imagination "bodies forth the forms" of Cain and a load of thorns, said to be "the fruits of the ground" mentioned in Genesis. One wonders what freak of human fancy procured Cain his admission to the moon and transformed his fruit offerings into thorns. It is certain that the legend was current before the time of Dante, who, in his *Inferno*, says:—

"Onward now,
For now doth Cain, with fork of thorns, confine
On either hemisphere, touching the wave,
Beneath the tower of Seville."

When the poet and Beatrice enter the moon, he asks anxiously:—

"Tell, I pray thee, whence the gloomy spots
Upon this body, which below on earth,
Give rise to talk of Cain in fabling quaint."

Milton makes the celestial Raphael the sponsor of his views on the subject. The spots, he thought, were—

"Unpurged
Vapors not yet into her substance turned."

Neither the gifted Florentine of the fourteenth century nor the educated Englishman of the seventeenth knew anything of the mountains of the moon. Mediæval writers refer to the man in the moon as carrying a burden of stolen sticks, with his dog going on before him. Chaucer supports the same tradition in his *Testament of Cresceid*, when he says the moon had—

"On her breast a chorle painted full even,
Bearing a bush of thorns on his backe,
Which, for his theft, might clime no ner the heaven."

The man in the moon is sometimes used as a synonym for Mr. Nobody. Shakespeare makes Stephano mystify the monster Caliban in *The Tempest* on their first meeting:—

C.—"'Hast thou not dropped from heaven?'
S.—'Out of the moon I do assure thee; I was the man in the moon when time was.'
C.—'I have seen thee in her, and I do adore thee. My mistress showed me thee, and thy dog and thy bush.'"

Quince's idea in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* of sending an actor with a bush of thorns and a lantern to say that he came:—

"To disfigure or present the person of moonshine"

is full of interest.

We cannot help regretting that Theseus and his companions interrupted the rustic, and irritated him into changing the blank verse in which he was about to explain himself, for:—

"All that I have to say is to tell you that the lanthorn is the moon; I, the man in the moon; this thorn-bush my thorn-bush, and this dog my dog."

What people meant to see, of course they saw, such an effect has the mind upon the senses. A lady and a clergyman viewed the moon through the same glass, and saw in it, as they thought, two figures. "May be," says the lady, "they are lovers meeting to pour forth their vows by earth light." "Not at all," says the clergyman, "they are the steeples of two neighboring churches."

The "glimpses of the moon" have moved men from the beginning of history. If the universality of any belief be a test of its truth, there is much to be said for this faith in moonshine. As Shakespeare says, "Truly the moon shines with a good grace."

MIMNERMUS.

Invisible Helpers and Adversaries.

MICRO-ORGANISMS almost everywhere abound, and were human creatures endowed with higher powers of vision the world would then appear a very different place. Still, the presence of microbes is indirectly, though none the less positively, made known to us through the aid of the microscope. Not that all may be made visible, for although modern microscopes magnify more than ten thousand times, innumerable microbes still elude their greatest power.

The minuteness of these organisms is so extraordinary that their tininess cannot be realised in any ordinary mode of measurement. A fair average length of these microbes is about one-twenty-thousandth of an inch. This statement, however, conveys very little in the way of definite impression. But we begin to grasp their infinitesimal dimensions when we picture them as Professor Frankland does when he assures us:—

"That no less than four hundred millions of these organisms can be spread over one square inch in a single layer. Thus we could have a population one hundred times as great as (inner) London settled on an area of a single square inch, without any complaint of overcrowding, and giving to each individual organism, not three acres.....but one-four-hundred millionth of a square inch, which is quite adequate for a citizen in the commonwealth of micro-organisms."

Microbes are usually very simple in form; the micrococci are more or less circular, while the bacilli are rod-like. The spirilla are spiral or corkscrew in shape, the yeasts are larger and oval in outline, and the moulds are made up of long threads which produce the nasty patches which arise on foodstuffs too long exposed to the microbe-laden atmosphere.

The bacilli and spirilla are mostly capable of movement, but the moulds and yeasts are stationary. Some of these motile organisms execute such fantastic movements across the field of the microscope that they create "an irrepressible impression upon the observer that each individual microbe is assisting in, and conscientiously performing, its part in a highly complex and thoroughly organised Scotch reel, conducted at express speed."

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Although the majority of microbes readily respond to staining with bright colors which serves to facilitate their easier observation, their spores are much more resistent to coloring matter. This difficulty has, however, been surmounted, with the result that the coloring processes complete, the spores, which play a very sinister part in the lives of disease germs, may be made to appear in one color, while the fully developed microbe is adorned with another. The differently stained microbes and their attendant spores can now be studied with greater ease.

It is a noteworthy fact that some microbes are as irresponsive to the action of colors as spores usually show themselves to be. The tubercle bacillus, one of the deadliest enemies of the human race, is one of these, but even this baleful organism has been compelled to respond to the gentle art of the dyer.

But the refinements of microscopic inquiry do not end here. More delicate and detailed devices are required to render visible the organs of locomotion with which motile microbes propel themselves with almost unbelievable velocity through their liquid environment. These locomotive organs refuse to respond to aniline dyes. But as linen and cotton cannot be directly dyed with basic aniline colors, this obstacle is overcome through the prior impregnation of their fibres with what are termed "mordants." By the application of this self-same process the bacteriologist is able to demonstrate the existence, and render visible the form, of these locomotive organs, the flagella, as they are called.

Many microbes multiply by simple division, but others develop spores, and these innocent-looking spores are the seeds of the microbes. They are the toughest and most death-resisting living matter so far discovered by science.

Among the multitudinous micro-organisms which float through the air, one there is which is responsible for all the alcoholic beverages which cheer and depress the world. And not only yeast, but several disease-generating microbes are borne through the atmosphere. Long ago, Pasteur proved that the invisible germs of the air were usually far more numerous in low-lying areas than on the heights. Other investigators carried the inquiry a step further, and Robert Koch elaborated a most interesting arrangement which consisted in a plan for exposing vessels filled with cultivating materials, and as the micro-organisms settled upon these they reproduced themselves so rapidly that the colonies formed in the experimental dishes soon became quite visible to the unaided eye. When such colonies are scrutinised it is ascertained that they are almost invariably of one kind, which supports the conclusion that aerial microbes exist in special groups and are not indiscriminately mingled in the air.

Professor Frankland's researches are both interesting and instructive. He placed sterilised gelatine peptone, which forms an excellent culture-medium, on the roof of the South Kensington Museum, at a height of some seventy feet. The tests were undertaken in order to determine the number of microbes in the air under different weather conditions. It was discovered that when the wind was high the numbers increased considerably:—

> "In one case, during the month of March, the wind rising during a succession of experiments, the numbers increased from 851 falling on one square foot in one minute at the outset, to 1,302 at the finish."

On the other hand, after the atmosphere had been cleansed by rain, the numbers deposited fell to about 66 per square foot per minute. The numbers declined still further during a dense white fog, when 32 only settled on the experimental dish. At a festive gathering of the Royal Society at Burlington House, experiments again furnished remarkable results. "At the commencement of the reception," states the experimenter, Dr. Frankland,

> "there were 240 microbes falling on a square foot in one minute, but, as the rooms became more crowded, the numbers rose to 318, whilst the following morning, when there were only three persons in the room, and everything was covered with dust, the number was reduced to 109."

Inquiries conducted in the Central Hall of the Natural History Museum yielded the following facts: On a morning in May the number obtained was 30, but in the afternoon of the same day the microbes collected in the dishes increased to 293. Moreover, on a Bank Holiday, when many more people were present, the very large number of 1,755 micro-organisms, fell on one square foot each minute. Various other experiments, both at thinly attended and crowded functions, point without exception to the fact that the larger the human concourse in a given space, the vaster the descent of the germs. Nevertheless, no one appears to have been a penny the worse.

Tyndall's researches on the floating matter of the air demonstrated that in a calm atmosphere the germs fall to the ground in a comparatively short space of time. And the more the ordinary air is agitated, the faster the microbes fall. Frankland was travelling by rail from Norwich to London, and shortly after the train started, when four passengers were in the carriage, he tested the microbic contents of the air. One of the windows was open, and the experimental dish was placed near it, and 895 organisms were found to fall per square foot per minute. On reaching Cambridge, the carriage became crowded with passengers returning from Newmarket Heath. Ten passengers now occupied the apartment during the remainder of the journey to London. Almost half-way between Cambridge and the Metropolis another experiment was made, one window remaining closed, while the other was let down about four inches at the top. The germ-laden air now showed itself capable of depositing no less than 3,120 microbes per square foot in a single minute. But an examination of the air in a barn during flail-thrashing produced the most astonishing result of all. The atmosphere was choked with dust, and when tested with the gelatine dish it was ascertained that over 8,000 microbes were descending over one square foot in the course of a minute.

Pasteur's proofs of the greater purity of air on mountains in comparison with that of the plains have been completely confirmed by Frankland's more recent researches. By means of the tube method, this scientist has shown that at a height of 300 feet, just below the spire of Norwich Cathedral, the air is far freer from microbes than in the underlying air. His "dish" experiments were equally conclusive, for while 49 germs were deposited in a given space per minute at the elevation of the spire, there were 107 at the tower, and as many as 354 near the ground. Tests conducted at St. Paul's Cathedral revealed the same striking differences. Even at the apex of that proud eminence, Primrose Hill, the air was found to be three times purer than at its base.

Dr. Fischer's sea-air studies have furnished very interesting information to the bacteriologist. These tend to prove that the nearer the land the larger the microbial population of the air, and the distance out at sea, where they are to be met with in any material quantity, is largely dependent upon the direction of the wind. From Dr. Fischer's researches there emerges another significant fact. The vast microbial population of the ocean leads a life that seems quite independent of the invisible motes of the air. Very few microbes, indeed, appear to exist in the atmosphere that covers the deep blue sea.

Whether viewed microscopically, or when artificially cultivated, one of the aerial micro-organisms presents a very striking appearance. This microbe, Bacillus prodigiosus, is only one-twenty-thousandth of an inch in length, but as one individual soon multiplies into millions in any suitable medium it then displays a magnificent mass of color. It is intensely blood-red in appearance, and has probably been the occasion of more than one priestly imposture. For this bacillus,—

> "finds a suitable soil for its growth and multiplication on bread and other farinaceous articles of food; thus it has not unfrequently taken up its abode on the sacred wafer, and by there producing this marvellous color has

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given rise to the appearance of the 'bleeding host,' causing supernatural terror among the ignorant."*

Although the number of micro-organisms suspended in the atmosphere varies from day to day throughout the year, yet the number usually increases with the rise of temperature, so that during the hottest months of the summer—July and August—the air is most plentifully charged with germs.

As the years roll by, more and more microbes are added to the extensive list previously discovered. One curious circumstance in connection with aerial microbes—and Dr. Frankland and others have kept these organisms under practically constant observation for several years—is the almost unvarying regularity they present. Each kind appears to breed true to type. Also, many possess forms of wonderful beauty, while others are distinguished by splendid coloration. Lest it be thought that bacteriological studies are merely curious, it may be mentioned that they have already led to most amazing discoveries in connection with the prevention and cure of disease, and that they likewise play a large and rapidly increasing part in the evolution of that scientific agriculture which is intimately associated with the happiness and prosperity of the entire human race.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be continued.)

Living by Faith.

WHAT is Faith? Faith, said Paul, "is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." This is a faith that sensible men avoid. The man of reason may have faith, but it will be a faith according to knowledge, and not a faith that dispenses with knowledge. He believes that the sun will rise to-morrow, that the ground will remain firm under his feet, that the seasons will succeed each other in due course, and that if he tills the ground he will reap the harvest. But his belief in these things is based upon experience; his imagination extends the past into the future, and his expectations are determined by his knowledge. The future cannot indeed be demonstrated; it can only be predicted, and prediction can never amount to an absolute certitude; yet it may amount to a height of probability which is practically the same thing. Religious faith, however, is something very different. It is not belief based on evidence, but the evidence and the belief in one. The result is that persons who are full of faith always regard a demand for evidence as at once a heresy and an insult. Their faith seems to them, in the language of Paul, the very *substance* of their hopes; and they often talk of the existence of God and the divinity of Christ as being no less certain than their own existence.

Properly speaking, faith is trust. This involves a wide latitude beyond our knowledge. If we trust a friend, we have faith in him, and we act upon that sentiment. But we are sometimes deceived, and this shows that our faith was in excess of our knowledge. Sometimes, indeed, it is quite independent of knowledge. We trust people because we like them, or because they like us. This infirmity is well known to sharpers and adventurers, who invariably cultivate a pleasing manner, and generally practise the arts of flattery.

The same principle holds good in religion. It was sagaciously remarked by Hume that we ought to suspect every agreeable belief. The mass of mankind, however, are not so fastidious or discriminating. On the contrary, they frequently believe a thing because it *is* pleasant, and for no other reason. How often have we heard Christian advocates prove the immortality of the soul to the complete satisfaction of their auditors by simply harping on man's desire to live for ever! Nay, there have been many great "philosophers" who have demonstrated the same doctrine by exactly the same means.

Living *by* faith is an easy profession. Living on faith, however, is more arduous and precarious. Elijah is said to have subsisted on food which was brought him by inspired ravens, but there are few of God's ministers willing to follow his example. They ask God to give them their daily bread, yet they would all shrink with horror from depending on what he sends them.

G. W. FOOTE.

* Frankland, *Our Secret Friends and Foes*, p. 56.

THE MESSIANIC DREAM.

Did Jesus give himself out, or allow his disciples to designate him, as the Messiah? It is impossible to tell. All that we can say is that his disciples, and not only those whose traditions are embodied in the first gospel, desired to identify him with the hope of Israel, and applied or wrested passages of the Old Testament to that intent. With that object evidently were produced, by two different hands, the two genealogies, which hopelessly diverge from each other; while one of them, by arbitrary erasion, forces the pedigree into three mystic sections of fourteen each—a clear proof that it was not taken from any public record, even if we could suppose it possible that, amid all the convulsions of Judea, the record of a peasant's pedigree had been preserved. One of the genealogies, moreover, includes the mythical line of patriarchs between Adam and Abraham. The Messiahship of Jesus is a question with which we need practically concern ourselves no more. The Messiah was a dream of the tribal pride of the Jew, to which, as to other creations of tribal or national pride or fancy, we may bid a long farewell. That it should be necessary for the redeemer of the Jewish race to trace his pedigree to a hero so dear to the national heart, though morally so questionable, as David, was natural enough; but who can believe that this was necessary for the redeemer of mankind? It is rather lamentable to think how much study and thought have been wasted in the attempt to establish the fulfilment of a Hebrew vision, devoid of importance or interest for the rest of the human race.—*Goldwin Smith.*

Oh, young men, young men! remember, I entreat, the great work which awaits you. You are the workmen of the future; it is you who will determine the character of the twentieth century; it is you who, we earnestly hope, will solve the problems of truth and equity that the dying century propounds. We, the old, the elder men, hand on to you the formidable results of our investigations, many contradictions, much, perhaps, which is obscure, but certainly the most strenuous effort which ever century made to reach the light, the most faithful and solidly based documents, and the very foundations of the vast edifice of science, which you must continue to build up for your own honor and happiness. All we ask of you is to be more generous, more emancipated of mind than were we; to leave us behind in your love of a wholesome life, in your ardor for work, in the fecundity through which man and the earth will produce at length an overflowing harvest of joy beneath the glorious sunshine. And we should make way for you, fraternally glad to go and take our rest after the day's toil in the sound sleep of death, if we knew that you would carry on our work and realise our dreams.—*Emile Zola.*

HELL-FIRE.

It was only in a cruel age that the doctrine of hell-fire could have acquired that hold upon men's minds which it had acquired in the Middle Ages. In recent times the doctrine has almost become universally discredited throughout the more enlightened portions of Christendom. Even those who maintain a belief in some kind of endless punishment no longer insist literally upon the lake of brimstone and fire that is never quenched. Now the doctrine of hell-fire has become thus universally discredited, not because it has been scientifically disproved, for science has neither data nor methods whereby to disprove such a doctrine; nor because it has been exegetically shown to be unsupported by Scripture, for the ingenuity of orthodox exegesis has always been equal to the task of making Scripture mean whatever is required; it has been discredited simply because people have become milder in their manners, and less used to enduring and inflicting physical pain. The doctrine shocks people's feelings, and so they refuse to believe it, no matter how the logic of the case may stand.—*Professor John Fiske.*

AS HOT AS THE BIBLE.

Remember that Professor Max Müller, when he published the *Sacred Books of the East* in England, explained that there were whole sections that he dared not publish in English lest he should lay himself open to a criminal prosecution.—"*The Beliefs of Unbelief*," *Dr. Fitchett.*

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Acid Drops

The Bishop of London would rather die than see England a German province. The alternative is too remote for much value to be attached to the Bishop's choice. He is like people who would give the world for this or that, or wouldn't for the world do this or that. The offer and the boast are both safe.

The Bishop of London is at last coming out in his true colors as a representative of the God of Battles. Speaking at the eighth anniversary of the Anglican and Eastern-Orthodox Churches Union, he called the present time of war "this great day of the Lord," while a week later, speaking at the Guildhall, he surpassed even himself by saying: "In spite of all the suffering and bloodshed involved in the war, it is a glorious thing to be alive in this great day of the Lord." No one will now doubt his lordship's orthodoxy and loyalty to Scripture. This is indeed the greatest day of the Lord of Hosts the world has ever seen. On this point the Bishop of London is in agreement with the Kaiser, who says, "With me are God and the Holy Virgin."

Now, if we judge the Lord, whose day is said to be upon us, by his history, we shall be obliged to characterise him as the biggest and cruellest monster ever heard of, whose "only excuse," as Stendhal puts it, "is that he does not exist." Nietzsche deeply regretted that Stendhal had robbed him of "the best Atheistic joke," which he "of all people could have perpetrated"; but the Basel professor himself gave utterance to the following: "What has been the greatest objection to Life hitherto?—God."

There is nothing like a good conceit of yourself, and Germany, which is *not* an Atheistic country, but very far from it, doesn't look like running short of that virtue. According to Privy Councillor, Dr. Lassore, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Berlin, the German State and people are "the most perfect creatures that history has produced up to now." "We are morally and intellectually superior," he says, "beyond all comparison." William II. is "the darling of the human race." The German Army is an epitome of all the excellences of the German nation—not like the "Russian beasts, English mercenaries, and Belgian fanatics." "We do good deeds to all people." That statement takes the cake! "God is with us" follows naturally. Finally, the learned professor assures us that the Germans are humane, conscientious, gentle, and truthful. There you are! Everybody recognises the portrait. It is so life-like.

Dean Inge, the "gloomy Dean," has been receiving a share of newspaper abuse because he has been pointing out a few obvious truths. Preaching in Westminster Abbey, he said, the outlook for democracy and liberty is not bright. With that, at any rate, we are inclined to agree. We have pointed out over and over again that for some years Europe has been passing through a period of reaction—and this in spite of much talk, and some indications of progress. The growth of militarism is in itself an indication of this. And now that we are actually in the midst of one of the most murderous wars in all history we do not see how Europe is to come out of it except as a heavy loser in all directions. For some years, at least, the militarist party in all countries will find their hands enormously strengthened. Already there is talk of all countries requiring larger armies after the war than they had before it. The mere task of clearing up the consequences of the war will take many years. And during that time we may take it that advanced ideas on all subjects will have to struggle hard for existence. This, we believe, is indisputable. But, we must add, that this is no reason for relaxation of effort. It is only a further justification for renewed and continuous effort.

We do not follow Dean Inge when he says that England has lost her place as a first-class Power. That is decidedly premature. As standards of value go, that has not occurred, and is not likely to occur. But we should like to see these standards of value altered. We should like to see nations classified as first, second, and third-class Powers, not in terms of extent of territory, or trade, or fighting capacity, but in terms of a people's contribution to the intellectual and moral welfare of the race. There is something radically wrong with our standards of measurement when Germany ranks as a first-class Power and Belgium is placed a long way down on the list. In this respect we quite agree with the New York *Independent* that "When the Great War is over the world will be staggered to discover how much has been destroyed besides life and property."

Mr. Robert Blatchford has been admonishing Dean Inge for his pessimistic utterances on the War. One of his retorts is as follows, "I should advise Dean Inge to give Deuteronomy a rest, and put in five minutes with a war map and an hour with the dispatches of Sir John French."

Sandwiched with the police-court cases and sporting news in the *Weekly Dispatch* is a prayer for Sunday reading. It begins, "Loving Father, our extremity is Thine opportunity." What robust faith remains in Newspaperland! An ordinary pietist would hesitate to see evidences of a "loving father" in the spectacle of 21,000,000 men ready to disembowel one another.

It is the opinion of Dr. Orchard, an eminent Nonconformist divine, that "if there is no good and just God at the helm, but only a blind force, then we are caught like little wild creatures in an iron trap," which, he assures us, "is an alternation too terrible to contemplate"; but, unless the reverend gentleman deliberately and completely blinks the facts, there is no other alternative for him or for us to contemplate. Are we not at this moment like little wild creatures caught in an iron trap? All Europe is ablaze; men, women, and children are being butchered by the thousand daily; the Belgian nation has been cruelly robbed of its homes, and is scattered abroad to live on charity; the whole of Christendom is overwhelmed with fear and trembling; and yet Dr. Orchard has the audacity to stand up and assert that a good and just God sits on the throne of the universe. It is the blackest and most pernicious lie that can be told. Then this preacher urges his hearers to "enthrone the God within"; but there is no God within, except the one invented by a diseased and polluted imagination, and the sooner we get rid of *him* the better for all concerned.

Having the War specially in mind, Dr. Orchard alleges that we must choose between a good and just God and a blind force. Nothing of the kind. The nations now at war have each a well-defined goal in view, which they are resolved to reach at whatever cost. The forces at work are *not* blind, but fully intelligent and easily intelligible. The European Powers now at mortal grips know exactly what they want; but to imagine that a good and just God is at the helm, while all this savage conflict is in progress, is to be guilty of harboring the sheerest nonsense conceivable.

It must not be forgotten that the editor of the *British Weekly*, Sir W. Robertson Nicoll, is an ordained minister of the Gospel, though the "Rev." has been dropped in favor of the more aristocratic "Sir"; and, occasionally, he still preaches. One of his most recent discourses is entitled, "A Call from the Battlefield," though, as a matter of fact, the "call" comes from the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is a call to prayer, and Sir William interprets it as an invitation from the front to pray for our soldiers, that they may be "restored to us the sooner." Does the reverend knight verily believe that the daily prayer-meetings held at the City Temple and other churches throughout the country will have the effect of shortening the war by a single day? If the Lord can bring the war to an end, great beyond measure is his guilt for not having prevented it from taking place at all. If he exists, he sees these hundreds of thousands of his own children being brutally murdered, and does nothing.

Sir William urges people to instruct the Almighty as to what he ought to do. "We are to put will into our prayers," he says. "What I mean is that we should pray with all our might for a speedy victory." If there is a just and loving God, will he not give us a speedy victory, if we deserve it, without our asking for it? To ask is to cast suspicion upon his justice and goodness; it is to insult him in the most offensive manner possible. Besides, the Germans believe in the rightness of their cause, and are praying with all might for a speedy victory; and it is a piece of self-righteousness on our part to ask God to favor us rather than them. Will not the Judge of all the earth do right without being prompted thereto by the creatures of his own hand? All this shows the infinite absurdity and uselessness of prayer!

The Theatres Committee of the London County Council is seeking to restrict the building of picture theatres because "cinemas have been built next to churches and chapels." This looks as if the public prefer the cinema to the place of

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worship, although the audience pays to see the one, and pays to get out of the other.

Two inmates of Bath Workhouse for some years past have been Messrs. Pickwick and Sam Weller. The Dickensian association is now dissolved, for Sam Weller has just died, and Mr. Pickwick is seriously ill. Curiously, it is the shadow-figures of the great novelist who live for ever, and not their human prototypes.

The London County Council deserves congratulating on its latest decision with regard to civil marriages. It seems that there are still within the London area two districts in which people have to pass through workhouses in order to be married before the registrar, and there are eleven others where people desirous of getting married must attend at buildings that are part of workhouses. The Council has therefore informed the Registrar-General that in its opinion provision should be made so that the marriage ceremony may be performed in buildings that have no connection with poor law institutions. Last year 26 per cent. of the total number of marriages were of a civil character, and it is high time that the State did away with what is a real scandal. Marriage is essentially a social ceremony; it is the religious proceedings that are incidental; and it is the plain duty of the Government to surround marriage—wherever performed—with all possible solemnity and dignity.

The County Council met with a failure in its attempt to enforce the closing of cinema palaces in the Tottenham district on Sundays. It was pointed out that the same Council allowed the Alexandra Palace to be open on Sundays for concerts, and it was rank hypocrisy to open that and to attempt to close picture theatres. The Bench held that the defendants were within their rights in opening on Sundays, and the summons was dismissed. There were other cases waiting to be heard, but these were not proceeded with, pending an appeal.

Writing in the *Weekly Dispatch* on the Czar's prohibition of vodka traffic, Mr. J. F. Fraser says, "Getting drunk has been the favorite Sunday amusement" of the Russians. The Greek Church appears to be as impotent as the Roman Catholic Church or the fancy religions in other parts of Europe.

Temperance papers are jubilant concerning the Czar's prohibition of alcohol in Russia, but the Cocoa Press outdoes them all in fulsome adulation. Perhaps the latter foresees a chance of selling the firm's staple article instead of the vile vodka.

Rev. F. B. Meyer regrets that the National Free Church Council has been unable to obtain official representation on the Prince of Wales' Relief Fund. But why on earth should they expect it? Clergymen may be trusted to work the Fund for their own advancement—so far as is possible—in any case. It is sheer impudence for them to expect *official* representation. And it is characteristic of Nonconformists, who are always talking of religion being a private matter, to demand official and public recognition of their Churches at every possible opportunity.

Dr. Clifford says that the message that has "come to him" is that, whatever happens, we should keep on praying. That is the kind of message one would expect a clergyman to receive. It sounds like another of the now numerous trade advertisements—"The way to beat the Germans is to buy British goods—our goods."

A correspondent of the *Church Times* writes inquiring "Why should England expect victory?". His reason for asking the question is that England has "done her best to turn God out of the schools, and has practically ignored his existence in Parliament." Also, England has been plotting and planning to rob "His Church" in Wales, and we have Sunday trading, Sunday travelling, and Sunday entertaining. These things together, it is evident we deserve a good "whopping," and it is like our cheek asking God to help us after we have robbed his church, etc.

Rev. D. Macleane, of St. Peter's Rectory, Wilts, is yet more emphatic. He points out that "the Church of Christ still considers the rights of man an infidel basis for human society." Afflicted Belgium has had to choose between her and God; and the French Government has persecuted the faith, and supplies her sick and dying soldiers with no ministrations of religion. Finally, England began the war by despoiling the Welsh Church. Evidently the Allies are a bad lot, and we should not be surprised to find that Mr. Macleane believes the war to ensue from their wickedness. In that case, we may take it that the Kaiser really is an instrument of God.

A well known Baptist minister, the Rev. J. H. Rushbrooke, has just returned from Berlin. He says that in Germany eminent theologians, whether pastors or professors, "have been the foremost in influencing public opinion on the side of the Government." He also says that at the beginning of the war the churches were crowded on the occasion of public worship, and ever since the attendances have been large. From which it would seem that the Germans are really more Christian in their war than we are. Another thing that Mr. Rushbrooke found most painful was to hear the Germans praying for victory. We should have thought that to be too natural and too common for anyone to be praised about. Everybody does it—who is religious—and its absurdity never troubles any of them. And really no one places any dependence upon these prayers. It is the quality of arms and men that is thought about, not the power of the prayers. German and English officially pray for victory; the French fight without any prayers, and with or without each seems to do as well. So Mr. Rushbrooke may console himself, when thinking of these Germans praying to *his* God for victory, with the thought that it really doesn't matter. In this war guns are greater than gods, and pluck more powerful than prayers.

The Kaiser has ordered all the Protestant churches in Berlin and throughout Brandenburg to be opened to the public all day, in order that his subjects may have the comfort of prayer whenever they feel they would like a dose. We guess, however, that free "cinemas" would be better appreciated.

Mr. Alan Bott, another *Daily Chronicle* correspondent, writing from Geneva, gives a lively account of a German paper published there for the benefit of refugees. Here is an extract from Mr. Bott's letter:—

> "The religious department of the lie factory makes it clear that God is attached to the Great German General Staff. A priest named Hein, who is also a member of the Reichstag, is quoted as making in the *Vossische Zeitung* the stupefying declaration: 'It is true that our soldiers have shot in France and Belgium many brigands, men, women, and children, and have destroyed their homes. But whoever considers this as being contrary to the teachings of the Christian doctrine only shows that he has not the least comprehension of the true spirit of Christ!'"

We congratulate this priest on his candor.

"The late Bishop Wilkinson encountered many difficulties in translating 'Hymns Ancient and Modern' into the Zulu tongue, but his task was not so bad as that of a missionary who attempted to render 'Sankey' into Congolese. Among primitive peoples many words have double meanings, and the translator marvelled at the heartiness with which the natives sang 'Wonderful Words of Life,' until he discovered that by a slip in translation he had made it 'Wonderful Words of Stomach.' To another well-known hymn, 'Lord, dismiss us with Thy blessing,' the people seemed to have a strange aversion. At first he thought they enjoyed the service so much that they regretted its close. After a while he found that his version had altered the meaning to 'Lord, kick us out softly!'"—*Daily Chronicle* (Nov. 2).

Writing in *John Bull*, Mr. George R. Sims says, "It is part of our Christian faith that the ways of the Almighty are inscrutable." Gadzooks! They are not nearly so inscrutable as those of our beloved "Dagonet," when he writes on "serious" subjects.

At a harvest festival at St. Peter's Church, Rochester, Sunday-school children brought thousands of cigarettes, which were afterwards given to the soldiers in the Chatham military hospital. It was a suitable feature of a service connected with a religion ending in smoke.

The Queen has sent a parcel of copies of Mr. Blatchford's pamphlet, *Germany and England*, for distribution in the Young Men's Christian Association's tents at the Military Training Camps. Mr. Blatchford might emulate the august example of "the first lady in the land" and send "the unconverted" some copies of his freethought writings.

A children's prize-volume has been issued with the title of *The Wonder Book*. It is not half so wonderful as the book which narrates Noah's Ark, Jonah and the Whale, Elisha and the Bears, and other "fairy tales" of faith.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

Sunday, November 8, Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester, at 6.30, "Religion, War, and Humanity."

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £227 2s. 9d. Received since:—W. Milroy, 5s.; J. Milroy, 5s.; G. W. Wright, 5s.; John Deacon, 5s. 3d.; J. B. Palphreyman, 10s. 6d.

G. W. WRIGHT says: "At this critical juncture, I hope all readers of the *Freethinker* will do their utmost to keep the flag of 'the best of causes' flying."

G. F. H. MCCLUSKEY.—We remember Mr. Searle very well, although we had not seen him for many years. We are sorry to hear he had much suffering before death brought its anodyne.

J. DEACON.—To be "quite well" at our age a man must recall his youth. Suppose we say, "As well as can be expected in the circumstances."

EDNA WELLS.—Who told you that Othello was a negro? He is called a "Moor" in the very title of the play, and the Moors are one of the finest races on earth. Their civilisation in Spain eclipsed anything existing at that time in all Europe.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote lectures to-day (Nov. 8)—the first time for many months—at the Secular Hall, Leicester, his subject being "Religion, War, and Humanity." The chair will be taken at 6.30 p.m., with all seats free, and a collection in aid of the expenses.

The London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner, under the auspices of the N. S. S. Executive, will take place at Frascati's Restaurant on Tuesday evening, January 12, 1915. There is no reason why the war should interfere with this particular function.

Mr. Cohen lectures for the N. S. S. Newcastle-on-Tyne Branch on Sunday, November 22. The Co-operative Hall, in which the lectures are to be delivered, is not the most accessible hall in the town, but that is a reason why the local "saints" should do their utmost to secure good audiences. Anyone wishing to help in this way should communicate with Mr. J. G. Bartram, 107 Morley-street, Heaton.

Mr. Foote's article on legal and other matters depending on the death of the late Mrs. Bowman, mentioned in our last issue, has to be postponed a little, for sufficient reasons. We think it may be expected next week.

We are very glad to state that Mr. W. Heaford, whose bad breakdown we reported several weeks ago, is making satisfactory improvement in health and strength, and is able to do a little travelling. He is looking forward to meeting his old friends again before very long.

There was a beautiful "war" story in Monday's *Daily Chronicle* from the pen of Mr. Harold Ashton. It relates the experience of an English lady at Bruges:—"On my way out of the town I met a German soldier with his hand dreadfully shattered. His bandages had slipped and he was trying vainly to replace them with his left hand. I took pity on him and helped him, redressed the nasty wounds, and rebandaged them with a pocket bandage I happened to have with me. The soldier fumbled in his pocket and at last produced a crumpled five franc note, which he offered me. Of course, I refused it. 'Why do you refuse good money for a good action, madame?' he said. 'Because I am an Englishwoman,' I replied, 'and Englishwomen do not take payment for good deeds, however small or great they may be.' 'I cannot believe you are English,' he said; 'but you are an angel, and angels have no nationality. May I kiss your hand?' I held out my hand, and he bent low over it and kissed it. There were tears in his eyes. And—I rather wish now that I had accepted that five-franc note to keep as a souvenir of Prussian gratitude!" A touch of nature makes the whole world kin.

It is difficult for the clearest and most careful writer to make himself plain to everybody. It has been said by some people that we are for "peace at any price." We have repudiated this absurd idea since the present awful War broke out, and that repudiation should have guarded us against misunderstanding. But as it hasn't, we will go back to our *Shadow of the Sword*, which was first published some thirty years ago, and invite attention to the following passage, which we meant when we wrote it, have meant ever since, and mean it now:—

> "War is just in self-defence, or in defence of a neighbor unjustly attacked. We are not of those who believe in the refusal of aid between nations in all circumstances. The sword may be, for some time yet, as necessary as the lancet, but it should never be drawn except against the enemies of mankind. 'The blood of man,' said Burke, 'should never be shed but to redeem the blood of man. It is well shed for our friends, for our country, for our kind. The rest is vanity; the rest is crime.'
>
> When any of these great duties call us we should be ready to defend them; and if ever England were menaced by a brutal invader, the most peaceful citizen might well wish her to be animated by the same brave spirit that whipped the pride of the Armada and drove the hectoring Dutch fleets from the English seas. Nay, to defend the nation's liberties in the dark hour of extreme peril, one might hope that her sons would make ramparts of their bodies, and if they could not make a pact with victory, make a pact with death; that her daughters would gladly resign their dearest in the spirit of the Spartan mothers of old; and that the very children might, like Hannibal, be dedicated to a righteous revenge.
>
> We are then far from loving peace at any price. But there is little need to denounce such an impossible doctrine. It is not that way our danger lies. Our fighting instincts, inherited from savage ancestors, are too strong for us to submit tamely to aggression, even if the law of self-preservation did not prompt us to defend our own."

In the light of the present situation this passage reads almost like a prophecy.

Spending the winter as invalids at Aiken, S.C., the Hon Thurlow Weed and Mr. Thomas C. Acton whiled away one Sabbath afternoon by attending a negro church. When they entered the primitive temple, the preacher, who was a pure African, was grappling, with all the fervor of his race, with the old, old subject of the fall of man. Sketching that day in the Garden, with its terrible results, he excoriated Adam in this fashion: "Now, brederen, when de Lord calls Adam to 'count, did he stan' up like a man, confess his sin, and ask forgiveness? He didn't do nuffin ob de sort, brederen, but he say, 'Lord, de woman dat Dou gubeet me gub me for to eat.'" Pausing a moment, he repeated: "'De woman dat *Dou* gubeet me gub me for to eat.'" Then again: "'De woman dat Dou gubeet me gub me for to eat.' Dar, brederen, you see dat mean, skulkin' Adam was atrying to sneak out of it by frowin' all de blame on de Lord hisself!"

LONGFELLOW REVERSED.

He goes on Sunday to his church,
  He sits among his boys,
He hears the parson pray. And preach?
  No! No! a snoring noise
From his nostrils shows that some sweet repose
  He in sermon time enjoys.

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Elias Ryepin.

"All the talk about the artist's vocation and the artist's mission.....strike me as being very empty and hollow and meaningless at bottom."
"Then what would you put in its place?"
"Life, Maia." —IBSEN'S *When We Dead Awaken.*

WAR reaps a full harvest of maimed minds as well as bodies. Just look at the ordinary press and its present state of topsy-turveydom! With all its palaver of "Business as Usual," could it possibly make *its* business more "unusual" than it is doing now? John Morley rightly gauged the worth of the ordinary press when he relegated it as food for the "common crowd," which is made up of Carlyle's "fools" and Voltaire's *canaille*. Yet, as Morley says, the "newspaper must live, and to live it must please," and to please at the present time, we may add, it must tune itself to the *gamut* of the "maimed minds" of the crowd. Take, for instance, the case of Nietzsche.

What had the press to say of Nietzsche before the War? Nothing! It didn't pay then; but it pays now, and it gives them as well an opportunity of revenging themselves for his ruthless denunciation of their smug ideals. Before the war, what had Russia been to the press but "barbarism"? Would they have allowed such a heresy to be preached as an enlightened Russia? But to-day Russia is our Ally, and as we Britons could only ally ourselves with an enlightened and cultured nation, the press has suddenly discovered that there is an enlightened Russia. The other day a contemporary gave among its illustrations *The Moujik's Departure for His Regiment*, described as "One of the most famous paintings of Ryepin, the great Russian artist." I held my breath in astonishment at this superscription, for it is the first I have heard of it from the British press. The way these people talk, with an elevated air of "We've always said so," is simply disgusting. I think, without exaggeration, if we looked at every journal in Britain for the past ten years, and found the name of Ryepin a dozen times, it would be a fair estimate of our recognition of the "great Russian artist." Of course, it must be admitted that even in Russia, Elias Ryepin is known better by name than by work; but that is explained by the fact that his paintings, for the most part, are confined to private collections, on account of their revolutionary tendencies, and even reproductions are only permitted to people of high official standing; yet the art world of Britain knows that Ryepin's work and "tendencies" are but the old story over again—the public must only know what their "betters" think is good for them; and an enlightened Russia was not good for them. Above all, a unit of an enlightened Russia—"a great artist"—who is an avowed Nihilist and Freethinker was certainly not good for them. But adversity brings strange bedfellows, and the War has thrown the Russian in our midst, so the glorious free press of our country finds that an enlightened Russia pays.

. . . . . .

Elias Ryepin was born in 1850. At the age of twenty-two his *Jairus' Daughter* won for him a scholarship that took him to Paris and Berlin for study. These were impressionable times. The intellectual ferment which followed the reforms of Alexander II. infested all byeways of art and literature, as well as political life. Young Ryepin, straight from the free Paris *ateliers*, was ripe for the "new spirit" which was saying, "Away with artistic convention: Art must serve humanity," and soon he was enrolled under the banner of a social art.

To the art purists, this was very wrong of him; for if you ask these devotees of "Art for art's sake" what relation art has to the social polity, they will tell you that art neither teaches nor persuades, and merely comes in contact with the social polity in so far as is necessary for the purpose of representation. For instance, if you find an artist depicting the denizens of the Black Country, such as Zola describes in *Germinal*, you must not immediately conclude that his art has a purpose, which is a sympathy with these people. To the artist they are mere subjects for representation. Thus far the æsthetician. Yet when we find in this artist that these subjects constantly recur, and that outside of his art the artist shows his social sympathies with this class, we may surely assume that there is a sounder basis for "art with a purpose" than the æsthetician would have us believe. Havelock Ellis, in a very fine essay on Eugene Carrière, has argued against purpose in art. He says that with the painter "his philosophy, his morality, his religion, are the outcome of his painter's vision of life, and not the source of it." That may be true enough; but the point is that he still has his philosophy, his morality, and his religion, whatever the means may be by which he arrived at them. It appears to me that Havelock Ellis's inversion of the process simply strengthens the argument for art with a purpose. However, to draw an absolute line between art and life, as the æsthetician does, would be to treat man as something apart from himself.

. . . . . .

In Elias Ryepin we have an artist who reveals his social sympathies in his art; and since we have evidence of these sympathies outside his art, coupled with the fact that he has derided the idea of "Art for art's sake," we may safely assume that here, at any rate, is an artist with a purpose. Ryepin has always been a fervent admirer of Tolstoy, and has depicted the saint of Yasnaya Polyana in many a canvas. He has also lent his pen to Tolstoy's movement in educating the masses to a better class of literature. Yet it must not be too readily assumed that he holds to Tolstoyan philosophy. They are possibly as far removed from one another as Dives and Lazarus. Primarily, it is a question of temperament; but, on the other hand, culture conditions account for much. The conditions that produced a Tolstoy in literature produced a Tschaykovsky in music, and a Vereetchagin in painting. Whilst it was the process that gave us Turgenev that brought Mussorgsky and Ryepin. Indeed, when surveying the various types in Ryepin's art, one cannot help recognising their "affinities" in Turgenev and Mussorgsky. His dull priests and haughty officials have the same air about them as Mussorgsky's musical puppets in *The Peep Show;* whilst his fine young Nihilists seem to have stepped out of the pages of *Smoke* or *Fathers and Sons.*

Like the two with whom I have grouped him, Ryepin has always loved "the people," and despised the Church and State as its oppressors. From his earliest years his revolt, not only from conventional art, but from conventional society, was clearly shown. In 1873 the Vienna Exposition had his *Bargetowers.* No greater plea for the proletariat is there than this! Millet's *Gleaners* or Courbet's *Stonebreakers* are of its kin, yet far removed. After all, there is a certain liberty of action attached to those gleaners and stonebreakers; but with Ryepin, his bargetowers are like the machines in those terrible fantasies of H. G. Wells. Twelve barefooted men yoked like oxen to the harness of a barge, pulling against the stream; such is *Bargetowers* on the surface. But what a world of sadness and protest pervades the scene. The very sky seems to cry out at the monotonous tramp of those human machines. It is not the sort of work that carries pleasure with it, such as Ford Madox Brown has shown us, but slavery in its vilest form. *Bargetowers* tells us, more than any worded testament, where Ryepin's social sympathies are.

In the *Village Procession* we see the forces operating that permit, if not produce, the evils of the bargetowers. How masterly he selects his types, so as to give you question and answer. You look at the poor brutalised Slavs, and, if you wonder why, just turn to those arrogant soldiers and officials, and you will understand. Look at the horrible, gaping, ignorant crowd, with its halt and lame, and then see the hale and well-fed priests and acolytes. Mark well that Cossack wielding his knout, to make way

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for the priest with crucifix and icon, for there you have Ryepin's indictment of the dual forces of Russian oppression—the cross and knout—cheek by jowl!

Ryepin has even confessed his sympathy with those who would rid Russia of the cross and knout. In the Tretyakov Gallery at Moscow there is a cycle by Ryepin which depicts the life-story of one of the countless martyrs of the Russian democracy. Those who are familiar with the works of Turgenev will recall the type of Nihilist that he portrays. It is one of these young *revoltés* that Ryepin depicts in the first of his cycle. Here we find him at a secret gathering, discussing with his fellow-students. The interior is poor, and the smoky lamp throws but a dim light. Yet on the faces of these young dreamers there is a light that one might think would never dim, if we did not see the story in full. Next we have the young Nihilist as a *Trimardeur*, a sort of social missionary among the toiling peasantry, trying to awaken them to a sense of their wrongs. At last the emissaries of the knout have laid their hands upon him. The police ransack his room, and the miserable informer confronts him with the incriminating books and papers. Then we find him in the hands of soldiers, on his way to Siberia. Years pass by, and finally we see his return. It is no longer the bright young student, but an old and broken man, who is scarcely recognised by his family.

This final scene would seem to show that Ryepin wished to emphasise the futility of revolt, which brings him into assent with the Tolstoyans. Indeed, there is a very fine enigmatical canvas of his which has been interpreted this way. It depicts a young Russian student and a companion stepping from a rock into a roaring sea, which will assuredly engulf them. At any rate, for every one soul that the cross and knout breaks into submission after revolt, as in Dostoyevsky and in Ryepin's Nihilist, a hundred remain true as steel. One of these Ryepin has even portrayed, perhaps as a foil to the *coda* of his Nihilist cycle. It is also in the Tretyakov Gallery, and shows the Nihilist, on his way to the scaffold, contemptuously waving aside a priest who has offered him the consolations of religion.

It seems strange that such an uncompromising critic of the cross and knout should not have trodden that weary road to Siberia long ago. But artists and musicians, like the court fool of olden times, seem to have liberties denied to others. The Anarchist Goya was petted by kings, and the Republican Beethoven was "at court and yet no courtier." And so with the Nihilist Ryepin; we not only find him a professor at St. Petersburg Academy, but a court painter. Yet, even when his brush plies for the Imperial galleries, Ryepin's stolid independence remains the same. What are these great ancestors of the great White Czar that we see? There is *Ivan the Terrible* and *Peter the Great*, but they are not monarchs clothed in ermined purple under canopied thrones, nor are they decked in martial pomp in the pose of victors. Ryepin has limned them as human beings, and bad ones at that. Ivan is delineated in the horrible episode of his murder of his son. Peter is depicted in the scene where he compelled his own sister, Sophia, to witness the execution of her faithful guards.

Such are Ryepin's court paintings! which, like the rest of his art work, make bold for "truth before everything." Great art does not deal in types or caricatures. Its world, as Robert Ingersoll says, is peopled with individuals, natural people, who have the contradictions and inconsistencies inseparable from humanity. Art has too long been untruthful. Even when the impossible gods and their friends were banished from art, an equally false and unthinkable Romanticism held sway. Religion and idealism may be very good in their way, but they are not true; and, above all, they are certainly outside the province of "seeing and feeling creatures," which Ruskin demanded first of all from artists. At any rate, posterity will be with the realists, since all vital and enduring art must be based upon that which is vital and enduring, which is—Life, Maïa!

H. GEORGE FARMER.

The Design Argument.—II.

IN THE LIGHT OF ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY.

(Continued from p. 701.)

THIS relates to the quantity of milk. I shall now speak something of its quality. If God, the merciful, the wise and the just parent, produces milk for the proper nourishment and development of the child—the means of his future glorification and praise—with all the ingredients necessary for its well-being, how is it that he allows germs of scrofula and consumption, the syphilitic taint, and other seeds of filthy, horrible, and dangerous diseases to pass through the very source—the milk—which he has intended, out of his special, merciful providence, for the proper nutrition and development of the innocent babe, who is brought into the world to sing the praises and the glory of the Lord? Why does not God, the all-powerful and all-loving Father, who so carefully manages to manufacture milk, having water and solids, containing casein, serum, albumen, lactose (*i.e.*, milk-sugar), fats, or butter, and salts, all in necessary proportions, from the mother's blood, by means of the great and wonderful laboratory in her breasts—why does not God, the greatest wonder-worker and the world-renowned miracle-maker of mysterious powers in heaven above and earth below; why, I say, does not that great chemist, by some process of filtration, like those which so plentifully abound in the animal organism, prevent these poisonous germs from passing into the helpless child's food—the very source and the only means of its subsistence? Why does he poison the innocent child? The child's mother, who is only finite in knowledge, and finite in wisdom, and finite in loving kindness, will, I am perfectly sure, carefully extract and strain away any rubbish or anything injurious that she happens to see from the milk she gives to her child. Why, even a hired nurse who has eyes to see, heart to feel, brain to reason, and right conscience to guide, will do the same. It is strange to think, and shocking indeed even to conceive, that God, said to be so loving and so everything, should not care a straw for these very highly important things concerned in the well-being of the child.

Well, again, taking for granted for a moment, for the sake of argument, that God, through his great loving providence, creates milk in the mother for the support of the child before even the child is born, how is it there is milk in the breasts when there is no child at all in the womb—when there is a false pregnancy, when there is only a mole in the womb, or only a disease called tumor, instead of a child? For whom, I ask, is the milk secreted—secreted in some cases even in greater abundance than in real pregnancies, by the loving Providence? For whom is this milk secreted? I again ask, for whom? The truth is that no God, no Providence, secretes milk through his infinite kindness with the object of nourishing the child or anyone else. It is only the outcome or sequence of cause and effect. Milk is the effect of some blind and unconscious animal function which goes on in the body without any object in view of doing either good or evil to anyone. To understand how true it is, we must understand the physiology of the secretion of milk.

Milk is secreted or produced by the mammary glands, or milk glands, as they are also called. The mammary glands are composed of large divisions or lobes, and these lobes are made up of lobules, which are composed of the convoluted subdivision of ducts, which are composed of milk cells. All these lobes and lobules are supplied with blood-vessels. These blood-vessels supply blood to these lobes and lobules in a larger or smaller quantity, according to the more or less stimulus given to them by the nerves that

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control them and supply them. You all know, I suppose, that the various functions of our bodies are under the control of the nervous system. The nerves exert their influence on the secretion of milk by increasing or diminishing the quantity of blood supplied to the secreting glands—the milk glands—while the nerves make the blood-vessels carry more or less blood to the secreting glands according to the stimulus they (the nerves) receive, or irritation produced in them from certain causes or substances.

There is great sympathy established between the uterus and the breasts of females through the nervous system. Whenever there is any irritation produced or stimulus given to the nerves in the uterus, reflex action is produced; *i.e.*, the impression produced upon the nervous centres by the contact of foreign substance, say, for instance, in case of pregnancy, the fœtus in the uterus is reflected upon the nerves supplying the mammary glands, which, in consequence, get an increased blood supply and, consequently, the milk cells become more active, and produce milk. Now, it must be remembered here that the stimulus or the irritation in the nerves of the uterus need not necessarily be caused only by the actual child in the womb to produce milk; but it may be produced by any stimulus or irritation of the uterine nerves caused by anything else, such as by false pregnancy, like moles, by tumors, and other uterine diseases. The secretion of milk may also be caused even by irregular menstruation. Because milk may be secreted from various causes other than pregnancy, the secretion of milk is looked upon by accoucheurs as one of the most uncertain signs of the state of pregnancy.

Thus, you can clearly see that to attribute the secretion of milk to the special, benevolent, and kind providence of God is an idle fancy and a physiological blunder.

Now, the third point urged on behalf of the special and kind providence of God for the good and welfare of children is that they can suck the milk out of the mother's breasts without teaching on the part of man. I say that even lower orders of animals do the same. And all this is done by mere instinct. And an instinct is nothing more than an inherited habit. Instinct is an inherited quality carried from parents to children. It is the result of evolution of animals rather than of the special design of God for the good of man. However, if theologians are bent upon believing that it proves God's special providence for the good and welfare of the infants, why, I ask, does he produce the most fatal diseases, like diphtheria, and choke them to death when they are not yet out of their teens? Diphtheria is a very malignant and fatal disease of the throat. It causes a very large amount of mortality amongst children. It is characterised by a peculiar inflammation of the mucous membrane of the throat or pharynx, accompanied by the production of a false membrane. At first, this membrane appears in the form of a white spot on the pharynx or tonsils, from which it gradually extends forward to the soft palate and into the nostrils, and backward into the œsophagus, sometimes into the larynx, producing at length suffocation and death, as if by strangulation of the throat. Look, what unbounded wickedness there is on the part of God if it is believed at all that here is his special providence working for the welfare of children. God, out of infinite love, teaches the innocent and the helpless baby to suck the milk, and, all of a sudden, without any cause for provocation to him by the sweet baby at the breast, he strangles it to death—which the most heartless human murderer would shun to do. The disease is, besides, epidemic and contagious. And yet this is only one of the many diseases, such as tetanus, convulsions, croup, whooping-cough, and others too numerous to name, which kill the very infants whom God, out of his infinite mercy, has taught the principle of suction and the art of sucking. Thanks to the inventors and promoters of medical and hygienic arts and sciences; thanks to those who suffered, fought and won for suffering humanity the battle of truth and right against the so-called agents of God! Had it not been for them, the world would have been but thinly populated, and, moreover, it would not have been worth living in. At a time when these and other sciences were not known, there was naturally greater faith in God, and, as a consequence, there was a higher death-rate among children. The ever-infallible rule that the greater the faith in the special providence of God, the less of health, the less of remedies for disease (the so-called whip of God), and the greater mortality amongst the people, and the less of population, has always been true in all countries and climes from time immemorial up to now.

The fourth point which the Design of Argument supporters bring forth is about the thickness and strength of the skull in which the brain is lodged—that the skull is formed of twenty-two bones instead of one, which are arranged like the stones of an arch to make it strong, that it may be able to bear even a severe blow.

In answer to this, I say that the skull is not able to bear a severe blow on all its sides. On the temples, as also on the orbital plate of the frontal bone, or the orbital plate of the ethmoid bone, even a moderately severe blow will easily cause serious injury to the brain. So, also, the walls of the orbit are very thin and delicate. The brain can be easily hurt through them. The superior, inferior, and internal walls which separate the orbit from the cerebral maxillary and nasal cavities are formed by thin osseous lamellæ (plates) which may be easily broken down. This anatomical disposition explains the facility with which a wound of the orbit may affect the brain, and how tumors, papylus, or others which take origin in one of the neighboring cavities, may break through the walls, and even destroy them, and, invading the orbital cavity, lead to the projection of the eye—that is to say, to exophthalmus.

Well, again, suppose, for the sake of argument, that the skull is made strong with the object of protecting the brain within, how is it that in infancy the bones are not even joined and ossified, and, consequently, the brain is easily hurt, though the bones are not so easily broken? So also, in old age, all these different bones are ossified more than they ought to be, are turned brittle and formed into one bone in contravention to the object of God and defeating his special providence. In infancy it is one extreme, in old age it is the other. This proves that the skull only follows the natural process of primary growth, successive development and decay, like all other organisms, without any special providence for anybody's good or ill.

Now, before I leave this point, let me remark something about the massiveness of the skull. The functions of the brain are very important, but, as it is locked up in the bony safe, it has as yet become almost impossible to know even one hundredth part of the functions of the brain, properly and positively, with any certainty. And in the absence of knowledge of these functions, most of the diseases of the brain and the nervous system are required to be treated almost empirically, merely as quacks would treat them. Many of the diseases are considered incurable, and so human misery is not relieved. And, again, what a number of false, fearful, and misguiding spiritualistic views, and how many superstitious ideas about reincarnation, life after death, and hell and heaven, are promulgated amongst the people and inculcated in their minds! What false notions about mesmerism, hypnotism, clairvoyance, somnambulism, and many other phenomena lie before the scientists and philosophers of the present century! These, as the hardest problems of the future, would have been solved long since and human kind made a thousand times happier if God, instead of shutting up the brain in the unventilated cage of the massive and compact skull, had managed to house it in some such wise way as that, while secure there, it would also be accessible to the scientists for the study of its functions.

Look at the organs in the chest—the heart and the lungs. Because their movements can be felt through the chest, a simple, trivial instrument like the stetho-

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scope has revealed a new world, as it were, of knowledge to the stethoscopists. Such a vast field of knowledge it has revealed, and such a great interest it has aroused amongst the medical faculty, that many of them have thought it worth their while to labor for the good of humanity all their life in that direction. And they have not labored in vain, but with great success. That tube, insignificant as it is to all appearances, has revealed the functions of these two important and vital organs, in health and disease, and enabled the practitioner to diagnose and remedy a large number of the most serious diseases, and thus to relieve humanity of its pains and pangs, sorrows and tears, by preventing untimely deaths.

But God, through his special providence, has prevented the scientist from acquiring and improving his knowledge of the functions of that most important organ of all, the governor of the functions and activities of the organs and limbs of the whole body—the brain—by shutting up and securing it close within that hard shell, the skull.

The fifth point is about the articulations or joints of our body. Out of his infinite wisdom and mercy, God has made these joints more or less firm, and bound them together with more or less ligaments, according to their greater or lesser importance, and supplied them with more or less strength, according to the functions they have to perform and the purposes they have to fulfil.

(To be continued)

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON OCT. 29.

The President, Mr. G. W. Foote, occupied the chair. There were also present: Messrs. Barry, Brandes, Cohen, Cowell, Cunningham, Davey, Judge, Lazarnick, Moss, Neate, Nicholls, Quinton, Roger, Rosetti, Samuels, Silverstein, Thurlow, Wood, Miss Kough and Miss Stanley.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed. The monthly cash statement was presented and adopted.

New members were admitted for Camberwell and West Ham.

The Secretary reported that the Annual Dinner had been fixed for Tuesday, January 12, 1915, at the Restaurant Frascati.

The President, in answer to inquiries, reported that no useful halls were at present available for indoor lectures, proprietors being afraid to risk the probability of references being made to the War, and, referring to the attitude of Professor Haeckel in relation to the War, said that Freethinkers should be on their guard against a narrow patriotism that would confuse their judgment on some of the greatest men of other nations.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary.*

Correspondence.

NIETZSCHE AGAIN.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The other day I looked up some of my old *Freethinkers*, and I came across Wheeler's article on "Nietzsche" (July 7, 1895). Note that J. M. W. *found* Nietzsche long before he was known in English or in England. One point that he emphasises in his penultimate paragraph seems to show that the dear old *Freethinker* always did see clearly when others were clouded by mists. Wheeler says rightly that Nietzsche's doctrine of the elimination of the unfit, through the erection of a military aristocracy, was simply the expression of the *existing* militarism of Germany. Yet these scribblers for the Jingo Press would have us believe that Germany's militarism is the outcome of Nietzsche.

As you say, war is not a question merely of intelligence, but perhaps more strongly a question of character.

Perhaps, with a few judicious "touches" (to suit chronology), you might reprint Wheeler's article.

In the *Freethinker* (March 9, 1890) there is a translation of a fine poetic onslaught by Jean Richepin, one of the greatest living French poets. Will you please consider it for reproduction in an early issue?

H. GEORGE FARMER.

The Better Land.

Suggested by Mrs. Hemans's Popular Poem.

"I HEAR priests speak of a better land,
And a rest for every laboring hand;
Tell me, dear mother, where is that shore—
Where shall I find it and work no more?
Is it at home, this delightful ground,
Where the golden harps and angels are found?
Is it where Kaiser Bill on his motor-car speeds,
Or in Rome where the Pope is counting his beads?
Is it at Shepherd's Bush, so fine and grand,
I shall find this adorable land?"
"Not there, not there, my child!"

"Is it far away on the Rio Grande?
In Ecuador or Basutoland?
Is it far away on Biblical shores,
Where unicorns fight and the dragon roars?
Or, will it in drear Belgium be found,
Where soldiers' bones manure the ground?
Or, on the banks of the sacred Nile?
Perhaps 'tis away on some coral isle,
With dusky groves and silver strand?
Is it there, dear mother, that beauteous land?"
"Not there, not there, my child!"

"Eye hath not seen that fair land, my child,
Ear hath but heard an echo wild—
The nightmare of an excited brain,
That dreamers have, ever again.
Far away, beyond the ken
Of men whose heads are screwed on tight.
Where the turrets of Colney Hatch do stand,
See the golden streets of that lovely land!
'Tis there, 'tis there, my child!"

MIMNERMUS.

LILY'S ANSWER.

As on my cosy couch I lay
Methought I heard an angel say:
"Dear little child, come up above;
Here all is peace, and all is love!"

But I replied: "Good angel, no!
I cannot leave my parents so;
And brother Frank and sister May
Would weep if I should go away."

He answered: "Here we live in joy;
Grief comes not, nor does pain annoy;
Care from our realm has taken flight;
There's nothing here but pure delight."

I pleaded: "Let me stay awhile
To see mamma's proud, loving smile;
Should I your realm of bliss attain,
I think she'd never smile again!

The pains and griefs I have to bear
My parents, brother, sister share;
So all my cares and troubles pass
Like shadows over waving grass.

Indeed, I'm very happy here,
With home so pleasant, friends so dear:
Earth's warm and comfy; in your sky
I'd be a stranger—so Good-bye!"

—*B. D.*

Obituary.

I have to record the death, in his 78th year, of Thomas Searle, of Devonport, on the 26th ult. He was a sturdy Freethinker of the old school, always ready and able to give a good account of his principles, and never better pleased than when discussing some knotty theological question with his Christian friends. For a considerable number of years his health was a constant source of anxiety to his friends and relatives, but he bore his sufferings with patience and fortitude. The present writer read a Secular Burial Service at the graveside last Sunday (Nov. 1), in fulfilment of a promise given to the deceased many years ago, and in accordance with the latter's strong desire expressed only a few days before his death.—G. F. HUGH MCCLUSKEY.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Mr. Davey's, 32 Crossway, Stoke Newington): Monday, Nov. 9, at 8.30, Business Meeting—To receive the Auditor's Report, etc.

OUTDOOR.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, R. H. Rosetti, "Christianity in a Funk."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

LEICESTER (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, G. W. Foote, "Religion, War, and Humanity."

ST. HELENS BRANCH N. S. S. (Central Café): Saturday, Nov. 7, at 7.30, Business Meeting.

FAILSWORTH (Secular School, Pole-lane): 6.30, E. Pack, "Our Spurious Gospels."

PROPAGANDIST LEAFLETS. New Issue. 1. *Christianity a Stupendous Failure*, J. T. Lloyd; 2. *Bible and Teetotalism*, J. M. Wheeler; 3. *Principles of Secularism*, C. Watts; 4. *Where Are Your Hospitals?* R. Ingersoll. 5. *Because the Bible Tells Me So*, W. P. Ball; 6. *Why Be Good?* by G. W. Foote. *The Parson's Creed*. Often the means of arresting attention and making new members. Price 6d. per hundred, post free 7d. Special rates for larger quantities. Samples on receipt of stamped addressed envelope.—MISS E. M. VANCE, N. S. S. Secretary, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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An illogical opinion only requires rope enough to hang itself.—AUGUSTINE BIRRELL.

How Lies Grow.

EVER since the days of Paul the Christians have been wonderfully fond of lying for the glory of God. The pastime has afforded what is thought a legitimate exercise of the imagination. It has also deceived millions of ignorant, indolent, and credulous people, and immensely increased the power, influence, and profits of the Church.

Colonel Ingersoll said that the truth often enters the field weak and defenceless. It meets a mature, vigorous falsehood, dressed in strong armor, and the truth gets licked. Ingersoll added that nothing on earth has as much vitality as a good, sound, healthy religious lie. A similar sentiment, at least to a certain extent, must have been in the mind of George Eliot, when she said that human beings took to the absurd as asses took to thistles, as an excellent aid to digestion. Was it not Lord Bacon who said that "A mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure"? His lordship found in human nature "a natural, though corrupt, love of the lie itself." "Doth any man doubt," he asks, "that if there were taken out of men's minds vain opinions, flattering hopes, false valuations, imaginations as one would, and the like, but it would leave the minds of a number of men poor shrunken things, full of melancholy, and indisposition, and unpleasing to themselves"?

Look at the pious stories that continue in circulation about the death-beds of great Freethinkers, like Voltaire and Thomas Paine. What is the reason of their longevity? They have been refuted every year since they originated. Long ago their death-warrant was signed by Evidence, and countersigned by Reason. But it is never executed. They flourish almost as vigorously as ever. It seems likely that they will never die except from sheer inanition. And what is the explanation of their obdurate vitality? It is not enough to say that these stories serve the turn of their inventors and perpetuators. Of course they do. But why are they so greedily swallowed by the Christian multitude? A jest's prosperity lies in the ear of the hearer, and a falsehood's prosperity must lie in the mind of its recipient. What then is it, in the mind of the orthodox Christian, which makes him welcome these ghastly stories of infidel death-beds? Why this. He has been taught, and he believes, that death is a terrible thing without Christian consolations. Men who die without those consolations *must* be miserable. That is as clear as daylight. Besides, if they *were* not, the orthodox Christian would be wrong; and that is a mortal affront to his vanity.

My object, however, at present, is not so much to show how lies prosper, but how they grow; how they career along, like a rolling snowball, gathering size as they proceed: and how the imagination which gives them birth, like the mother bear with her cubs, licks them afterwards into shape. Of course I cannot, in a single article, trace the rise, progress, and development of a dozen lies; but what I have to say about *one* story will throw light upon all the rest.

Many of my readers, I daresay, have seen a lecture on the Bible by a Yankee anti-infidel, the Rev. H. L. Hastings—a fellow who considered it a Christian duty to slander Colonel Ingersoll. In the course of this lecture he tells a story of two infidels, father and son (we believe, but we have not the lecture by us), who were travelling in the wild and woolly West. They found shelter one night in a rude dwelling, and after retiring to their room they were alarmed by sinister sounds in the next apartment. The son looked through a crevice, and saw their host reading a book. It was not the *Age of Reason*, but the Bible. That was enough. They felt quite safe, and went to sleep in peace and security. Had the host been reading Paine or Voltaire or Shelley, or any other Freethinker, the two infidels would, of course, have been obliged to sit up all night, with their hands on their revolvers.

Now I have discovered that this story is fairly ancient, although its older form is not so dramatically rounded—not having yet been *licked* into proper shape. I have been looking through an old debate, between Charles Bradlaugh ("Iconoclast") and the Rev. T. D. Matthias, held at Halifax, in October, 1859. It was a four nights' discussion on "The Credibility and Morality of the Four Gospels," conducted with excellent good temper on both sides. Mr. Matthias had quite a Sunday-school teacher's notion of debate. In his last speech he told some anecdotes, which he evidently regarded as splendid arguments. One of them was as follows:—

> "I may tell you of another instance—of a sceptic who was travelling at one time, in the backwood settlements of America. Benighted, he sought a refuge in some cabin from the wolves and bears of the forest, and found it in the log hut of a lone and solitary woman, whose looks were aught but hospitable. The man of the house soon came in, and if the looks of the woman had terrified him before, the man seemed much more rough than his partner. He had a considerable amount of property about him, and dreaded sleep lest his property should be taken from him and his life lost. What was his terror to see the old man place two pistols on the table! He thought it was all up with him. He was asked to go to bed, but this he dared not do; he said he would sit up. 'Well, then,' replied the old man, 'the dame and myself generally have a chapter of the Bible and prayer together.' He was not afraid of the pistols now."

Such is the story as told many years ago by Mr. Matthias. It is more dramatic as told by Mr. Hastings. The one sceptic grows into two infidels; the old woman, as far as I recollect, is eliminated; the two infidels are in mortal terror in their own room, one looking through a crevice in the partition; and then, at the climax of fear, they see their host reading his Bible.

This is how stories grow. An inventive genius starts one, and more critical minds improve it; and at each stage it is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

Could we see the very first Christian document, and all its successors, until the settlement of the New Testament Canon, we should know exactly how the Life of Christ was manufactured. But the Christian Church was wise. It destroyed the traces of its operations, and criticism has to painfully eke out the paucity of evidence.

G. W. FOOTE.

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The Wrong Way to Die.

IN one of the soldier's letters that are being published in the newspapers, I came across the following item. It is related by a sergeant of the Fifth Lancers:—

> "I came on a wounded man of the Lancashire Fusiliers one day. He had two ghastly wounds in his breast, and I thought he was booked through. He was quietly reading a little edition of Ruskin's *Crown of Wild Olive*, and seemed to be enjoying it immensely. As I chatted with him for a few minutes he told me that this little book had been his companion all through and that when he died he wanted it to be buried with him. His end came next day, and we buried the book with him."

Now, this story came to me with something of a shock. It was not that I knew the wounded soldier, or was affected out of the ordinary by his death. It was that this particular soldier didn't seem to realise what was required of him. As a mere soldier he had doubtless done his duty in a most satisfactory manner. He had fought well, and the narrative shows he had taken his punishment bravely. He was not found crying or whimpering, but with two deadly wounds in his breast was spending his last hours reading. So far, as a soldier, all was well.

But there is more than this in it. He was a British soldier. A member of the greatest Empire on earth. He was an Englishman, belonging to a Christian country, which, we have often been informed, owes its greatness to the Bible and to Christianity. It was, therefore, incumbent upon him to play the part properly, to live up to the character of a Christian soldier, fighting a Christian battle.

The sergeant ought to have found him reading, not *The Crown of Wild Olive*, but a pocket Bible. He ought to have told the sergeant what a comfort that precious book had been to him, how it had solaced his hours of lonely duty, inspired him when the battle was at its fiercest, and had now fallen back upon it as his only true friend in the hour of death. And, finally, he would, of course, have begged that the Bible might be buried with him. That is how it ought to have ended; that is how soldiers are often found—in the religious tracts I have read. Frankly, this Lancashire Fusilier failed in his duty as a member of so Christian a country as England. He must have known what the Christian public of England expected of him. Why was he so neglectful of his responsibilities?

The more I think about this soldier the more disappointed I am. He was probably born of pious parents, had received a religious education, and here, at death's door, was found reading mere secular essays. He must have known the proper, the orthodox way to die. He must have read scores of times how the true Christian soldier dies. He may have read the story, published *again* the other day, of how a soldier's life was saved through carrying a New Testament in a breast pocket, and how this is used to prove the value of the book. He must have known how hard a number of people at home are working to raise funds to send copies of the New Testament out to the front. He ought to have realised that churches and chapels are not praising our soldiers in order that they may advertise Ruskin and the consolatory power of his writings. If he had not been reading, but merely died; if he had made no dying request, but only whispered "Good-bye, old pal"—but to die reading *The Crown of Wild Olive*, and to ask for it to be buried with him, that is the very height of impropriety.

This Ruskin-reading "Tommy" is what the tracts call "a pernicious example." He may induce others to follow in his steps, and instead of cheering their last moments by reading the genealogies of the Old Testament, or seeking inspiration in the zoological curiosities in the Book of Revelations, they may take all sorts of literature with them into battle and ask that it shall be buried with them. Imagine the feelings of good Christians if they learn that some of the men at the front were to go to battle with *The Age of Reason* in their pocket, or if wounded men were picked up reading the *Freethinker*. Of course, reports are published of soldiers who eagerly welcome copies of this or that paper, but that is for reading while they are safe and sound. It is quite another thing to have soldiers reading them in the hour of death. It is against all theory, contrary to all tradition.

I am also disappointed with the sergeant who reported the case. Clearly it was an incident that ought never to have been reported. He also manifested a certain want of a sense of responsibility. At least, he should have asked the advice of one of the Army chaplains before reporting the matter. Then, doubtless, the story would have been properly edited before being made public. And it would have been so easy to have edited it in an "edifying" manner. The alteration of one word, and the elimination of several others would have made the story quite suitable to the columns of all the religious papers, and would have secured its perpetuation in thousands of religious tracts. Thus:—

> "I came on a wounded man of the Lancashire Fusiliers one day. He had two ghastly wounds in his breast, and I thought he was booked through. He was quietly reading a little book. As I chatted with him for a few minutes he told me that this little book had been his companion all through, and that when he died he wanted it to be buried with him. His end came next day, and we buried the book with him."

There it is! Substantially the same story, every word true to fact, and yet how different would have been its influence on the public mind! Told in this way there is not a religious person in the country who would have doubted what book the wounded soldier was reading. Evangelists would have repeated the story on numerous platforms. It might have formed the subject for a special tract, with an engraving of a soldier hugging a family Bible as a frontispiece. Or it might almost have run to a serial story: Chapter i., the soldier as a boy reading the Bible at his mother's knee. Chapter ii., the soldier as a youth attending Sunday-school. Chapter iii., the soldier in the barrack-yard holding up the Bible to his fellow soldiers and exhorting them to lead a Christian life. Chapter iv., the soldier in the trenches reading the Bible by candle light with shells falling all around him. Chapter v., the Christian soldier's end, dying clasping the Bible to his breast, with the whites of his eyes turned upward in the most approved fashion. It is exactly the thing that Mr. Harold Begbie would have turned into one of his religious shilling shockers. It is a sheer waste of good material. Many a report of missionary conversions has been built up on a story with less fact as a foundation. That sergeant had no imagination. He was as blind to his duty as a Christian as was the dying fusilier. Perhaps the sergeant was not a Christian, though. And that puts a different complexion on the matter. One wonders what kind of reading he has been doing during the War?

I am disappointed also at the editor of the newspaper—it was the *Sunday Chronicle;* the villain deserves the publicity—publishing such a communication. I must inform him that, judged by the ordinary standards of English newspapers, his conduct was un-English, unchristian, uneditor-like. Could *he* not have edited it on the lines suggested? What is to become of religion in this country if the newspapers do not play their part in keeping up those traditions about the Bible which Christians value so much? Have they not often been warned of the danger to religion of advertising, by notice, Freethought meetings, Freethought speakers, and Freethought works? And how much less real is the danger of advertising that our soldiers find comfort in a book which contains things like the following:—

> "If you have to take away masses of men from all industrial employment, to feed them by the labor of others,—to provide them with destructive machines, varied daily in national rivalship of inventive cost; if you have to ravage the country which you attack,—to destroy for a score of future years its roads, its woods

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> its cities and its harbors; and if, finally, having brought masses of men, counted by hundreds of thousands, face to face, you tear these masses to pieces with jagged shot, and leave the living creatures, countlessly beyond all help of surgery, to starve and parch through days of torture, down into clots of clay—what book of accounts shall record the cost of your work;—what book of judgment sentence the guilt of it? That, I say, is *modern* war,—scientific war,—chemical and mechanic war,—how much worse than the savage's poisoned arrow! And yet you will tell me, perhaps, that any other war than this is impossible now. It may be so; the progress of science cannot, perhaps, be otherwise registered than by new facilities of destruction; and the brotherly love of our enlarging Christianity be only proved by multiplication of murder."

The whole matter is eminently unsatisfactory. It is an accepted maxim in English society that if you are not a Christian, if you do not believe in the Bible, the proper thing is to remain silent. English society is still largely modelled on the principle that you ought to be a Christian, or, at least, you ought to be religious, and that if you are not, the proper thing is to "respect the feelings" of Christians by saying nothing about it. Our political leaders appeal to this "Christian nation," and ignore the existence of large bodies of people who are not Christian. Ministers of religion assure us that the greatness of the nation rests on Christianity. Newspapers are run on the principle that only Christian opinion is worth bothering about. Why could not this soldier, and this sergeant, and this newspaper, have kept to the orthodox lines? It is useless pleading that as a matter of fact our soldiers care little about the Bible, and would sooner read an evening paper at any time. It is useless pointing out that the overwhelming majority of people do not, when dying, trouble their heads about the Bible, and not one in ten thousand call for it to be read to them on their death-bed. It is idle to point to the fact that people do not fly to the Bible for comfort in trouble, or for consolation in death. The fact remains that the religious tradition points otherwise. In thousands of tracts, and sermons, and evangelical reports, people die hugging the Bible, demanding that it *shall* be read, and depart this life with a beatific smile on their face. That is the way this Lancashire Fusilier *ought* to have died. That is the way he *would* have died had one of our professional evangelists been there. To die reading *The Crown of Wild Olive* is to fly directly in the face of all orthodox tradition.

I feel certain the story will not be very widely retailed.

C. COHEN.

Illusions.

SOME divines declare that the greatest and most precious truths in the world's possession were discovered by small nations. The reason assigned for this is that small nations which have survived must have passed through many a hard time. Such a nation occupied Palestine in olden times; and being small and weak it experienced numerous trials of the severest kind. Both Israel and Judah were perpetually in trouble, and each dark time made them think and wonder; compelled them, so to speak, to look life in the face and demand an explanation of their own existence. The Rev. John A. Hutton, of Glasgow, puts it thus: "In the depth of their historical agony, Judah and Israel—occupying territory about half the size of Scotland—came upon God. In the depth of its historical agony, Athens, with a free population only equal to that of Stirling—Athens came upon man." The contention is that "in the depth of their national disasters the children of Israel comforted themselves in God," while the Athenians, when similarly situated, found comfort in the contemplation of truth and beauty. It is quite true that the Greeks were ardent lovers of beauty, and that the products of their art have remained incomparable to this day; but it is not true that the Israelites either "came upon God" or were loyal to him. Officially, Jehovah was their deity; it was he who was worshiped in synagogue and temple; it was he who was supposed to reward them with victories and punish them with defeats; but he was only one among many, and they often preferred some of the others. Throughout their history the chief complaint against them was that they were unfaithful to their God. Jeremiah, of course, was profoundly loyal to Jehovah; but this is how he represents Jehovah as speaking of the people generally:—

> "Then shall the cities of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem go and cry unto the gods unto whom they offer incense; but they shall not save them at all in the time of their trouble. For according to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah; and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem have ye set up altars to the shameful thing, even altars to burn incense unto Baal" (xi. 12, 13).

But Jehovah himself did not save even his loyal followers in the time of their trouble. When Job's lot was at its worst it was in vain that he sought help from the Lord, who deliberately hid his face from him and held him for his enemy. One of the Psalmists says, "Why standest thou afar off, O Lord; why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?" Another complains thus: "Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled; thou takest away their breath, they die and return to their dust." Even the devout Isaiah wails almost out of despair, "Verily, thou art a god that hidest thyself, O God of Israel." Scores of similar quotations might be made, all showing that even they who trusted in Jehovah were frequently most disappointed in him, while to the generality of the people he was scarcely more than a name.

It is very true that in any time of national and international tragedy, like this present time, men and women who believe in God, however faintly, turn to him for succor. Multitudes go to church and chapel now who had not been inside a place of worship for years; but it should be borne in mind that their belief in God had never died. All the time it lay dormant within them, and the horrors of the War have but shocked it into newness of life for a brief season. The same thing happened at the time of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. For a while the churches of France and Germany were crowded with superstitious people momentarily frightened out of their religious indifference. As soon as the excitement caused by that sad struggle began to abate the newly awakened zeal for religion showed signs of growing drowsiness, with the result that after a few years the state of religion in those countries was much worse than it had been before that war. It will be the same now. Indeed, already places of worship are not so thronged as they were two months ago. As long as superstition is alive, however soundly it may sleep in quiet times, it naturally awakes when noisy and destructive storms begin to rage, but no sooner are the tempests lulled than it gradually falls asleep again. But they from whom superstition has been completely eradicated, they who do not know the way to any mercy seat above the clouds, being able to face the facts dispassionately and to think for themselves, are simply confirmed in their unbelief by the awful happenings of the hour. They are profoundly convinced that nothing can be more absurd, more utterly fruitless of good, or more emotionally injurious than the intercessory prayer-meetings now being held in all parts of the country. If people would but think, they would soon share that conviction and decline to have anything to do with such ludicrous performances.

Dr. Orchard admits that "God does not burn Europe to roast a pig"; but the fact remains that, according to the reverend Doctor's teaching, God *does* burn Europe for some higher purpose. On this point all the divines are agreed. As reported in the *Christian Commonwealth* for November 4, Dr. Orchard spoke thus:—

> "God's judgments were not mere vengeance, they came to deliver us from something worse. Something

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> no less than this catastrophe was necessary to save us from the racial suicide that was threatening us, a racial suicide involved in the tendency of our civilisation to build upon the working of a competition almost as ruthless as war itself. An attitude of distrust towards each other, the quarrels between churches which created little sects in despair over the great whole of men, the irreconcilability of political parties, the militancies of our advanced reform movements, these were all signs that we had ceased to believe in the convertibility of each other, and had come to trust in some kind of thinly disguised force."

Now, if the present War is "God's operation," if it is proceeding in accordance with his omnipotent will, why not allow him to bring it to an end in his own way and time? Surely it is not possible to be guilty of more egregious disrespect towards him than by "praying with all our might for a speedy victory." The holding of intercessory services is an act of overt impiety. If Christians took Dr. Orchard's dictum to heart, that "God does not burn Europe to roast a pig," not another prayer-meeting would be held. Mr. Hutton clearly agrees with the new minister of the King's Weigh House Church, for he says that "one of the great discoveries which the good men in the Bible made is that a dark and heavy time, if we meet it properly, will soften and deepen and enlarge our soul." God has brought this War upon us for our good. And yet these very men of God lead their people in petitioning their Master that this bitter cup of European war may pass away from us before we have drunk it to the dregs. Here we have the quintessence of inconsistency.

We affirm that the God whom the Jews are erroneously said to have "come upon" is an illusion, a vision of the fancy that never objectively existed, which the divines have utilised in all sorts of ways to their own selfish advantage. For example, they assert that the tribulations of life, of whatever nature they may be, come from God as means of "deepening us." We are to endure them without a murmur of distrust, regarding them as blessings in disguise. Listen to Mr. Hutton:—

> "It is one of the most common things in the Bible to hear someone saying that he is a much better man now that God has plunged him into deep waters than he used to be when he had no troubles. They even go the length of saying that God did well to let loose the dark waters upon them; that God knew them better than they knew themselves."

One of such men, we presume, was King David, whom Samuel characterised as "a man after God's own heart." This was said of him *before* he entered the throne, but *after* he had been a captain of freebooters levying blackmail on all who could pay and after he had cherished treasonable designs against Saul. It was as "a man according to God's own heart" that he committed adultery with Bathsheba, and afterwards had her husband murdered that he might possess her altogether. Principal George Adam Smith says that his "character was one of the most complex ever possessed by man," and that "his temper was not only ambitious and cruel," but also "disfigured by some of the most ferocious traits which are characteristic of his race." When he lay on his dying-bed the most horrible words ever heard fell from his lips, which are to be seen in 1 Kings ii. 2-10. Such was David, the God-trained and God-filled man. God's heart is a figment, like himself, and all talk about him and his heart is senseless jargon.

Mr. Hutton gives the case for God away when he states "that we find what we are looking for, what we in secret are confessing we need." Exactly so. It follows, then, that God is not looking for us, or he would find us, confessing that he needs us. He does not need us, nor do we need him. It is the most difficult thing in the world to convince little children that they need God; and once they have learned that lesson, they always keep forgetting it again. Even the saintliest people living acknowledge that their hold on God is in constant danger of giving way, and that one prayerless day obscures the vision of him. Let prayer be dropped altogether, and soon all thought of God vanishes from the mind. After that has occurred we discover that war is not God's judgment, but an antiquated method of settling disputes which we ought to have outgrown long ago, and that tribulations are not things to be resigned under, but evils to be thrown off as soon as possible.

J. T. LLOYD.

A Fourpenny Wilderness.

The Holy Bible: Containing the Old and New Testaments, etc.; 1914.

THIS volume, bound in funereal black, is, without doubt, a very cheap publication. Indeed, the shiny cover bears an embossed inscription to the effect that the volume is sold "under cost," whatever that may mean precisely. There is plenty of reading matter for fourpence, and several hundred pages of small type, strongly bound, should satisfy even a Scotchman.

The contents are, however, distinctly puzzling. We have given ourselves a headache by examining this book, and, like the curate who had a doubtful egg given him, we admit that "parts of it are excellent." As for the remainder, we cannot discover any sequence in this volume of undigested tracts. The whole thing is merely a *pot-pourri*, a literary Irish stew. If the reader cares to imagine *Dod's Peerage, Mother Shipton's Prophecies, Mrs. Beeton's Cookery Book, Rochester's Poems, Tupper's Proverbial Philosophy, Baron Munchausen's Travels, The Book of Mormon, Every Man His Own Lawyer, Petronius*, and some auctioneers' catalogues, all bound in a single volume, he will get some faint idea of the incoherency and general confusion of this book. Its various divisions, too, like an awkward squad of Boy Scouts, are of all sizes, and equally open to criticism. From the first blunder in Genesis to the last absurdity in Revelation, we have discovered very little that merits praise. A few sentences in Ecclesiastes, Proverbs, and Corinthians make some pretence to sanity; but, like the plums in a workhouse pudding, there is a taxicab ride between each.

The author has, occasionally, a flow of language which is as painful as it is free, such as in "the Psalm of Curses," which is the strongest piece of invective we remember offhand, and might prove useful to landladies who have lodgers in arrears. The so-called "historical tracts" are utterly untrustworthy. They are anonymous, dateless, placeless, legendary Salmagundi, of no more value than the History of Cock Robin. Indeed, the search for the gems was as exasperating as the proverbial search for the needle in a bundle of hay. And, as a numerous father and respectable citizen, we must reluctantly admit that the author is very tropical and outspoken in his treatment of sex matters. He is very Oriental in his nastiness, and, as we all know, Eastern vice begins where Occidental vice leaves off. Parents keep some modern novels out of the reach of children; but this anonymous scribe writes powerfully enough to make a bronze statue blush. The dedication to King James is an anachronism; it should have been inscribed to Charles II., who would have appreciated this ordure, especially the Song of the Royal Solomon. The stories of lust, adultery, incest, and unnatural vice are sufficient to paralyse the green readers who admire the blue stories in the *Pink-un*. We do not believe in bowdlerising any volume, but, if ever there were any occasion for such drastic treatment, it certainly should be directed against such a book as this.

Unfortunately, if all the objectionable passages were deleted, the volume would be very much reduced in bulk. Further, if the vain repetitions, contradictory genealogies, and untruthful yarns were also removed, we fear the volume would be further contracted to the size of a penny novelette. So, acting on this suggestion, our fourpenny wilderness has nearly vanished. It is a thousand pities it has not really disappeared, for its circulation debases the moral

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currency. The book should be published at ten guineas, and have a lock and key on it. Selling it at the price of a cigar is demoralising. Ordure is cheap when so much can be had for fourpence.

MIMNERMUS.

Invisible Helpers and Adversaries.—II.

(Continued from p. 710.)

IT was long alleged that the method of purification adopted by the water authorities, which consists in the storage of water in huge reservoirs, which is afterwards filtered through sand, had little influence on the number of aquatic microbes resident in the liquid. An examination of the untreated water of the Thames, however, soon discloses the fact that whereas on an average as many as 20,000 micro-organisms may be detected in about twenty drops of water, this large number falls as low as 400 in the same quantity of water that has undergone the purificatory processes which prepare it for human consumption. Sand filtration is consequently of considerable utility to the urban water-using population.

Extremely few micro-organisms are to be met with in deep well-water. In water raised from wells sunk into chalk an average of eighteen only has been discovered. This indicates a wide difference between artificially prepared water drawn from such rivers as the Thames and Lea and the clear liquid which has filtered naturally through immense layers of chalk. Indeed, Pasteur found some waters that arose from deep-seated wells and springs that were optically pure under the microscope; but such ideal conditions are not often encountered.

Contrary to expectation, observation has established the fact that river waters do not teem with bacteria during the summer months—the season of life and growth—to the extent anticipated. The truth is that several samples of water examined disclosed a larger microbial population during the winter months. Still, due weight must be accorded the contention that—

> "in summer the rivers are principally fed by spring water, and receive comparatively little surface drainage, whilst in winter the rivers are generally more or less in flood, and are swollen by large volumes of surface water, which is naturally rich in micro-organisms."

The powers of multiplication among microbes are strikingly illustrated by the following experiment. Water from a deep well was kept under observation at a temperature of 20° centigrade for three days. At the commencement of the investigation, seven microbes were found in twenty drops of water. At the end of the first day the number trebled, but when the water was three days old the number had increased to 495,000!

The micro-organism responsible for wool-sorter's disease in man and splenic fever in cattle—Bacillus anthracis—when introduced into ordinary water, soon perishes, but its hardier spores are in no way affected by immersion, and retain their virulence in the purest water for a practically indefinite period. But in contaminated water, especially sewage, the microbes themselves continue to flourish, and even multiply on a vast scale. Another malignant microbe, Koch's "comma bacillus," the generator of Asiatic cholera, soon adapts itself to a sewage environment, and has been detected in immense numbers after immersion in this fluid for eleven months. In "clear" drinking water, however, although these bacilli were discovered after nine days, they were very few in number. A far greater tendency to succumb is exhibited by the micrococcus of erysipelas, for, when placed in waters of different degrees of purity, it soon disappeared. Even in sewage its presence was not demonstrable after five days, while it perishes in clearer water in a few hours.

A study of the activities of the bacillus of tetanus or lockjaw has revealed some remarkable phenomena. This pestilent micro-organism does not appear to part with its malign powers when placed in distilled water, but, when introduced into ordinary water in which other bacteria abound, its vitality is lessened; but it quickly recovers itself as soon as the activities of these antagonistic organisms are weakened. Sea-water depresses the tetanus microbe, but it rapidly reasserts itself when restored to more normal conditions.

Although there is evidence that there are fewer aquatic bacteria in salt than in fresh water, the organisms appear to be fairly evenly distributed at the various sea-depths studied. Observations in the Gulf of Naples showed that in the accumulated sea-mud there exists a dense mass of bacterial life, which is far more abundant than that of the overlying waters. It has also been determined that this large surplus is not the outcome of reinforcements from the neighboring land, but is to be ascribed to the genesis and development of the microbes within the mud itself. At a depth of about 400 feet the investigator demonstrated the presence of ten bacteria per cubic centimetre of water, while in the mud immediately below an army of 200,000 was met with in the same volume of sediment. The mud under the waters of Lake Geneva includes among its microbe residents various disease germs, and it is asserted that the bacillus of tetanus has been dredged from the sediment of the Dead Sea.

It is a relief to know that micro-organisms are not all maleficent, but that various beneficent bacteria exist. In nearly every region of the earth, both in ancient and modern times, man appears to have possessed the secret of converting sugar into alcohol. And there is no known race of men among whom fermented beverages are not appreciated, and, regrettably enough, abused. Still, comparatively little is known, even now, of the precise processes which transform sugar into alcohol. More than half a century since, Latour and Schwann discovered that yeast was a living substance. The celebrated studies which Pasteur subsequently pursued revealed the truth that the production of the best beverages is strictly dependent upon the use of yeast or "barm" from which alien micro-organisms have been excluded. Then Hansen's more recent researches proved that it was not only imperative to employ pure yeast, but that for every special brand of beer a particular variety of yeast is needed if the finest qualities are to be obtained. Yeasts are now specially cultivated for brewing purposes. These yeasts are elaborated under conditions of the most refined scientific skill, and several important laboratories have been erected on the Continent in connection with this industry. The yeasts thus evolved are arranged in two chief classes: the surface yeasts, which appear on the top of the liquid, and the bottom yeasts, which flourish on the floors of the vessels in which they are prepared. British and North German beers require the "top fermentation yeasts" in order to secure their prime production. The "bottom fermentation yeasts" are employed in the brewing of those Bavarian beverages, Lager and Pilsen, which are now held in high esteem throughout the world. Hansen has also devised some very ingenious tests to distinguish one form of yeast from another, as the microscope fails to reveal any material difference between them.

Although horses, dogs, cats, and monkeys will occasionally drink the cups that cheer as well as inebriate, the lower animals in general have little liking for fermented liquors. There is one organism, however, whose imbibing capacity much exceeds that of the most hardened human drunkard. This alcohol-loving organism is a tiny body which becomes conveniently visible when magnified by the microscope one thousand times. It was originally discovered and studied by Pasteur, and is commonly known as the vinegar organism. This microbe (Mycoderma aceti), when once established in alcohol of moderate strength, multiplies with amazing rapidity, assimilates the alcohol, and converts it at an extraordinary rate into vinegar. In a sense this organism

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is a discriminating drinker, as it eschews all fermented liquors that contain more than 10 per cent. of alcohol. It is a deadly enemy to wine—at least from the vintner's point of view—as the choicest vintages, confined in carefully guarded cellars for human enjoyment, when thoroughly mature, are transformed by this mischievous microbe into the sourest vinegar in the course of a few hours.

The services supplied to the vegetable kingdom by bacteria are truly wonderful both in their nature and extent. Yet the story we are now to relate could not have been told until quite recently. It is an indisputable fact that one of the leading plant-foods resident in the soil is nitric acid. Scientific agriculturalists are agreed that in soils destitute of this chemical no root crops, corn, or grass will grow, even when the land is in all other respects of the richest quality, most favorably circumstanced as to sun and air, well tilled and adequately drained, and provided with all "the purely mineral ingredients of plant-food, such as *potash, lime, and phosphoric acid.*"

Yet despite the indispensable nature of this ingredient to floral growth, nitric acid is present in the most minute proportions only in all moderately fertile soils. This important truth was brought to light through the epoch-making experiments of Gilbert and Lawes at Rothamsted. It has since been ascertained that the minute quantities of nitric acid in average soils is to some degree due to this chemical being dissolved by the rain, and partly to the avidity with which plants absorb it for nourishment and growth.

Two enterprising chemists made the astonishing discovery that bacteria were the agents instrumental in the conversion of the nitrogen of the nitrogenous materials of the earth into nitric acid. Further facts emerged from the later labors of Warington and others, but the specific organism engaged in accomplishing this transformation continued to resist all efforts to isolate and identify it. It was only in 1890 that the bacterium was at last traced by Frankland, and only a month after this scientist had established its identity, Winogradsky, who was investigating the same problem independently, also isolated the same or a very similar nitrifying micro-organism. As this organism requires the absence of all living matter from its developing environment, it was found difficult, if not impossible, to grow it in any ordinary culture medium.

Winogradsky's researches appear to prove that nitrifying bacteria are capable of elaborating living protoplasm "in a solution from which organic matter has been rigorously excluded." This in itself constitutes an important contribution to knowledge, as it was previously thought that the power to evolve the living from the lifeless was the prerogative of green plants alone.

But at this stage of the inquiry the problem of nitrification was incompletely solved, for the bacteria discovered, although undoubtedly instrumental in changing ammonia into *nitrous acid*, were found to be incapable of evolving *nitric acid* itself. The nitrous acid, then, which exists in very small quantities in vegetable soils is therefore the product of micro-organisms. How, then, is the nitric acid prepared? Winogradsky and Warington supplied the answer by isolating another organism which "possesses the power of converting nitrous acid into nitric acid, but has no power of attacking ammonia." The nitrate which these two sets of bacteria evolve is invaluable to the soil, and the hundreds of thousands of tons of this manure exported from the nitrate fields of Chili and Peru have enormously increased the crops of Europe, while building up the fortunes of the Nitrate Kings.

The problem as to whether plants were capable of utilising the free nitrogen of the atmosphere was long debated until Lawes and Gilbert discovered that while the nitrogenous constituents of many crops unquestionably came from the chemical matters of manures and rain water, yet, in the case of several crops such as peas, beans, vetches, etc., there remains a surplus of nitrogen demonstrably not derivable from these sources. It is now known that this excess of nitrogen in leguminous plants is obtained from the air, but that the power of these plants to assimilate free nitrogen is absolutely dependent upon the activities of bacterial organisms which attach themselves to the vegetable roots. To clench the matter, hundreds of experiments have made good the fact that in soil from which these beneficent bacteria are excluded, leguminous plants fail utterly to fix the atmospheric nitrogen. Again, the tuberosities on the roots of these and other plants are formed by microbes. These root-swellings are extremely rich in nitrogen, and simply teem with bacterial life.

T. F. PALMER.

(*To be concluded.*)

GOD IN PICCADILLY.

Poisonous paint on us, under the gas,
Smiling like spectres, we gather bereaven,
Leprosy's taint on us, ghost-like we pass,
Watched by the eyes of yon pitiless heaven!
Let the stars stare at us! God, too, may glare at us
Out of the void where He hideth so well.
Sisters of midnight, He damned us in making us,
Cast us like carrion to men, then forsaking us,
Smiles on His throne on these markets of hell!

Laugh! Those who turn from us, too, have their price.
There, for the proud, other harlots are dressing;
They too may learn from us man's old device—
Food for his lust, with some sham of a blessing!
Sons of old Adam there, buy the fine madam there,
Bid with a coronet—yea, or a crown!
Sisters, who'd envy the glory which graces them?
They, too, are sold to the lust which embaces them,
E'en in the church, with the Christ looking down.

—*Robert Buchanan.*

EXIT GOD AND COMPANY.

There are indications that the celestial interest in man begins to flag, that Jahweh himself is tempted to transfer his immortal energies to some other and more profitable corner of the universe. Certain misguided spirits even derive consolation from this fact. One hears an occasional impious tongue venture to affirm that, when the divine audience gets off the stage, and out of the theatre, the mortal company of players will provide a more refined entertainment. With people who permit themselves these appalling opinions we should have nothing to do. For since the high gods are weary of us, the time has surely come when we should cease to take the smallest delight or interest in ourselves. But who shall dare to say that heaven quite forgets us? Has not God's own daughter, Carnage, recently given us refreshing proof that the All Father is still remembering his children?—*Eden Phillpotts.*

THE CHURCH WHERE YOU MAY LAUGH.

A theatre to me is a place "where two or three are gathered together." The apostolic succession from Aeschylus to myself is as serious and as continuously inspired as that younger institution, the apostolic succession of the Christian Church. Unfortunately, this Christian Church, founded gaily with a pun, has been so largely corrupted by rank Satanism that it has become the Church where you must not laugh, and so it is giving way to that older and greater Church to which I belong—the Church where the oftener you laugh the better, because by laughter only can you destroy evil without malice, and affirm good fellowship without mawkishness.—*Bernard Shaw.*

A CONVICT'S READING.

There is a good story in the October number of the *Sunday at Home*. A well-known Glasgow preacher was interviewed by an ex-convict, who desired help in a case of what he considered to be objectionable police surveillance. The interview was satisfactory, and in bidding the ex-convict good-bye the minister asked what had led him to consult one who was a stranger to him. "Well, you see, sir," said the visitor, "it was like this. When I was at Peterhead I read an address of yours in a weekly paper. You know what it is when ye're in prison—you'll read anything."

The Bishop was visibly moved, and many wounded soldiers sat and heard the BENEDICTINE as he poured out..... the most touching appeal I have ever heard.—*An "Evening News" misprint.*

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Acid Drops

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York have decided to do something drastic to help the nation in its hour of trial. January 3, 1915, is to be observed as a "Day of Humble Prayer and Intercession." This is done with the consent of the King, who expresses his personal disinclination to the "use of any term which might plausibly be misinterpreted either at home or abroad." This looks as though King George had a little more sense in the matter than many of his advisers, but we suppose in these matters he must give way. Perhaps he thinks as Charles the Second did of the popularity of certain preachers in his time. Their nonsense suits the people's nonsense, he said, and we have no doubt that the nonsense of a Day of Intercession will suit the nonsense of many others. A number of Free Church leaders have expressed their approval of the suggestion, which is only to be expected. Anything that favors their trade will naturally meet with the support of parsons of all kinds.

Seriously, we wonder whether anyone—or how many—will believe that a general day of prayer would have any influence on the course of the War? If it will, why was prayer not resorted to three months ago? And why wait for another two months now? Will the German troops fight less effectively because people at home pray? We doubt it. Besides, we were under the impression that people had been praying—on both sides—all along. And now God Almighty is given two months' notice that unless the War is over by January 3, the whole of the nation—or that portion which calls itself Christian—will go down on its knees and howl to high heaven for "intercession." We really do not know whether this united prayer is intended as a bribe or as a threat. But whichever it is, it seems equally silly; and it is rather hard to realise the frame of mind that at this time of day thinks the course of a great war is to be influenced by adopting the intellectual attitude of a tribe of savages. Elaborate ritual and polished language may disguise that fact, but it remains.

The *Church Times* remarks on the proposed Day of Prayer that we must face the fact that "England is not a Christian country." It explains the selection of Sunday on the ground that the proclamation of a week-day to be set apart for prayer would only mean "a Bank-holiday orgy." Still, it thinks the first Sunday in January will supply a "public recognition of the Divine governance of the world," and "will give the most captious and critical occasion to think." Doubtless; but all the thinking will not be of the kind that the *Church Times* would like. The *Church Times* thinks "the curious and unbelieving may well be influenced by the spectacle of a nation on its knees." In what way? The "curious and unbelieving" are not unfamiliar with the sight of people on their knees. And it really makes no difference when a million adopt the same attitude. It is so like the religious mind to assume that an action that may be silly when performed by a few will become sensible when performed by many. It is what one may call—for want of a better term—sheep psychology; and that kind enters very largely into the religious make-up.

The late Bishop Wilkinson translated many English hymns into the Zulu tongue, but his task was not so bad as that of the missionary who had to render Sankey's pious verses into Cannibal dialects. Fancy some "Cannibal" Christians singing "There is a Fountain Filled with Blood."

The value of modern journalism, intellectually, is not great, but one of five daily papers, each claiming the largest circulation in the world, a few months ago stated that the Kaiser was "a very gallant gentleman, whose word is better than many another's bond." The paper sings a different tune to-day—for the same small bronze coin.

Thirsty ladies will not be served with intoxicants in the Metropolitan area before 11.30 in the morning. We hope prayerfully that this will not drive them to take early communion.

English sailors are cool enough when facing death. After the wreck of the cruiser *Hermes*, which was torpedoed in the Channel, a party of men went by on a raft, singing "Put Me Among the Girls." Unlike Turks, they did not mean the girls in the "next world."

Mr. G. K. Chesterton, whom the *Daily Mail* calls jocosely "a stout opponent of Germany," has been writing on "The Barbarism of Berlin," and he states that the root-evil of the Germans is that they are "intellectual Anarchists." Including the 20,000,000 German Catholics, eh, Mr. Chesterton?

We hear a lot concerning the evil influence of German "culture," which, presumably, includes music. Many religious tunes are German, such as the Christmas favorite, "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing," whilst the Easter hymn, "Christ the Lord is Risen Again," was also made in Germany. So were the children's favorite, "O Happy Band of Pilgrims," and the harvest festival tune, "We Plough the Fields and Scatter." The oratorios, "The Messiah," "St. Paul," "Elijah," and the "Hymn of Praise," are all German. Yet the wise Mr. Hilaire Belloc and a number of clerical gentlemen are always assuring us that the Germans are Atheists, and their "culture" is responsible for the present calamitous War.

Some Free Church busybodies, whose ears are longer than their colleagues', have been discussing the question of banning German music in their tin-tabernacles and chapels. They are asking whether it is right to listen to Mendelssohn's "Wedding March" or Handel's Dead March in "Saul." Perhaps they will crucify the flesh by using ragtime music.

"The war has accomplished more for missionary efforts than a thousand missionary societies," says the Rev. A. J. Waldron, of Brixton. Maybe this is his humorous way of suggesting that it has sent more men to heaven than the missionary societies.

The Rev. W. B. Brash, writing in the *Methodist Recorder*, says that "As one wanders along the roads of modern literature, one sometimes hears the low, at other times the loud baying of the bloodhound." How sad! And it is sadder still to reflect that the Scriptures of Brother Brash's Church also teach the ethics of blood.

A new novel has been published with the quaint title, *The Man with a Double Heart*. In that better-known work of fiction, the Holy Bible, we have stranger stories of people who had two funerals.

Rev. W. Temple, who is editing a series of pamphlets—"Papers for War-Time"—says that it is easy to answer those who say that the War represents the bankruptcy of Christianity. He thinks it really represents a great advance of Christianity, because "It is only now that Europe has found out again that if nations were Christian there would be no war." Dr. Temple is simply threshing the air. Even as it stands, the case is bad enough; for if Christianity has not persuaded the European peoples to adopt it during all these centuries, and with unrivalled opportunities for asserting itself, it is hardly likely to succeed in the future, with every one of its claims contested by hosts of keen and cultured minds. But the real bankruptcy of Christianity is shown in its being deficient in that kind of social and intellectual teaching that would lead people to see the horror and ultimate futility of war. The cardinal and damning fact is that the peace of the world has been for generations threatened by Christians, and by Christians alone. Anything like common trust and honesty among Christians would have made such a War as the present one a sheer impossibility.

How far Christians are from the Freethought ideal of human brotherhood! One hears so many people killing the Austrians and Germans "with their mouths" nowadays. As Huxley wittily said, "Public opinion is often public-house opinion."

Captain Jackson, a Tooting veteran, who will be 107 shortly, was among the congregation at the recent Seafarers' Service at St. Paul's Cathedral. He was made much fuss of. What would that congregation have done had Captain Noah been present, bearing bravely the weight of eight centuries?

Ordinary soldiers are sometimes as laconic as Cæsar or Wellington. We remember an elderly warrior who used to beg, bearing a placard, "Actions seven, wounds nine, children eight." The pious public so soon forget "Mr. Atkins" when the band has stopped playing.

Mrs. Randall Davidson, the wife of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the wives of the Bishops of Rochester and Southwark, have issued an appeal "to the girls living in the neighborhood of the Crystal Palace to beware of "the glad eye" of "Mr. Thomas Atkins." What a commentary on

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the assertion of the restraining influence of Christianity! And what an insult to "Mr. Atkins" and the girl he leaves behind him!

Frederick Birkett, a collier, who was sentenced at the Notts Assizes to twenty months' hard labor for house-breaking, his crimes totalling twenty-one burglaries, was a Sunday-school teacher. There is no moral; but had he been a Freethought lecturer there would have been a long one.

"May the guns ring in a new age of a wider charity, a bigger God, and a larger heaven!" says the Rev. A. J. Waldron. A bigger God. Indeed. Isn't Brother Waldron satisfied with one three times as large as that of any other religion?

Everybody is now familiar with the responsibility for the War being placed upon the shoulders of Nietzsche, Treitschke, and Bernhardi. The cultured pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Dr. Dixon, goes one better and lumps these three, Bernard Shaw, R. J. Campbell, and the late William James. We wonder why Mark Twain and Josh Billings were left out?

The New Zealand House of Representatives has rejected by 46 votes to 17, the proposal that the Bible in Schools Referendum Bill shall become law. It was hoped by the advocates of Bible teaching in State schools that by means of the Referendum the present position would be overthrown. As it is, Secular Education continues.

Mohammedan Turkey has at length joined in the march of Christian "civilisation," and will now devote herself to the study of murder as one of the fine arts.

The *Daily Telegraph*, that very Christian newspaper, has surpassed itself in its fulsome adulation of the Czar of all the Russias, whose kindness to the Jewish people will never be forgotten. Years ago the *Telegraph* gushed over the Czar's disarmament scheme, and called it the "coming millennium." As the music-hall song says, "It's a long, long way to Tipperary."

General Christian De Wet is "a dour man, convinced that God is on his side," says Mr. Robert Blatchford in the *Weekly Dispatch*. De Wet is the breeder of trouble in South Africa. Another man, who is also "God intoxicated," is the Kaiser, who is causing far more trouble in Europe. Is it not true that the negation of God is the beginning of wisdom?

The naval and military authorities agreed to a partial relaxation on November 5 of the rule prohibiting fireworks, in order that Protestants might celebrate "Guy Fawkes Day." It is a pity that this absurd celebration is not done away with, but any silly superstition is tolerated if it be even remotely associated with religion.

"The Christian faith is confidence in God in spite of anything, and no facts must be allowed to bully us out of that faith." So says Rev. John Hutton; and we agree that the faith which declines to be influenced by facts is the proper kind of faith. If facts contradict the faith, so much the worse for the facts. Only it strikes us that it is just this kind of faith that is bringing Germany to ruin. German leaders appear to have a most pronounced faith in the argument of brute force and sheer terrorism. They do not allow any fact to shake that faith. They will not realise that you cannot bully a people into taking even what is good for them, still less what is harmful. But they go their way, and, in Mr. Hutton's words, allow no facts to bully them out of that faith. We trust that Mr. Hutton renders to the German leaders the appreciation that is due to them.

The *British Weekly* announces that a representative gathering of Free Churchmen will be held at the Memorial Hall to deal with various aspects of the war. It adds that in the afternoon there will be a discussion on "The Camps—How the Free Churches can Help the Soldiers." This, we are told, "will relate to their temptations." Lord Kitchener should attend to this. There seems enough temptations about the camps already without Free Churchmen helping them to some more.

One of the wounded British soldiers at the Naval Hospital, Southend-on-Sea, has to be fed on buttermilk. That is the diet the Press Censor considers suitable for newspaper readers.

At a Bible Society meeting at Southend-on-Sea the Rev. J. H. Ritson described the operations of the Society's work among all the nations involved in the War, and also referred to a visit to South Africa. Evidently the Holy Book does not prevent the Christians following the pleasant pastime of cutting each others' throats.

"General" Booth may be full of the milk of human kindness, but the milk sold by the Salvation Army Colony at Hadleigh might be improved. At Southend recently the "General" was fined £5 and costs for selling milk from the Colony below the required standard. A witness said cows were affected by music. We wonder if he was thinking of the Salvation Army band.

The clergy of all denominations are shrewd in looking after their own interests. One result of the European War probably will be armored cathedrals and churches.

A pious writer in *T. P.'s Weekly* says that "German industrialism is materialistic to the core." So is all other. Soap, cotton, jam, clothing, and other articles are not made for any other purpose than the provision of the material basis of life. Even the bronze "gods" made at Birmingham and elsewhere are "materialistic."

A condemned man who was not sure he was going to be "jerked to Jesus" has been hanged. He deserved to have had a new trial, for the probability is that he was innocent. People who actually commit murder never seem to have any doubts about their salvation.

"It is because we are Christians that we have gone to war," says Sir Robertson Nicoll. This is not the whole truth, but there is a good deal of truth in the statement. It is partly because the world is Christian, and has been governed by Christianity for so long that such a war as the present one obtains. Can one imagine that a world in which the majority of people had been for centuries dominated by anything else but religion would be placed as Europe now is? We do not believe that any form of philosophy would have failed as completely as religion—and particularly Christianity—has done. It has failed to unite in bonds of enduring friendship two nations in any part of the world. Its failure is colossal—only equalled by its impudence in claiming that the world now needs more of it.

If all the Christian sects would support the Catholic Church in an Anti-War policy, says the *Catholic Times*, we should have a guarantee of peace upon which men might rely. Really! We should be interested to know when the Roman Catholic Church has preached an Anti-War policy, and when its whole influence has been directed to that end. We have no doubt that the Catholic Church would like all the other sects to look to it for leadership. Some weeks ago the *Catholic Times* was silly enough to hope that this might be one of the results of the War.

By the way, the *Catholic Times* does not view with any pleasure the probability of Russia occupying Constantinople. It is afraid it would mean a too great aggrandisement of Russia, and the progress of Russia means the progress of the Russian Church, which is not favorable to the Roman Church. That much is certain—until the advance of thought weakens the Russian Church, as it weakens churches elsewhere. The Russian Government looks to the Church as one of its most potent helpers, and those who know the history of Russia know the part played by the Church in dragooning the Russian people. Readers of M. Pobyedonosteeff's *Reflections* will remember the emphasis he placed upon religion as an agent in keeping the people in subjection. As Procurator of the Holy Synod of Russia he was able to speak with authority, and he was, moreover, a singularly intelligent man. He saw that the first consideration for an autocracy was not the enslavement of bodies, but of minds. The other followed as a matter of course.

It was reported that information reached the authorities of Harvard University that a very large bequest would be lost unless it discharged Professor Munsterberg, the eminent psychologist. The Professor tendered his resignation rather than injure the University. The University declined to accept it, and the Professor remains at his post. The authorities of the University deserve congratulating on their decision. It is as well to teach even millionaires there are some things that are not in the market, and upon which no cash value can be placed.

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To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £228 13s. 6d. Received since:—Pontypridd, 15s.; F. H. (Blackburn), £1 1s. Per Miss Vance: J. L. Vickery (Peckham), £1 1s.

ANDREW MILLAR.—You will see why we did not meet your young friend at Leicester. We should have been glad to shake hands, and something more.

PONTYPRIDD.—We like to acknowledge every subscription somehow. This will not disclose your identity.

ABRACADABRA.—Our readers will be glad to see your contributions resumed. There is much truth and sense in what you say with regard to the War.

T. C. (Portsmouth).—We note your opinion that the *Freethinker* articles on the War are in your opinion "almost the only ones containing reason and truthfulness." Perhaps this is due to the fact that *Freethinker* writers have no political or party axe to grind. Their object is to bring reason and good feeling to bear on *all* problems, and if the truth cannot be reached in this way, then the outlook is indeed hopeless.

E. A. PHIPSON.—You are quite mistaken as to the class of people among whom the *Freethinker* circulates. On that point, at least, we are likely to be better informed than any other individual. Nor do we think that our work would be more rapidly done by concentrating attention on what you call "modern occult and psychical theories." Reason is the great solvent of *all* superstitions, and a very large number of those who are attracted to modern occultism have never had their minds really liberated from the "old Adam" of theology. We venture to say that the attractiveness of "occultism" proves how little good is done by destroying a particular religious belief without at the same time giving the mind a—so to speak, good general cleansing.

H. W. MANN.—We do not know anything of Mr Weatherhead, and cannot say anything concerning the nature of the letters written many years ago "against the Bible and religion in general," and which he now expresses regret for having written. If we saw the letters it is possible that we might add our regrets to those of Mr. Weatherhead.

E. B.—Much obliged for cuttings.

W. P. BALL.—Your cuttings are very welcome.

BRADFORDIAN.—We are sending specimen copies of *Freethinkers* to the address given.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Personal.

I WAS very much disappointed by not being able to go to Leicester on Sunday. Neither my voice nor my breathing apparatus generally was affected. I was primarily suffering from an internal disarrangement brought on by lack of lavatory accommodation in a railway train, which set up acute diarrhœa and consequent heart disturbance, with sharp pain every now and then that nearly doubled me up. My doctor took me in hand, and soon worked an improvement. The pain is all gone, other symptoms are subsiding, and I expect to be quite well again in a few days. Anything expected from my pen this week will have to be postponed till next week's *Freethinker*. Mr. Cohen is kindly filling the editorial chair for the present issue of the paper. All's well that ends well, but I missed meeting many old friends at Leicester, and I am sorry for it.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Sydney A. Gimson, President of the Leicester Secular Society, writing on Monday morning, says: "A large crowd gathered to hear you last night. Not only from Leicester but from towns and villages round about. They were much disappointed not to hear you, and recognised that you were as disappointed not to come. Many left when they heard you were not coming, but a good audience remained and we gave them a good concert."

The *Ardrossan Herald* recently contained the following leaderette:—

"THE MOCKERY OF RIVAL PRAYERS.

"We pray to God to bless our arms. Germany is doing the same. France is doing the same, and so is Austria. What a ghastly spectacle it is! The evangelical churches of Germany issue a manifesto. The evangelical churches of England reply to it. In the manifesto of both the name of God and his Crucified Son appear, and we poor creatures must read them both—must read the comments passed upon both; and what can we do but hang our heads in shame that ever such a thing should have happened? I wish for those days, said Mr. Ramsey Macdonald, M.P., at Manchester, on Sunday, when we had no universal God at all. Then we could pray to our national God. I wish we were back in the old pagan days when every land had its own idol to which it could pray. Then we should be consistent; then we should be content and happy. But the hollow mockery of it!—that men using the same Name and worshiping the same God should, from rival battlefields and pulpits, put up rival prayers asking for rival blessings. What a curse must have come upon Europe before that sort of thing could be possible. Cannot we say this evil must pass away from us? We must go back to our Christian faith and our Christian hopes and, leaving all our fine-spun philosophies and all our political apologies upon one side, look each other in the eyes, shake hands with each other, and start Europe anew upon a basis of reason, of experience, and of Christian fellowship."

This is not a bad article for a Scotch paper on such a subject, but it contains a blunder which may as well be corrected. France is *not* praying to God for victory. The President refused to let the State be used for national prayers. He left all that to the Churches, as pertaining to their special province.

We might observe that Christian fellowship has always been a very poor basis for international peace. Christ said he came not to send peace but a sword, and he kept his word. His followers have shed more blood than the followers of all the other Prophets on earth. Why introduce "Christian" before "fellowship"? Isn't the latter good enough by itself?

Many of our readers will be glad to read the following passage in a letter from a Blackburn correspondent:—

"I gratefully acknowledge the debt I owe you—a debt so great that I can never hope to discharge in any material way. During these years of physical blindness you have been, and are still, an unfailing source of inspiration. You have enriched my life. Allow me to express also my warm appreciation of the common sense you are publishing regarding the War."

Such letters are medicinal to one who has had many troubles and as many reckless enemies as man ever had. But the friends always outnumber the enemies, and such letters as this assure us that we have not lived and toiled in vain.

It is probable that some of our readers may be acquainted with Belgian refugees in need of a home. A Freethinker is ready to place a small furnished cottage in the country, with food, at the disposal of, preferably, a widow with two to four children, or, failing that, an elderly couple. No questions will be raised as to religion—although preference would be given to Freethinkers; the only question is that they shall be necessitous. Applications for particulars must be made to Miss Vance, at this office.

We feel there would be little need for the above paragraph, but, as usual, religion is making what is at best a mournful business still more distressing. The Belgian Hospitality Committee, in making arrangements, raises so many questions of religion that Freethinkers have little opportunities of extending their hospitality. In addition, we are afraid that those refugees who are Freethinkers (and there must be many such) will be more or less victimised on account of their opinions—unless they are driven to concealment on account of their needs.

There is hope for Catholics now. The Pope has advised them that they should all keep a copy of the Bible in the house and read some of it every day. If they take his advice, as we earnestly hope they will, many of them will soon be on the high road to Freethought.

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Undelivered.—Killed in Action.

THERE had been a dispute at the works. Foolish things had been said by both parties; and when he spoke the matter over at home his father agreed with the manager, even going further, and saying he should get the sack for impertinence and insubordination. That led to complications. His spirit, naturally a rebellious one, seethed with revolt. He felt at war with the world. So he 'listed.

Six crowded months passed quickly. His seditious nature was tamed into sharp recognition of obedience. He trained hard, and in the training his overpowering personality was subdued. He helped to bury an unforgiving father. A premature engagement was broken off. There was a declaration of war; a hurried farewell visit to his mother; and a hasty departure for France.

Mother suffered, as many women do, in silence and solitude; but her quiet anguish came more from her thoughts than from her heart. She often questioned the sense of bringing children into the world. And always, when she turned the pages of the book of her own life, her ideas circled this; and always they were personal. Often she wondered if it were not possible to conquer sex love to the extent of dominating the physical by the mental. Happiness she had enjoyed up to the time when she knew she was a mother; but from then the happiness gradually waned. With her baby there came something of the nature of misery, a cloud that hung heavily upon her heart, and never lifted. Her boy was the flame of a physical passion that appealed to her as a sudden weakness, and the smoke of it thickened with the years. Even now, twenty-seven years later, her cheeks would flush at the thought, and she could not be sure it was not shame.

Mental pain intensified with the gathering of thoughts and memories. As her brain found more and more avenues of ideas that led away from her conviction she felt herself drawing nearer to an imagined sore part of the heart of womankind; for she dreamed there must be many women with natures like her own, women who wished the tree of love to bear no fruit. And the sadness never left her; for her son was headstrong as a child, stubborn as a boy, and grimly determinate as a youth. Circumstance aided her attitude to strength.

Conflict between him and his father was continuous. Even in their times of apparent peace moved an animosity that kept the atmosphere charged with the elements of strife. There were periods when the tension became nearly unbearable. Only the idea of the inevitability of it all seemed to keep her mind from being destroyed. She summoned to her assistance the oriental complacency in the face of fate. Behind her son's moods, his character, his strong enmity to control, his passionate hate and disgust at everything from which his mind recoiled, and his inability to conceal his emotions, she saw the reaction of her own sex distaste. The implications of her sense of shame, of weakness, she felt convinced, had been transmitted; he had inherited them; they were working out their fated destiny in his life.

Delight came to her from one source. When the clouds lay black and heavy over the household, and her mind was being tossed upon the sea of conflictions, she would turn there for such delight as it afforded. Silent, moody, and self-sufficient as her son was, his outside life practically a closed book to his parents, only an occasional trivial episode leaking out, the mother felt with a stedfast faith that her boy was straight. Nothing ever came to dim her pride. She knew his mind and body were clean, cleaner than her own, she thought. And fain would she have confided in him, seeking to ascertain his ideas; for often she wondered if he felt as she did towards the things that mattered most in her life. But his egoism forbade friendship, and her loneliness of mind acted as a barrier to the expression of her longings.

When her husband died it seemed as if the gates were opening. She would come closer to her son. They would get to know each other. The stain of the last grievous quarrel would be wiped away by purifying chumship. And her heart rejoiced at the idea of her son's chumship. At last, it seemed, she could renounce her loneliness. She would enjoy his companionship. And her heart leaped at the prospect. But suddenly the winds of war swept across the land of her dreams. The gates were crashed together; and her son was gone.

Lines crept into her face, and grey hairs whitened into snow. Loneliness deepened under the sombre skies of her thoughts. It was too late. The few letters that came were the silver edges of her life; and when these ceased night fell.

. . . . .

The postoffice sorter turned the letter over and swore audibly at the officialism of which he was a part; and all day he cursed bitterly the callous, inconsiderate thing. The postman, handling the letter, wished to God someone else had been on his road that delivery.

"Any letters for me this morning, postman?"

"Yes, mother; and I wish I hadn't!"

She took the letter, looked at her own name and address as she had written it on the back, then she turned it round to read the endorsement on the face: "Undelivered—killed in action."

ROBERT MORELAND.

"The Weaker Vessel."

IN his article on "The Radical Woman," published in this periodical recently, Mr. Mangasarian gives as known truisms a number of statements in regard to female subordination which are not in accord either with my own reading or observation. He speaks of primitive times and the primitive husband, and lays down that in primitive times a mentally virile woman would have scant chance for survival. That the primitive husband wanted a dependent woman because it gave him an opportunity to play the rôle of protector. But what is "primitive"? When were "primitive" times? As far as history goes, men in all stages of development existed concurrently. The world at this instant contains races in every degree of uncivilisation. It is those which are most degraded that can be demonstrated not to be "primitive," but degenerate posterity of formerly civilised peoples. To avoid a side issue, we will take the word "primitive" in its everyday and conventional meaning in regard to the races of men, only to find that there is no fixed law in nature controlling the status of woman. It was precisely in primitive society that the "virile" woman—both or either—mentally and physically had scope. Among the earliest Hebrews, the first virile mind to conspire to emancipate the tribes was that of the woman—Deborrah—and she was their recognised chief. Captain Cook found at least one of the South Sea Islands ruled by a woman. Speke and Grant found a powerful female chief in Africa. I find in Irving's *Life of Columbus* the statement that upon one occasion a canoe containing a number of men and two women came unawares upon one of their boats. While attempting to seize the savages, they resisted, and "The women fought as fiercely as the men, and one of them sent an arrow with such force that it passed through and through a buckler.....One of the women, from the obedience and deference paid to her, appeared to be their queen." The aboriginal inhabitants of the New World not only have "virile" women but women who are sacerdotal; for in Mr. Mangasarian's own city of Chicago there is, in the Field Museum, the figure of a native minister of primitive religion, in a temple of the primitive culture, and that minister is a woman.

In paragraph 318 of Herbert Spencer's *Sociology*, is the statement "that definite coherent marital relations," such as described by Mr. Mangasarian as

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"primitive," wherein the man's vanity made him "play the rôle of protector," were preceded by indefinite incoherent ones, and, in many places, instead of a lordly-protector-husband admiring the quality of weakness in his wife, her dependence upon, and subordination to, him, there is the diametrical opposite—a woman with a plurality of husbands. This polyandry is found among the most primitive peoples, such as the Fuegians, the Aleutians, the Todas, the Esquimaux, and among the warlike and domineering Caribs, who, nevertheless, have among them the opposite institution of polygamy. In truth, the subordination of woman and her fixture in society as "The Weaker Vessel" is the outcome of religion, and is not a tradition surviving out of primitive times. Gods are primitive ideals and become obsolete. The Greeks were the most civilised and cultured people that has yet been evolved. They had a vital religion that was a reality and part of their national existence, yet they kept their women in harems, subordinate and uneducated, impressing beautiful female children to be reared intellectually, but to form a distinct and prostitute sex. I have not read of any Greek woman out of that caste who was otherwise than domestic, subordinate, and dependent; nevertheless, among the gods Wisdom was an old maid who was born dressed in the complete uniform of a soldier! Thelma was not merely "a mentally virile woman," but a physical warrior. The gods of the Arts and of the Chase were twins, but it was the woman who was the hunter and the man a musician. In simple truth, the subordination of women, like the class inferiority of productive toilers, is a survival of slavery and direct outcome of the military organisation of society—which is always religious. The priest and the king are always more or less synonymous. As the royal power assumes the priestly, so the status of woman lowers. In England, when it was broken up into earldoms, abbesses had great power. Hild Abbess, of Whitby, created a university, trained clergy, and nominated bishops.

At that time the patient Grissel was unheard of; but when Cardinal Beaufort usurped the protectorship of the kingdom, he degraded the intellectual wife of the Protector as a witch, burnt the woman-soldier Joan of Arc alive, and the poem of Griselda was taught to the women of the kingdom as the true description of the perfect wife. I can remember no instance of a warrior-husband killing his wife because she was not delicate, dependent, fragile, timid, leaning upon his strong arm for protection—quite contrary. Alexander married the Queen of the Amazons. Moses married Zipporah, who decidedly had a will of her own. David took the strong-willed Abigail for a supplementary wife. The wife of Brutus stuck a dagger into herself, to demonstrate her firmness. Mark Anthony married Cleopatra. In fact, such unions of kindred temperaments with warriors are the rule. I cannot go through early French and German history, but here in England every warrior-king selected a virile woman as his "better half." Henry II. married Eleanor, who poisoned his mistress, "Fair Rosamond"; Richard the First's wife went with him to the wars; Edward III. had for his queen Phillippa, who, in his absence defended the country against the King of Scotland, and made him prisoner; Edward IV. married the extremely capable widow, Elizabeth Woodville; and so throughout history. Theodora, Alice Ferrars, Catherine I., Montespan, Maintenon, Mrs. Clark, were all voluntarily taken by soldiers for their companions, and were more or less ruled by them. But, on the other hand, while soldiers, instead of killing the most individualistic woman they could find, have married them or made them their mistresses. The most notably intellectual women have been murdered by priests. The famous Phryne narrowly escaped execution as an Atheist. Hypatia was cut to pieces by monks at the instigation of Cyril, the Archbishop of Alexandria. They were so vigilant that I do not remember another intellectual woman appearing until Anne Askew, who was burnt alive by the bishops for denying the Real Presence. While the Atheists Bentham, the Mills, Grote, Spencer, Huxley, Tyndall, Darwin, Swinburne, were extremely popular and flourished, their woman friend, the astute "George Eliot," started by writing orthodox *Scenes of Clerical Life*, and followed it by a novel, the heroine of which was a female street preacher, and she did not not avow her Atheism until she resolved to write no more.

Neither the "primitive" nor the "barbarian" suppresses woman. What use is Mr. Mangasarian's savage's wife, who let her husband "think for her, choose for her, and decide for her," to a man who is from home the greater part of the time. Scott knew primitive man better; and he gave his savage revert, half ourang-outang, cattle stealer, Helen Macgregor for his wife. The savage has no rule in marriage. Some consort with women of the same name wherever he finds her, as by right—others may not marry such a one. As I have shown, he sometimes has female priests, female warriors, and female chiefs. The Queen of Ethiopia came to Solomon to learn wisdom; but Queen Athaliah was murdered by the high priest. Mark Anthony made his wife a general; Olympias, wife of Philip of Macedon, and mother of Alexander, upon her husband's death, headed an army of her own. Semiramis did the same thing. Herod the Great selected his daughter Alexandra to succeed him. Henry I. gave England to his daughter Matilda. Isabella I. was co-king with her husband, and a warrior. There are four suits of her armor in the Escurial. But it is in Italy that woman is intellectually abject. It is in Rome and Poland, in France since the rule of the Cardinals of the renaissance, in Russia under a Christian quasi-god autocrat, that the effacement of woman exists. Everywhere the priest rules the active and beautiful woman is mesmerised into a convent; the land drops down to moor, debased by insane, stealthy, and deadly cotters—we get Poland, Calabria, the Campagna, Connaught—and the Highlands of the early years of the last century. Where the soldier rules, we have the female liberty of the German housewife. The educational advantages granted to females in Russia, and the very advanced rights enjoyed by women in Turkey, as described by Lady Wortley Montague, in the eighteenth century. No woman except Pope Joan, who was disguised as a man, ever seized a priestly government but the late Empress of China, a former Empress. No; two Catherines of Russia, Maria Theresa, Catherine Medici, Queen Elizabeth, and many others, have seized and ruled military empires, and been enthusiastically worshiped by soldiers; but no woman except Lucrecia Borgia and, I repeat, Pope Joan, ever exercised the office of the Pontifex Maximus of Rome.

GEORGE TREBELLS (Newfoundland).

The Design Argument.—III.

IN THE LIGH OF ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY.

(*Continued from p. 717.*)

WHATEVER the designists may say about it, I can't for a moment make myself believe that God or any other being has supplied more or less ligaments, and these also of more or less strength, to the joints, according to the importance of the joints. I don't think there is a joint of greater importance in the whole body than that of the atlas and axis, the first and the second bones of the vertebral column. The dislocation of the atlas produces pressure on the spinal cord and causes instantaneous death. No dislocation of a joint or joints of the body causes so serious, so disastrous a result; and yet only six ligaments are supplied to it. These are two anterior atlo-axoid, one posterior atlo-axoid, one transverse, and two capsular. And again, of these six ligaments, properly speaking, only one ligament—the transverse—serves to retain the odontoid (of the shape of a tooth) process of the axis in connection with the

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anterior arch of the atlas, and join these two bones —the atlas and the axis—that is, the first and the second bones, together.

There are several cases on record where the odontoid process has been dislocated with the result of instant death. A man went to swim, and straining himself in the act, the joint was dislocated, and instant death was the result. A lunatic in an asylum was being fed, and in his efforts to avoid the food, he jerked his head backwards, by which the joint between the atlas and the axis was dislodged, and the poor madman died instantaneously. Several such cases will be found cited in works on medical jurisprudence. If we take into consideration the fact that not even twenty per cent. of such cases come to the knowledge of the medical profession, and not even one-fourth of these are recorded, we can clearly see how disastrous results follow from the failure of the so-called God's special providence to supply the joint with ligaments strong enough and of sufficient quantity and good quality.

In children the danger of dislocation of this joint is very great, owing to the ligaments being more relaxed, and dislocation actually often takes place, causing instantaneous death. Hence, let me remark right here, that apart from God's special providence or no providence, it is essentially and absolutely necessary for us to take great care, in the handling of children, to support the head. So also in debilitated sick persons, the ligaments become relaxed and weak and we have to be very careful in supporting the head.

When we see how the most important joint of the atlas and axis is neglected, the trying to prove the special providence of God from the supply of ligaments to the joints of the human frame becomes glib talk and nothing more.

Sixth. It is urged that God not only has made joints and supplied them with ligaments, but that in order that they may work well, he has even oiled them, as we do the wheel and axle of a carriage. I admit that we do find something like that in joints. There is really a bag-shaped skin called synovial membrane around the joints. These membranes secrete a liquid substance which prevents the opposite membranes from rubbing against each other and permits gliding movements in joints. This is all true, no doubt. But to say that this is done by special providence of some kind and merciful Father in heaven is only to ignore the pathological phenomena which the human economy is subject to. If God, out of his infinite mercy, goodness, and wisdom supplies the oil in joints to make them work smoothly, and thus to enable his dear child, man, to walk and work and serve him, then why does he, every now and then, and in numberless cases, inflame the membranes and produce the disease called synovitis, by reason of which the limb cannot be moved an inch without the most excruciating pain? People prefer death rather than life, suffering this cruel pain. In cases of inflammation, God, out of his merciful profusion, produces a secretion of much more oil than is necessary and causes the same most unbearable pain just mentioned; or, on the other hand, he takes the opposite extreme—as he is often wont to do—and out of his frugal economy produces so little of the oil—why, often, in fact, he does not produce any oil at all!—that the membranes cannot glide against each other, and, of course, the joints cannot move, thus frustrating the special, kind design of the all-powerful Providence. The pain produced by this want of oil is simply unimaginable.

Now, one might say that these are pathological phenomena. They are not natural. God had made certain laws according to which the human system, as all other systems, is going on. If you break the laws you must suffer. That is the natural consequence. Who else is to blame for that? Well, so far, so good. But what's the good of God's making laws and keeping the people ignorant of them? Suppose the Parliament makes good and wise laws for the nation, but does not make them known to the people. Would it be wise on the part of the members of the Parliament to punish the people for not keeping them? You would surely call the Parliament insane, or, at any rate, unreasonable beings. It is the same case here with regard to the so-called God's providence. For instance, how are people to know what they should do to avoid synovitis, as well as a number of other diseases? It is simply orthodoxy, fanaticism, and want of regard to truth, to attribute all the good things to God's special providence for the good of man, and acquit him of the evils produced in the world and in the complex human system (said to have been made by the loving Father himself)—a system of the correct rules for the guidance of which so much remain to be known in spite of the hundreds and thousands of noble souls that have worked since time immemorial (and many are still working for the good of man) to understand correctly the laws that govern the system; not to speak of a number of external influences over which man has no control whatever, such as excessive heat, excessive cold, snow, fog, etc, besides a number of epidemic diseases, which oftentimes, in the twinkling of an eye, upset the human system and produce diseases, the names and nature of which have filled volume after volume of thousands of pages.

Now, as regards the seventh point, the so-called most ingenious contrivance in the throat, I have simply to ask you to recall to your mind how often you have seen this contrivance of God prove futile in others, and even in your own selves, while taking food or drink. How often is suffocation produced by the lodging of food and drink in a wrong passage, the windpipe, instead of the œsophagus, the gullet? How is it, I ask, that the food goes in a wrong way if God has already designed a valve or a door to guard against the accident? It defeats God's purpose, speaks volumes of evil against him, and clearly proves the opposite of his all-powerfulness and wisdom. Perhaps, some one will say, although the food sometimes escapes to the wrong passage, the wind from the lungs drives it away. Well, my inquiry is, why should it pass into the wrong passage at all? Does it not defeat the contrivance of God, if it is a contrivance in any sense? Of course, it does defeat it. There are cases on record of death caused by suffocation induced by the passing of food and other substances into the air-passages from which they could not be dislodged by the air of the lungs. Sometimes, too, the epiglottis is paralysed, when there is a great chance of such accidents taking place. Sometimes such diseases as glottidis are produced, or tumors are formed in the breathing apparatus; in such cases, there is great danger of suffocation being produced.

The eighth point I have now to consider is about the eye. The eye is, indeed, the most important organ of the senses of our body. They say God has provided the eye with seven muscles to enable us to move it in every direction. Well, if God has kindly managed it in that way, how is it that these muscles are often paralysed and God's good intentions foiled? If the elevator muscle of the upper eyelid is paralysed, dropping of the lid is produced, when one cannot see unless the lid is lifted artificially. So also paralysis of any of the four muscles—superior, inferior, exterior, and internal—determines a permanent deviation of the pupil in the opposite direction to the muscle paralysed, whilst its shortening draws the pupil to its own side. In these cases, the subject is said to suffer from squint. This effect can be cured only by the hand of the surgeon—mind, by the hand of the surgeon and not by that of God!—by the total or partial division of the muscle which draws the pupil to its own side. Lastly, the remaining muscles are the two "oblique muscles," and are called the great and the small, or the superior and inferior. They preside over the movements of the rotation of the eye on its anteroposterior axis and tend to draw the globe forward, whilst the recti-muscles act in an opposite direction. These two opposed forces neutralise each other and tend to keep the globe of the eye in equilibrium. But paralysis of any of these muscles produces deplopia, which means

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double vision, making a mess of the whole thing. Such is the special providence of God for the good of man—his favorite creature, and the noblest work of his hand!

The theologians, in praise of the Creator, say how astonishingly wonderful it is that although we have two eyes, we see only one substance when there is one substance only; but from what we have just described, in deplopia, we see two objects, though there is only one object, whether we see with two eyes or with one eye only. Here is a greater miracle still than seeing only one object with two eyes!

They say the eyes are placed in the front of the head where they are most useful. God has given us two eyes instead of one. This arrangement enables us to see better, and again, should we happen to lose one by an accident or disease, we still have the other.

In answer, I ask, should we lose the other also, why not a third and a fourth eye? Why only two eyes in the front, and not two more eyes behind, and one eye on each side? We could have seen better in that case. We could have seen vehicles and animals and everything coming behind us, and thus be saved from accidents. We could the better have detected wicked persons like assassins and pick-pockets. But no! God has given man only two eyes, and not even half-a-dozen; while such a trivial and loathsome creature as the cockchafer has 8,820 eyes, and the butterfly has 34,650 eyes!

Again, when we take into consideration the distance we can reach with our naked eye, we cannot but admit that we are very weak, neglected, and pitiable creatures.

On the point that "the eye is carefully guarded by the bones which jut out all around it," I have to say that it is not so guarded on the outer side, where it projects beyond the base of the orbit, and so exposes the eye to injury on this side very easily.

Again, they say the eye is protected by two shutters—the eyelids—to keep out the powerful light of the sun. So, also, the eyelids are supplied with lashes to keep off small bodies like dust and flies. How far the object of God to keep off small insects and particles of dust from going into the eyes is accomplished, is universally known. There cannot be found a single man on the face of the earth who is not now and then troubled with these small bodies in the eye, especially when he goes out for a walk in the open air on a windy day. So, also, the eyelid is sometimes inverted, *i.e.*, turned inwards, when the hair growing on the margin of the eyelids, which we call eyelashes, are turned inside the eye, and so the eyeball is continuously pricked, is continuously tortured, as it were, by the hair. Sometimes, although the eyelid is not inverted, the eyelashes, that ought to grow only on the anterior or cutaneous, *i.e.*, the outer, lip of the free border of the eyelid, grow on the posterior or conjunctival, *i.e.*, inner border of the lip of the eyelid and prick into the eyeball, giving the favorite creature of God incessant pain. And in this, as in hundreds of other cases, it is for no fault of his.

You see what a fuss the special providence of God is making in this manner! When the special providence of God is pleased to take such a turn, no amount of prayers and offerings, no intervention of priests and mediators, can remedy the evil. Nothing short of a surgical operation, the tying up of the eyelid, or the extermination remedy, as the case may be, can correct the whim of God's so-called special providence for the happiness and well-being of man.

(*To be concluded.*)

Where is Jesus Christ?

A Curious Speculation.

AN astronomer had just shown a man Jupiter in a telescope. The man was pious, the astronomer was "undevout."

"Is that a world you are showing me?" queried the man.

"Probably it is," said the astronomer.

"I wonder," added the man, "if Jesus Christ has been crucified there too?"

The astronomer, knowing much more of Jupiter than of Jesus, could venture no reply to the last query. But the incident sets me athinking in quite an original direction.

You know, according to those most truthful of records, that Jesus left the earth for heaven about 1,864 years ago, informing his followers that he would return to earth in a short time—in fact, during the course of their natural lives. He has never returned, and there is no sign or sound of his second advent. This is a very serious matter, and believers are very much exercised over it; and their hearts are wrung and lacerated terribly when the scoffing sceptic cries: "Where is the promise of his coming?" The Christian can assign no reason for the failure of J. C. to reappear, any more than the followers of Joanna Southcott can for her delay in coming back to be the mother of the Messiah.

Now, I think I am able to suggest a reason why Jesus has not returned according to promise; and my explanation ought to convey the most solid comfort to those devout souls who "love his appearing."

You see, when Jesus ascended to go to heaven, he had no knowledge at all of Jupiter—didn't know such a world as Jupiter existed. But as he travelled on through space on the back of a cherub, which snorted fire along the road, and as age after age passed by, and nearly a thousand years had run since he left the earth and no resting-place had yet been found, he saw Jupiter just in front of him, and resolved to call there for a few days' rest and change of air. So he put spurs to his cherub, and was soon landed on Jupiter.

J. C. found the planet Jupiter immensely bigger and more interesting than the earth, and the people much more numerous.

"Dear me!" he exclaimed, by-and-bye, "how came my father to commit so gross a blunder as to send me to save so trumpery a world as the Earth—that paltry speck over yonder; why, dear me, I can't see it anywhere. Why, how was it he sent me to that paltry speck and not this huge world?"

So J. C., after resting a few months on Jupiter, resolved to do a little salvation work in that huge planet on his own account. So he provided himself with a new mother; and as the period of gestation there is much longer than here—because Jupiter's year is almost twelve times the length of ours—he was not born until almost nine years after his conception.

Having been born, and slowly grown up to manhood, he found, when he had finished his work, been crucified, and having risen from the dead, that over four hundred years had passed since he had landed to rest on Jupiter; and now he thought his father might be a bit anxious about him, and resolved to make straight tracks for home.

At the present time J. C. is, according to my most devout reckoning, about half-way between Jupiter and Saturn. He does not yet know anything of the latter planet; but, should he come in contact with it, I venture to predict that he will land first on one of the rings, and then descend to the planet itself. Should he choose a mother, and be reincarnated there, gestation, work, etc., and death and resurrection will take up no less than from 900 to 1,000 years.

If Jesus should stay to perform his grand comic farce on Uranus and Neptune too, it will be some time ere he gets back to his father. In Uranus alone it will take him about 2,600 years to get through the play; while in Neptune it will take him about 5,400 years.

The reader will understand that I have given Jesus equal proportionate times in all the planets named, taking each planet's year as the standard of measurement.

If my surmise be correct—and who will venture to question it?—why, I must have been divinely inspired to write it. If I am right, the reader will understand how it is Jesus has not returned to earth. And I am confident that my explanation is the most rational yet put forward to account for Christ's long delay. Looking at all the facts of the case, I do not think Jesus will return to earth until after the year A.D. 1,000,000, and I shall feel no surprise if 100,000,000 years should pass before he comes. Would you?

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THE
Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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Religion itself means intolerance. The various sects tolerate nothing but their own dogmas.—SHELLEY.

The Unreality of Religion.

NEARLY two years ago the Rev. F. B. Meyer prophesied, at a public meeting at Newcastle-on-Tyne, that in a few months this country would experience such a revival of religion as had never been seen before. Time has shown us how utterly false that prediction was; but his past failure as a prophet has not taught the reverend gentleman any wisdom. Two other prophecies have just fallen from his lips, the one being that one result of the War will be the restoration of Palestine to the Jews, which "will be a wonderful thing, proving that the Word of God stands for ever," and the other that immediately after the War we shall have a new heaven and a new earth, in which righteousness alone shall reign. God's covenant with the Jews was that the land should be kept for them, and that in due time they should return to it. In order that the covenant may be speedily fulfilled, Turkey has been Divinely inspired to join Germany in the present War, which will inevitably eventuate in the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. Then this modern prophet "declared that history revealed that the Almighty had entered into a covenant with us as surely as he had entered into a covenant with the Hebrew people, and that he was going to stand by us and see that it was not the mailed fist but the pierced hand of Jesus which should hold the book of Empire." We are convinced that all this talk about God and his covenants with certain people is mere cant and twaddle. The "mailed fist" is real, strong, and terrible, and most devastating are its blows; but the "pierced hand of Jesus" is unreal, impotent, and quite incapable of any performance, either destructive or constructive. If there is a God, he has hitherto befriended the mailed fist, the achievements of the German Empire having been phenomenal. He secured for it glorious victories in the wars of 1866 and 1870, and the empire founded by it has had forty years' uninterrupted prosperity. Without a doubt, the mailed fist has been a mighty power in the world, and is at the present moment doing wonders on bloody battlefields. Judging by the facts of recent history, the Almighty has smiled upon and supported German militarism, and the Kaiser has always led his people in his name. If this militarism is now doomed to disappear, its destruction will be accomplished, not because God is with the Allies, but because the allied forces are more than a match for the vast German army. We shall win not because our cause is just, but because we are strong enough and sufficiently well led to crush the enemy on the open field. The ministers of the Gospel know this as well as we do, and that is the reason why they act the part of recruiting sergeants.

The truth is that religion is as impotent in times of war as it is known to be when peace prevails. To unprejudiced people its unreality is an established fact. Recently Sir W. Robertson Nicoll entitled his leading article in the *British Weekly* "Prayer in Time of War," and now we learn that "in response to many requests" Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton have published it as a pamphlet. Why were those numerous requests made? Simply because the majority even of religious people are not quite sure that prayer will do any good in such a crisis, which is a perfectly natural state of mind to be in. Of well-attested answers to prayer there are absolutely none, and as a consequence there are multitudes of professing Christians who doubt the utility of praying, especially for victory in war-time. Canon Adderley informs us that the object of religion is to help us to lead good lives, but it is a notorious fact that it has dismally failed to achieve that end. The nations engaged in the present war are all profoundly religious. The German campaign may be "a delirium of vanity and ambition," but Dr. Watkinson, the popular Wesleyan preacher, is fundamentally mistaken when he characterises it as "the most atheistical, sceptical, and ghastly" campaign that has ever been inaugurated. Why, in his first proclamation the Kaiser assured his people that God had always been on their side in the past, and would undoubtedly be on their side and give them the victory on the present occasion, if only they were united; and the name of God has been prominent in every message that has fallen from him since. Every war is "ghastly," but this one is anything but "atheistical and sceptical." But has the Christian religion succeeded in making these fighting nations "good"? If national and international relations had been good, this fierce struggle would have been impossible, and the only rational conclusion is that religion has signally failed to establish such relations.

The Rev. Lloyd Thomas, of Birmingham, contributed a remarkable article to the *Christian Commonwealth* for November 11 on what he calls the highest reality of religion, in which he declares that no religion can possess such reality unless it fulfils three conditions. "It must be true; it must be good; it must be beautiful." Then he proceeds thus:—

> "These three conditions are fulfilled in that Eternal Being whom we worship. He is a holy and blessed Trinity of three Persons in one God; and the three *persons* are Truth, Goodness, and Beauty. The True is the ideal of the intellect; the Good is the ideal of the will; the Beautiful is the ideal of the emotion; and these three are one. The quest of truth gives us philosophy; the devotion to goodness gives us morality; the love of beauty gives us art."

This new doctrine of the Trinity is not more acceptable to the reason than the orthodox one. We know of no Eternal Being in whom are fulfilled the three conditions just mentioned. Certainly the Christian religion does not impart truth, goodness, and beauty to those who profess it. It does not impart truth because it is not itself true. It is not true that the human race is fallen; it is not true that a God-man ever lived and died and rose from the dead on this earth, and thereby became the Savior of the world; it is not true that a just and good God sits on the throne of the Universe and governs it according to his own will; and it is not true that all existing things work for good to genuine believers. Such doctrines are mind-corrupting and heart-degrading lies, and belief in them has made people cruel. Neither does the Christian religion inspire high morality in its professors. Mr. Lloyd Thomas says that "the good received stern and austere expression among the Puritans." We candidly admit that the

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Puritans were tremendously religious—so religious, indeed, that in their time, as Green puts it, "the whole nation became, in fact, a Church"; but their goodness was a highly doubtful quantity. Very beautifully does Milton sing in his *Comus*:—

> "Mortals, that would follow me,
> Love Virtue; she alone is free.
> She can teach ye how to climb
> Higher than the sphery chime."

But to the Puritans virtue meant godliness, and godliness was possessed only by themselves. What was their attitude towards non-Puritans? It was always one of supreme hatred and contempt, and when they were in power it expressed itself in acts of the utmost brutality. Their intolerance knew no bounds. With what avidity they put witches and Sabbath-breakers to death! Lecky says:—

> "As soon as Puritanism gained an ascendancy in the country, as soon as its ministers succeeded in imparting their gloomy tenets to the governing classes, witchcraft assumed a gigantic magnitude. During the few years of the Commonwealth, there is reason to believe that more alleged witches perished in England than in the whole period before and after. Nor is this to be ascribed entirely to the judges or the legislators, for the judges in former reigns never shrank from condemning witches, and Cromwell was, in most respects, far superior to his predecessors. It was simply the natural result of Puritanical teaching acting on the mind, predisposing men to see Satanic influence in life, and, consequently, eliciting the phenomena of witchcraft" (*The Rise and Influence of Rationalism in Europe*, pp. 106-7).

In his interesting little book, *Sunday: The People's Holiday* (pp. 62, 63), Dr. Hardwicke relates the following savage incident:—

> "A Baptist minister in 1661, in London, was hanged and quartered, his heart taken out and burned, his quarters affixed to the gates of the city, and his head stuck on the top of a pole and set opposite his meeting-house in Whitechapel, simply for speaking against Sabbath observance."

Piety the Puritans displayed in great abundance, but goodness or virtue, in the social sense of the term, was conspicuous only by its absence. The Christian religion and exalted morality are two wholly different things. Benvenuto Cellini was at once a devout Christian and a shameless criminal. And in the second decade of the twentieth century European Christians have been cruelly slaughtering one another for nearly four months. Yet, in face of all these facts, and thousands more that could be cited, Sir W. Robertson Nicoll has the hardihood to publish a book called *The Difference Christ is Making!*

Now religion, being essentially unreal, has done nothing but harm to mankind. Saintliness and humanity have often been entirely opposite qualities. And of all the great religions, Christianity is the most demoralising in its influence upon character. Dr. Meyer is confidently looking forward to a wonderful revival of this superstition, and is going to do his utmost to live ten years longer to see the happy time that will follow such a revival. We do not share that expectation, but are of opinion that this war will rather do more towards hastening the complete disintegration of supernaturalism than any other catastrophe known to history.

J. T. LLOYD.

Religious Freedom.

NEARLY everyone is acquainted with the famous definition of a crab as "a fish with six legs that walks backwards." Cuvier's reply to this is equally widely known, but it will bear repetition. He said that he agreed with the definition, except that a crab wasn't a fish, it didn't have six legs, and it didn't walk backwards. Otherwise, the description was accurate.

I was reminded of the above by a sentence in a leading article in one of the daily papers of a recent date. The writer said—just as though it were a matter beyond dispute—"Religious freedom has made us increasingly religious," etc. What went before and what came after the words cited, had no special bearing upon the opinion expressed, and so may be left on one side. I cite this particular sentence because it illustrates a very common fallacy, and one that seems an even greater favorite with latitudinarians than with those of pronounced religious convictions. What Cuvier said of the definition of a crab might be said, with a change of terms, of the opinion that religious freedom has made us more religious. We are not more religious than we were, and religious freedom does not, and cannot, make for greater religion. With these reservations this particular statement may be accepted as correct.

Let us take the last point first. What is meant by religious freedom? Presumably it means liberty to accept and express any religious belief we please. Each one of us must be allowed, as Heine puts it, to go to hell in his own fashion. It will be observed that I have confined the idea of religious freedom to a selection of one from amidst many competing religious ideas or beliefs. This has been done because, as a matter of fact, that is about all the average religious man has in mind when he talks about religious freedom. He does not include in the idea the liberty to *reject* all religion, and, at the same time, to state one's reason for such rejection. On the contrary, there is a fairly strong opinion current that if a man does not accept some religion he should at least keep silent. He ought not to talk about it. If he has not the faith to accept he should have the decency to be silent. And even those who do not go quite so far as this are to be found supporting the position that expressed dissent from religion should yield greater consideration for other people's opinions on religion than for their opinions on any other subject.

Of course, the full and complete definition of religious freedom would involve liberty to believe and worship as we please; or, if we please, not to worship at all. That is what the Freethinker has in mind when he talks about religious freedom, and it must be admitted that this kind of freedom is now greater than it has ever been. From the point of view of the Freethinker, this state of things is wholly admirable. But is it, or ought it to be, admirable from the point of view of the devout believer? Not only is it not so, but it is tolerably easy to show that freedom of religious belief exists only as a consequence of a very general impression of its uselessness. As a mere historic generalisation the truth of this may be fully demonstrated. To begin with, in all early stages of social life such a thing as religious freedom is absolutely unknown. It is not so much that it is denied, as it simply does not exist. Everyone is religious, and everyone is convinced of the necessity of maintaining the religious beliefs of the tribe. To doubt these, or to flout these, is not so much an intellectual offence as it is a social wrong. It is an offence against tribal well-being; and this is so generally and so deeply felt that no other offence calls down such prompt and severe punishment as that which afterwards becomes known as heresy. To this fact both the universality of punishment for heresy, and the deeply ingrained religious hatred of the heretic, is due.

In later stages of social development we see that wherever religious belief is at all uniform and general there is always resort to coercion when heresy shows itself. One may safely say that there is no instance known of a community that was uniformly religious and at the same time tolerant of religious differences. Sects may consent to religious freedom, but none of them desire it; and I know of none that, with the power to persecute, have refrained from doing so. The Protestant Reformation is a case in point. It is often said that this movement was an expression of religious freedom. This, however, is very far from the truth. The true significance of the movement of which Protestantism was a quasi-expression, was not religious, but social and intellectual. Socially, the vital question at

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issue was whether the religious or the secular authority was to govern society. It was not so much a revolt against dogma that was in the air—no greater dogmatists than the Protestant leaders ever existed—but a revolt against the rule of the priest. It was a contest between the secular and the theological forces, a contest that is still with us, although the supremacy of the theological forces is now almost an impossibility.

On the intellectual side we have to count a series of forces, none of which were religious, and all of which made for a weakening of religion. The revival of letters, the growth of new conceptions in astronomy, in geography, and in physics, the rediscovery of the almost forgotten culture of antiquity, set in motion forces that made directly for the disintegration of religious beliefs. The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were notoriously eras of a very widespread scepticism in religion; even some of the Popes did not escape suspicion. And while much is known, one may safely assume that a much larger amount of scepticism existed unexpressed and undiscovered. In the main, then, Protestantism represented the influence of this general spirit of unrest in the domain of religion. People did not become more religiously tolerant because they believed more fervently, but because the value of religion was declining in view of the numerous other interests that had been evoked. Those who were genuinely and intensely religious were not more tolerant of differences; but the very multiplication of sects, and the fact of these sects fighting against the supremacy of a single Church, familiarised the public mind with religious differences. Religious freedom was thus not a consequence of Protestantism; it was, at most, an accompaniment, and to all the leaders a very unwelcome one.

In both these directions—the social and the intellectual—the fact really governing the growth of religious freedom has been the realisation of the comparative unimportance of religious belief. At the beginning, as I have said, religion starts as a social force, and a social force of the first importance. Religion is the business of the whole community. It is everybody's business to see that everyone else believes rightly, because to offend the gods is to endanger the welfare of the tribe. At the other extreme we have the conviction that each man's religious belief is his own business, and that, right or wrong, religious belief is a matter that concerns himself alone. But between these two extremes there lies an enormous development. And the last position can only be reached when it is recognised that, so far as the State is concerned, so far as man's social duties and obligations are concerned, these can be completely and satisfactorily discharged without necessary reference to religious belief at any point. Religious freedom would be impossible in any community that sincerely believed right religious belief to be essential to the satisfactory discharge of social duties. So long as that is believed, so long the coercion of opinion remains certain. It becomes an act of social purification and of social protection. The community which says that men may adopt any religion they please, or, if they prefer it, go without religion altogether, is saying by that, so far as the State is concerned, religious belief is of little or no consequence. The measure of religious freedom is thus the measure of religious indifference.

On the intellectual side the same thing is apparent. In the first place, it may be noted that belief in religion stands on quite a different basis to belief in any scientific subject. If I do not, for example, believe in the law of gravitation, it makes no difference to anyone else, or to the fact itself. If it is a truth, I cannot ignore it in fact, however I may do so in theory. A scientific formula is based upon verifiable facts, and these sooner or later make themselves felt. There is thus, on the scientific side, no necessary tendency to coercion. The problem of the scientific teacher is simply to state the facts, and leave them to work conviction. With the religious teacher, on the other hand, belief is everything. Beliefs are really his *facts*. If I do not believe in a God or a soul, then to me neither God nor a soul exist. Before God can influence me, I must believe in him. I do not believe in him because of the influence; I am influenced because of the belief. And, consequently, the aim of the religious teacher everywhere is to induce what he calls right belief—that is, not a belief that we are asked to accept as a logical conclusion drawn from verifiable facts, but a belief that is quite independent of verifiable data. The religious teacher cannot say, as the scientist can, "There are the facts, and I can leave them to tell their own tale and to exert their own influence"; he says, substantially, "Here are certain beliefs, and the more you question them, the less likely you are to accept them. The longer you are without them, the less likely you are to need them."

It is, then, absurd to speak of religious freedom making us increasingly religious. The world is not more religious than it was; the growth of non-religion is the constant lament of religious teachers all over the civilised world. Religious freedom results from, first, the multiplication of religious sects—itself an expression of heresy—which makes the coercion of religious opinion increasingly difficult, and finally impossible; second, the development of social life which liberates the genuine social forces from the control of theology, and reduces religion to a mere speculation with which the State has no legitimate concern: and, third, the growth of knowledge, which, by offering a scientific explanation of one group of phenomena after another, leaves religion without any clear utility to the mental life of mankind. Freedom of religion and indifference to religion are thus two aspects of the same fact.

C. COHEN.

"The Untilled Field."

"I would rather have written *Salammbo* than have built Brooklyn Bridge. It was more difficult, and it will last longer."—EDGAR SALTUS.

PROBABLY the mass of English readers will never have the opportunity of respecting Mr. George Moore's art at its true value, for he enjoys the rare privilege of being one of the few English authors who are boycotted. It was for his sake that the lamented Mr. Mudie assumed the functions of the "Bishop of Rome," and started an Index Expurgatorius. But Mr. Moore has had his revenge, for he has reached the proud position where he can dispense with praise or blame.

It is an abuse of language to term Mr. George Moore's book, *The Untilled Field* (6s.; Heinemann; 1914), which has just been reissued, a novel, although the publisher and the booksellers alike persist in so labelling it. *The Untilled Field* is a series of pictures from Irish life, and it must rank as among the finest, if, indeed, it be not the finest from the literary point of view, Mr. Moore has given to the world. Many of these stories are pessimistic in tone, yet nevertheless strangely beautiful in their directness of utterance and exquisite craftsmanship of words. The author traces many of the woes of Ireland to the despotic rule of the priest, which has sapped the individual will-power of the Catholic laity, who find themselves unable to hold their own against the steadily increasing Protestant population. Thousands of Irish Catholics emigrate every year to escape the despotism of priestcraft. That is what Mr. Moore thinks; and the cultured writer, travelling by a vastly different route, reaches the same conclusion as the despised Freethinkers.

In the first story in the book, "In the Clay," and in the last, "The Way Back," Mr. Moore puts his views very strongly. He makes it plain through his characters, a girl and a sculptor, that Ireland will never be productive of anything great in art because of the dominance of a puritanical and fanatical Catholicism. The whole book seems to be written with the idea of exposing the Great Lying Church. Nothing

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escapes the author. Even the chastity of the Irish Catholic is regarded as an unmixed evil. "There are no bastards in Ireland, and the bastard is the outward sign of inward grace." Says Mr. Moore, "There is as little free-love in Ireland as there is Freethought; men have ceased to care for women, and women to care for men. Nothing thrives in Ireland but the celibate, the priest, the men and the ox." Ireland for him is "a country without past or future, melancholy and ineffective as bog-water." Ireland's great churches, monasteries, and schools stand amid uncultivated lands, daily going to greater waste, and ruinous huts hourly falling into greater ruin. *The Untilled Field* is a powerful volume that will fascinate even those readers to whom the author's sentiments are anathema.

If the publication of *The Untilled Field* does but draw attention to one of the foremost of present-day novelists, it will have served its purpose. Since *The Mummer's Wife*, one of the finest realistic novels in the language first frightened a squeamish public, Mr. Moore has added masterpiece after masterpiece. His *Esther Waters* turned the tables on his detractors, and by the sheer force of genius compelled their unwilling admiration. *A Drama in Muslin*, *A Modern Lover*, *Celibates*, *Evelyn Innes*, *Sister Teresa* are among the notable works produced.

His greatest work, *The Mummer's Wife*, is a masterpiece by a master-hand. The central idea of the book, an elopement by a married woman, is not unique. Many of the blameless novels, freely selected by the libraries, have used this. But the erring wife of *The Mummer's Wife* is the wife of a middle-class shopkeeper, and the author shows in plain English the fatal decline, how the divorced woman becomes a dipsomaniac, and, step by step, loses propriety and decency, until she dies the dreadful death of a drunkard. Had she been depicted as a lady of title; had her sin against society been clothed in decorative phrases, and smothered in sentiment, then, probably, no outcry would have arisen. But because Mr. Moore chose the right method of depicting vice as it really is, the result disgusted some of Mr. Mudie's chaste subscribers, but it enriched English literature with a most powerful and realistic novel, and a superb picture of contemporary middle-class and Bohemian life.

Mr. Moore has other sides to his genius, and his unique and brilliant *Confessions of a Young Man* startled even his admirers. It is without a parallel in modern autobiography. Reckless and irresponsible in its criticism, it is wonderful how much truth underlies the biting epigrams. Its intimate knowledge, too, of the art of France, literary and pictorial, marks it off from other books. To consider *A Mere Accident* after this volume of brilliant criticism is a curious task. For in it the love of epigram and paradox has vanished. In its pitiless sequence of an awful tragedy, that, evolved from a mere accident, destroys one life and darkens others, it is true to nature, and a superb example of conscious art. Unhappily, publishers nowadays lack courage, and whilst the old Vizetelly edition of the book is complete, all the later issues of this tragic story have been mutilated to please the innocent and sentimental daughters of Mrs. Grundy, who are supposed to be the only readers of fiction in a nation of "God's own Englishmen."

Who need apologise for his admiration for Mr. Moore's magnificent work. His power of investing the common life of to-day with profound tragedy is surely the true romance. Content to leave all the machinery of the supernatural, to lay aside the well-worked properties of sensationalism, to abjure Dumas and Poe alike, and yet move his thousands of readers with the truthful record of elemental passion in modern life, is surely akin to great art. Perhaps, because of his reticence in quantity, the early reputation has been less in peril; and now with a group of novels and essays that show fully the power and the limit of his work, it is right he should receive recognition, not merely as books that have charmed away dull hours, but as manifesting a personal force in literature, which, to be candid, has mocked every imitator. Historians of English fiction will, one fancies, be compelled to consider the work of Mr. George Moore even more seriously than contemporary critics have done. Mr. Moore's detractors have called him "the English Zola." It is an unwilling compliment. It is precisely because France values her intellectuals, instead of smothering them with a grandmotherly censor, that she is so great as a nation. In honoring Mr. Moore by associating his name with that of Emile Zola, even his enemies have unwillingly set the seal of approbation upon a writer who most worthily carries on the intellectual traditions which have made the sons of France the vanguard of the Army of Progress.

MIMNERMUS.

Celestial Bombs.

IT is interesting to note the apologies offered by Christians for the inactivity of their God during this terrible War. They allege that he is everywhere present, in addition to being almighty; but somehow or other he could not prevent the German shells from falling on Rheims Cathedral and destroying the beautiful architecture of that ancient building, nor could he stop German bombs from knocking down a portion of the holy edifice of Notre Dame at Paris. Of course, German Protestants may say that it is God's will that this work of destruction shall go on, but French Catholics can neither see the necessity nor the wisdom of it. His Holiness the Pope shakes his pious head, and says that the Lord will be avenged on the wicked Germans for their dastardly deeds one of these days; but in the meantime German shells and bombs continue the work of destruction. Not content with knocking down God's churches, with supercilious disregard of consequences, these pious Christians have destroyed thousands of homes of their fellow-Christians in Belgium and France, and threaten to destroy the homes of Christians on this beautiful island of ours, if only the British Fleet will give them the chance of getting here. They don't propose to ask God's permission; they take that for granted.

Whether they pray for victory over their enemies or not, if their guns are powerful enough, and their shot and shell well directed, they succeed; and God, apparently, takes no notice. How different, this, to the good old Bible days! Then God answered the prayers of the faithful. He sent down fire from heaven and consumed the enemy. Take the story of Elijah and the prophets of Baal as an example. The children of Israel were constantly changing their God; sometimes they followed old Jahveh, but when he appeared to neglect them, or they could not get as much out of him as they required, they forsook him and turned their attention to Baalim, and followed him. So Elijah decided to put the matter to the test. A great meeting was called at Mount Carmel, and four hundred and fifty of the prophets of Baal and four hundred of the prophets of the groves, which eat at Jezebel's table, and the children of Israel also, attended the meeting. And Elijah addressed the assembly, and said: "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him, but if Baal, then follow him." Now, nothing could be fairer than that. And so we read that the people answered never a word. But how were they to know whether the Lord was God? What was to be the test? Listen:—

> "Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I, only remain a prophet of the Lord, but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Let them, therefore, give us two bullocks, and let them choose one bullock for themselves and cut it in pieces and lay it on wood, and put no fire under; and I will dress the other bullock and lay it on wood and put no fire under: And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord; and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken."

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And I am bound to say that that is what I consider a fair test.

And so the proceedings began. The Baalites took their bullock and dressed it and put it on the altar, and began to call upon their God to send down fire from heaven. They called unto their God from morning till noon, "O, Baal, hear us!" "O, Baal, hear us!" but there was no response. And then Elijah began to mock them just like an ordinary, vulgar infidel who does not believe in any other gods but his own. And so we read that: "And it came to pass at noon that Elijah mocked them and said, 'Cry aloud, for he is a God, either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is on a journey, or, peradventure, he sleepeth and must be awakened.'"

Then the Baalites got savage. They did not like their God to be jeered at in this fashion.

So they cried louder, and, in order to provoke the sympathy of their God, they cut themselves with knives until the blood gushed out; and they continued their cries until the evening, but their God was deaf to their appeal and blind to their suffering, and made no signs and no response.

Then came Elijah's turn. He called the people to him; told them to take twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, and build an altar; cut a bullock in pieces, place the pieces on the altar, and fill four barrels with water and pour it on the sacrifice and on the wood. This process he commanded to be repeated three times; and when this was done, he called upon the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to hear and let the children of Israel know that he really was God. And when the Jewish God heard the challenge, he responded in most convincing fashion, and sent fire from heaven, which consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when the people saw it they fell on their faces; and they said, "The Lord he is God—the Lord he is God."

But Elijah was not satisfied to let the matter end there; he thought that the most convincing ending to such a drama was a terrific battle and tremendous slaughter. And so Elijah said to the Israelites: "Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape." And they took them; and Elijah brought them down to the brook of Kishon and slew them there. And in every age religious people, whether Jew, or Christian, or Mahommedan, have considered that slaughter was, in the last result, the most effective way of settling a religious dispute.

But while this terrible War is raging in France and Belgium, it has seemed to me rather strange that Catholic Christians have not prayed that when the terrible Germans send their shot and shell in the direction of Churches and Cathedrals, that their God should drop some *Celestial Bombs* from heaven, and put the guns and gunners out of action. Or they might pray that he drop one on the head of the pious Kaiser, and before that august being had time to exclaim "Mein Gott," he and his General Staff might be blown into a thousand pieces. Or he might be asked to change, with his magic wand, all the shot and shell into non-explosive dust, and thus render them all harmless—and then no doubt the Catholic Christians might proclaim that God was on their side, and the War would come to a speedy conclusion. On the other hand, if a light from heaven, in answer to prayer, struck M. Poincaire, the French President, or General Joffre, that might be considered in favor of the Protestants; but so far, without question, all the gods have remained neutral.

When I was a boy I used to go to the old "Vic" in the Waterloo-road (and I go now when there is an opera or a Shakespearean play to be seen), and I once saw an old melodrama there called *The King and the Deserter*, and, when the poor unfortunate deserter was brought on to be shot, George Yarnold, the famous old comedian of the "Vic," sent us into roars of laughter by changing all the gunpowder into black sawdust; and when the soldiers tried to shoot, they shot sawdust; and, to the unbounded delight of the audience, the handsome young deserter received a free pardon at last at the hands of the king. Why cannot the gods transform shot and shell into useless bits of scrap-iron?

A few weeks ago a friend of mine was having a discussion with a local missionary on the War, and various knotty points were raised; whereupon the missionary said: "At all events, my friend, I am content to leave the matter entirely in the hands of the Lord." "My dear sir," replid my friend, "you could not leave it in better hands. He won't interfere."

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

The Bowman Legacy.

THE late Mr. C. Bowman, who was a member of both the National Secular Society and the Secular Society, Ltd., made the latter Society residuary legatee in his will. On the death of his widow, a few weeks ago, the trust became liable to realisation and distribution. For a good while the Society had been practically threatened by the Trustees' solicitors—whose names we do not mention at present,—and litigation had been going on with regard to a side issue, which would, however, have indirectly led to the principal point which was to be tested. We cannot say more than this at present, though more may be stated hereafter, if it does not involve contempt of court, which we do not regard as very likely.

All we propose to say now is that Mrs. Bowman's death has deprived the Trustees and their Solicitor of any further non-legal defiance of the Society's position under Mr. Bowman's will. Our solicitor, Mr. Thomas Harper, who acted for Charles Bradlaugh, has always acted for us, and indeed prepared Mr. Bowman's will, has received notice that the Trustees have been presented with a claim from a nameless gentleman indicated "the heir at law and next of kin." Our solicitor replies that this has nothing to do with us from any point of view whatever. An action against the will is the concern of the Trustees. If a gentleman with no status under the will chooses to contend that *the Society is unlawful and against public welfare*, he is free to do so. But the question whether he can do so in connection with this will is quite another matter. We must wait and see. Not a single will benefiting the Secular Society, Ltd., has ever been challenged before. And for my part, I am under no anxiety now.

G. W. FOOTE, *Chairman.*

Many readers do not know what the Society really is. Its Memorandum is appended for their information:—

MEMORANDUM OF ASSOCIATION OF
THE SECULAR SOCIETY (LIMITED).

Registered Office:
2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, London, E.C.

1. The Name of the Company is The Secular Society, Limited.
2. The registered office of the Company will be situated in England.
3. The objects for which the Company is formed are:—
   (*a*) To promote, in such ways as may from time to time be determined, the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action.
   (*b*) To promote the utmost freedom of inquiry and the publication of its discoveries.
   (*c*) To promote the secularisation of the State, so that religious tests and observances may be banished from the Legislature, the Executive, and the Judiciary.
   (*d*) To promote the abolition of all support, patronage, or favor by the State of any particular form or forms of religion.

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(e) To promote universal Secular Education, without any religious teaching, in public schools maintained in any way by municipal rates or imperial taxation.

(f) To promote an alteration in the laws concerning religion, so that all forms of opinion may have the same legal rights of propaganda and endowment.

(g) To promote the recognition by the State of marriage as a purely civil contract, leaving its religious sanctions to the judgment and determination of individual citizens.

(h) To promote the recognition of Sunday by the State as a purely civil institution for the benefit of the people, and the repeal of all Sabbatarian laws devised and operating in the interest of religious sects, religious observances, or religious ideas.

(i) To purchase, lease, rent, or build halls or other premises for the promotion of the above objects.

(j) To employ lecturers, writers, organisers, or other servants for the same end.

(k) To publish books, pamphlets, or periodicals.

(l) To assist by votes of money or otherwise other Societies or associated persons or individuals who are specially promoting any of the above objects.

(m) To have, hold, receive and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

(n) To co-operate or communicate with any kindred Society in any part of the world.

(o) To do all such other lawful things as are conducive or incidental to the attainment of all or any of the above objects.

4. Every Member of the Company undertakes to contribute to the assets of the Company in the event of the same being wound up during the time that he is a Member, or within one year afterwards, for payment of the debts and liabilities of the Company contracted before the time at which he ceased to be a Member, and the costs, charges, and expenses of winding up the same, and for adjustment of the rights of the Contributories among themselves, such amount as may be required not exceeding £1.

According to a paragraph in one of the daily papers a Cambridge firm of booksellers has received permission to purchase certain scientific works from Germany. If this is true, it contains a sad reflection upon our home scientific equipment. Science is, of course, international—or perhaps one ought to say, super-national—and the interchange of scientific knowledge is desirable from every point of view. But we must confess that we should like to see this country perfectly independent of others, as we should like to see other countries independent of this one. This would in no way hinder helpful co-operation, it would only mean that all countries were marching abreast, each doing its part in the work of conquering nature, and each making its own all that others have achieved.

A great American newspaper, the *New York World*, has equipped a Santa Claus ship, loaded with over a million toys and gifts which have been subscribed for by Americans for the European children orphaned by the War. It is always man and not "God" who answers the orphans' cry for aid.

Robert Bridges, who supplies the nation in general, and the Royal Family in particular, with poetry when they want it, says that "This is a war of Christ against the Devil!" Yes! But which is which?

The *Weekly Dispatch* alludes to Friedrich Von Bernhardi as one of the men who caused the present European War. It is well to remember that Von Bernhardi is as pious as the two Kaisers.

A fire broke out at the Darwin Science Hall at Shrewsbury School recently. Once upon a time a moral would have been attached to this press paragraph by Christians, but now, like Brer Rabbit, they "lie low and say nothing."

The yellow press and the clergy have been claiming the late Lord Roberts as a Christian soldier. We do not complain, for, as a rule, the Christian soldier is represented in the theological battle by his wife.

Acid Drops.

War is a frightful demoraliser, but we did not suppose it would have such an effect on Mr. Horatio Bottomley. First it made him a theologian, and now it has made him "a poet." We liked him ill as a theologian; we like him worse as "a poet"; but we daresay he will settle down again when the War is over. Meanwhile, it is rather odd to see him railing at the Kaiser so violently. William's motto, of course, is "Germany Above All," and he is trying to work that out in practice. True, he has a clumsy and vicious way of doing it; but that is what he is up to, if he can only manage it. Mr. Bottomley is up to the same game (though not exactly in the same way) only he puts "England" or "Britain" or the "Anglo-Saxon" instead of "Germany." For the life of us we can't see the slightest difference between the two ideals, except the accidental fact that the Kaiser is a native German and Mr. Bottomley a native Englishman. Each thinks the highest of the country which he honored by being born in it.

Mr. Bottomley does not mince the matter. He says we are witnessing the birth of a new age, and the blood is flowing to realise a special intention of "God." To do this he has to "chasten" us—yes, *us*—by plunging us in a blood bath. When the day of judgment arrives Mr. Bottomley and his "Comrades" will be able to stand up and boast:—

> "We fought like worthy foemen, on battlefield and flood,
> And purified our spirit in seas of human blood."

This will please the orthodox Christian, who cannot be saved without being washed in the "blood" of redemption. But we are sorry to see Mr. Bottomley prescribing it as the best method of purification. "Seas of blood" may seem to him very sanative, while the War is on and the mob like it. For our part, we can imagine no filthier mess.

Some of Mr. Bottomley's old friends may say that they can hardly believe that he is quite as far gone as we represent. We reply that we are relying solely on his own words. Our first duty, as he lays it down, is "To prove this world we live in of all the worlds the best." Rather a big job, to begin with? And *are* there any other inhabited worlds, in the next place. The late Dr. Russel Wallace argued that there were not. Anyhow, whether this is the best or worst of the lot cannot concern us very much; we have to put up with it just as it is; there isn't likely to be any swopping. But let us proceed with Mr. Bottomley. He tells us what is the second duty of every patriot (English patriot, we mean):—

> "And justify our object, to put in highest place,
> O'er all the peoples of the Earth, the Anglo-Saxon race."

There you are. Mr. Bottomley and the Kaiser cherish the same ideal. The only difference is in their postal address.

We hope we shall be pardoned for saying that his ideal, like the Kaiser's, is rather a humdrum affair. A world full of Britishers is too many. A world ruled by Britishers would be too monotonous. The world is all the better for variety. No doubt the German commits a public nuisance by talking his own language instead of ours; but why should we lose Goethe, and Heine, and Lessing, and Schopenhauer, and other great writers? If some people find the German boorish and even brutal, other people sometimes find the Frenchman a little too polite. So there you are! The various races of the world have all been produced by geographic and climatic differences. If the world had been flat, without mountains and rivers, there would have been a greater similarity than there is amongst its inhabitants. That would have made room for Mr. Bottomley's Anglo-Saxon paradise. Fortunately, nature got in front of Mr. Bottomley. She declined to make the world flat. Mr. Bottomley's dream will never be realised.

Sydney Smith once paid a visit to a "swell" house with a well-mirrored drawing-room. He saw himself multiplied all round the place. "I thought I was in a meeting of clergymen," he said, "and was delighted! Of course!" Those who heard him say that "Of course!" declared it to be one of the finest things that even he was ever "guilty of." Mr. Bottomley will see the point; if not, he must get his "God" to help him. And we hope there will be no bad blood at the finish.

By the way, correspondents sometimes send us *John Bull*. It is kind on their part, but it is a waste of time and postage, for we take *John Bull* ourselves. Mr. Bottomley has recently said that he reads the *Freethinker* every week. We are glad

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to hear it. We know of no paper from which he would be likely to derive more benefit.

How the Almighty must feel consoled for some of the nasty things said about him to-day—as, for instance, what he is doing while whole nations of his children are cutting each others throats, and all pretending to be doing it under his special blessing! Mr. George A. Birmingham, the novelist, and incidentally a Christian preacher, having been sent over to the United States in a sort of rivalry to Mr. Harold Begbie, ventures to put in a good word—perhaps we should call it a pious certificate—for "the one Above" "I have come to the conclusion," he says, "that God counts for a good deal in the life of New York." We see a smile of satisfaction breaking over the dour face of old Jahveh! For we suppose it is the Bible "God" that Mr. Birmingham is talking about.

At the Middlesex County Council Licensing Committee the other day the renewal of license was refused to a number of picture shows on the ground that they had kept their places open on Sundays. The Bench declined to renew unless the applicants agreed to conform to the clause in the license which stipulated for Sunday closing. Mr. Bodkin, on behalf of the applicants, said that if such a condition were imposed they would obey, providing such a condition was lawful. The undertaking was a very guarded one, and we should like to see cinema owners act with courage in the matter. If the matter were carried beyond the Licensing Court, we fancy it would be decided that no court has the right to impose any such condition; and Mr. Bodkin's guarded undertaking seems to indicate that he is of the same opinion. The Committee announced that the applicants would receive a reply by post, which strikes one as a rather undesirable way of doing business. We would prefer to see the decision announced in open court.

King George is a very good monarch in a country where "the monarch reigns but does not govern." It is hardly to be expected, however, that he should be a genius in literary composition. But he might have been helped, by a friend or secretary, from congratulating "his" army under Sir John French on their "pluck and spirit." There cannot be much difference between the two words, and "pluck" is good enough for the man in the street but not in the public letter of a King. It is enough to make Walter Savage Landor turn in his grave. How he hated it as one of the worst of vulgarisms!

Here is another "slip" of the King's. Addressing some of "his" men at Colchester, he said, "I should have been sorry to have missed them." This blunder is common enough, but it should not be common amongst Kings. The two "haves" are wrong. His Majesty should have said "I should have been sorry to miss them" or "I should be sorry to have missed them."

France has good reason to be proud of the work done in its schools since the reorganisation that followed the war of 1870. And even in the turmoil of the present War the French Minister of Education is not losing sight of the important work of education. In a circular issued to the teachers of France, he points out that on the material side the nation is spending its savings, living on capital that is not exhausted, and hoping that the enemy's capital will be exhausted before theirs.

> "But in matters of the mind and the spirit a nation cannot store capital or subsist upon it. It is always living from hand to mouth, and any cessation of effort there must be paid for in the future. Whatever evil is done in the minds of men or children by this war is not a destruction of superfluities but of necessaries. A nation may be rich enough to spend millions in killing its enemies; but no nation on earth is rich enough to neglect the education of its children."

There are profound truths in this pronouncement, truths that are only too likely to get overlooked during the present crisis. The higher aspects of French education should be safe in the hands of M. Sarrout.

Mr. Dan Crawford, missionary, says he is in no hurry to get back to Africa now, because when he boasts about white civilisation, the Africans will want to know what the white men in Europe are killing each other for. Well, we suppose it will be a little awkward, but missionary ingenuity should be equal to the situation. It will be easy to paint the Germans as a nation of wicked Atheists, and the Allies as sincere Christians who go into battle with prayers on their lips and Bibles in their hands. We are getting almost that at home, and it should be so much easier to play the same card in Central Africa.

This is the way to do it. Rev. M. Watkinson told the London Methodist Council that the German campaign was "the most Atheistical and ghastly that had ever been inaugurated." And yet Dr. Scott Lidgett told a City Temple audience that the Germans were better liars than we were. This really seems like an aspersion on some of Dr. Lidgett's clerical colleagues. Let us give honor where honor is due.

This is the way the *Christian World* describes the oratory of Mr. Lloyd George. "There was Burke's exquisite artistry in the phrasing, the unerring choice of the inevitable word, the wonderful aptness and force of the illustrations, the withering sarcasm. There was Gladstone's passionate declamation and his effective reinforcement of the spoken word by expressive and powerful gesture. There was Bright's matchless simplicity, his Anglo-Saxon drawn from the 'well of English undefiled,' and Bright's natural and yet most skilful use of the Bible." That's all! A combination of Burke, Gladstone, and Bright. It's a long, long way to Tipperary—also a long way *from* Limehouse.

Bless those that curse you, pray for those that despitefully use you. Such is the advice given by the New Testament, and a curate at Tottenhall was silly enough to think that Christians believed it. So he offered up a prayer "for the Germans." Result: the bishop pronounced his conduct "unwise," and the parishioners clamored for his removal. Now, if the Rev. Mr. Edwards had consulted Sir Robertson Nicoll, he would have been told that the New Testament cannot mean what it says, because Christians never do treat kindly those that despitefully use them.

There is no doubt about the German hatred of England, but we had always understood that it resulted from our position as a World-Power. This, according to the *Record*, is wrong. "The bitter hatred of England, whatever its pretexts, really is because as a nation she loves and honors the Bible, and is the home of Evangelical Protestant Religion." And this with Germany's Kaiser keeping a Bible by his bedside, taking it as his guide in all things, and even rising at night to consult its inspired pages!

The latest one to join the ranks of the prophets is Rev. F. B. Meyer. This wiseacre knew that Turkey would join with Germany, "because it is a matter of prophecy." In that case it would seem as though Deity, and not the Kaiser, is to blame. Mr. Meyer also has a turn at the Jews. They will go back to Jerusalem. The only difficulty about this would be the Jews. The man who seriously imagines that the Jews of England and France, to go no farther afield, are burning to get back to Palestine is a case for a specialist in brain disorders. If such a move were seriously contemplated there would be an unusually keen competition for agencies in Europe. Finally, Mr. Meyer declares that history reveals that "the Almighty had entered into a covenant with us," and so was going to see that the "mailed fist" did not triumph—God and our Army of two million we presume.

Mr. Blatchford complains of the Censorship. His own writing actually fell under the official blue pencil. But what right has *he* to complain? The Censorship is an inevitable part of the militarism he is recommending to the British democracy—through the columns of a Tory paper. It is the *Weekly Dispatch* now; it was the *Daily Mail* before; it may be the *Daily Express* hereafter.

After chatter about "God," Mr. Blatchford indulges in something equally unknown. This is how he started in the *Dispatch* last week: "After much cogibundity of cogitation our successful cabinet has decided, etc." "Don't do it, Mr. Blatchford—don't do it!" This sort of play upon words requires learning behind it. There is no disgrace in being self-taught, rather the contrary. They call you a second Cobbett; that is, the Tories do, when they want to employ *your* pen in behalf of *their* principles. But Cobbett would never have been guilty of your opening line in the *Dispatch*. He always knew what he was doing, and always precise in doing it. He would have laughed at your "cogibundity," and still more so at your phrase "cogibundity of cogitation," and the pure English "much" in front of that. Even if you had got your first big word right, your whole expression is absurd. It means "much of much cogitation of cogitation." And not even *your* pen can make this English or sense. We repeat, therefore, "Don't do it, Mr. Blatchford—don't do it."

Mr. Lloyd George's "great speech" at the City Temple Convention of the Free Churches' Convention, proved quite

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convincing—to an already converted audience. Nothing could be better done than the cool assumption that they were on God's side, or God on theirs,—it didn't much matter which. The Kaiser bawls out his partnership with the Almighty, with an air of "Damn everybody who denies it!" Mr. Lloyd George just mentions it as one of the best-known facts of life that are taken for granted and not open for discussion. Everybody was aware that God's favorite human being was the English Puritan. And tremendous applause followed the statement that we now had an opportunity of dealing with the Turk once for all. The Free Church meeting applauded that so fiercely that he felt bound to say at once that it was not because the Turk was a Mohammedan. We had too many Mohammedans in the British Empire to let that pass. "I am not thinking of him as an enemy of Christendom," Mr. George said; "there is no more futile method of settling the conflicts of creed than a war." This elicited a faint "hear, hear" from the Free Churchers, and Mr. Lloyd George was enabled to save his bacon.

A new novel has been issued with the title, *Incredible Adventures*. The title would be very suitable for that well-known work of fiction, the Bible.

"Scarcity of Coal in Paris" runs a headline in the daily press. If there is truth in the Christian superstition, there should be some risk of a scarcity of fuel in a warmer place.

Will the "soul" be the same after death as now? asks Mr. Campbell. It is a subject on which one may safely dogmatise, if one is built that way; and Mr. Campbell is certain it will be—because, he says, the fundamental self never changes, "the spirit never lets go what it has once possessed. The brain and the body forget, the spirit never." We are not quite sure what is meant by the "fundamental self," and we fancy it is with Mr. Campbell no more than one of those comforting expressions that sound so well and means so little. The only sense in which the "spirit," or mind, of man never forgets an experience is that it becomes part of its texture. And in that sense the body also carries a record of its experiences. But so far as consciousness is concerned, we do constantly forget—life would, indeed, be unbearable were it otherwise. No man can possibly remember more than a mere fraction of his total experiences, although there is always a possibility of *isolated* experiences being recalled. Life itself is constant change, and when change ceases life ceases also. If Mr. Campbell were only half as certain about things he might know as he is about things concerning which it is impossible for him to *know* anything, he might be of more real help to those who come to him for assistance.

The *Catholic Times* says that the War has had the "excellent effect" in France of setting up a revival of religion. "A high percentage" of the French soldiers, it says, "have approached the Sacraments since hostilities." Of course, this *may* be so, but we should like some rather less prejudiced testimony on the point than the *Catholic Times*. We should also like to know what is held to constitute a "high percentage"? In all probability all that has occurred is that the religious portion of the French people have been a trifle more punctilious in the discharge of their religious observances. It must never be overlooked that a large majority of the French people still profess Christian opinions, although the majority of the leaders of French thought are definitely Freethinkers. It is significant that amongst the English troops—where such statements might be more easily tested—the *Catholic Times* laments that the War has *not* brought about an increase in religious devotion.

Rev. Albert Smith, aged 73, of the Vicarage, Wendover, Bucks, left £42,240. He left all and followed Jesus, and it paid him very well. Several smaller cases of the same trouble have appeared in the papers lately, but we have not had time to notice them.

It is a hundred years since the great Napoleon blessed or cursed the earth,—just as people happen to face. The German Kaiser holds the military field now. Everybody knows his justification of the most shocking atrocities committed by his troops, not only upon their enemies, but also upon non-combatants. It is a policy of terrorism. It makes things easier, in his belief, if his enemies are frightened out of their senses before the fighting begins; on which principle he might boil women and children with great advantage to the peace of Western Europe. Now the Kaiser is a good Christian—a Protestant Christian—a true-blue Christian. Napoleon never was a Christian. He was a Freethinker. But just compare his proclamations to the Kaiser's. Read the following Proclamation to his Army of Italy on April 26, 1796:—

> "All will wish when returning to their villages to be able to say with pride: I belonged to the conquering Army of Italy. Friends, I promise you this conquest, but there is one condition which you must swear to fulfil. That is, to respect the people whom you deliver. Without that you would not be the deliverers of Peoples, you would be their scourge! You would not be the honor of the French people, it would disown you! Your victories, your courage, the blood of your brothers fallen in battle, all would be lost, even honor and glory. As for me, and the Generals who have your confidence, we should blush to command an Army without discipline, without restraint, knowing no law but force.....I will not permit that brigands soil your laurels. I shall have rigorously executed the procedure I have ordered. Looters will be pitilessly shot."

Looters will be pitilessly shot! It ought to make the German Crown Prince jump in his boots. But it won't. He's a good Christian, like his father. How the Christian world has improved in a hundred years!

Napoleon issued another Proclamation to the Army of Egypt on June 22, 1798, which contains the following passage:—

> "Have for the ceremonies prescribed by the Koran, for the Mosques, the same tolerance which you have shown for the Convents, the Synagogues, for the religions of Moses and of Jesus Christ. The Roman Legions protected all religions. The people among whom you are going treat women differently than we, but in any country he who violates a woman is a monster. Pillage only enriches a small number of men, it dishonors us, it destroys our resourcefulness, and it renders us enemies of peoples whom it is our interest to have as friends."

The Kaiser flatters himself that he resembles Napoleon. Yes, as an ape resembles a man. It is impossible to imagine him addressing his soldiers in that fashion. He knocks down Catholic cathedrals.

A very plain-spoken article on "The Causes of the War" appears in a recent issue of the *Yorkshire Factory Times*, from the pen of Miss Jessie Cockerline. There are a couple of paragraphs that should prove of special interest to our readers. Miss Cockerline notes the extent to which certain people are using Anti-German sentiment to attack things they dislike. She says:—

> "Now, when the English sentiment is against everything German, the shattered pedants of England—or those noisy few of them with a hate of German science, those who buttress beliefs well-nigh untenable under the fire of outspoken continental scientists, and those who see an opportunity to re-erect their broken prestige—creep back and raise their ragged standards safe behind a national animosity. More than that, they hold up as German everything they detest, hoping a half-educated mob may make it a target of their fury."

There is a timely note of warning here that all would do well to bear in mind. Advanced ideas are bound to suffer more or less during war-time, and it is the duty of genuine reformers to see that they suffer as little as possible.

Miss Cockerline has the following observation on the tactics of those who use this Anti-German sentiment as a means of attack on Freethought:—

> "At Shipley last week a speaker discoursed on the Atheism of force. Why should he link Atheism and force? History does not show Atheists and Agnostics as the advocates of forcible subversion. It is quite the contrary, and in the name of religion some of the most bloody atrocities have been committed. I don't contend that a person always makes a statement like the one I mention with a deliberate Machiavellian purpose, but because he links everything which he deems good together, and also links everything which he deems bad, into separate classes. The one he considers the realm of God, the other he considers the realm of Lucifer."

We have often protested against the policy, but it is good to see an independent protest raised in an ordinary newspaper. Perhaps the *Yorkshire Factory Times* is not an *ordinary* newspaper. We think not, by the tone of Miss Cockerline's article.

Messrs. Partridge & Co. have published a book called *Angels in White*—"a book for the present time of distress." But why *White?* Why not *Khaki?* That is the holy color now.

In an appreciation of Lord Fisher, *T. P.'s Weekly* quoted some magnificent lines from Swinburne. Is it not high time that a popular edition of that great poet's works was put on the market? Present-day poets are so very pious, and piety and poesy seldom run in double harness.

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To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £231 10s. 6d. Received since :—A. J. Marriott, 2s. 6d.

DORIS FINNEY.—(1) We never heard of the "Atheists of the working classes" in John Wesley's time before. They certainly did not persecute *him* even if they existed. He was bitterly persecuted by his fellow Christians. Southey's *Life of Wesley* is not, of course, quite up to date, but it is a classic in its way, and a readable edition can be bought for a shilling. (2) Glad to hear that, after reading the *Freethinker* for seven years, you still look forward to it every week.

S. T. ELLIS.—Glad to see the Sabbatarian clergy have had a setback at Belfast; also that you think "our views on the war are calm and collected, and a great contrast to the hysterical raving one reads so much in the newspapers."

J. G. BARTRAM.—The matter was referred to last week. We can quite understand how great a disappointment it was not to hear Mr. Cohen at Newcastle as you expected. We prophesied you would not get a hall for his lectures. The loss of posters and handbills is, of course, one of the pleasant things entailed by war.

A. MILLAR.—We have sent you a brief note to save time. We hope the explanation was sufficient.

S. W. L.—Sorry we cannot find room for your verse.

H. J. H.—Next week; too late for this week.

E. B.—Many thanks for cuttings.

F. C. HOLDEN.—We had not seen it. Thanks.

S. M. FARRELL.—Pleased to see your handwriting again and to read the enclosure.

W. P. BALL.—Your cuttings are always welcome.

J. HUDSON.—Will consider your suggestions.

J. SCOTT.—There is no Branch of the National Secular Society in Portsmouth. We are pleased to know that you derive gratification from reading the *Freethinker*; but you are surely not "compelled" to go to church every Sunday if you decline on the grounds of this being contrary or opposed to your opinions. There is, theoretically at least, liberty of opinion in the Army, although we can quite believe that there are cases where it is not easy to realise it.

W. BRADBURN.—Sorry you found no meeting at Maryland Point, after going so far in the hopes of hearing a lecture. We do not think the person you name is worth bothering about. His filthy blackguardisms are well known to London Freethinkers, who generally treat him with the contempt he deserves.

D. P. STECHELL.—We do not think that your superior officer is entitled to inflict anything in the nature of a punishment for your not accompanying the rest of your battalion to church. A protest to your commanding officer might be advisable, and, in that case, we hope that he is sufficient of a gentleman to see that justice is done. We are, however, sending your letter on to one who has been "through the mill," and whose advice to you may be helpful.

W. EDMONDS.—We do not care to discuss *how* many Freethinkers have joined Kitchener's Army, and we have no means of furnishing reliable statistics on the point. We know there are many, from the number of letters we receive. Only a week or two ago we received a visit from one of the Canadian contingent, and he informed us that there were several other Freethinkers in his company. One may depend upon it that Freethought will not make a man less ready to fight for what he considers a just cause, and it may easily make him a better fighter—better, that is, in moral determination and consideration.

H. MASON.—Your policy of compelling the Christian Evidence lecturer to read from Mr. Foote's *Shadow of the Sword* was a good one, and, apparently, effective with the audience. No one who really knows the speaker you confronted would take what he said seriously; but, then, everyone does not know him—worse luck. To be opposed to war in general need not prevent one seeing the justification for a particular war. We have never preached non-resistance, and never recommended it to others. That is a Christian teaching.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Owing to the War, Mr. Cohen's visit to Newcastle-on-Tyne has been cancelled. This is not due to any fault of his or of the local Branch. The military authorities have commandeered every hall in the city for the use of troops, and no lectures, for the present, are possible. Unfortunately, the posters announcing the lectures were printed before the halls were seized, or that expense might have been saved. Perhaps the Branch may have better fortune in the new year.

Lancashire friends are asked to note that Mr. J. T. Lloyd will deliver a lecture at the Secular School, Pole-lane, Failsworth, to-day (Nov. 22). His subject is a topical one, and the views of a Freethinker on current affairs should be worth hearing. We hope that Manchester friends will do their best to give Mr. Lloyd the audience he deserves.

Mr. Cohen is kindly occupying the editorial chair again on press-day (Tuesday) this week, but Mr. Foote is almost himself again, and hopes to be completely so very soon.

No one will imagine that we are in favor of women frequenting public-houses at any time; but we must confess to something like a feeling of disgust at some of those busybodies who treat a soldier's wife as a suspected person, and who seem almost anxious to place her under police surveillance. For this reason we read, with much pleasure, a very human letter from Sir Lawrence Gomme in the *Daily Telegraph* of November 12, and from which we take the following:—

> "What uncontrollable cruelty is enacted under the name of religion and charity! A great blow has come to thousands of poor women—women who have lost their men—husbands, brothers, sons, representing all that was best in their drab lives. I witnessed at Brighton a fortnight ago one of these women saying good-bye to her man. The train did not start at once after the closing of the doors. 'Give us another kiss, Bill,' she said, and entering the carriage she flung her arms round the man's neck. The man was ashamed before his mates at this exhibition of love. The woman moved off with bravely laughing mouth, with sadly tearful eyes. 'Come back to me, Bill,' she cried. 'What a fuss these blooming women do make,' said Bill to his companions; but as I sat next to him I felt the gulp in his throat. He was off with the lust of fight in his being. 'I'll kill some damned Germans first,' he said, 'even if I don't come back,' and his mates looked at him. This was all, and they fell to laughing.
>
> Where was that poor woman going? Back to a home which contained her kids—a home dreary and miserable at all times; more dreary and miserable than ever now without her Bill.
>
> On the way home, perhaps; on the morrow more likely, she enters a public-house—the only place where she can learn news, where she can talk to other women similarly placed. And she drinks too much.
>
> Then come the State, and the Church, and the Chapel, and denounce her. They do not extend a helping hand. They don't give her a parish room where she can sit and talk in peace; they don't see to it that her home is clean and wholesome; they don't give her hope. They only condemn her unheard."

It is so easy to condemn; so difficult to understand.

Will Freethinkers in Nottingham and its vicinity who would like to assist in the formation of a Branch of the N. S. S. be good enough to send their names and addresses to Miss Vance, the N. S. S. General Secretary? A letter has been received requesting the formation of a local Society at Nottingham, and there is no reason why this should not be done if those who are interested in the work can be brought together. When the names and addresses are received, a meeting for business purposes can be arranged.

The November number of the *English Review* reached us so late that a lengthy notice would be rather farcical. We can only say that it is well up to its usual level, and can be warmly recommended to our readers' attention.

The November number of the *Positivist Review* contains an excellent article on "The Conduct of the War," by the Editor (Mr. S. H. Swinny), and other interesting articles by Frederic Harrison, F. S. Marvin, J. Carey Hall, etc. We hope this useful little publication will not suffer too much from the War. We fear it is bound to suffer to some extent. Fortunately, the Positivists are not, as a rule, amongst the poor or destitute classes.

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Dives and Lazarus.

SOME Christian friend has sent to me—of course, for my edification—a copy of the first number of *The Bible Student's Monthly*, the leading article in which is entitled "The Rich Man in Hell; Lazarus in Abraham's Bosom." The writer states that this parable has been "greatly misunderstood"; but he undertakes "to make it plain," notwithstanding that he deplores the fact that "the masses, disgusted with all doctrines, no longer hope for anything reasonable or logical in religion." This last admission proves that Freethought is spreading widely. The text on which he founds his remarks is this: "And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom" (Luke xvi. 23).

The writer commences by saying "that in the parable the thing said is never the thing meant." This assertion utterly ignores the fact that all dictionaries state that a parable "is an allegorical representation of something real," a word-painting or illustration of something that is true, something that makes clear what otherwise would be obscure. He is careful, however, to say "that since our Lord did not interpret it, anybody has the same right as himself to make known an interpretation of it." In saying this he is simply following the lead of the late Archdeacon Farrar who, in his bulky volume *The Bible: Its Meaning and Supremacy*, declares that "he who chooses may believe that the most fundamental laws of the universe were arrested to enable Joshua to slaughter a few more hundred fugitives, and he who chooses may believe that nothing of the kind ever entered into the mind of the narrator." And so with Jonah and the whale, the talking serpent, the talking jackass, and all the other Biblical fables. That is, you may believe or disbelieve what you like, and then assert that the narrator was of your opinion.

The writer next proceeds to give his interpretation of the parable. He points out that nothing is said about "the rich man being profane or wicked"; nothing about the "good qualities" possessed by Lazarus; that "if Lazarus were in Abraham's bosom there would be no room for anyone else"; and that "the word hades and the Hebrew word sheol, rendered hell in our version, simply signify the death state, the tomb," and nothing more. He leaves the reader to infer, therefore, that he disbelieves in eternal damnation, and, consequently, doubts the truthfulness of Jesus Christ. For was not the parable uttered by Jesus Christ? And are the utterances of Jesus Christ—who, if the Gospels be true, turned water into wine, walked upon water, raised the dead, and made the elements obey him—to be placed in the same category as that of mere mortal men? Surely the being who is said to have possessed supernatural powers must necessarily have also possessed supernatural knowledge!

If the gospels be true, Christ taught implicitly that there is a Devil (Matt. iv. 5); that there is a hell (Matt. v. 29, 30); and that all men "except the elect whom he hath chosen" (Matt. xiii. 20) shall be tormented for ever in the "everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. xxv. 41). And did he not utter this parable, if he uttered it at all, to emphasise his doctrine of eternal damnation? Is Christ to be believed, or is he not? And if the statement in this instance, whether parabolic or not, be not true, what reliance can be placed on any other of the statements which he is said to have made?

Not long ago a well-known Anglican clergyman, when discussing in print the parable of "Dives and Lazarus," declared that "he could not conceive the idea of God doing stupid things." Neither can I! For God is omnipotent and omniscient, or he is not. If he be not omnipotent and omniscient, he is a myth and nothing more. But if he be omnipotent and omniscient, all the woes and miseries and crimes which torture mankind and blacken the pages of history must be attributed to him, and to him alone.

J. W. DE CAUX.

The Design Argument.—IV.

IN THE LIGHT OF ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY.

(Concluded from p. 733.)

NEXT, as to the eye being made of three coats which are opaque all over except the middle portion through which we see, and three transparent substances, through which refraction of the rays of light takes place; as also about the humors of the eye being transparent, in order that we may see, we shall consider them at length in our lecture on the eye itself. Suffice it to say here, if the aqueous humor is made transparent by God with the object of enabling us to see, why does he sometimes turn it turbid and opaque and blind the poor man? So, also, if God had made the lens transparent with the object that we should be able to see, how is it that the lens by various causes, and especially that of old age, loses its transparency and becomes opaque, making the man blind? The state of the opacity of the lens is called cataract. Apart from various other troubles of the eye, the cataract alone affords us a good argument against the ignorance or unreasonableness of the theologians in attributing the structure of the eye to the special providence of God.

They also say, God has made the socket of the eye round to enable it to turn easily; had it been made square, it would have been fixed. I say, not necessarily so. Even if it had been square, it could then have as easily turned as now, had the four angles of the square been packed up by some fatty matter. Had it been so evolved, the religionist would have said: "Oh, look at the kind and benevolent contrivance of God! The frame of the eye, *i.e.*, the socket, is made square and its four angles packed with fatty matter, not only that it may turn well, but that it may be guarded against external shocks also." They could say anything to serve their purpose.

Ninth. As for the processes of repair that go on in our body in healing wounds of various kinds, I say that it is not done as an intention on the part of any benevolent or malevolent being; but it is going on blindly, as a course of nature, not minding whether its going on is doing you good or harm. For instance, take the healing process called cicatrisation, as is instanced in point number nine. It is all very easy to say that this process of healing spreads from the edges, or from any islands of skin that may have been left, or that may have been grafted by the surgeon, and that it draws the margins together by what is called concentric contraction, and covers by a layer of epithelium, and so forth. But what of the further proceedings? If God had intended to do us good, after a cicatrisation was fully formed, he would really have stopped the process only there. But that is not the case. Even after a cicatrisation is fully formed, it continues to contract; this contraction may go on for months or years, and give rise to some of the most dreadful disfigurements that are met with in surgical practice—especially in the case of a severe burn. If the burn be on the neck, and cicatrisation takes place there, the neck will incline backwards; if on the side, it will lean towards the side or shoulder; if on the elbow-joint, the forearm will be contracted towards the arms, and the same will happen to the knee-joint, not only producing ugly deformities, but also causing great inconveniences. From this you will clearly see how the poor, helpless man is deformed the whole of his life, if he sits quietly with folded arms, believing that whatever is done is done for the best by the loving Father, and will not run to the surgeon—a man—to be remedied. Thus you will see that what is going on is going on blindly without the intervention or will or design of any being for your good or for your evil. How can one dare say that it is God who causes his own man, who is to glorify him, to be deformed all his life? Does God glory in deforming people? If not, why does he deform them? To say that God carries on the process of repair or healing, when the

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circumstance of deformity is taken into consideration, is to blaspheme God—to admit that he is some whimsical, some unmeaning being.

Now, the last—the tenth—point is about bodily pain. It is said that pain gives notice of danger, and excites those endeavors which are necessary to the preservation of our lives. It is the unmistakable and the true monitor. It points out to us exactly where disease is, where destruction of the tissue or the mismanagement of the functions is going on; calling our immediate attention to the remedies. Well, so far as pain does this, apart from the presence or absence of God's design in it, I say, well and good, to some extent. But what if I prove to you that pain points to one place while the disease is really situated in another place? Is not that showing false ensigns, deceiving people by feints and false colors in time of danger? And is not that treacherous, is not that dangerous and immoral, is not that a lie and deception? And yet it must be admitted that it is exactly this, if, as theologians say, God does it. In disease of the hip, there is pain in the knee, although there is no disease in the knee at all; and there is no pain in the hip, although there is really disease there. So, also, when there is disease of the heart, there is pain down the left arm. In the inflammation of the liver, there is pain in the right shoulder. And in some diseases there is no pain at all. For instance, take the case of such a serious and dangerous disease as cancer of the uterus; there is no pain at all, as there is no nervous supply to it until the disease is pretty far advanced and spread to the adjacent parts, when the case is almost hopeless, and proves fatal in 95 per cent. of all cases. What sort of an arrangement do you call this? Now, the pain in the knee has become a common sign of disease of the hip with the medical practioner. But what hardships must people have undergone for centuries before medical science discovered this fact, or rather this lie!

My friends, I have done with my theme. You can clearly understand how the so-called design arguments from anatomical and physiological facts prove no special design on the part of any being or beings, either for the weal or woe of man. What is all this arrangement, then, in our body? What is it the outcome of? In short, what is man? Man is the outcome of evolution which recognises no special design for anybody's good or evil. He is evolved from some lesser organism some hundreds of centuries since. And while he was being evolved through myriads of ages, his limbs and organs were developed according to the place, climate, and many other surrounding circumstances he was subject to, in the cycle of evolution, without anybody's special interference. In short, he was evolved, subject to the law of the survival of the fittest, which means the strongest in the war of Nature, which unmistakably governs the animated world.

Lastly, I shall consider only one point, and finish. Some one might ask, when a special design for the good of man by some benevolent providence is believed by so many people, why should I try to sweep away the foundation of their belief, the solace of their mind, however false their beliefs and however true your beliefs may be? In answer to this, I say that it is my firm belief—and that belief is as true as anything true can be—that if man is ever to be really loving, kind, and tolerant, and in short, happy, his mind must be washed clean of all the false beliefs, and true ones implanted in their stead. What does it benefit man to believe that there is some one to take care of him, to protect him against danger, to soothe him in his calamity, to stand by him in his distress, and to support him in his weakness, when really there is none to do so? We shall be totally ruined by such beliefs. And we have been seriously injured already. Our ignorance on many important points is largely owing to these false beliefs. The religionists have placed as many difficulties as they could in the way of science. False hopes and false beliefs are equally to be avoided. It is rightly said that to know where the danger lies is half-way to safety. Suppose we know the danger, but think that there is some one to protect us from it or avoid it, when really there is none to do so, what would be our fate? It is decidedly disastrous to have such beliefs. It is always safe to have true beliefs, and true beliefs are founded only on facts, on proofs and reason, and never on delusive imagination. In truth alone we shall meet as brothers and sisters, in love and harmony, with unbiased minds, and pure hearts, and with unlimited toleration, without any shadow of orthodoxy or hate. It is rightly said that "there is no religion higher than the truth." Therefore let man really love the truth. Let man love man, and there will be truth and honesty, justice and piety, happiness and prosperity. Let us all have the "gates" of our souls widened and "way" broadened, and we shall surely have the pleasure of seeing the possibility of acquiring the real heaven of happiness for all. Let us throw away small-mindedness and banish old false ideas of the past to the bygone dark ages; let narrow views about men and things, God and Nature, be consigned to antiquity to be forgotten for ever; let the sun of enlightenment shine upon us, and let his clear, bright rays pierce the deep recesses of our souls; let everything that is dark in us be illumined, and let all human kind, giving up the dissensions of sectarianism, clasp hands of sympathy and embrace each other with the sincere love and affectionate feelings of true fraternity. Then, and then only, if ever, is it possible that even at the remotest age imaginable, quarrels between man and man will disappear, wars will cease, and nations—hundreds of different nations—will forget their differences and will be united into one blessed nation of real men and women, into one sacred nationality of the human family.

Invisible Helpers and Adversaries.—III.

(Concluded from p. 726.)

HAVING rendered justice to the neutral and friendly micro-organisms, we may pay some attention to a few of the all too numerous pathogenic germs which minister to our ill. In the opinion of the writer, the labors of scientific workers in unravelling the secrets of malignant microbes constitute a supreme achievement of medical humanism. No one conversant with the facts can any longer dispute that every zymotic disease—cholera, scarlet fever, diphtheria, and rabies among others—is to be attributed to the morbid agency of micro-organisms. Of course, many of the specific microbes remain to be isolated; but in several instances the particular organism which generates—directly or indirectly—degeneration and death has been tracked to its lair.

Malignant pustule, or woolsorter's disease, is one of these fatal maladies, and is justly dreaded as a human scourge. It is also rightly feared by the raiser of farm stock, as it becomes fatal to cattle in the form of splenic fever. In 1850, Rayner and Davaine, two French doctors, announced the discovery of small rod-shaped bodies in the blood of patients who had succumbed to anthrax; but nothing further transpired for over ten years, when interest was reawakened in these singular forms through the researches of Pasteur in 1863. But a further fourteen years were destined to pass before Pasteur, in a celebrated memoir conveyed to the Paris Academy of Sciences, proved beyond all question that the rod-formed bodies observed by Rayner and Davaine twenty-seven years earlier were the generators of anthrax. Since Pasteur's demonstration, our knowledge of these bacilli has been greatly extended by Koch and other bacteriologists, so that we now possess a detailed acquaintance with their life-history. Nor are these inquiries yet exhausted, for fuller and clearer light is being thrown on their phenomena every year of our lives, with highly practical results.

It is now demonstrable that microscopic study of the blood of any animal that has perished from

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anthrax discloses the presence of enormous numbers of these bacilli. If the smallest amount of this infected blood

> "is introduced into the tissues of another animal capable of taking this disease, the inoculated animal becomes infected, and almost certainly succumbs; and if now the blood of this second victim be similarly examined, this also will be found densely populated with the same bacilli. We thus see that the disease is accompanied by the enormous multiplication of the micro-organism within the system of the victim, and that the disease may be indefinitely communicated from one animal to another."

It is also possible to cultivate this fearsome microbe artificially. All that is necessary is to take a drop of blood from an animal that has died from splenic fever and then place it in any ordinary cultivating medium to, in a short time, secure a rich colony of the anthrax bacillus, which is easily seen with the naked eye. In the blood of the animal smitten with this dreadful disease the bacilli seem unable to evolve spores, but as soon as they are removed from the restrictions imposed by the blood their spore-producing powers gain full play, and it is this spore-evolving capacity which endows the bacilli with such deadly influences. For example, if the bodies of animals that have suffered from anthrax are interred or permitted to putrefy near the surface of the soil, the micro-organisms develop spores in the earth, and other creatures will be infected through swallowing the spores with the grass on which they graze.

Nor does this end the trouble. As the hides and fleeces of animals to which the malady has proved fatal sometimes pass into commerce, their contained spores are very liable to cause death to the tanners and wool-sorters who work them long after their original owners have perished.

Cremation seems in any circumstances the only really satisfactory method of disposing of the dead. In any case, it is fairly obvious, in the light of the above facts, that the burning of the carcasses of anthrax-smitten quadrupeds is absolutely imperative, and that the farmer or cattle dealer who neglects these precautions is an unsocial unit of the community. The pity is that many who are in most constant touch with this malady are ignorant of its menaces. During the prevalence of this disease in England some years ago, "the butcher to whom the slaughtering of the affected animals was entrusted was quite unaware of the dangerous task upon which he was engaged, and only had his ignorance enlightened by himself falling a victim to the disease."

A malady which is far more general in man than anthrax—erysipelas—is also set up by an organism. It is not a bacillus in this instance, but a micrococcus. This microbe readily responds to artificial growth, and it has been definitely established by experiment that this micrococcus gives rise to the disease of erysipelas, not only in the lower mammals, but in man.

Possibly the greatest bacteriological triumph is that associated with the labors of Koch. This eminent investigator has settled beyond all cavil the exciting cause of tubercular disease, one of the most fatal forms of which is pulmonary consumption, a dire malady which sweeps away about one-sixth of the British population, and frequently selects as its victims the very flower of the human race. This pestilent disease is bound up with a minute bacillus, which is never absent from any of the numerous varieties of tuberculosis. The tubercle bacillus is also easily cultivated in artificial conditions, and it has been demonstrated that its presence in the body is always the precursor of tubercular disease.

The precise manner in which this scourge is spread is still an open question, but it is demonstrable that the sputum of consumptives is almost certain to contain the bacillus. This micro-organism also develops spores; so that, in addition to the serious risks of infection through sputum, the poison may find many other facilities for communicating the disease. It is, however, to be observed that the conveyance of the tubercle bacillus from a consumptive patient to a healthy subject need not necessarily induce the disease, as a predisposition to the ailment is sometimes essential. This natural immunity to infective diseases is a very important matter, and the writer hopes to deal with it in a forthcoming article.

The connection between tetanus, or lockjaw, and the micro-organism which occasions the disease is one of the most astounding phenomena in the entire realm of bacteriology. Not until 1884 were Carle and Rattone able to prove that jockjaw was a disease liable to conveyance from one victim to another. They showed that rabbits inoculated with pus from the infected corpse of a human being who had succumbed to tetanus also died from the same disease. This discovery at once led to further inquiry. Nicolaier then found that certain microbes were the causative agents of this awful ailment. Rosenbach extended the inquiry; but all attempts to isolate the tetanus bacillus proved unavailing until Kitasato, the great Japanese bacteriologist, secured pure cultures of the refractory organism. His method of working is thus described:—

> "Kitasato took some tetanus pus and inoculated it on to agar-agar, and kept it at a temperature of about 38° C. in an incubator; already within the space of twenty-four hours, an abundant growth was visible, and on examining this under the microscope he found various micro-organisms, and amongst them bacilli, which he at once recognised as those identified with tetanus by Nicolaier and others."

These bacilli produce their spores at the end of the rod-like bacillus, and thus bear the appearance of a microscopic club. They were ascertained to be strictly anærobic; in other words, they will never grow in the presence of air; and this at once accounted for the inability of earlier investigators to free them from contact with foreign microbes.

The spores of this malignant bacillus abound, not only in garden soil, but in stables and other places of a similar kind. They are remarkably resistent to death, and retain their evil qualities for long periods of time. Everything considered, they are to be regarded as among the most sinister and relentless enemies of higher animal life.

Fortunately, in cases of this nature, fatal results may be prevented by the use of tetanus serum, which has been, and is still, employed both with man and the lower animals with very gratifying results in various parts of the world. In tropical and semi-tropical countries the risks of tetanus are much more serious than in our own temperate isles. As that eminent expert, Stewart Stockman, states, "there were places, like Calcutta, where tetanus was so common that bicyclists were warned to wear gloves along the roads. The protective use of tetanus anti-toxin for horses gave them no inconvenience, produced no fever, and never led to a fatal result."

A microbe that has been the occasion of much discussion is the "comma bacillus," which is regarded by Koch as the cause of Asiatic cholera, in which opinion he is supported by many of those best fitted to judge. That this bacillus is the causative agent of cholera is a belief resting upon an imposing array of evidence. The germ in question was detected by Koch in the dejects of cholera patients in Egypt, Calcutta, and Toulon in 1883. Koch's findings were largely confirmed by Klein and Gibbs in Calcutta and Bombay, and other medical authorities subsequently found the comma bacillus in the stools of cholera sufferers. And although these, or similar, bacilli may be present without inducing the disease, the malady always appears to be attended by the comma bacillus.

The germ of typhoid fever, which must not be confused with typhus fever, is another bacillus which long refused to lend itself to that exact observation and experiment which is essential to precise knowledge of microbic connection with disease. But, for all practical purposes, Eberth's bacillus has been proved guilty of direct or indirect responsibility for typhoid fever. Prolonged and patient study is im-

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perative to bring home to a micro-organism its complicity in death-dealing disease. In the case of tuberculosis, tetanus, malaria, plague, yellow fever, and other diseases the connection between the microbe and the malady has been demonstrated to all save those who refuse to understand.

In common with all other branches of science, bacteriology is a matter of evolution. The obstacles it has triumphantly surmounted are many, but many more remain to be overcome before full victory can be won. But its already splendid successes are of happy augury for the future. As that brilliant if ill-rewarded investigator of Nature's problems, Sir Ronald Ross, said, in his recent Huxley Lecture, with reference to science:—

> "Her slaves are like laborers condemned to drive tunnels through mountains—working, perhaps for years, in darkness, and oppressed by the immense spissitudes of nature above them; but always encouraged by the hope that at any moment they may emerge into the sunlight and upon the vision of a new world."

T. F. PALMER.

AN ATHEIST'S PRAYER.

Who then are you? Speak out at last. The hour is come.
You can not always keep your tongue within your head.
Appealed to you have all men, wept and wailed have some,
Why have you nothing said?

Why stay you in the sky, huge bronze of livid hue,
With mocking smile on lips that all speech else avoid?
Impenetrable face and phantom form, are you
Of brain and heart devoid?

Why do you nothing say? Why do we see described
No wrinkle, stubborn spectre, on your brow austere?
Why that stupid air and aspect circumscribed?
Are you too deaf to hear?

If you speak not, then try at least to understand.
Despise me, if you will, but let me see, I pray.
Your face relax to show that I may lift a hand
And you know what I say.

To transform into faith the doubt that me o'erpowers
You need but put a yes into those eyes I spy.
You need but make a sign; my hate no longer towers;
It at your feet will die.

O Mystery proud, wrapped in your dismal veils,
He whom men call father should be one indeed.
If you are my creator, in the shades and vales
How can you see me bleed?

How can you see me humbly kneeling on the stone,
My arms stretched toward you, drowned my voice in accents wild,
And yet no tear beneath your eyelid trickling down?
Am I, then, not your child?

Alms give, in pity's name! So poor am I and weak!
I am not wicked. Good be thou, and look at me.
My poor love-laden heart has naught that it can seek
But to exhale to thee.

But no! I still see on your face that stupid smile
My cries, my tears, my insults bear no fruit, I fear.
No, you do not speak; you have no thoughts the while;
You have no ears to hear.

Then, after all, do you exist? When I sound space,
Within the infinite depths your shape I never miss.
Is what I see, perchance, the reflex of my face,
Mirrored in that abyss?

Is it my soul that lends a soul unto the world?
Were my heart's dreams no more an object of my thought,
Would you in vain, like image on the wild waves whirled
When sun goes down be sought?

Yes, yes, your haughty silence now is solved for aye.
But I too long have suffered; revenge is now my share.
These lips henceforth shall be of blasphemy the way,
Never again of prayer.

O God, thou floating fog above a field of lies!
O God, thou vain mirage of wishes here below!
Thy glory and thy pride but from our dreams arise,
Without us, thou must go.

—Translated from the French of Jean Richepin by B. R. Tucker.

Correspondence.

BACTERIOLOGY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Your correspondent, Mr. T. F. Palmer, speaks of some amazing discoveries in the prevention and cure of disease by the study of bacteriology. Now, it is unfortunate that that study is usually entered into with preconceived notions, which lead to the most mischievous nostrums, to the detriment of the public health and the depletion of the public purse, being forced upon us. Any medical opinion opposed to the orthodox is treated with insult and persecution; just as the orthodox religionist treats the heretic. What chance would a medical student have of getting his degree if he had an independent opinion on vaccination or serum-therapy? What happened to Dr. Tebb for his outspokenness on vaccination? Next to dogmatic theology vaccination has been one of the greatest curses that ever afflicted humanity. Arm to arm vaccination spread syphilis and leprosy all over the world, and after years of denial the first fact had to be practically admitted by the substitution of what is called, euphemistically, pure calf lymph, which was simply a reversion to a treatment that was given up because it was unsatisfactory.

Any real test experiments would meet with the most strenuous opposition from the vested interests in disease, or else we might ask that at least one army corps should be kept free from vaccination and other inoculations long enough to give a fair comparison between it and the others who had undergone the medical rites which, in my opinion, do infinite mischief. Great care would have to be used in obtaining fair results, for vaccination statistics are deliberately cooked.

A. J. MARRIOTT.

"GENTLE JESUS."

Oh, what have sickly children done to share
Thy cup of sorrows? Yet their dull, sad pain
Makes the earth awful; on the tomb's dark stair
Moan idiots, with no glimmer on the brain;
No shrill priest with his hangman's cord can beat
Thy mercy into these—ah, nay! ah, nay!
The angels thou hast sent to haunt the street
Are hunger and distortion and decay.
Lord! that mad'st man and sendest him foes so fleet,
Who shall judge thee on thy judgment day?

—Robert Buchanan.

THE HOUR OF DEATH.

[The following is a fine translation of an admirable poem by the famous French poet, M. Sully Prudhomme.]

Kindly watcher by my bed, lift no voice in prayer,
Waste not any words on me when the hour is nigh—
Let a stream of melody but flow from some sweet player,
And meekly will I lay my head and fold my hands to die.
Sick am I of idle words, past all reconciling—
Words that weary and perplex, and pander and conceal;
Wake the sounds that cannot lie, for all their sweet beguiling:
The language one need fathom not, but only hear and feel,
Let them roll once more to me, and ripple in my hearing,
Like waves upon some lonely beach where no craft anchoreth,
That I may steep myself therein, and craving nought, nor fearing,
Drift on through slumber to a dream, and through a dream to death.

Obituary.

We deeply regret to announce the death of our well-known and esteemed friend, Mr. M. Jones, of 41 Co-operative-street, Ton Pentre, Rhondda, on the 7th inst., at the age of 59, after a few days' illness. He was of an exceptionally genial disposition—a typical Welsh-speaking Welshman; actively associated for many years with working-class organisations; and an avowed Freethinker. When Mr. Foote and Mr. Lloyd last visited Aberdare, he went over to hear them. He was unusually frank in the expression of his views, and his good character always gained him a hearing. I have the authority of his sons to say he died a Freethinker. His remains were interred at Trecrchy Cemetery on the 12th inst., followed by a large concourse of friends and relatives.—RICHARD MORRIS.

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The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularisation of the State, etc., etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

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No disguise can long conceal love where it is or feign it where it is not.—ROCHEFOUCAULD.

About Atheism.

ATHEISTS are the last people in the world to resent criticism. Experience would have inured them to it, even if principle had not taught them to recognise its justice. But criticism, if it is to be justified, and certainly if it is to be helpful, must be intelligent. The critic must understand what he is criticising, and this, unfortunately, is what few critics of Atheism ever trouble to do. A brief glance at the literature of Atheism shows that no small part of the work of Atheists has been to remove misunderstandings, some of them almost deliberate. Very seldom indeed does a religionist fight the Atheism of Atheists, it is more generally an Atheism that does not exist out of the pulpit. Where Atheism *is* fairly present a reply to adverse criticism is easy—sometimes it is not even needed. There is an illustration of this in the case of the famous seventeenth century scholar, Ralph Cudworth. His *True Intellectual System of the Universe*, intended as a refutation of Atheism, is probably one of the most scholarly works on Atheism ever issued. But Cudworth took care to understand the Atheism he was criticising, and not only to understand it, but to set its arguments down with fairness. The consequence was that the Christian world met the work—or as much of it as was published—with abuse. And the author grew so disgusted with its reception that the remainder of what was intended to be a defence of Theism never saw the light. The general opinion was well summed up by Dryden, who said that the author "has raised such strong objections against the being of a God and Providence, that many think he has not answered them." And the famous Earl of Shaftesbury says that Cudworth was "accused of giving the upper hand to the Atheists for having only stated their reasons and those of their adversaries fairly together."

I was reminded of this case of Cudworth's by coming across the following sentence in Canon Ainger's life of Charles Lamb:—

> "He went through a phase of Atheism—probably out of sheer curiosity."

These words, it should be said, do not refer to Lamb, but to Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who was a schoolfellow with Lamb. And unless one knew to the contrary, one would be inclined to class it with Lamb's own observation on Coleridge's love of German metaphysics, that it was due to his sense of humor. But Canon Ainger is quite serious over the matter. Coleridge went through a phase of Atheism, says the Canon, and he explains it as due to sheer curiosity.

Now, so far as Coleridge himself is concerned, it is extremely unlikely that he ever was an Atheist—in any genuine sense of the term. He himself refers to his "infidelity," and this may be what Canon Ainger had in mind. But it is very probable that this "infidelity" never went beyond what would be called Deism. He rejected the Biblical stories, and was very likely influenced by the better class Deistic authors. Other people may have called him an Atheist, but that is only to be expected so long as Atheism is a term of abuse, and so long as Christians count abuse as argument.

Coleridge himself says that it is—

> "for telling unwelcome truths that I have been called an Atheist. It is for these opinions that William Smith assured the Archbishop of Canterbury that I was (what half the clergy are in their lives) an Atheist. Little do these men know what Atheism is. Not one man in a thousand has either strength of mind or goodness of heart enough to be an Atheist. I repeat it. Not one man in ten thousand has goodness of heart or strength of mind to be an Atheist. And were I not a Christian, and that only in the sense in which I am a Christian, I would be an Atheist with Spinoza."

I am not, however, concerned at present with any discussion of Coleridge's religious opinions. I am using Canon Ainger's words as an illustration of a common phase of mind as regards Atheism and religious disbelief in general. Atheism, it is assumed, is a phase of mind that may be passed through, or even deliberately adopted, much as one might select a motor-car or a suit of clothes. Some people, disgusted with religion, "try" Atheism, and then give it up when they see what an inferior thing it is; or they pass through it, as Canon Ainger says Coleridge passed through it, as though Atheism were a species of intellectual complaint to which bright intellects are susceptible. *Bright intellects*, be it observed; for it is easy to see that it is never the foolish ones that catch this complaint. It is always the more brilliant minds. The fools are quite safe. Stupidity is the true anti-toxin against Atheism. In spite of the Bible, the fool does not say in his heart "There is no God." Quite the contrary; he proclaims God, and then goes on his knees and thanks God for his stupidity.

Now, anyone who thinks that a man can become an Atheist, as Canon Ainger says Coleridge did, out of sheer curiosity, is—to put it quite plainly—a fool. However wise he may be in relation to other matters, in relation to this one he is foolish. He does not know what Atheism is, and he has, for the time being at least, forgotten the normal laws of mental life. How can one adopt a frame of mind from mere curiosity? One may go anywhere or examine anything out of curiosity; one may even feel a curious interest in one's own mental twists and changes. But by what means can one pass through a mental phase, whether of hope or fear, depression or exaltation, because one is curious about it. A man may realise that he is what the world calls an Atheist or a Theist, and he may be curious as to the causes that have made him the one or the other; but that is all. Mental states are not *adopted;* they are not even consciously selected. They arise; they are a part of growth; they express what we are at a given time. Their causes and their consequences are alike matters of history.

The idea of anyone becoming an Atheist from sheer curiosity is delicious. Curious about what? About the reasons that lead one to profess Atheism? They are to be studied by anyone who cares to read Atheistic arguments. Is it to find out what Atheism is? Well, Atheists are not formed into a secret society. They are only too ready to explain Atheism to anyone who cares to listen, and writings on the subject are not unobtainable. Is it curiosity to find

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out what are an Atheist's feelings? There may be something in this, and one can conceive a fervent believer in Deity genuinely puzzled to realise how people can get on without God. But, then, judging by all appearances, the Atheist is not greatly unlike other people. He looks the same as others, he acts the same as others, and, apparently, feels the same as others. And if anyone wishes to realise an Atheist's mental condition, there is only one way in which this may be done. That is by becoming an Atheist. We are not so curious about Theists, for the reason that most of us have passed through that phase of mind. It represents a stage in our development. But one cannot take up with Atheism out of curiosity. I can attend a religious service, and may even go through a religious ceremony, because I am curious about them. But there is no method by which one can acquire a conviction save by appreciating the proofs on which that conviction rests.

It is naturally agreeable to Christian prejudice to assume that Atheism is no more than a mere transient frame of mind to which all are subject, but from which really well-balanced minds soon recover. It removes it from the category of serious forces that have to be reckoned with, and at the same time gives the believer a comfortable feeling of superiority. But genuine Atheists never do "recover." A man who is really an Atheist is never reconverted—that is while he remains mentally healthy. The change is all on the one side, and all in the one direction. Nothing is, indeed, more amusing than finding religious people attributing the Atheism of this or that one to false views of the Bible, or to the revulsion brought about by contact with undesirable Christians. The truth is that Atheism is very seldom, if ever, brought about by these means. They may cause a man to leave one sect and join another. They may give weight to one religious doctrine against another religious doctrine; but that is all. If every believer was a wholly admirable person, if every religious doctrine were as clear as daylight, and if all Christians were agreed as to what was the correct view of the Bible, these things would leave the Atheist quite unaffected, and they would be quite powerless to prevent the growth of Atheism. That rests on causes that are part and parcel of human civilisation.

Look at the matter historically. Quite apart from the desirability or undesirability of Atheism, the whole trend of the world's mental growth is in the direction of Atheism. Bacon's often quoted saying that a little philosophy leads to Atheism, but greater depth in philosophy brings men back to religion, will not withstand examination. It is quite the other way about. It is a little philosophy that leads to religion, a greater depth in philosophy brings one out of it. Religion is not the final philosophy of nature, it is the earliest. It is true that religion is the product of reason, but it is reason in its crudest and least informed state. Had man been incapable of reason the gods would never have existed; and provided he keeps on reasoning the gods will one day cease to exist. All history and experience proves this. The very universality of religion proves it. For religion is only universal in the sense that no tribe or nation is known without possessing some kind of superstition. And then exactly in proportion as a people advance in genuine culture, we find religion losing its hold on the human mind. One would never expect to find Atheism amongst savages. Amongst civilised people it has ceased to excite comment.

The essential fact about Atheism is that it represents growth—growth in the individual and growth in the race. That is why a man cannot become an Atheist and then revert to religion. One may exist without knowledge or perception of certain truths, but once this knowledge is ours, how are we going to divest ourselves of it? So one may easily remain a believer in God—the majority do so remain, but once a man sees the fallacy of the God idea, understands its origin, and appreciates its history, how is he ever going to bring himself back to his previous mental condition? It simply cannot be done. Yet it is this fact of growth that is of vital significance in connection with Atheism, and it is the one fact that the Theist declines to recognise. Perhaps one ought to say he dare not. For its recognition involves the admission that the belief in gods is a passing phase in history, analogous to the belief in fairies in the history of the individual. It is in the infancy of the race that the gods are born, to the infancy of the race they properly belong; and that is a truth which is not vitally affected by the fact that in many cases this period of infancy is a very prolonged one.

C. COHEN.

What of Christendom?

IN Anglo-Saxon, *cristnian* signifies to make a Christian, from *cristen*, a Christian. Our English verb *christen* bears precisely the same meaning. In the Catholic and Anglican Churches Baptismal Regeneration is held to be a fundamental dogma, and to be regenerated is to be born into Christ, or to be made a Christian. Tertullian says: "We fishes are born in water, conformable to the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Now, in the early Church "fishes" denoted Christian disciples, "fish" being then used as a symbol of the Redeemer for the simple reason that the first letters in the Greek words for "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior" make up the Greek term for "fish." To be born in water, then—that is, to be baptised—was to become Christians by a supernatural act. Even among Nonconformists to Christen has practically an identical signification, though in common parlance it often means merely to give a name, to demonstrate—as, for example, when Bishop Burnet says, "Christen the thing what you will." It naturally follows that by *Christendom* is to be understood either Christian citizenship, as such, or a group of countries inhabited by Christians. Shakespeare employs it in the former sense when he makes Duke Arthur exclaim, in answer to Hubert:—

> "By my christendom,
> So I were out of prison, and kept sheep,
> I should be as merry as the day is long."

It is in the second acceptation, however, that the word is generally taken. By Christendom is meant the United Christian Kingdom — the cluster of kingdoms over which Christ rules. The Rev. Edward Shillito, in an article in the *Christian World* for November 19, is candid enough to admit that "devotion to Christendom means little to-day," which signifies that loyalty to the Emperor Christ is almost entirely a thing of the past. Once upon a time loyalty to Christendom was an all-consuming passion, burning fiercely in all Christian hearts. Mr. Shillito describes it thus:—

> "It was a motive powerful enough to stir the hearts of kings, statesmen, thinkers, poets, and all the master-minds of Europe. The Crusades testified to the reality of Christendom. The long struggles with the Moors were prompted by the faith that there was something distinctive and vital for which all Christian peoples were content to die."

We endorse almost every word in that extract, but we politely beg to remind its writer of the fact that to every statement in it there is a staggering counter-statement, which is carefully left out. The Crusades *did* witness to the reality of Christendom, but they witnessed quite as powerfully to the utter rottenness of the moral characters of those engaged in them. Doubtless there were amongst them a few pure-hearted and noble-minded persons, but the bulk of them were drawn from the riffraff of the populations of the West, and did not hesitate to commit the lowest and darkest deeds in the name of the Cross. Their licentiousness was a byword. Hating the Jews with all their hearts, they tortured, slaughtered, and plundered them whenever they had an opportunity. And they ran no spiritual risks by any of the crimes they perpetrated, for the Pope had granted them full indulgences before they started. Has Mr. Shillito forgotten how Pope after Pope

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advocated those horrible wars; how Innocent III., his guardian, forced Frederick the Second, when only twenty-one years of age, to assume the cross; how Gregory IX. excommunicated him because he kept putting off his departure for Palestine; how he was excommunicated a second time by the same Pontiff for going there; and how, after securing a favorable peace, and after sailing for Italy, he was excommunicated a third time for returning? A most extraordinary character, an impassioned poet as well as a level-headed lawgiver, a man who could live on terms of friendship and hospitality with non-Christians, which was denounced as conduct unworthy of a Christian, Frederick was hated, despised, and persecuted with great ferocity by the Papacy.

Surely, Mr. Shillito does not think that the treatment of the Moors in Europe reflects any credit upon the Christian Church? Is he not familiar with the story of their forcible conversion to Christianity, their persistent persecution, and of the heartless injustice heaped upon them for so many generations in Spain? The reverend gentleman is quite right as to the motive that animated the Church. It is a notorious fact that the horrible cruelties and oppression practised upon the Jews by Christianity dates from the time that it became the religion of the State under Constantine. It is true that three or four Popes protested against and attempted to check such a shamefully inhuman policy; but, with those few exceptions, the persecution continued with extreme ferocity through many centuries. We have seen that the Jews were massacred by thousands during the mad fury of the Crusades; but we have to confess further that it was the uniform habit of most devout sovereigns, like Theodosius, St. Lewis, and Isabella, of the Council of the Lateran, of Paul IV., and particularly of all religious orders, to put up a wall of absolutely implacable hostility between them and all Christians. It was appointed that they must wear a distinctive garb and dwell in ghettoes. Christians were forbidden to have any intercourse whatever with them. Intermarriage with them was the very worst of sins, and there was a time when, if a Christian chose a Jewess for his mistress, he was burnt alive. These are facts with which all students of history are well acquainted. The Jews were a hated and hunted race in a Christendom sweetly governed by the God of all grace and love. Christians were only allowed to utilise them as their bankers, and some doubted whether they ought to be allowed to do even that.

Now this brutally hated, hunted, hooted, and plundered race found an asylum replete with tolerance, kindness, and sympathy amongst the Moors of Spain. Having many points in common, these two peoples were able to appreciate and serve one another. But the friendship thus established was destined to be but short-lived. Soon after the Cross vanquished the Crescent, the Holy Inquisition became supreme in Spain. The edict went forth that the Jews must be expelled from the country at once. They offered 30,000 ducats to remain, but Isabella was not on the market at any quotation, especially when Torquemada was at hand to keep her straight. The Jews gone, the fate of the conquered Moors grew worse and worse, until, a hundred years later, they, too, a full million, shared the doom of the hundred and sixty thousand Jews.

The most amazing fact in this connection is that Mr. Shillito seems to believe that the Jews and Moors were treated so unheroically and with such economic blindness by the Spanish Christians because of something distinctive and vital which, they were convinced, characterised the Christian faith. The expulsion of the Jews under Ferdinand and Isabella, and that of the Moors under Philip III. were, beyond doubt, acts of supreme piety. Ever since 1509, when a revolt, provoked by a breach of the compact entered into on the fall of Granada, was violently suppressed, the vanquished Moors had been shockingly oppressed. They were not allowed to make an open profession of their own religion, and their sufferings were indescribable. Later on, in 1566, they were prohibited from speaking or writing in Arabic, and from indulging in their traditional habits and ceremonies. Then came the over-pious and dangerously foolish Philip III., whose one object in life was to further his own ends by promoting those of the Catholic Church. In 1609 this ridiculous monarch resolved to make a public exhibition of his orthodoxy by issuing a decree ordering the expulsion of all Moors from the Peninsula within three days. The edict was duly executed, and the ruin of Spain as duly begun. We stoutly maintain that the Mooriscoes were intellectually, morally, agriculturally, and industrially the backbone of the country, and that their departure from it could not have been eventuated in anything but its certain disintegration. And yet Mr. Shillito has the coolness to indicate that this was the way Spain witnessed to the reality of Christendom. He makes his case worse still by his allusion to Mr. Gladstone's championship of the cause of the maltreated Bulgarians in 1876. Identifying Gladstone's motive with that which controlled the Spanish Catholics of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, this twentieth century preacher says:—

> "When with passionate wrath, he pleaded the cause of Bulgarians or Armenians, he never forgot that they were members of the body of Christendom; they had a claim upon him as fellow-heirs of the Christian name, set in the midst of a non-Christian civilisation. They were not of his Church, they might have strayed, as he imagined, from the highways of the Faith, but they were Christians, and, as Christians, were not the same as though they were outside Christ."

Such is Mr. Shillito's conception of Christendom, and it is the genuine idea of it too. There are humanitarians in Christendom, people who love and work for the welfare of the human race, but they are outsiders, and genuine Christians look down upon them and contemptuously dub them Pagans. Thank you so much, Mr. Preacher, you have opened our eyes still more. We now see clearly that the central, all-embracing Christian attribute is *clannishness*. Nothing could be more obvious. What is the root and guiding principle in Foreign Missions? Narrow, selfish, exclusive clannishness. Great fault is found with the Germans just now because they loudly assert their own superiority to all other nations in the world; but does not the British Empire make the same silly claim, and quite as loudly, every time a prominent politician or a pulpiteer opens his mouth? This fault is pre-eminently a Christian fault, not a German or British one merely. Toleration of and fellowship on equal terms with non-Christians have never been and never can be Christian virtues. At one and the same time Christianity preaches self-denial *and* self-assertion, two mutually destructive qualities. Christianity may be summed up in the solitary word—*Egoism*. Such is Christendom as interpreted by Mr. Shillito.

J. T. LLOYD.

Ambrose Bierce.

> "A fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy."
> —SHAKESPEARE's *Hamlet*.

A PARAGRAPH has been going the rounds of the press that Mr. Ambrose Bierce, the well-known humorist, who is seventy-two years of age, and who went recently to Mexico for further literary work, is missing, and none of his friends know what has become of him. Mr. Bierce, who is even better known by his pen-name, "Dod Grile," is an American with a large following in his native country, but for some years he resided in England, doing excellent work on the *London Figaro* and *Fun* in their palmy days, and publishing a number of books, which firmly established his reputation on this side of "the herring pond." In the United States his works have been collected in a handsome edition in twelve volumes; but in this country he is represented by stray volumes which are the joy of discriminating lovers of literature.

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Why his books are not so popular as those by Mark Twain, Max Adeler, Artemus Ward, and Jerome K. Jerome is a mystery. That he is as funny as either is evident. If his humor is not appreciated by the public to the extent of those others, it may be because he has chosen to expend it largely upon a disrespectful perversion of religion. The proper study of mankind is man, and possibly the only burlesque that causes the wide mouth of the general public to broaden to a grin must also concern nature, and not the alleged supernatural. Ambrose Bierce deserves a place beside the other humorists mainly because his work is of a rarer quality than theirs. Two of his books with the quaint titles *The Fiend's Delight* and *Cobwebs from an Empty Skull* revealed a mordant satire that is without a parallel since the days of Swift, and they were as full of profanity as an egg is full of meat. The title page of *The Fiend's Delight* was ornamented with a drawing showing a devil toasting a plump baby at a large fire, whilst in the body of the work the Christian superstition fared as badly as it did in the lively pages of Colonel Ingersoll. Another extraordinary book was *In the Midst of Life*, a series of powerful short stories largely concerned with military episodes in the American Civil War, and some of his battle pictures are unsurpassed of their kind, whilst others recall the grim realism of Poe or Maupassant. The gems of humor scattered throughout his writings would make the fortune of a comic writer. Here are a few taken at random:—

"I once knew a man who made me a map of the opposite hemisphere of the moon. He was crazy. I knew another who taught me what country lay upon the other side of the grave. He was a most acute thinker—as he had need to be."

"The Psalmist never saw the seed of the righteous begging bread. In our day they sometimes request pennies for keeping the street corners in order."

"It is wicked to cheat on Sundays. The law recognises this truth, and shuts up the shops."

"If a jackass were to describe the deity, he would represent him with long ears and a tail. Man's ideal is the higher and truer; he pictures him as somewhat resembling a man."

"Camels and Christians receive their burdens kneeling."

"Most people have no more definite idea of liberty than that it consists in being compelled by law to do as they like."

"People who honor their parents have the comforting promise that their days shall be long in the land. They are not sufficiently numerous to make the life-assurance companies think it worth their while to offer them special rates."

"Everybody professes to know that it would be difficult to find a needle in a haystack, but very few reflect that this is because haystacks seldom contain needles."

"In calling a man a hog, it is the man who gets angry, but it is the hog who is insulted. Men are always taking up the quarrels of others."

"It is to be feared that to most men the sky is but a concave mirror, showing nothing behind, and in looking into which they see only their own distorted images, like the reflection of a face in a spoon. Hence it needs not surprise that they are not very devout worshipers; it is a great wonder they do not openly scoff."

"Benevolence is as purely selfish as greed. No one would do a benevolent action if he knew it would entail remorse."

"The symbol of charity should be a circle. It usually ends exactly where it begins—at home."

"Piety, like small-pox, comes by infection. Robinson Crusoe, however, caught it alone on his island. It is probable that he had it in his blood."

To pick out passages haphazard is not doing justice to a brilliant humorist. Not only does a jest's prosperity lie in the ear of him who hears it, but it has its life in atmosphere of its own, and there are few plants so tender in the transplanting. While the creator of "Mr. Dooley" is welcomed, and the author of *Three Men in a Boat* is passing popular, one cannot help regretting the inadequate appreciation that Ambrose Bierce has won. Of course, all reading people must know his writings; but that the larger public should not have an opportunity of testing what he has written is unsatisfactory.

The function of a laugh-maker is often underestimated. The man who grins at you through a horse-collar, and sets you laughing back at him, does you a vast service. The physiological value of laughter has never been correctly appraised. Although doctors bestow a certain patronage on cheerfulness, and give it a minor place in the pharmacopœia, no one will dispute that the humorists are the benefactors of society. Yet, with the exception of Moliere, Rabelais, and Dickens, humorous writers are held to be only second-rate artists. The world will not take them seriously. Perhaps it is their own fault for electing to provide mirth for folk who take their pleasures sadly.

MIMNERMUS.

A Chapter of My Autobiography.

THE SECULAR CHARTER.

IN the early days of my acquaintance with the Secular party I used to hear Charles Bradlaugh and George Jacob Holyoake complain that Christian laws deprived Freethinkers of a right enjoyed by all other citizens; namely, of giving or bequeathing money to the Secular movement with full legal security. Those who might imagine that Holyoake's language was less vehement than Bradlaugh's on this subject are very much mistaken. He spoke like a man who had seen his and his friends' property carried off in open daylight and the policeman helping the thief.

My own prosecution for "Blasphemy" in 1882-3 gave me a special interest in this matter. Robbing a man of his personal rights of free-thought and free-speech was half-way to robbing him of his financial rights. It was because a Freethinker could be kicked with impunity that he could be pillaged with impunity. And as, for my part, I am as little fond as any man is of "wrongs unredressed and insults unavenged," this state of things made a great impression on my mind and filled me with indignation. Natural inferiority must be borne with, but arbitrary inferiority—manufactured by bigotry and insolence—is a thing that no man with a spark of self-respect could put up with for a single moment longer than he could help.

I became a Freethought lecturer and writer myself, and the editor of the *Freethinker* from its first number. It was like no other Freethought paper that had ever been published, and although it contained nothing in the form of revelation, its novelty of character made it more popular than was expected. And it soon got me into trouble. I was so incensed at the treatment of Bradlaugh by the baser sort of Christians, aided by Christians of a more tolerant reputation, that I felt, "Very well, gentlemen, if that is your Christianity, I hate it; moreover, I despise it, and contemn you; and I will inflict upon you as much pain and injury as I can." So the *Freethinker* started with a really fine program, if I may say so, and it kept its promise as far as possible. But ridicule was our speciality. By "our" I mean my dear old friend and colleague, Joseph Mazzini Wheeler, as well as myself. All who really knew him would subscribe to the statement that he couldn't be vulgar if he tried—and there was the paper to speak for itself. Articles of my own on Gambetta, Littré, Paul Bert, and Etienne Dolet, appeared in the early numbers; and although time necessarily brings changes, I would not be ashamed to sign them now. Mr. Wheeler and I were extremely unlike each other in many things, but wonderfully alike in many other things; and men who worshiped Shakespeare, reverenced Darwin, and loved Shelley (as we both did) were not the likeliest to be enamored of vulgarity, although we may occasionally have failed to remember the Master's *mot* about a jest's prosperity.

Well, with good outside help from friends whose names could not be mentioned then and cannot be mentioned now, we simply maddened the Christians—as we tried to do in the circumstance of the time.

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We were revenging Freethought a bit—what the man in the street calls "getting our own back." And the worst of it was that the enemy recognised the learning and ability which (leaving out myself) lay behind the witty attacks of that gallant little band of Freethought soldiers on the Bible and Christianity in particular, but also in general on all the flourishing superstitions of the world.

We maddened the Christians so much that they soon fell upon us with the "Blasphemy" Laws. I was prosecuted as Fiend in Chief, Mr. W. J. Ramsey as Chief Steward, and Mr. H. A. Kemp as Substeward—that is to say as Editor, Publisher, and Shopman (he was really a lad). But I am not relating the story of my prosecution and imprisonment at present. I am only indicating the way my mind took with regard to the main subject I am writing about. I suffered my twelve months' imprisonment under a Christian judge's sentence, in a Christian gaol, provided with a Christian soul-saver in case I required his services. Christians sometimes ask me to forget it. Never, while Christians love persecution; never, while the "Blasphemy" Laws are unrepealed.

During my imprisonment I thought of many things. Amongst them, of course, was the personal side of the Blasphemy Laws—the danger that every Freethought publicist ran from a Christian jury's being asked whether his criticism of their faith was absolutely suited to their taste. That danger, from the nature of the case, seemed still destined to a considerable longevity, although its viciousness had been greatly diminished by Lord Chief Justice Coleridge's judgment at my trial. In spite of all the Common Law decisions of former judges, he insisted that times had changed, that people had grown more tolerant and humane, that differences of opinion on any subject could not now be considered a crime, and that "*if the decencies of controversy are observed, even the fundamentals of religion may be attacked without a person being guilty of blasphemous libel.*"

Nobody felt the full meaning and weight of these fateful words. Certainly I did not. Lord Coleridge himself did not. He said that he did not then realise the great importance of the trial at which he was presiding. Still, he stuck to his judgment, which I had included in my report of the proceedings; and his independent report of his own speech, except for what may be called repairs and decorations, showed very little difference between the two publications.

I suffered the heaviest punishment inflicted on a Freethinker for a hundred and twenty years. Not by the order of Lord Coleridge, but by the sentence of Mr. Justice North, one of the common rack of judges and a Roman Catholic at that. It was my singular fortune to be tried for "blasphemy" three times in the course of less than three months. I was brought up from prison to be tried again on what was really the first indictment. I had fallen among thieves, I was bruised and wounded, without so much as the benefit of first aid. And I sat there to be tried again for the same "crime," answer the same stupid arguments of bigotry, and retort its insolences. When lo! there was a hush in court, and a tall figure, looking so stately in those red robes, walked across the bench with noble dignity, and took the judge's seat. And it was the Court of the Lord Chief Justice of England! He sat down serenely, rested his forehead on his right hand, and took a good look at me. I think the scrutiny ended in satisfaction. Judge North's "Foote" changed into Mr. Foote, his Lordship assisted me in protesting against the word "indecency" being applied to my paper, and the "vulgar blasphemer" of a few weeks before had turned into the author of a "very striking and able speech," as Lord Coleridge told the jury it was—while the *Times* said that the trial "would be historical, chiefly because of the remarkable defence" I had made. So it seems that I was born, as it were, for this particular work.

In the course of time the spark of fire in Lord Coleridge's speech to the jury at my third trial for "Blasphemy" grew into a great light in my mind. Was it not possible to make a distinction between *matter* and *manner* in the criticism of Christianity, so that one might be legal though the other were penal? The logic of this distinction had nothing to do with me. Providing that Lord Coleridge's distinction held good, a Society might be founded on a legal basis of non-Christian intention, and as firm and secure as the Rock of Gibraltar. It would also have to furnish security on the side of expenditure—that is, internally as well as externally. This could be done by something that was a Trust and not a Trust—by something that had all the advantages of a Trust and none of its disadvantages. This was at last worked out through the Memorandum and Articles of a Company Limited by Guarantee.

Hardly anybody thought this plan was feasible. I had to convert even the legal gentlemen who afterwards assisted me. Some of my colleagues, with rather a cynical smile, were ready to encourage me, as far as they felt able to, in attempting the impossible. Some asked why the project had not occurred to Bradlaugh. I replied that no one admired him more than I did, but his death did not leave the world empty. Some (there are always *these* some) predicted still worse things, and pictured me as a sort of millionaire living on the Mediterranean with all the money of my dupes safely invested in good securities for my own advantage. As a matter of fact, money accruing to the Society had to come through the Society's bankers' by cheque, endorsed by the Secretary and two Directors, of whom the Chairman was not necessarily to be one. The Society was formed, the Society was registered in 1898, the Society has had thousands of pounds by way of gift and legacy, the Society still exists and fulfils its intended function—and I am not yet living on the Mediterranean. It is ten to one that I shall be cremated at Golder's Green.

I published the Memorandum of Association of the Society last week. I now give the "Reasons for Joining the Society," which I published in in this journal in September, 1898:—

REASONS FOR JOINING THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED.

First Advantage.—This scheme gets rid of the old difficulty as to giving or bequeathing money, or other property, for Secular purposes. The Secular Society (Limited) is a legally incorporated body. It has all the rights, as far its Memorandum and Articles go, of an individual citizen. If anything is bequeathed to it, the executors have no alternative but to pay the amount over. That is certain. It does not admit of a moment's doubt. While the registration stands there is absolutely no room for apprehension on this point. A Freethinker may leave this Society five pounds, or a hundred pounds, or a thousand pounds, with the certitude that all he so leaves will be devoted to the objects set forth in the Memorandum.

Second Advantage.—The Society, like an individual citizen, can act as trustee. Should a Freethinker wish a certain sum of money to be devoted, not to the general objects of the Society, or to any one of them in particular, but to some special object in the same direction, he can so devote it by deed of gift, or in his will, and appoint the Society as trustee for the carrying out of his intentions.

Third Advantage.—While the Society is not nominally a Trust, like the various Christian Churches, it is practically so. Its Memorandum amounts to the same thing as a Trust, because it specifies certain objects to be promoted, generally by the members and particularly by the Directors, and because Article 54 makes it legally impossible for the Society's funds to be expended in any other way.

Fourth Advantage.—No member, as a member, can derive any profit, direct or indirect, from the Society. The funds of the Society could not, therefore, be voted in any way to its members. Further, there is no danger of the highest interests of the Society being injured by a desire on the part of its members

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for a commercial dividend. There is no room for that desire to operate.

Fifth Advantage.—There is no Share Capital; consequently, the danger does not exist of shares passing into indifferent, alien, or hostile hands. This has frequently occurred in the case of ordinary companies, and the result has been ruinous to the objects of the original promoters.

Sixth Advantage.—No temporarily successful faction of malcontent members could have the slightest chance of wrecking the Society, for it cannot be voluntarily wound up except by the consent of at least nine-tenths of its members, which involves practical unanimity. The continuity of the Society is thus guaranteed.

Seventh Advantage.—It could be to no one's personal interest to see the Society wound up, because Article 57 provides that on its winding up its property would have to be given to some kindred society, or to a non-sectarian charity. "It shall not be paid or distributed," the Article says, "amongst the members."

Eighth Advantage.—While there is every security for the rights of members, and for full and perfect publicity, the Society's affairs will be conducted in a business-like way by a Board of Directors, who have legal powers and also legal obligations, which could, if necessary, be enforced.

Ninth Advantage.—The Memorandum gives the Society large and varied powers, if only it can obtain the means to exercise them. The whole field of Secular work and organisation could be covered with adequate resources.

Tenth Advantage.—Every member having to be proposed and seconded, and admitted or rejected by the Directors, there is a reasonable guarantee that only proper persons will be admitted to the Society; and, as every member has to pay ten shillings on joining, and five shillings a year afterwards, there is a reasonable guarantee that he will be seriously interested in the Society's welfare.

Eleventh Advantage.—This is an indirect one. Henceforth the leading men in our movement will be freed from unjust suspicion and malicious misrepresentation. If one of them was left anything by a friend, who happened to be a Freethinker, it was always open for jealous persons to say, "Oh, it was meant for the movement, but he has stuck to it himself." Mr. Bradlaugh had several such legacies, at least two of them being substantial ones, and he suffered from these traducers, who took advantage of a Christian law to libel their own leader by means of a falsehood that, from the very nature of it, did not admit of a positive refutation. Other leading Freethinkers have suffered from the same cause. But all that is ended now. If a man wishes to leave money to the movement, he can put the Secular Society, Limited, in his will. What he leaves to an individual, henceforth, can only be meant for that individual. And probably there will always be some who prefer to help a movement by helping those who labor and sacrifice, and perhaps suffer, to carry it forward.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

A CHRISTIAN SON.

The other day a young gentleman, a Presbyterian who had just been converted, came to me and gave me a tract, and he told me he was perfectly happy. Said I, "Do you think a great many people are going to hell?" "Oh, yes." "And you are perfectly happy?" Well, he did not know as he was, quite. "Would you not be happier if they were all going to heaven?" "Oh, yes." "Well, then, you are not perfectly happy?" No, he did not think he was. "When you get to heaven, then you will be perfectly happy?" "Oh, yes." "Now, when we are only going to hell, you are not quite happy; but when we are in hell, and you in heaven, then you will be perfectly happy? You will not be as decent when you get to be an angel as you are now, will you?" "Well," he said, "that was not exactly it." Said I, "Suppose your mother were in hell, would you be happy in heaven then?" "Well," he says, "I suppose God would know the best place for mother." And I thought to myself, then, if I were a woman, I would like to have five or six boys like that.—*Colonel R. G. Ingersoll.*

Newman and Paine.

"Rough work, Iconoclasm, but the only way to get at Truth."—OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

CARDINAL NEWMAN ought to have been well acquainted with Freethought, for one of his brothers was a Theist, and another was an Atheist, whilst in many pages of own incomparable writing he shows a delicate appreciation of the sceptical objections to orthodoxy. The Cardinal's biographers, however, do not appear to possess much knowledge on the subject. In a sketch of Newman, issued by the Catholic Truth Society, and written by Dr. Barry, it is said that Newman, at the age of fourteen, "read Paine's tracts against the Old Testament, and found pleasure in thinking of the objections they raised." It would be difficult to beat this specimen of "Catholic Truth." Paine wrote no "tracts" against the Old Testament, and his *Age of Reason*, which covers the whole of the Bible, is a substantial volume, and has been on sale for over a century, and has been sold by hundreds of thousands. Many replies have been published, but Paine's book has outlived them all, and may be regarded as a Freethought classic.

There were critics of the Bible, it is true, before Thomas Paine's day, but they were mainly scholars, whose works were not easily understood by ordinary folk. Paine himself, a man of genius, had sprung from the people, and he spoke their tongue and made their thoughts articulate. But boldly as Paine might write, his book would never have been read at all but for the courage of the Freethinkers. In that battle for free speech, Richard Carlile and his wife and friends divided among them about fifty years imprisonment. Daniel Eaton, besides being prosecuted seven times, had the pillory inflicted and £2,500 worth of literature destroyed. Christian apologists, who are never tired of boasting of the tolerance of their intolerant superstition, need to be reminded of these things. Although trials for blasphemy have been numerous, the comparatively enlightened nineteenth century holds the record for the number of blasphemy and free speech prosecutions, and it is extraordinary in how many instances Paine's book has figured. The reason is not far to seek. Paine woke the working classes to intellectual issues, and since Church and State have united in an unholy alliance to strangle Liberty.

M.

PROFESSOR BURY'S CRUSHING ARGUMENT.

Before I came to years of discretion, a well-meaning preceptor supplied me with an argument to prove the supernatural origin of the Christian revelation. It amounted to this: If Christianity had been a human invention, it could not have lasted for nineteen centuries. It so obviously proves too much. For it would establish the divine origin of Buddhism; it would establish the divine origin of Confucianism; and it would establish for Fetishism an origin still more divine. Or, why confine its validity to religions? Roman law, which in its way has had as wonderful a vitality as Christianity, would be entitled to claim superhuman inspiration.—*Prof. J. B. Bury, Litt.D., LL.D.*

HOW JONES WORSHIPS JONES.

Of all conceivable forms of enlightenment the worst is what is called the inner light. Anyone who knows anybody, knows how it would work; anyone who knows anyone from the Higher Thought centre knows how it does work. That Jones shall worship the God within him turns out ultimately to mean that Jones shall worship Jones. Let Jones worship the sun or moon, anything rather than the inner light; let Jones worship cats or crocodiles, if he can find any in his street, but not the God within.—*G. K. Chesterton.*

BRADLAUGH AND "GEORGE ELIOT."

I well remember that when describing an evening at the Hall of Science, George Henry Lewes observed laughingly to "George Eliot," "I verily believe, Polly," thus he usually called his companion, "that our friend has a sneaking fondness for Mr. Bradlaugh."—*Miss Betham Edwards, "Reminiscences."*

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Acid Drops

We are rather at a loss to see why so many military men in this country should spend so much time denouncing the teaching of some German writers that war is a national necessity. It is only what scores of militarists in our own country have taught for years. It is, indeed, the common teaching of militarists in all countries. Even Lord Roberts said that "Without war, at any rate, without the vigilance and discipline which prepare for that stern emergency, a nation is in risk of running to seed." War, he said, "prevents decadence and effeminacy." This is, we repeat, the common teaching of militarists, it is no more German than British, and no more British than French. And it is wholly false. War does not improve a nation, it degrades it; instead of preventing decadence, it leads to it. If this were not so, it would be nothing short of lunacy to talk of fighting Prussian militarism in order to end war. We ought to take care to perpetuate it as a recurring factor in national life. But the truth is that war takes of the best and leaves the worst. It begins by weeding out the physically fit, and ends by inducing a blunted moral sense. The proof of this is seen in the fact that no militarist nation has ever been able to perpetuate itself. And it is one of the best established truths that troops long in the field tend to demoralisation.

Where these theorists go astray is in confusing the exercise of combative energy with physical fighting. The first is a permanent element in human nature; the second is only one of the forms in which it finds expression. Man is always a fighting animal. Civilisation itself is no more than the story of man's fight with nature and the conservation of the fruits of his many victories. But there is no need that this combative energy of man shall always be expended in physical contest with his fellow-man. That is the uncivilised—or at best the less civilised—aspect of the struggle. The higher and better and more profitable aspect of the struggle lies in the contest of ideas and ideals. The other form becomes less and less so in proportion as humanity becomes susceptible to the sway of ideas. And this contest is also decisive. No one really wishes to stop contests between human beings. What the better minds wish to do is to lift that contest from the lower to the higher stage. The true militarist favors the lower expression of the struggle. That is the real difference between the pacifist and the militarist. And, as a matter of fact, there is no more combative person in existence than the anti-militarist. Only he prefers ideas as being ultimately more powerful and profitable than bullets and bayonets.

The *Church Times* is hoping that some kind of Christian unity may result from the War. But it is to be the kind of unity that exists when a wolf and a lamb are united; for what the *Church Times* wants is that other sects shall become reconciled to them. And the other sects are equally anxious for unity—on the same terms. Meanwhile, it is instructive to observe that religion is the one thing on which people will not and cannot unite. When the War broke out politicians of opposite schools became reconciled, employers and employees declared a truce. Religious parties alone maintained all their divisions and their differences. It may be said that this is because religion is the most valuable of all things. But the truth is that, while social life draws people together, religion makes all the time for division.

Some good stories are included in Sir Melville Macnaghten's *Days of My Years*. One is in connection with the murder of William Terriss, the actor, when Charles Brookfield objected to the highly colored details published in a paper, and wrote to the editor: "Sir,—God, who in his infinite mercy has deprived the negro of his sense of smell, would seem similarly to have deprived the journalist of all sense of decency."

The Unspeakable Prussian is the title of a new book. Surely it must omit reference to the Psalm-smiting and loquacious Kaiser, for he talks like an insurance agent or a revivalist preacher.

A new volume has been issued with the title, *David in Heaven*. We wonder if his celestial amusements are as interesting as his little affair with Bathsheba, or his dancing display before the Ark.

In a biographical note of Lord Strathcona in *T. P.'s Weekly*, it describes the late-lamented peer as belonging to the "catch-as-catch-can Individualist school." This awful phrase suggests an evangelical mission, a harmonium, and plenty of collection boxes.

The Vicar of St. Peter's, St. Albans, has been solemnly warning people that they should avoid spending on luxuries during the present state of affairs. Such advice is not very helpful, especially as one is not told what is a luxury. There are, of course, hosts of things that most of us could *live* without, but would a life without some of these be worth the living? Are necessaries only those things adequate to sustain life—say, enough food, clothing, and shelter? A great many people apparently regard a book as a luxury, and one can, of course, live without books. So with a variety of other things. And the gist of the whole matter lies in the consideration that what is at first a luxury becomes later a necessity, and that, on the whole, it is well that this should be so. For life itself becomes higher in value as luxuries become necessities. Reducing life to what are called its bare necessities would mean little less than the destruction of civilisation. We do not mean that there are no such things as unnecessary luxuries, and some that people would be just as well without. The difficulty lies in discriminating, and the uselessness of advice without discrimination.

Meanwhile, from our point of view, there are some things that we think the nation could get on very well without. People might dispense with their disbursements—or a part of them—for purely religious purposes. The money spent on foreign missions, over three millions annually, might be saved. Now that we have called upon the followers of the religions of India, the Japanese, the Senegalese, and others to come and help in the task of preserving Western civilisation, it might be a graceful act if we desisted from offering them a religious patronage that is unwelcome and impertinent. But this is, of course, not the kind of economy that the Vicar of St. Peter's has in mind. He is thinking of the way in which people might economise in some directions in order to give the money to "Home Missions," and the like. It is really a question of point of view, and the Vicar's is like that of the merchant who sees no more in the War than a chance for him to capture some of Germany's trade.

It was one of life's little ironies that a portrait of the Bishop of London, in full war-paint, should have been exposed in a dealer's window immediately beneath a placard announcing a cheap edition of Stevenson's *Travels With a Donkey*.

In a recent novel, entitled *Sinister Street*, there is a lengthy account of life at the University of Oxford, and it is frankly admitted that the institution has been captured by wealthy prigs and sporting men. This is not exactly a new discovery, for Gibbon, the great historian, described Oxford dons as being "sunk in prejudice and port," and Matthew Arnold has called the University "the home of lost causes." A university which expelled Shelley and canonised General Booth, has reason to boast that it is not for the common herd.

The clergy are boasting of the revival of religion owing to the War; but it is curious that in many leading articles in the press on the death of Field-Marshal Lord Roberts, hardly any reference was made to Christianity. Even the *Times* was purely Secularistic in tone, and all the great dailies echoed the same strain. It looks as if the clergy are making capital out of the compulsory attendance of troops at the official services.

It is given on the authority of a clergyman, or we should hardly have credited it. But from the *British Weekly* we learn, on the authority of the Scottish Chaplain with the Expeditionary Force in France, that a "universal question" with our men at the front is, "Do you think they'll be praying for us at home, Sir?" Of course, those who know soldiers intimately, realise that this is precisely the kind of thing they would be anxious about. And it is fortunate that the Scottish Chaplain is there to send home this cheerful message. For the secular correspondents have altogether failed to chronicle such an interesting piece of information.

The clergy of St. Paul's Cathedral have arranged to hold a twenty-hours' watch service on December 16, in preparation for the National Day of Intercession on January 3. This ought to be called a non-stop watch service.

Most of the "authorities" on a future life adopt the policy of "I have evidence," or "I am assured," or "I am convinced," all of which are interesting autobiographical items, but are not of much value otherwise. For it is not somebody else's convictions, but *mine*, that is required; not

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something that is evidence to another, but something that is evidence to *me*. Accordingly, we are not greatly affected by the assurance which Sir Oliver Lodge gave a South London audience the other day to the effect that a continued existence after death was a demonstrated truth. "I tell you," said Sir Oliver, "with all the strength of conviction which I can muster that the fact is so, that we do persist, that these people still take an interest in what is going on, that they still help us, and that they are able from time to time to communicate." All this *may* be so; but on the face of it all that these assertions actually prove is that Sir Oliver Lodge believes them to express the truth. This we are not inclined to question. We have never doubted his sincerity or his honesty; but honesty is no protection against blunders—in this connection it sometimes promotes their occurrence.

Sir Oliver Lodge says that "the survival of existence is scientifically proved by careful scientific investigation," that the evidence is recorded in the volumes of a scientific society—presumably the Psychical Research Society, and that those students "who have given most attention to it have gradually, and in the process of many years, come to agree that the proof has now become crucial." Every statement here admits of serious question. *All* students of psychical phenomena do not admit that conclusive proof of a future life has been found. Some may believe so, but many remain unconvinced. The survival of personal existence has not been "scientifically" proved—that is, unless we give to the word "scientific" a new and altogether arbitrary meaning. It may be, as Sir Oliver says, that "it is not for everybody to investigate everything," but it is the essence of a scientific investigation that its methods and results may be appreciated by the non-investigator of average ability and adequate education. We have never investigated many things that we take for granted from scientific teachers, but we understand the methods on which these teachers work, the steps of their calculations are there for all to study, and we see that their methods are satisfactory, and their conclusions agreeable to other scientists. But this is not the case with a future life. All those who investigate are not satisfied. Some challenge the "facts." Others admit the facts, but dispute the inferences therefrom. Others come to quite contradictory conclusions. Sir Oliver Lodge is quite justified in putting forward his belief in a future life, but it is *his* belief. He has no right to put forward the belief as scientifically demonstrated.

Sir Oliver Lodge has been protesting against the doctrine that the State is the "summit" of everything—that it is entitled to do what it pleases if it is conducive to its own benefit. We think that Sir Oliver, like many others, is confusing State with Government; but in the main we agree with his protest. But why does Sir Oliver Lodge call this doctrine "practical Atheism"? The first duty of a scientific man is to be exact, and this particular theory has about as necessary a connection with Atheism as Macedon has with Monmouth. Sir Oliver had of course in mind certain German writers, who, curiously enough, call themselves Christians, and who have a perfect right to call themselves such. One is not surprised at the ordinary theologian or journalist calling "practical Atheism" anything with which he disagrees, but it is a pity to find a leading scientific man falling—even momentarily—to the same level.

It is stated that the authorities of the Roman Catholic Church and the National Council of the Evangelical Free Churches will have an "Intercession Sunday," in which they will follow the lead of the Government Religion in petitioning the Throne of Grace on behalf of the Allies. Pity the sorrows of a poor, old deity!

"God helps only those who help themselves" says the *Daily Mail* in a leading article recently. The sentiment is not original; but some of the *Mail's* pious readers may have demanded their ha'pennies back.

At a Thundersley (Essex) Brotherhood Meeting recently, the subject discussed was "How to Fight the Enemy," and a vocalist sang "A Dream of Paradise." Surely an ironic heaven!

The following exhortation has been written on the wall of a certain golf club-house where soldiers are billeted: "Think of Jonah! He came out all right." If he did, he must have been sicker than the whale.

There must be few thoughtful and unprejudiced observers who are not struck by the almost contemptible part played by the Christian Churches during the War. Quite powerless to prevent the outbreak of war, since then they have formed an obviously negligible quantity. No one pays any serious attention to what they say or do, and any help given to recruiting men for the Army could just as well have been given by the clergy as private individuals, and by the Churches as secular organisations. To reply that the Churches have supported the Government in pursuing the War is to say nothing. They have almost invariably supported *every* war, and that alone discounts the moral value of their support now. Moreover, the Churches of Germany and Austria have been equally keen in supporting their Governments; which also proves that from Christianity no genuine guidance is possible. The Christian Churches have no common message, and no common teaching, unless it be one of the rankest opportunism. The support of even a politician counts for more than the sanction of the Church, for the reason that one is more likely to get an independent opinion. Right or wrong, the Churches echo the opinion of the moment, in war as in other things.

This aspect of the matter evidently appeals very strongly to the Rev. E. Shillito, who, in the *Christian World*, laments that "Devotion to Christendom means little to-day, although once it was a motive powerful enough to stir the hearts of kings, statesmen, thinkers, poets, and all the master minds of Europe." Even so, it cannot be said that their Christianity made with any greater certainty for unity and peace. No matter how seriously the people of past ages took their religion, it did not prevent their conducting wars with far greater ferocity than even now. Mr. Shillito refers to the case of Mr. Gladstone, who, in pleading the cause of the Bulgarians and the Armenians, never forgot that "they were Christians, and as Christians were not the same as though they were outside Christ." Quite so; but Mr. Shillito overlooks the fact that in this instance there was a non-Christian Power to be attacked, and that will always whet the appetite of followers of the Prince of Peace.

Mr. Shillito asks, "Would it make any difference if half the nations in the arena were not Christian?" Perhaps not; but what difference has it made now that they are Christian? Did it delay their arming against each other for years before war actually broke out? Did it lead to a greater measure of trust between them? Was there a single Christian nation or statesman who depended upon Christianity as affording any guarantee of honorable dealing or of peaceful intention? Everyone knows to the contrary. Everyone knew that, should a critical occasion arise, the profession of a common Christian faith would not lie as a feather's weight in the balance. And everyone recognised also that the voice of the Church in Germany or Austria or England was only, as Mr. Shillito confesses, "a valuable adjunct to the semi-official press," voicing the official case in the language of piety.

The manner in which hatred against everything relating to Germany, Austria, and Turkey is finding expression is ludicrous. Soon we shall have children objecting to "German" sausage or the Christmas "Turkey."

There is a popular belief that the Czar of all the Russias has forbidden the sale of all alcohol throughout the War, but this is not so, for only vodka is barred. Wines and beers are still being drunk, but vodka is the national drink. So spirituous intoxication, no less than spiritual intoxication, is still within reach of the Russian people.

At a recent meeting of the London County Council Education Committee it was stated that nearly six hundred Territorials were attending French classes. They will be able to read M. Anatole France's stories in the original language.

For some years now the Chinese Government has been attempting to deal with the opium traffic—a traffic forced upon China by this country. In the native cities the opium dens have been closed; but now the Rev. Arnold Foster points out that the Municipal Council of the International Settlement outside Shangai has, while closing the recognised opium dens, largely increased the number of shops licensed for the sale of opium. The Council is made up of Europeans, the majority of whom are British. Under their rule the number of shops licensed to sell opium has increased from 87 in 1907 to 663 in 1914. The sale of the drug is now about twenty times as great as it was seven years ago. The Chinese are compelled to submit to this, but it will not fail to impress them with what Christian morality means in practice.

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To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £231 13s. Received since:—F. Lucas, £1 1s.; Newcastle Branch, N. S. S., 10s. 6d.; W. H. Hickes, £1 1s.; M. J. Charter, 10s.; Jersey, 10s.; T. T., 2s. 6d.; H. Courlander (S. Africa), 10s, 6d.; W. W., 2s.; Mrs. Borsby, 2s.; J. Wood (Winnipeg), 4s.

R. CAUDEN.—The address of the Secretary of the Birmingham Branch of the N. S. S. is Mr. J. Partridge, 245 Henstone-road, Rotton Park, Birmingham. We have noted the other matter. Thanks for cuttings, which are always acceptable.

F. LUCAS.—Acknowledged. We are not sure which of the papers received has been sent by you, but you will doubtless be able to trace it from some of the paragraphs in this week's issue.

W. D.—Thanks for paper, which we do not see regularly. The use of religious terms has a curious attraction for a certain order of mind, and that is all one can say about it.

H. G. FARMER.—Thanks for cutting. The comment is characteristic. It may be useful on some future occasion.

T. T. (Glasgow).—Regret delay in acknowledging subscription, which you will see has now been done.

A. R. WILLIAMS.—We do not think the *Schoolmaster* is correct in speaking of Mr. R. J. Campbell as having been a *strong supporter* of Secular Education. His help to the cause was never of a very strenuous character; and his decision that often having seen the effect of the German system, he would never again support the "relegation of religion to a subordinate place in the day-schools," shows that he understood neither Secular Education nor the German system. (1) The advocates of Secular Education do not wish to place religion in a subordinate place; they wish to exclude it altogether as a matter with which the State has no concern. (2) The "German system" has more religion in it than has our own; and one would have expected Mr. Campbell to see in this a reason for the exclusion of religion—if he were not a parson. (3) Men of strong principle and whose convictions are well founded do not change in this way because something has occurred with which they disagree. It is the attitude of mere sentimentality.

A. J. N.—Sorry we cannot find room.

G. H. (Liverpool).—We have had a copy of the leaflet you send. It appears to have been given away broadcast—which is probably the only method by which a circulation could be gained. Its author is scarcely worth any of our contributors bothering with.

J. ANON.—Hope we have got the acknowledgment correct.

J. W. REPTON.—Thanks for addresses. Copies will be sent as requested.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and not to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. J. T. Lloyd lectures this evening (November 29) in the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester. Admission is free, and we hope to hear that the Leicester folk will avail themselves of the opportunity.

Some excellent passages from an article by Mr. Romain Rolland appeared in the *Daily News* of a recent date. The title of the article from which the passages are taken is "Above the Battlefield." Mr. Rolland asks:—

> "Is our civilisation so solid that you do not fear to shake the pillars on which it rests? Can you not see that all falls in upon you if one column be shattered? Could you not have learned to love one another, or if that were impossible, at least to tolerate the great virtues and the great vices of the others? Was it not your duty to attempt—you have never attempted it in sincerity—to settle amicably the questions which divided you—the problem of peoples annexed against their will, the equitable division of productive labor and the riches of the world? Must the stronger for ever darken the others with the shadow of his pride and the others for ever unite to dissipate it? Is there no end to this bloody and puerile sport, in which the partners change about from century to century—no end, until the whole of humanity is exhausted thereby!"

"The leaders of thought," says Mr. Rolland, "the Church, the Labor parties did not desire war. That may be, but what did they do to prevent it? What are they doing to put an end to it? They are stirring up the bonfire, each one bringing his faggot. The striking feature in this monstrous epic, and one without any precedent, is the unanimity for war in each of the nations engaged."

This is, indeed, the most striking feature of the War, and the one with least promise of good for the future. It is a war for which no one will take the responsibility, and yet each displays a determination for war and for resistance, certainly unsurpassed, and probably unequalled on any previous conflict. Mr. Rolland well says:—

> "You Christians will say—and in this you seek consolation for having betrayed your Master's orders—that war exalts the virtue of sacrifice. And it is true that war has the privilege of bringing out the genius of the race in the most commonplace of hearts. It purges away, in its bath of blood, all dross and impurity; it tempers the metal of the soul; of a niggardly peasant, of a timorous citizen it can make a hero of Valmy. But is there no better employment for the devotion of one people than the devastation of another? Can we not sacrifice ourselves without sacrificing our neighbors as well? Many of you, I know, yield your own blood more readily than you shed that of others. But this is, in its essence, a weakness. For you who are undismayed by bullets and shrapnel yet tremble before the dictates of racial frenzy—that Moloch that stands higher than the Church of Christ.....You socialists on both sides claim to be defending liberty against tyranny—French liberty against the Kaiser, German liberty against the Czar. Would you defend one despotism against another? Unite and make war on both."

This is finely said, even though many may think this is not the time to say it with profit. With these we do not agree. It can never be right for those who see the insensate folly of war to sacrifice the future of the race to the madness of the moment. The duty of speech rests with those who see, now and always.

Miss Kough is lecturing for the Kingston Humanitarian Society this evening (November 29). Her subject is "A Christian War," and the meeting will be held in the Fife Hall, Fife-road, at 7 p.m. Freethinkers in the neighborhood should make a note of the meeting, and make it a point to be present.

There is nothing so difficult to eradicate as superstition. One may keep hammering away at it year after year, only to find at the end that the form only has been affected. And the amount of superstition current in even educated circles is a source of ever-recurring astonishment to students of the more obscure phases of sociology. We were reminded of this by a paragraph we came across the other day, pointing out that there is still in existence a number of followers of Joanna Southcote. Joanna Southcote died just about a hundred years ago, after establishing a religious sect who believed that she would give birth to the Messiah. A large number of people actually accepted the truth of the prophecy, but Joanna died without the marvel coming to pass, and her death was certified as due to dropsy. Still, the majority of her followers clung to the sect she had founded, and after a century it is not yet extinct. Those who ponder a fact of this description, in an age of newspapers and books and education, will cease to wonder at the prevalence of such a superstition as Christianity in earlier ages, and the difficulty of eradicating it once it is firmly established.

THE EVANGELICAL PULPIT.

In the face of physical science, of modern Biblical criticism, and of all the light which history and comparative mythology have of late years thrown on the genesis of religions, the old theory of verbal inspiration, the old methods of Biblical interpretation, and the old pre-scientific conception of a world governed by perpetual acts of supernatural interference, still hold their ground in the Evangelical pulpit. The incursions of erudite science have been met by the barrier of an invincible prejudice—by the belief, sedulously inculcated from childhood, that what are termed orthodox opinions are essential to salvation, and that doubt, and every course of inquiry that leads to doubt, should be avoided as a crime. It is a belief which is not only fatal to habits of intellectual honesty and independence in those who accept it, but is also a serious obstacle in the path of those who do not. The knowledge that many about him will regard any deviation from the traditional cast of opinions as the greatest of calamities and crimes seldom fails, according to the disposition of the inquirer, to drive him into hypocritical concealments, or into extreme and exaggerated bitterness.—*W. E. Lecky.*

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Christian Apologetics.

THE REV. Z. B. WOFFENDALE.

SOME time ago mention was made in this journal of the Rev. Z. B. Woffendale having been criticised by the late J. M. Wheeler, when sub-editor of the *Freethinker*. Of this matter I have no knowledge; but, somewhere near the time referred to, chance threw in my way a copy of a Christian Evidence periodical of which the reverend gentleman named was co-editor. In that issue was an article entitled "Agnostic Rationalism," in which the following statements were made: "Agnostic Rationalism is one of the latest and weakest developments of Infidelity. .....The methods of the Agnostic Rationalist, like those of his Atheist brother, are exceedingly unfair. .....This is the way in which he foolishly reasons about miracles: he takes the so-called impositions, counterfeits, and impostures of mythological, Pagan, and mediæval times, and treats these fictions as if they bore an exact resemblance to the miracles recorded in the New Testament, and as if they were analogous to the real miracle of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ." Then followed "the evidences" for the genuineness of the last-named miracle.

Being at that time a reader, and occasional contributor, of the *Agnostic Journal*, I wrote an article of three columns upon those "evidences" in that journal —to which the Rev. Woffendale afterwards replied in his own paper. These wonderful "evidences" I now give in the reverend gentleman's own words. He said:—

> "The evidences for the truth, genuineness, and reality of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ are colored down, hidden away, or conveniently ignored by the Agnostic Rationalist, and yet for Christ's Resurrection there is overwhelming testimony. There is first the witness of the honest doubter, Thomas, who would not believe until he saw with his own eyes, heard with his own ears, and touched the risen Christ with his own hands, and who, when this cumulative evidence was given, confessed Christ at once and his divinity. There is the testimony, secondly, of John, whose character for truthfulness no breath of suspicion has ever marred. There is the honest testimony, thirdly, of the Apostles, who were also eye and ear and hand witnesses to his Calvary wounds and risen bodily condition.....There is the witness, fourthly, of the Sacraments, the monumental institution of the Lord's Supper, and Christian baptism. And, fifthly, there is the recurrence every week of the commemoration of his Resurrection in the permanent establishment of the Lord's Day. And, sixthly, there is the existence to this day of the Christian Church, which has been founded and built up upon the miracle of Christ's Resurrection.....The Agnostic Rationalism which ignores God and denies miracles is but another phase of that pernicious Infidelity which rests upon little knowledge, shallow thinking, and weak reasoning."

The foregoing "arguments" are neither better nor worse than those used by Christian apologists in the present decade. My remarks upon them in the article mentioned—which I give verbatim, though somewhat abbreviated—were as follows:—

1. Without going into the question of the reality of the alleged resurrection of Jesus Christ, I will briefly examine the evidence adduced for it by Mr. Woffendale. First, we are told, there is "the witness of the honest doubter, Thomas."....But where is this testimony? Did Thomas leave a written statement, attested, say, by two or three persons of proved honesty, affirming his recognition of the resurrected Jesus? No; we have nothing from the hand of Thomas—not a single line. This vaunted testimony turns out to be nothing more than an unauthenticated anecdote related of this apostle in the Fourth Gospel (xx. 26—29)—one, too, of which Matthew, Mark, and Luke appear never to have heard. In other words, we have but the unsupported statement of the writer of the Fourth Gospel—who, without a particle of evidence, is assumed to be the apostle John—that Thomas saw and recognised his risen Master. Hence, in stating that we have the "witness" of Thomas to the resurrection of Jesus, the Rev. Z. B. Woffendale deliberately "misleads the unwary and the less intelligent" of his readers.

2. Next, says the rev. gentleman, there is the testimony of the apostle John, "whose character for truthfulness no breath of suspicion has ever marred." This statement proves that Mr. Woffendale either knows nothing of, or wilfully ignores, the facts most firmly established by Biblical criticism. He has apparently never perceived that the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel is a totally different person, both in language and actions, to the Jesus of the Synoptics. .....Again, we have no evidence that the Fourth Gospel was written within a hundred years of the alleged "Resurrection."....We have thus presumptive evidence that the anecdote recorded of "the honest doubter Thomas" is fictitious.....Here, again, the rev. gentleman "misleads the unwary."

3. Thirdly, says Mr. Woffendale, "there is the honest testimony of the apostles." Now, the twelve apostles are said to have been: Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, another James, Thaddæus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot. Where are we to look for the "honest testimony" of these? Where are we to look for *any* testimony of these twelve men? There are, it is true, some apocryphal Gospels written in the names of apostles; but these are admitted to be forgeries. Where is the "witness" of Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Thaddæus, Simon, or Judas Iscariot? As a matter of fact, we have *no* testimony which can truthfully be affirmed to be that of apostles.....But assuming, for the sake of argument, that the writings attributed to Peter, James, John, Jude, and Matthew were the work of apostles, in not a single one of them does the writer say that he had himself beheld the risen Jesus. Here, once more, the Rev. Z. B. Woffendale "misleads the unwary."

4. Fourthly, says this Christian advocate, "there is the witness of the sacraments—Baptism and the so-called "Lord's Supper." Now, the rev. gentleman ought to know that neither of these "sacraments" was originated by Jesus Christ; the early Christians took them from Paganism. But, assuming that both were actually instituted by Jesus, this fact in no way proves that personage to have been miraculously raised from the dead. Here we have a sample of what Mr. Woffendale asserts to be a characteristic of "pernicious Infidelity"—"shallow thinking and weak reasoning"—though the reverend gentleman's utterances might more correctly be described as random statements made without thinking at all.

5. Fifthly, says our great authority, there is "the permanent establishment of the Lord's Day." Now, it is true that in some second century documents we are told that Christians met by preference on the first day of the week, because on that day their "Lord" had risen from the dead. But this proves nothing more than the existence of stories similar to those at the end of the Gospels. It certainly does not show the alleged resurrection to have been an actual fact.....We have thus another example of "shallow thinking and weak reasoning."

6. Sixthly, says Mr. Woffendale, "there is the existence to this day of the Christian Church." A Christian Church, it is true, exists "to this day"; but this Church is not that which is alleged to have been founded by Jesus Christ. The original Jewish Church (that of the Nazarenes) lingered through three or four centuries, and then died a natural death. The existing Gentile Church was founded by Paul, who never beheld Jesus at all, and who simply *believed* the resurrection story.....It is therefore untrue that the existing Christian Church was founded on the *reality* of the alleged resurrection of Jesus.....Will Mr. Woffendale say that the existence "to this day" of the Mohammedan Church, or that of the Latter Day Saints, proves the genuineness of the revelations alleged to have been made to Mohammed or to Joe Smith? If he cannot, why does he endeavor to "mislead the unwary" of his flock by such "shallow thinking and weak reasoning"?

To some portions of the foregoing criticisms Mr. Woffendale replied in his own paper; but I soon saw that such a discussion was a farce: for his readers read nothing of my reply save a sentence here and there which he quoted for refutation, and this was done in the usual Christian Evidence fashion—by brag and bluster. At the end of the first instalment of his reply he boasted that he had made his Agnostic antagonist "bite the dust, where for the present we leave him." At the end of his second, he said that "the champion Philistine of Agnostic Infidelity has been fairly met, completely unhorsed, and left sprawling." I have only space here to illustrate this gentleman's replies by that relating to his first witness to the resurrection of Jesus—"the honest doubter Thomas."

> "Abracadabra's argument (!) is, that as 'we have nothing from the hand of Thomas,' therefore the scene and the event narrated by the writer of the Fourth Gospel concerning Christ and Thomas never took place.

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.....In any law court where the laws of evidence rule, such reasoning would be scouted and laughed to scorn. .....The crooked methods of Abracadabra are as blameworthy as they are shallow, unscholarly, fallacious, and misleading."

One portion of my reply to the foregoing—I have not space for the whole—reads as follows:—

Let us imagine for a moment a scene in accordance with Mr. Woffendale's notions of evidence. "Call the first witness—John," says the magistrate. Thereupon the apostle named steps jauntily into the witness-box, and states that he saw the risen Jesus on each of the occasions recorded in his book, after the alleged resurrection. "Call the next witness—Thomas," says the magistrate. Thereupon John again enters the witness-box, and reads the little incident he had fabricated about Thomas and the nail-marks. "Call the third witness—Peter," says the magistrate. Then John, for the third time, goes into the witness-box, and reads the little story he had invented about the resurrected Jesus telling Peter to feed his sheep and his lambs (xxi. 15—17). "That will do," says the magistrate; "We have now heard the testimony of three unimpeachable witnesses to the undoubted reality of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The fact, all will allow, is now firmly established."

This kind of court is known only to the Rev. Z. B. Woffendale; the others, "where the laws of evidence rule," are unanimous in rejecting all hearsay evidence.

The rev. gentleman's answers to my replies numbered 4, 5, and 6, are given in the following sentence:—

"That Christian Baptism, the Lord's Supper, the Lord's Day, and the Christian Church have been, and still are, four standing and impregnable monuments to the truth, the fact, and the reality of the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

These "monuments," as already shown, yield no testimony to the reality of the alleged Resurrection. Not one of the arguments there advanced has been in the slightest degree shaken. My opponent merely reiterated his former assertions. Everyone with a grain of sense will, of course, see that these "memorials" of the early Christian Church do not touch the historicity of the alleged Resurrection at all. They simply tend to prove that the Gospel resurrection stories were believed—by a later generation of Christians.

ABRACADABRA.

The Condemned Denominational Schools in London.

IT is now ten years since, on the destruction of the late London School Board, the L. C. C. became the education authority for London, and took over not only the control and support of the Board Schools but also the support, and a very small part of the management, of the Denominational Schools. These latter schools, in common with other Denominational Schools throughout the country, were henceforth to be known as "Non-Provided Schools."

The Clerical Schools, in which little children were taught, in too many cases by sweated teachers, "the faiths of their fathers," were, according to the supporters of the Denominational system, in a very bad way. Nothing seemed to be sound about them except the "atmosphere." The Government Grants alone did not suffice to meet the "intolerable strain," of which, prior to that great triumph of clericalism, the destruction of the School Boards, ecclesiastical authorities made such piteous complaints. However, Fabian and other politicians assured us, that when once Government Grants were supplemented by rate-aid, the Denominational Schools would soon become equal to the best of the Board Schools which had grown up under public control.

How far that hope has been realised may be seen in a L. C. C. report for May 26 (No. 33), in which, covering some forty pages, are the facts concerning 124 Denominational Schools in London, which have a total accommodation of 54,545 scholars, and which have been condemned by the Board of Education. The report reveals a mean, sordid condition of things to which every Rationalist should help in giving the fullest publicity. For we have to remember that the ecclesiastical forces behind those schools are powerful by reason of great wealth, patronage, and high political influence. Speaking with an intimate knowledge of education politics, gained as a member of the late London School Board and also as a pronounced Anti-Clerical education propagandist in the Trade Union movement, I say deliberately, that no self-respecting Rationalist can at this time afford to withhold his help, in building up the strong public opinion necessary to compel the Board of Education and the L. C. C. to insist upon the managers of the 124 condemned Denominational Schools fulfilling the obligations from which even the clerical legislation of 1902 and 1903 has not freed them, viz., the provision of suitable school buildings in place of the disgraceful, and in some cases, positively disgusting, schools which, as shown in the official report mentioned above, constitute so foul a disgrace to London.

In thirteen of those schools there are no playgrounds whatever, and no adequate provision can be made for physical exercises and recreation. One of these is the Girls' School of St. Mary Magdalene, Paddington, which, in the *Church Review*, December, 1901, was held up for admiration because of the managers' boast that "many a little Dissenter has been taught the Catholic faith in these walls." (The faith, it will be observed, of other children's fathers!) The report shows that in other schools also, playground accommodation is miserably limited. One reads of more than one case in which the infant classes go by turns for play into tiny yards containing the offices. In one case a boys' urinal is five feet from a classroom window; in another, the offices open direct from an infants' classroom. In one school which rejoices in the name of the Holy Family, "The boys spend the school recreation time in the street, the girls in the corridor or in the offices." These offices are stated to be "too near the school, and an unpleasant smell at times pervades the corridor." Surely a case for a cartoon, with apologies to Raphael! In one case the number of closets work out at one for forty children, and in another at one for sixty.

In one school, the boys, in order to reach their own offices, pass those set apart for the girls, "and the door between the two set of offices cannot be kept locked." Men and women teachers in one school use the same W.C.

A girls' school "on the first floor of another building is approached by a single wooden stairway with numerous turns"—a veritable death-trap in case of panic, through fire, or any other cause. Darkness on account of the close proximity of high buildings is common, and in some cases we find that classrooms are dark because the church is so near.

One reads again and again of structural defects, bad lighting, and bad ventilation. The infant schools are specially deserving of condemnation, and often one's heart goes out in pity—and in shame—for the poor little ones whom we are leaving to pay so high a price for the privilege of being taught—*at the public expense*—the "faiths of their fathers."

In connection with the report on the condemned schools, mention should be made of the service rendered by Mr. J. King, M.P., who, in June last, by a series of searching questions to the Minister of Education, brought some of the sordid facts of the case to the notice of the House of Commons. Thanks are also due to the quiet but highly effective work done by the National Education Association, an organisation which, in the past, has rendered excellent service in the cause of popular control of education.

It is, however, disappointing to be obliged to state that, although the facts concerning the condemned schools have for many months been widely known in Socialist and Trade Unionist circles, the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress, the Labor Party Executive, and the London Trades Council have taken no action. The same applies to the various Socialist organisations; for no Socialist

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paper, and no Socialist leader has given any lead on the subject.

A significant silence on this scandal also marked two important Education Conferences, each extending over several days, and held at the London University soon after the publication of the official report on the condemned schools. The first, held in May, was under the auspices of the Victoria League; the second, in July, was under the joint auspices of the Theosophical Society, the Education Group of the Fabian Society, and the Ratan Pata Foundation.

The National War Emergency Committee also, formed at the commencement of the War, while declaring that public bodies should set on foot works of public utility as one means of meeting the difficulty of unemployment, has not yet called upon the wealthy ecclesiastical bodies behind the condemned schools to replace them by up-to-date school buildings. However, many earnest members of the rank and file of the organised workers are at work, and in many branches of Trade Unions this great public scandal is being discussed. Ere long, no doubt, the leaders, yielding to pressure from below, will take action; and let us hope that a strong representation will be made to the L. C. C. and the Board of Education, that all municipal and imperial financial support shall be withdrawn from those schools, until the managers are definitely pledged at once to take the necessary steps for rebuilding them and for providing adequate playground accommodation. If the law compels us to tolerate and support Denominational Schools, we can at least see to it that the children are not put off with school buildings of the "cheap and nasty" variety.

M. BRIDGES ADAMS.

The Gardener.

TAKE a map of England. Select half-a-dozen of the areas upon it most sparsely supplied with the names of towns. Of these bare spots choose the barest, and stick a pin right in the middle of it. If you have followed the directions accurately your pointer should now be sticking right into the church spire of the most isolated village in the land.

Clumpton-in-the-Woods (probably so called on account of the fact that it is bounded on three sides by bare hills and on the fourth side by a small group of fir-trees) is the only village in England where a delectable stupidity has not been assailed by town-made "smartness," and where a reputation for being "up to date" is not classified among the virtues. Its inhabitants are as law-abiding as angels. Only a scarcity of pasturage or an epidemic among the stock can agitate the tranquillity which covers them like a garment. Clumpton possesses but one motor-car, and beats all England for the number of its natives who have never been out of the county.

With the owner of the only motor-car—the hamlet's medical attendant—I recently stayed for a week's rest. One warm, sunny afternoon, which certainly belonged to mid-March but had somehow contrived to get itself into early November, I started out for a leisurely walk with the intention of passing through the village and on to the moor beyond. At the end of "The Street"—correctly called "The" street, for there is but one, and incorrectly called "Street," for it is no more like a street than a camel is like a cow—there stood a cottage, old, but with a trim exterior, and surrounded by flower gardens from which the sunshine of a coming June will doubtless call forth a prodigality of perfume and color. Half an acre or so of garden at the side of the dwelling was devoted to the culture of vegetables.

On the side of the road, its work evidently done for the day, stood the vehicle by which the crops from this plot were conveyed for sale to the villagers—a most curiously wrought kind of van, which appeared to have been originally designed for some totally different purpose, and to have had odd little pegs and shelves superadded as necessity compelled invention to provide additional accommodation. A pair of tarred wooden doors or gates, wide enough to admit this vehicle, formed the entrance to the vegetable garden; and upon these gates, which were closed, the following announcement, written in chalk, attracted my attention:—

> "NOW is the time for fruit trees to be pruned and sprayed, they must be attended to if Good Crop Required. Why do we prune. because theres always a lot of bad wood to be cut away same as little children —why do we spraye because trees have ENEMYS Like Man and its best to kill them whil in there yoth. we do this work by the HOUR. DAY. or WEEK.
>
> Prune and spray
> Thats the way
> and Dont forget to pray
> for Fruit Some Day."

Here followed two chalk drawings, quite up to the standard of the letterpress. They represented young trees, and were described respectively as "pruned" and "not pruned." Underneath the whole appeared the signature of the proprietor.

Over the hedge I could see a man operating upon some gooseberry bushes with a knife. Judging him to be the "we" of the announcement, I determined to make his acquaintance. The chalk advertisement indicated a combination of modern enterprise and native philosophy rarely met with, and very surprising indeed in Clumpton; and its author, I concluded, would be worth knowing. So with that disregard of convention which the countryside expects, I opened the gate and bade him good day.

"You're busy," I said.

"'Ave to be," he replied, laconically.

"But isn't this your slow season?" I asked. "I thought gardeners had their holidays in the winter."

"Always plenty to do in a garden," he replied. "Never need stan' still. If you ain't doin' one thing you be doin' another. There's a sowin' time and a reapin' time, same as in the Kingdom."

I felt sure I was not mistaken. This was the author of the advertisement.

"And this," I said, "is pruning time? What advantage will those trees derive from your labors? Will they bear more fruit next year?"

"There 'ere be young uns," he returned. "Put 'em in last month. And they won't bear no frut 'tall next year. Want to git a firm standin' first. Can't rut and frut too, so I lets 'em rut. If a tree fruits first year all its strength goes, like a baby suckin' at a woman's breast."

I said "I see," though I didn't quite see the analogy he had intended to draw.

"Yours is a skilled profession," I added. "It must take many years to learn what is best for all the various plants you rear."

"Same as in the Kingdom," he replied quickly. "There's only one door, but there's a many ways leadin' to it. And you can't bring 'em all along the same one. Some 'as to be drove, some persuaded, and some carried. Which way did you come into the Kingdom, Mister?"

This unexpected and somewhat inconvenient question was accompanied by an unexpected and inconvenient a look. Until now I had seen the gardener's face only by portions, as he dodged around the bushes, bending at his work. But as he put this question he drew himself upright and looked full at me out of a pair of small, black, deep set, and very penetrating eyes. Shaggy black eyebrows and a beard of the same color contrived between them to leave very little of his face hairless.

I hesitated somewhat to answer his question, and he repeated, still watching me closely:—

"Which way did you come in?"

"Oh, I was driven in," I said, invoking the useful Catholic doctrine of mental reservation to add under my breath—"And I have been persuaded out!"

The gardener ejaculated "Ah!" as he bent again to his task, a little downcast, I thought, at finding me within the fold and so being deprived of a possible

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capture. He talked again, however, when, after remarking how stunted and unsightly the pruning left the trees, I added that no doubt his experience and skill were directing him aright in spite of appearances.

"Best to take 'em young," he replied. "They'll be all the better for it arterwards." Then, evidently calling to mind the chalk effort on the gate, he added, "Same as little children. Sunday-school's the place to prune. We cuts 'em and we trims 'em like—like—like—" he hesitated, and finally decided—"like a barber."

It occurred to me that a barber, though operating on the heads of so many others, is quite incapable of attending to his own, and I wondered whether this gardener, evidently at home when working at the juveniles, ever submitted his own spiritual adornments to the trimming and pruning of any experienced craftsman.

I found he would talk freely under a little encouragement. And his conversation was original and instructive. He knew exactly where the pruning-knife should be applied to "little children," and where reabouts in the "Word" the instructions on this matter are laid down. He understood human nature as thoroughly as he understood gardening; and he knew as much about God as Darwin knew about pigeons. Every process employed in his profession—even to the application of "dung" to the growing and fire to the useless—he applied to the life of man, with a view to the production of fruit and the glory of "our Lordun Savior." And he was full of metaphor. His figures were a little cloudy sometimes—as when he declared in reference to the liming of fruit trees that "there's something be'ind everything"—and his intended analogies appeared at times to be not strictly analogous—as when he endeavored to institute a comparison between the inverted pots of bay on dahlia stakes and the Sunday-school treat. But his total lack of self-consciousness was reassuring, and his undeniable conviction atoned for his obscurity.

It was well he was ready to do the talking, for if I had played any other part than that of audience, I doubt if I could have satisfied him that I was really and truly "within the fold." For he was very exacting. He drew rigid lines—good and bad, piety and sin, faith and unbelief, were as clearly differentiated in his mind as roses and cabbages. Beyond putting a few leading questions, therefore, I preferred to listen. I gleaned a few hints for the better cultivation of my garden, and many for the expansion of "the Kingdom." When the time for my departure arrived he was buried in the subject of pansy cuttings—on which theme he was particularly expository, showing in a truly wonderful manner how the life of the pansy illustrates the "Life to Come."

I was wondering how I should break the thread of his metaphysics and get myself away, when a husky voice called from the house—

"Jim!"

Both "Jim" and I turned round. The former's wife (as I judged) was standing in the doorway of the cottage with a ragged girl of some twelve or fourteen years at her side.

"'Ere's Jinny Bell. Bin sent from the sewin' meetin' to know whether you've mended them there 'ymn books yit."

I took this opportunity of wishing my companion good-day, and as I passed out of the gate my eye caught a notice-board nailed about ten feet up the trunk of a tree. Painted in white on a ground of black, I read:—

> "Christans meet Hear. every Sabbath, to remember the Lords Death in the Braking Off Bread."

My visit was to terminate before the next "Braking Off Bread," or I should certainly have joined the company of good "Christans" in that sacrament. If the gardener was a fair work-a-day sample, what a rare treat would a gathering of such provide on the "Sabbath"!

R. NORTH.

JESTS FROM THE COLONEL.

A meeting between Knox and Calvin is like a dialogue between a pestilence and a famine, or a conversation between a block and an axe.

Many people are religious when they have dyspepsia. An absolute specific for that disease would be the hardest blow the Church has received.

It is hard to make a lie stand always. A lie will not fit a fact. It will only fit another lie made for the purpose.

A greenback, unless you have the gold behind it, is no more a dollar than a bill-of-fare is a dinner.

Homes make patriots, and few men will shoulder a musket to defend a boarding-house.

In the name of universal benevolence Christians have hated their fellow men.

Hope is the only universal liar who never loses his reputation for veracity.

Keep your word with your own children as you would with your banker.

Show a sanguine man an egg, and instantly the air is full of feathers.

Custom meets us at the cradle and leaves us only at the tomb.

All progress for centuries has consisted in repealing laws.

The infidels of one age have been the saints of the next.

Nothing is so egoistic as ignorance.

—*Col. R. G. Ingersoll.*

RELIGIOUS IDEALS.

The ideas of religion among the lower classes of men are intimately associated with—if, indeed, they have not originated from—the condition of man during sleep; and especially from dreams. Sleep and death have always been regarded as nearly related to one another. Thus, in classical mythology, Somnus, the god of sleep, and Mors, the god of death, were both fabled to have been the children of Nox, the goddess of night. So, also, the savage would look on death as a kind of sleep, and would expect and hope—hoping on even against hope—to see his friend awake from the one as he had often done from the other. Hence, probably, one reason for the great importance ascribed to the treatment of the body after death.

But what happens to the spirit during sleep? The body lies lifeless, and the savage, not unnaturally, concludes that the spirit has left it. In this he is confirmed by the phenomena of dreams, and, consequently, to the savage, they have a reality and an importance which we can scarcely appreciate. During sleep the spirit appears to desert the body; and, as in our dreams we seem to visit other countries and distant regions while the body remains, as it were, lifeless, the two phenomena were naturally placed side by side, and regarded as the complements one of the other. Hence the savage considers the events in his dreams when he is awake, and hence he naturally feels that he has a spirit which can quit the body, if not when it likes, at least under certain circumstances.—*Sir John Lubbock.*

THE TANGLE OF THE TRINITY.

One God there is from old Judee,
One God alone, not one in three,
Who was, and is, and aye shall be—
The Bible says so.

Three gods there are from old Judee,
Not one alone, but One in three,
Who were, and are, and aye shall be—
God's book says so.

No man can ever live and see
This awful God from old Judee;
The sight the mortal's death would be—
The Bible says so.

In perfect safety men did see
This awful God from old Judee,
And spoke with him, as you with me—
God's book says so.

Affirm, deny, that A is C,
That black is white, that one is three;
You must be right, whate'er it be—
The Bible says so.

—*G. L. Mackenzie.*

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Man's intellect only is immortal and bequeathed unimpaired to posterity.—WILLIAM HAZLITT.

The Kaiser at Jerusalem.

[Reprinted from the *Freethinker*, 1898.]

EMPEROR WILLIAM is perhaps the most pious monarch in Europe. His father was somewhat tainted with Freethought, as well as inclined towards Liberalism in politics—if the two do not always go together. But there is none of this nonsense about William. He never speaks of his father, at least in public. He prefers to forget that unfortunate link in the Hohenzollern chain. His ideal is his grandfather and namesake, the first William; that pious and pipe-clayey old gentleman, for whom Bismarck supplied brains, foresight, and timely resolution. William has a tremendous belief in the efficacy of the Christian religion, particularly as an invisible but powerful support of the Hohenzollern throne. He says prayers at home and on board his yacht. He has even preached in the absence of a professional exhorter. Still more exemplary, if possible, is the piety of his wife. The Empress has devoted much of her time and means to the cause of religion. She had added considerably to the number of churches in Berlin. What she cannot do is to fill them. The people of Berlin are not churchgoers. They prefer spending Sunday in the beer-gardens, listening to good music, instead of being shut up in a dismal house of God, and undergoing dreary discourses about the day of judgment and the wrath to come.

One result of William's piety, however, is that religion is rather more ostentatious in Germany than it used to be, and Freethought a little less exuberant. The old law of blasphemy has of late years been frequently enforced, and several Freethinkers have been fined and imprisoned for saying what is thought by one-half of the whole male population of Germany. Still worse is it in respect to the law against "insulting the Emperor." No such sensitive vanity as William's has occupied a throne since the days of Nero. It is not safe to doubt his being as great a poet as Goethe, as great a musician as Beethoven, as great a soldier as Napoleon, or as handsome as the Apollo Belvedere. Hundreds of men have been imprisoned for speaking of him with what is called a want of proper respect. Loyalty in king-deluded Germany—as Shelley styled it—must be more than negative; it must be positive, or it becomes *dis*loyalty. Some years ago the editor of the principal comic paper in Berlin was sent to gaol for a mild satire on William's declaration that only Christians could be good soldiers. The shades of Alexander and Julius Cæsar—pre-Christian warriors, and of Napoleon and Frederick the Great—both sceptics, were simply made to smile at this imperial utterance. William cultivates the high and mighty attitude. I am Sir Oracle, and when I ope my lips let no dog bark! It is almost a case of "me and my God." He likes to fill the stage and monopolise the footlights, and woe betide anyone who is caught grinning.

It was only natural that pious William should desire to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and see the various spots that were hallowed by the real or imaginary feet of Jesus Christ and his twelve Apostles—including, alas, the mercenary and miserable Judas; after whose death, we suppose, the Master had to perambulate the country afresh before ascending, in order to reconsecrate the aforesaid spots, just as a church has to be reconsecrated after it has been desecrated by a suicide. William set out on this glorious expedition with his wife, a large escort, and a heavy baggage, which taxed the powers of the largest railway engine. The King of Heaven visited Palestine, *via* Bethlehem, in a far less striking fashion; creeping in, so to speak, through a stable in the company of camels and jackasses. But the King of Prussia cannot cut such an ignominous figure. He goes with pomp and ceremony. Instead of having one poor garment, like Jesus Christ, he has a large assortment of costumes, some of which are specially designed for this pilgrimage. It is said that he has been photographed in one suit, in no less than forty different positions. This is an exhibition of modesty that could not be paralleled from the lives of mere Pagan rulers, such as Julius Cæsar, Augustus, Vespasian, Titus, Trajan, Antoninus, and Marcus Aurelius. Those benighted emperors did not understand the philosophy of the wardrobe. They labored under the heathen prejudice that their duty was to live simply and devote themselves to the welfare of their people. No doubt they would smile at William's photographs, but this only shows their backward and un-Christian state of moral cultivation.

There is, however, one touch of low comedy in this high imperial enterprise. William was taken round Palestine by Mr. Cook, and the great German Emperor sank into a personally-conducted excursionist. Of course it is all for the best, but it is rather grotesque. We should have imagined that the Archangel Gabriel—the elegant personage who made that delicate announcement to Mary—would be proud to descend from heaven once more, in order to show Emperor William round the old haunts of the leaders of the first Salvation Army.

Egypt was to have been visited *en route*, but the opportune discovery was made of an Anarchist plot to assassinate Emperor William, who is thus relieved from the difficult task of comporting himself so as to avoid offending either England or France. No doubt the Anarchist plot was real, but perhaps there is more substance in the problem of Fashoda.

But the imperial pilgrim has not missed Constantinople. He has "done" the sights of that incomparably situated metropolis. He has seen what it is that Russia aspires to possess. He has been cheered by Turkish soldiers, who were probably paid a month's back salary for shouting. He has helped the Sultan to spend half a million of money. He has dined with "the Great Assassin." He has allowed his wife to go about arm-in-arm with "Abdul the Damned." He has exchanged cordial civilities—nay, fraternal greetings—with the man whose hands are red beyond all cleansing with Christian blood—red enough to incarnadine the multitudinous seas.

This is piety! This is diplomacy! This is Christian statesmanship! Emperor William forgets the poor Armenians. He has no thought for the men who were massacred, the wives who were outraged and then tortured to death, the girls who were pol-

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luted and left to bear their moral agony. What are these things in the great game of international politics? Germany stood aside cynically while England, France, Russia, and Italy took charge of the Cretan question. But the Turks at Candia made the fatal mistake of killing some English soldiers and sailors; which put Admiral Noel's back up, and in he went with his ultimatum and his watch in his hand—the finest sight in those parts for a long while; and, oh irony, while William and Abdul were fraternising at Constantinople that English admiral was just settling the Cretan question, with the cordial co-operation of his brother salts of the three other fleets.

We rather like the good old sailor methods: shipshape, up to time, no damned nonsense. Had the four Admirals been given a free hand, they would have settled the Cretan question many years ago. They didn't understand the tricks of diplomacy, but they had common sense, and they knew that the one indispensable thing to be done was to clear out the Turkish garrisons and disarm the whole population.

But let us get back to Emperor William at Constantinople, where we left him while we dashed off to Crete. We have not mentioned that the Empress visited the Sultan's harem, and was welcomed by the particular lady who is called the Sultana, the other ladies being discreetly ignored. William was not privileged to accompany her. Had he done so, he would probably have investigated the establishment more thoroughly, in order to see what comparison it bore to Solomon's—the wisest fool that ever lived, the gentleman who had seven hundred wives and (as Ingersoll says) three hundred other ladies he was acquainted with.

Emperor William had a "high old time" at Constantinople, and he and the Sultan made a good impression upon each other. Semi-official Turkish journals sang the Kaiser's praises lustily. Barring their own Padishah, he was certainly the greatest man in the world—strong, brave, and manly, highly accomplished and universally informed, a mighty ruler of men by genius and cultivation; indeed, a perfect miracle of statesmanship. Semi-official German papers have said much the same of the Sultan, in whom they detect surprising resemblances to the Kaiser—a compliment which we hope the latter appreciates at its full value.

Leaving the Sultan's capital with the Empress, who was loaded with costly presents—paid for, God knows how!—Emperor William set sail in his gigantic yacht for the Holy Land. This part of the world has had more lies told about it than any other, and the Kaiser is bound to be somewhat disillusioned after seeing it for himself. It is, as Gibbon sneered, of about the size and fertility of Wales; yet it once supported at least three million Jews, and seven other nations mightier than they—that is to say, between twenty-four and thirty millions of people, at the very lowest estimate. Its inhabitants, too, were wonderful warriors. They thought nothing of killing a hundred thousand of the enemy before breakfast. In one battle they killed as many as six hundred thousand—more than twice as many as the whole military force of Great Britain in every part of her empire. When a census was taken, if we may judge by the story of Christ's birth in Luke, all the Jews took to tramping, and the roads of the Holy Land swarmed with men, women, and children, all making tracks for their native towns and villages. This was the very perfection of clumsiness, but the Jews were naturally awkward at that particular business. They never quite got over their national fright on the occasion of the first census in their history, when Jehovah slew seventy thousand of them to commemorate the event. Such a divine visitation was enough to addle their wits in this direction. The shrewdest of them turned imbeciles when they heard the fatal word "census."

Railways and other modern innovations have considerably revolutionised the Holy Land. It would startle Jesus Christ and the twelve apostles—even including Judas, who was fairly fly—if they were to come to life again and hear the train guards shouting "Through for Jerusalem" or "Change here for Jericho." But we understand that the country still retains its old character for the opposite of cleanliness. Jerusalem itself is no exception to the general rule. Mark Twain searched in vain for the pool of Bethesda, and finally concluded that it was all over the Holy City, for the mud was two feet deep everywhere. And who does not remember the story of the man who declined to believe the story of Noah's menagerie, which contained eight antediluvians—to say nothing of six dogs, cats, and monkeys—and only two fleas? Now without wishing to insult the Jews, of whom there are now a good many in Palestine, we are bound to say that they enjoy the reputation of being rather hospitable to these parasites. Was it not Thackeray who, describing the scene on board a ship in a storm in the Levant, the said ship's deck being the sleeping-place of several poor rabbis—was it not Thackeray, we say, who wrote—

> "Then all the fleas in Jewry
> Jumped up and bit like fury?"

And from all we have been able to ascertain, the holier the city the more numerous and aggressive the fleas. Palestine swarms with them; it is their classic country. Kinglake felt this, and gave the world warning in his delightful *Eothen*:—

> "Never think of attempting to sleep in a 'holy city.' Old Jews from all parts of the world go to lay their bones upon the sacred soil, and as these people never return to their homes, it follows that any domestic vermin which they may bring with them are likely to become permanently resident, so that the population is continually increasing. No recent census had been taken when I was at Tiberias, but I know that the congregation of fleas which attended at my church alone must have been something enormous. It was a carnal, self-seeking congregation, wholly inattentive to the service which was going on, and devoted to the one object of having my blood. The fleas of all nations were there. The smug, steady, importunate flea from Holywell-street—the pert, jumping 'puce' from hungry France—the wary, watchful 'pulce' with his poisoned stiletto—the vengeful 'pulga' of Castile with his ugly knife—the German 'floh' with his knife and fork—insatiate—not rising from the table—whole swarms from all the Russias, and Asiatic hordes unnumbered—all these were there, and all rejoiced in one great international feast."

Well, if nothing else can drive Emperor William home again from the Holy Land, the fleas will do it.

The Kaiser has visited Nazareth, the home of Jesus Christ's childhood; a place, however, absolutely unknown to the Old Testament, to Josephus, or to any other ancient writer; the name of it being probably manufactured by fictionists who thought it was the place where the Nazarites lived—although the Nazarites were only teetotalers with a craze for shaving their heads. Bethlehem, where Jesus Christ was born, has also been visited; but the Kaiser was unable to catch a glimpse of the Star of Bethlehem—which really ought to have been lighted up for this great occasion—or of the chimney over which it anchored. William has also been to Jericho, and perhaps a good many Germans would not have worn mourning if he had stayed there. He has seen Jerusalem, about which the Jews bragged so in their sacred scriptures. There was no city like it—which was probably true. It was really what the Americans call a one-horse town, containing fifty or sixty thousand inhabitants at the outside; and its boasted temple must have been of very moderate dimensions and no very grand architecture. Unfortunately, its greatest curiosity is no longer visible. We refer to the famous Jerusalem Ghost. All that William could do was to go to bed and dream, and see Jesus in a vision, as Paul did. The flight of the Jerusalem Ghost had occurred; it had left earth for heaven, and occupied a side seat close to the throne; but Paul was not to be done, he was not going to be inferior to any other captain of the first Salvation Army, so he had his vision, which nobody could dispute, and he went about saying, "I also have

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seen Jesus"—which William may do likewise if he only rises to the occasion.

Many of the places of interest in and about Jerusalem are in duplicates; that is to say, there are two of each, and both authentic. There are two holy sepulchres where Christ was buried, and no doubt he slept in both if he slept in either. The famous Church of the Holy Sepulchre, built round one of these spots, is used by the Greek and Latin Christians; one lot on one side, the other lot on the other—and a row of Turkish soldiers between them to keep the peace! That spectacle alone ought to set Emperor William thinking, unless he is in too much of a hurry for such a useful exercise. Christianity is the most quarrelsome religion on earth, and Christendom is always full of war or rumors of war. Christ came to bring peace, but he must have forgot it and left it behind. Perhaps he ascended to fetch it, but he never returned. He was to have come again shortly, but he has not arrived yet; and peace is nearly as far off as ever, in spite of the Czar's manifesto. Yes, if Emperor William has any head worth speaking of, his visit to the Holy Land may do him good. It may set him thinking over many things, and make him less a Christian and more a man.

G. W. FOOTE.

Atheism Unmasked.

THE Rev. Frederic Spurr asserts, in an article in the *Christian World* for November 25, that "the war has unmasked Atheism." We did not know that Atheism ever wore a mask, or made use of any disguise whatever, and we are quite sure that the reverend gentleman cannot prove his wild statement. There is certainly nothing in this article to substantiate the strange allegation. Mr. Spurr seems to delight in making assertions that are incapable of verification. He tells us that "the best Rationalists find their fine program torn up," and that "it is time to begin again, and on sounder lines"; but his article shows that his knowledge of Rationalism is extremely superficial. We deny that any Freethought program has been torn up since the War began. It is true that Secular lectures are not so numerous this season as they used to be; but that is due, not to lessened interest in Secularism, but to the difficulty of securing halls wherein to deliver them. Most halls are owned by Christians, whose bigotry, stimulated by the War, sees to it that they are not let to Freethinkers. The Secular Societies which are fortunate enough to possess halls of their own hold meetings as usual, and are well supported. Mr. Spurr confesses that he has read Freethought journals "for years with not a little amusement and often with not a little indignation," but that "never before has he observed such a chastened tone in the editorial articles as at the present time"; but he has perused them to very little purpose if he discovers "a chastened tone" in them, or learns from them that the "Freethought crowd is thinning." It may be true that churches and chapels are better filled now than they were a year or six months ago; but we can assure the reverend gentleman that they are not filled from the ranks of Freethought, but from those of the Indifferentists. It is the backsliders who have returned for a brief season, because the War has frightened them and roused into fresh activity their slumbering belief in the supernatural. It is safe to predict that when the present excitement comes to an end the places of worship will speedily empty again.

Mr. Spurr hates Atheism, and naturally wishes it to perish, but he is entirely mistaken when he says that "the repudiation of Atheism as the real cause of the War is the result of superficial observation and thought." We maintain that the attempt to hold Atheism responsible for this bloody conflict is in the highest degree dishonest. Mr. Spurr succeeds in doing so only by blinking the facts. He calls the author of *Germany and the Next War* "an Atheist, a hard materialist, an anti-Christian." Even in that very book Bernhardi claims that his doctrine of war is in full harmony with the teaching of the Christian Church. Luther held precisely the same view, and expressed it in the strongest terms at his disposal. In like manner this preacher avers that to "claim the Kaiser as a New Testament Christian is silly;" but, in reality, it is Mr. Spurr who is silly in denying the claim. His Majesty's conception of Christianity may differ from that cherished by the reverend gentleman, but that would not entitle the latter to declare that he is not a Christian. Prior to the War Professor Harnack was regarded as one of the greatest theologians, and his name was constantly on the lips of ministers in their pulpits. Nobody doubted the sincerity of his profession of the Christian religion. Will Mr. Spurr say of him also that he is not a Christian because he openly approves of Kaiserism? Listen to what the *Christian World* says of him:—

> "We have been second to none in our respect for Dr. Harnack's learning and contributions to theology, but, at the present time, we can only regard his moral balance as quite upset, and his moral sense as perverted by a blind patriotism."

We are of opinion that Professor Harnack is as good a Christian to-day as he was a year ago, and that Kaiserism is neither *anti*-Christian nor even *un*-Christian. Christianity and war have always gone hand-in-hand hitherto, and there is no indication just now that they are likely soon to be divorced. Physical force has invariably served as the most valuable supporter of the Gospel of Divine love.

In the *Daily News* for October 10 there appeared an exceptionally inaccurate and misleading article, entitled "The Return of Odin and the Religion of Valor," in which it was asserted that "through all the contradictions of Nietzsche the gospel of brute force runs like a thread of steel," which gospel, the writer said, the German soldier carries about with him in his knapsack. We are not concerned just now with the inaccuracy of that description of the Nietzschean philosophy, but, rather, with the statement about the contents of the German knapsack. Dr. Oscar Levy, the editor of the complete and authorised English translation of Nietzsche's works, does not think that the German soldier has a copy of *Thus Spake Zarathustra* in his knapsack. Mr. Earle Harrison, Special War Correspondent in Belgium for *Nash's and Pall Mall Magazine*, supplies us with the following information in the November number:—

> "I saw a German prisoner brought into Antwerp, and in a little bag which he wore at his breast, suspended by a cord hung round his neck, there was a prayer-book—a special edition for the German army. In the same little bag were four bloodstained rings, which he laughingly admitted he had torn from the fingers of a bludgeoned and dying woman."

Like the Kaiser, the German Army is profoundly religious, much more so, evidently, than the British Army. Does Mr. Spurr imagine that an Atheistic country would publish prayer-books for the use of its soldiers in a time of war? Does he really think that an unbelieving monarch would be perpetually claiming and offering thanks for Divine help to his troops? He says that the Kaiser has never yet, in all his public utterances, named the name of Jesus or Christ; but that proves nothing. Has he never read a volume of sermons delivered by the Emperor on various occasions, which are characterised by their exceeding orthodoxy?

Mr. Spurr, while regarding Atheism as the cause of the War, believes that the War is going to destroy its own cause. He says:—

> "The few professional Atheists of the country have the mortification of seeing the tide running away from them; and they have been telling us that the tide was destined to be for them in perpetual flood. The War will probably kill the Rationalistic propaganda. The conscience of humanity cannot permanently suffer degredation at the hands of men who, in the sacred name of reason, seek to slay the finest instincts of the

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soul. Man, being 'incurably religious,' is bound to assert himself as a religious being."

A more brilliant idea never entered a man's head. It required a truly great man to perceive that an Atheistical war turns out to be the death of Atheism. In other words, German Atheism is destined to kill British Atheism. Already "the few professional Atheists of the country have the mortification of seeing the tide running away from them." The fact is that there is not an atom of truth in that extraordinary passage just cited. The tide is not running away from our Atheists, nor is the War at all likely to kill the Freethought propaganda. While it lasts it may limit the circulation of Secularist literature, as it has lessened the circulation of religious journals and of most books; but it has not reduced the number of Freethinkers in the land. Man is not "incurably religious," as tens of thousands of our fellow-beings are prepared to testify. If he were "incurably religious" there would be no need for Mr. Spurr's profession. The business of clergymen is to prevent man from becoming irreligious; but in spite of all their assiduity in the discharge of their onerous duties, irreligion is spreading. Irreligion abounds around them while they fight with all their might against it; but irreligion is by no means synonymous with immorality. The soul and its finest instincts are creations of the religious imagination. Man possesses exceedingly fine instincts, many of which religion seeks to slay or enchain. Religion says "Do not" when Nature says "Do," with the result that the life of a religious person is incomplete and unnatural. His chief duty is to suppress himself, to crucify his flesh. Religion seeks to develop an imaginary soul and culpably neglects a real body. The moment a man begins to "assert himself as a religious being" he loses his self-respect and longs to be nothing. To assert himself as a religious being he must suppress himself as a natural man. The natural man is positively non-religious. Mr. Spurr predicts that the time is coming when our country shall glory in its allegiance to God, when the prodigal son cries, "I perish with hunger; I will arise and go to my Father." He adds:—

> "Such a moment is now dawning for our nation. The things we trusted in, and of which we were so certain, have failed us. The ideal of a world self-governed and happy, under the sole guidance of 'Science' and 'Culture,' has been shattered, and we are back again at the beginning of things, to face God afresh, and to settle our accounts with him who, the supreme Master, has been left out of our reckonings."

Nobody can tell what the future holds for us, but we are pretty sure that it does not hold the fulfilment of Mr. Spurr's prophecy. The only things that truly matter are the things that make for the welfare of society, and religion is not one of them. Religion is a sower of social discord and jealousy and malice. It is religion that sets Mr. Spurr against so many of his fellow-beings. It induces him to look down upon and despise unbelievers as if they belonged to another race. Secularism, however, engenders the sense of universal brotherhood, and does full justice to the life that now is.

J. T. LLOYD.

Christian Apologetics.

THE REV. Z. B. WOFFENDALE (NO. 2).

IN reply to my contention that "we have no evidence that the Fourth Gospel was written within a hundred years of the alleged resurrection of Jesus Christ," Rev. Z. B. Woffendale, in his own journal, characterised such a statement as "an Agnostic balloon" inflated with "pretentious assertions," and then he proceeded to take the wind out of it by producing nine "testimonies" which, he declared, "furnish cumulative and overwhelming evidence that the Fourth Gospel was written by John the apostle, and in the apostolic age." Having duly delivered himself of his nine wonderful "testimonies," he finished up by saying: "We now see how baseless, shallow, and untrustworthy is the preposterous assertion of our antagonist, that 'we have no evidence that the Fourth Gospel was written within a hundred years of the alleged Resurrection.' No wonder that, after inflating and sending up such a tattered paper balloon to mislead, Abracadabra has to mask his identity."

I now give these nine remarkable "testimonies" in the Rev. Woffendale's own words, and, to economise space, I give my reply to each witness before he leaves the box.

> 1. "That Christian antiquity has been unanimous in transmitting this book to the Church as the work of the personal friend of Jesus—viz., John, the son of Zebedee."

REPLY.—This is true; but the "antiquity" only dates from the time of Irenæus (A.D. 185), who is the earliest writer who *names* the four Gospels.....Mr. Woffendale has to show that the Fourth Gospel was in existence within a hundred years of the Resurrection—viz., as early as A.D. 130.

> 2. "That not only the Church, but the sects most opposed to it, are agreed upon this subject."

REPLY.—We have not the testimony of any sect to the existence of the Fourth Gospel prior to A.D. 130.

> 3. "That in the second century the Judæo-Christian party used this narrative from a book whose statements had not been called in question."

REPLY.—No Harmony or other book containing a portion of the Fourth Gospel is known to have been in existence before the time of Irenæus—though one is erroneously ascribed to Tatian (A.D. 170).

> 4. "That Marcion, who came to Rome A.D. 140, acknowledged in a letter that he, in common with all the Church, had made use of the Fourth Gospel until he had rejected its authority, but not its authenticity."

REPLY.—No writing of Marcion is extant. All we know of that arch-heretic is derived from hostile writers of a later age, who have sought to blacken his character. These stories cannot be admitted either as the evidence of Marcion or as dating from his time.

> 5. "That the Montanists and Gnostics who separated from the Church all made use of this book as the fulcrum for their heresies."

REPLY.—This is only true of a time subsequent to A.D. 130. The Montanists did not arise as a sect until after A.D. 170.

> 6. "That Justin Martyr, in the middle of the second century, quotes the Fourth Gospel frequently as part of the undoubted 'Apostolical Memoirs,' which are read, said he, every Lord's Day in all the Churches of Christendom."

REPLY.—It is true that Justin quoted from what he calls "Memoirs of the Apostles"; but these writings cannot be shown to have been the canonical Gospels—not *one* of which is named. The only book Justin mentions *by name* is an apocryphal Gospel—the "Acts of Pilate." His earliest work is dated A.D. 150, and it contains no quotations from the Fourth Gospel.

> 7. "That, a little later, an African writer, in the Muratorian fragment,.....designates the Gospel of John as the Fourth," etc.

REPLY.—The Canon of Muratori is admitted by nearly all critics to have been written *not earlier* than the last quarter of the second century; many place it at the beginning of the third. Its mention of the Fourth Gospel is therefore no evidence of the existence of that Gospel as early as A.D. 130.

> 8. "That Irenæus, about the year 180, testifies to the apostle John being the author of the Fourth Gospel. And when it was remembered that this Irenæus had, in his early days, lived at Smyrna, under the Christian teaching of Polycarp, who had lived with the apostle John, it is impossible for any sane man to doubt that Irenæus knew the real fact, and stated honestly the truth about the authorship of the Fourth Gospel—namely, that it was written by John."

My reply to this took up two columns, in which I showed: (1) That Irenæus had *not* lived "under the Christian teaching of Polycarp"; but that he once saw the latter when he was a boy. His words are: "whom I also saw *in my early youth*." (2) That Polycarp had *not* lived with, or been taught by, the apostle John, as stated by Irenæus. (3) That Irenæus knew nothing whatever about John the apostle; what he does say is unhistorical. He is a witness only for the existence of the four Gospels in his day (A.D. 185)—and, by inference, for some decades previously.

> 9. "Add to all these testimonies the witness of the 21st chapter of John that 'This is the disciple whom Jesus loved (verses 20—23), which testified these things,

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and wrote these things, and *we* know that his testimony is true.'"

REPLY.—Mr. Woffendale does not say who the "we" in this passage are; but he knows perfectly well that before he can adduce any of the statements in the Fourth Gospel as evidence, he must first prove the authenticity of that Gospel. This he has failed to do. It will now be seen that, of Mr. Woffendale's nine "testimonies" which, he asserts, furnish "overwhelming evidence" of the apostolic authorship of the Fourth Gospel, only one of them—the second-hand testimony of Irenæus—has any bearing *at all* upon the subject. That one, also, is found upon examination to be worthless. Hence, though the rev. gentleman has the effrontery to characterise my statements, given above, as "baseless, shallow, and untrustworthy," it is he himself who has been constructing a balloon inflated with "pretentious assertions"—and a very big balloon it is too.

ABRACADABRA.

Autumnal Fires and Festivals.

IN the two fascinating books which conclude the herculean labors of Professor J. G. Frazer in connection with his ten-volume work, *The Golden Bough*, *The Fire Festivals of Europe*, and *The Doctrine of the External Soul*, are considered with immense wealth of detail.* With the first of these interesting themes these articles are concerned, more especially with the autumnal fires of Northern Europe, thus leaving a survey of the fire ceremonies of Christmas for later treatment. That these observances were originally of solar import was an opinion which Dr. Frazer was led to accept on the high authority of Mannhardt. This view he has now abandoned in favor of the hypothesis more recently advanced by Professor Westermarck, which is certainly supported by extremely weighty evidence. Dr. Frazer says:—

> "The true explanation of the festivals I now believe to be the one advocated by Dr. Westermarck, namely, that they are purificatory in intention, the fire being designed not, as I formerly held, to reinforce the sun's light and heat by sympathetic magic, but merely to burn or repel the noxious things, whether conceived as material or spiritual, which threaten the life of man, of animals, and of plants.....Dr. Westermarck based his criticisms [of the solar theory] largely on his own observations of the Mohammedan fire festivals of Morocco, which present a remarkable resemblance to those of Christian Europe.....So far as Europe is concerned, the evidence tends strongly to show that the grand evil which the festivals aimed at combating was witchcraft.....If that was so, the wide prevalence and the immense popularity of the fire festivals provides us with a measure for estimating the extent of the hold which the belief in witchcraft had on the European mind before the rise of Christianity, or, rather, of rationalism; for Christianity, both Catholic and Protestant, accepted the old belief and enforced it in the old way by the faggot and the stake. It was not until human reason at last awoke from the slumber of the Middle Ages that this dreadful obsession gradually passed away like a dark cloud from the intellectual horizon of Europe."

Dr. Frazer then proceeds to utter a timely warning to those who cherish the delusion that the Freethought fight is won. We are mistaken in supposing that this baleful belief is extinguished in the minds of the masses. As a matter of fact, "it only hibernates under the chilling influence of rationalism," and would soon reassert itself if that influence were withdrawn. Much of our safety lies in the growth of urban life, where circumstances are less favorable than in rural communities for the re-emergence of dark and dangerous superstitions.

Be the ultimate explanation of these seasonal ceremonies what it may, and probably no single theory suffices to lay bare their secret, the fire festivals themselves form an instructive chapter in the history of human culture. The great festival of midsummer certainly coincides with the arrival of the sun at the highest point of his annual journey through the sky, and was, apparently, regulated by the solar clock. In any case, the growth of animal and plant life, with which this midsummer ceremony is associated, always appears at this season in the plentitude of its powers. Therefore, we may conclude that the ceremonies of this season were directly connected—whether consciously or otherwise—with the maximum splendor of the solar orb. But while this holds true of the primitive races of Central and Southern Europe, other factors appear to have intervened among the Celtic peoples of North-Western Europe.

The most important festivals of the Celts have no obvious connection with the sun's light and warmth-giving powers. The two chief Celtic celebrations which still survive are but the shadowy relics of former glory. The first of these is the Eve of May-Day and the Day itself, while the second is the Eve of All Hallows, October 31, and they appear rather to indicate the beginning of the two seasons into which the year was divided in prehistoric times, rather than to commemorate the majestic march of the sun. Nor do they coincide with the most important periods of the agricultural year, the sowing of spring and the harvesting of the autumn. Long prior to May-Day the seed of the future harvest has been sown, and by the time that dreary, dripping November is due, the grass and the grain and the fruits have been gathered. May-Day, above all, Old May-Day, saw spring in its verdant splendor and arrayed with full promise of the fast-coming summer, while November bears all the outward and visible signs of approaching darkness and death. Now, as Mr. E. K. Chambers has shrewdly noted, while these particular seasons are of little moment to the tiller of the soil, they perform an important part in the herdsman's calling. Commenting on this happy hit, Dr. Frazer says truly enough, that it is when the summer is near, that the herdsman drives his cattle into the open fields to graze the new green herbage, and it is on the verge of winter that he sends them to shelter from the storms of the cold season. This custom, consequently, appears to date from periods of remote antiquity, before the races of Britain had merged their earlier pastoral life with that of the later cultivation of the earth. It is also undeniable that—

> "even in Central Europe, remote from the region now occupied by the Celts, a similar bisection of the year may be clearly traced in the great popularity, on the one hand, of May-Day and its Eve [Walpurgis Night], and on the other hand, of the Feast of All Souls, at the beginning of November, which, under a thin Christian cloak, conceals an ancient pagan festival of the dead."

Hallowe'en was seemingly the herald of the New Year. At all events, in the Isle of Man, whose inhabitants so long presented a sullen front to Saxon influences, November 1 was regarded as New Year's Day right down to modern times. The Manx land tenure terminates on November 1, and on that day the farm laborers enter into their term of annual service. Moreover, the Manx mummers were wont to wander on Hallowe'en and proclaim the incoming year.

Further testimony is forthcoming from ancient Ireland, where a fresh flame was each year kindled at this season, and from this holy fire the hearths of Erin were relit. That Hallowe'en was honored as the commencement of another year is also illustrated by the old Celtic custom of then divining what the future held in store. Again, throughout Europe it was at Hallowe'en that the souls of the dead revisited the scenes of their living days to bask in the genial glow of the house-fire and to partake of the good cheer provided by their surviving kinsfolk before returning to the spirit land. Dr. Frazer argues that as the herds came home from the pastures at this period to the friendly care of their owners, so the ghosts of the dead were also permitted to share in the hospitality of their kindred's hearth and home.

But in addition to these annually welcomed guests there were others of more sinister aspect. The witches careered through the air on their broomsticks, or rushed over the country on brindled cats

* *Balder the Beautiful*, 2 vols. Macmillan.

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transformed for this special occasion into very dark horses of wondrous speed. Also, the fairies were abroad in endless numbers, and the ghosts and goblins lurked everywhere on mischief bent. In Cardigan, on November Eve, every stile had its attendant bogie. Not only in Wales, but in Ireland and Scotland, all these beliefs abounded as articles of faith among the superstitious rustics. The Irish fairies, hobgoblins, and fiends wandered at their own sweet will on Samhain Eve or Hallowe'en. In the Scottish Highlands the good and evil fairies dedicated this great occasion to dance and music, but were none the less dangerous to intruding and inquisitive mortals on that account.

Hallowe'en appears in all Celtic lands to have been the right and proper season for diving into coming events. The Druids were great diviners, and their powers were at their highest at this period. The Eve of all Hallows was in Wales the weirdest of the Spirit Nights of the year. As the wind sighed in the air or sobbed in the trees, the names of those destined to die in the new year could be heard on the breeze. In the conventicles the Welsh women assembled to divine each one her fate from the flickering candle-flame which she bore in her hand. They were at the same time made acquainted with the names, or saw the coffins of those whom death had selected for the coming year. Judging from the emotional outpourings of a modern Welsh revivalist meeting, these uncanny proceedings at Hallowe'en must have left a morbid stain on the minds of these highly sensitive women. And in Northern Scotland the morbidly inclined could gratify their unhealthy curiosity by sitting on a three-legged stool at three cross-roads at the hour of midnight at Hallowe'en, and as the kirk-bell tolled the hour the identity of those over whom an early death impended was disclosed by the passing wind.

With the evolution of modern thought, with the growth of towns and cities, and with the increased facilities for travel latterly afforded, the dark and gloomy spirit associated with Hallowe'en has materially declined. The brighter side of the observances has lingered, while their more sombre aspects have receded into the background. The celebration of this season is now more generally festive in character in those remote retreats where the custom still survives. The November fires on Egdon Heath, mentioned in Hardy's *Return of the Native*, were relics of this anniversary, and our Fifth of November guys and bonfires, although nominally associated with Gunpowder Plot, really date to days before the Romans landed on our coasts.

Traces of the Hallowe'en customs have lingered in Lancashire right down to modern times. The Lancashire witches

> "used to gather on Hallowe'en at the Malkin Tower, a ruined and desolate farmhouse in the forest of Pendle. They assembled for no good purpose; but you could keep the infernal rout at bay by carrying a lighted candle about the fells from eleven to twelve o'clock at night. The witches tried to blow out the candle, and if they succeeded, so much the worse for you; but if the flame burned steadily till the clock struck midnight you were safe. Some people performed the ceremony by deputy; and parties went about from house to house in the evening collecting candles, one for each inmate, and offering their services to *late* or *lost* the witches, as the phrase ran. This custom was practised at Longridge Fell in the early part of the nineteenth century."

In other parts of Northern England kindred customs were to be met with.

But to return to the bonfires of Hallowe'en. In the Scottish Highlands each homestead was provided with its own heap of dry faggots, ferns, and other combustible matter, which was set ablaze so that the whole country was lit up with bonfires, which lent a wonderfully impressive appearance to the surrounding scenery. In some districts the Hallowe'en fires were encircled with stones and, on the following morning, November 1, the people gathered round the dead fires and surveyed the stones with eager interest. Where a stone was displaced, or where anyone's footprint stood near a stone, it was seriously supposed that the person whom it represented would die within the year. In the eighteenth century this custom was falling into desuetude, as a writer of that period intimates when he says: "The Hallowe'en fire is still kept up in the Low country; but on the Western coast and in the Isles it is never kindled, though the night is spent in merriment and entertainments."

T. F. PALMER.

(*To be concluded.*)

Acid Drops

Mr. Harold Begbie is in America, on behalf of the *Daily Chronicle*, to report on the American attitude towards the European War. He reports that an American business girl said to him, "I can't understand why you should write about religion." We feel inclined to believe that Mr. Begbie misunderstood what the American girl said, which was probably, "I can't understand *what* you write about religion." And in that respect she would have had many sympathisers with her on this side of the water. For very few can understand what Mr. Begbie writes about religion—until they understand Mr. Begbie. Then they will probably realise that it is not really meant to be understood. It is designed to entertain. A large section of the religious world must be continually entertained with emotional slush expressed in terms of religion, and for that class Mr. Begbie is a very successful entertainer. But so far as the study of religion goes, that American girl may rest assured that none outside the class mentioned, whether they are religious or non-religious, take Mr. Begbie seriously.

But incidentally Mr. Begbie gave some inkling of what he thought religion to be. (At least of what he thinks religion to be while he is in America, for it is quite probable he will discover it to be something different when he returns home.) He inquired if this young lady was not curious about the mystery of existence. "The mystery of this immense universe. Its significance. Its origin and its purpose. Our own conscious and self-conscious life. Why is there any universe at all, and to what end is the progress and travail of humanity? Think for a moment that we are in the midst of an infinity which is without beginning and without an end.' Mr. Begbie, then, thinks that thoughts about these things constitute religion—or, at least, the material of religion—and, by implication, those who are not religious do not think, or ought not to be thinking, about these things. Which is all very amusingly absurd. "The mystery of the universe," etc., etc., all belong quite as much to the non-religious as to the religious. The ceaseless questioning of non-religious science proves it. It is not the existence of these questions that makes religion, but the answer that is given to them. And the only answers given them up to date that are of any real value are those that have come from the non-religious side.

Mr. Begbie's conclusion is that "religion, at any rate the disciplinary and dogmatic religion of a past generation, is in a bad way in America." The modern American "has washed his hands of the old religion of his fathers. Puritanism, I should say, if not dead, is at any rate on its last legs." We fear that Mr. Begbie here, as elsewhere, exaggerates. We should be only too glad to think otherwise. But it is almost impossible for a man of his temperament to give a scientific survey of the facts. There is plenty of religion in America, just as there is in this country. The state of things both here and there prove it.

According to the press Sheikh-ul-Islam has published a fetwa, according to which every Musulman must, as a religious duty, fight against the Allies in the present War. This means the "Holy War" for the whole Islamic world; whilst the earlier "Holy War," initiated by the two pious Kaisers, has turned Europe into a slaughter-house.

The daughter of a baronet is among the hospital nurses in France and is acting as "probationer general scrubber" in one of the operating theatres. Of course, the "ha'penny press" is horrified, although English people profess to worship a Carpenter-God.

Mrs. Esther Davies, of Llanelly, has died at the age of 104. At that tender age Adam and Methuselah wore pinafores and trundled hoops.

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A new novel has been published with the title, *The Woman Who Looked Back*. We wonder if it refers to Lot's wife, although that yarn has to be taken with an extraordinary pinch of salt.

The Southwark coroner recently complained that local poor people do not look upon marriage as a necessity. That looks as if Holy Mother Church was fast asleep, in spite of the fact that many thousands have been spent upon Southwark Cathedral.

"Only one other Englishman has attained to anything near the place which Lord Roberts filled in the hearts of the Indian soldier, and that was John Nicholson," says the *Evening News*. Nicholson was deified after his death by his faithful followers. Shall we have another god?

The *Evening News* recently had a leading article "To Prove Our Faith." It contained no reference to Christianity, but was an appeal for further recruits for the British Army. It is a long way from Mount Carmel to Carmelite House.

Rev. J. Tolfree Parr says that there is more than the breed to account for the courage of our soldiers in the trenches. The reason for it is that "the great bulk have gone through our Sunday-schools." That accounts for it. Only we are quite surprised to learn that the bulk of the British Army has been through the Methodist Sunday-schools. If the facts were not guaranteed by a parson, we should be inclined to doubt it.

The Dean of Norwich has been laying down the ethics of war. He says that "war, regarded as the punishment of a wrong-doer, is perfectly right and Christian; whereas war, regarded as retaliation, is absolutely wrong and anti-Christian. The purpose of all punishment is the ultimate good of the punished, and hence punishment must be regarded as a truly Christian obligation." This is a very comforting doctrine, but it has its drawbacks. To begin with, we do not know that any country ever does consider itself the wrong-doer in a war. It is always the other party that is in the wrong. Each country sets out to punish the wrong-doer, and generally in a thoroughly Christian spirit. We feel that it is a Christian obligation to punish the Germans, and the Germans feel that they have a Christian obligation to punish us. Meanwhile, the outsider is apt to reflect that a little less Christianity all round might have made the nations of Europe better fitted to live together on the same planet.

In the days of the old *régime* in France, a certain lady expressed the opinion that God would think twice before he damned people of "our quality." The editor of the *Hibbert Journal* has much the same opinion of God and Great Britain in the present War. He cannot believe that God will be indifferent to our cause in the War—which is exactly the way that the Germans feel in the matter. And it looks as though God will be the only party that will gain credit from the War. If the Germans were to win they would praise God for the victory, and if the Allies win they will also praise God. And the losing side will not have the courage to blame God for their defeat. It will be attributed to their shortcomings, to the chastening wisdom of God, etc. In these matters it is with God "Heads I win, tails you lose." Neither side appears to have the sense to realise that, even though God may not be indifferent to the result of the War, he has evidently been indifferent to the development of conditions that made the War inevitable; and that is surely the crowning offence. A God who can allow preparations for war to go on year after year, knowing all the time that these preparations must lead to war, cannot escape responsibility by not being indifferent as to the result. If he can determine the result, he must have been equally potent to prevent the conditions that led to it. If he was indifferent to the one, we do not see any reason for believing he is less indifferent as to the other.

The British public who buy Christmas cards this year will notice that the Prince of Peace has been ousted by the soldier in khaki, for on a very large number of these articles of stationery warlike figures and verses have usurped the customary pacific figures. What an elastic religion is Christianity! When the god is changed from Christ to Mars, the worshipers do not seem to mind in the least.

That hero of a hundred tea-fights, the Bishop of London, exploited the late Lord Roberts at a meeting at Queen's Hall recently. He quoted the remark of the late Field-Marshal that he "had family prayers for fifty-five years." What a victory for Holy Mother Church! It was ever better than Kandahar.

In the course of an article on German culture in the *Evening News* recently, a saying of Frederick the Great's was used with a reference to that monarch's "accustomed piousness." The probity of our contemporary is as remarkable as the "piety" of Frederick.

A morning paper protests against the tearful eloquence which is becoming popular amongst clergymen. Does the editor think that anyone can worship "The Man of Sorrows" with impunity?

An American dentist claims that by pressure on a patient's thumb and finger joints he can induce insensibility to pain in the teeth. It will add to the charm of a visit to the dentist's when they all keep thumbscrews—like the Inquisition in the "good old days."

Sir Oliver Lodge, opening a "Science Week" at the Browning Hall, Walworth, recently, spoke on the question of the soul's survival. Some of the proofs, said the speaker, for communication after death are being withheld for a time, but will be published later. This is a religious dodge, for scientists believe that demonstration is the highest means of proof.

Sir Oliver Lodge has been challenged by a writer in the *Times* to produce his evidence in favor of a future life. As he has just declared that this is now a demonstrated scientific truth, one would have thought that this request would at once have been complied with. Instead of doing this, Sir Oliver declares that while a few scientific men agree with him "more or less," the majority are hostile—which is hardly what one would expect in the case of a demonstrated scientific truth. He says, also, that "people cannot receive proof so long as they shut their minds to the evidence," which is quite true, although people cannot keep their minds shut when genuine evidence is produced. Then Sir Oliver Lodge says that the beginning of the proof is telepathy. So that we must accept this before we can be offered proof of the other. This means, something that is highly speculative must be accepted as a demonstrated fact, and on that Sir Oliver is prepared to prove something else. Seriously, this is only a new variant of the old religious cry that we must have faith first—then all things are possible. But, what with the Germans burning cities and shooting people in the interests of "Culture," and Sir Oliver Lodge asking in the name of science for a blank cheque on the Bank of Credulity, some people will hardly know presently whether they are on their heads or their heels.

Talk about pot calling kettle black! Here is the *Church Times* complaining that Sir Oliver Lodge's information about a future life is not sufficiently circumstantial, and hinting that more detailed information is necessary if it is to be accepted. Now, we wonder what kind of circumstantial evidence the *Church Times*' own statements about a future life rests on. So far as we know, they only say they believe it. Well, Sir Oliver also says that, and adds that he has proof. Certainly we should very much like to see these proofs; but it is a dangerous game for a religious paper to set up the same demand. Like all people who have set up in this business, Sir Oliver Lodge asks other people to believe because he has had what he considers evidence. And that is exactly what every priest does. He asks us to have confidence in *him*, forgetting that a genuine truth carries its own conviction to all rational minds alike. Anything short of this is open to doubt, and is little better than speculation.

The *Schoolmaster* records the case of a lady who is able to tell the exact time whenever called upon. It is said that she sees the face of a clock, with the hands pointing to the time. We do not think the case is so precise as is stated, particularly as it is noted that it is "only when she answers on the instant is her answer correct." There is evidently room for a certain degree of inaccuracy. It is also obvious that the time is not read from the visualised clock. The time is judged first and the clock is visualised afterwards. Most of us, if we start guessing the time, will find that we *see* the clock face more or less distinctly, because this is practically the only way in which we tell the time.

The Vicar of Burton-on-Trent magnanimously admits that there is not the slightest reason to suppose that, in his religion, the German Emperor is a hypocrite. Of the sincerity of his worship of God there can be no doubt; but, unfor-

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tunately, he worships the wrong God. The reverend gentleman charges the Kaiser with having made God in his own image; but is not the vicar himself guilty of the same charge? There are as many gods as there are worshipers, and they are all equally non-existent. The religion of the Kaiser may be "tragic and twisted," as this vicar says; but is not all religion the tragedy of a twisted human nature?

The men of God are waxing bolder and sillier every day. They say now that we would have won this War long ago had it not been for our national sins. Because of these, God prolongs the bloody conflict, thereby permitting and becoming directly responsible for the slaughter of millions of innocent men. Prebendary Webster is reported as saying that "God would not answer our prayers for victory because the nation was not yet right with God." "The war had not yet taught us our lesson," the Prebendary added. Another man of God, the Rev. C. B. Bardsley, informed the Lord in prayer that our national sins are the neglect of Sunday, of prayer, and of public worship, and the love of pleasure. Just think of it. The Almighty keeps the most brutal war ever known going on so long simply because the British people do not sufficiently support the parsons!

What a wonderful conceit of themselves Christians cherish and openly express! The Rev. C. E. Darlaston, of Crouch End, London, speaking at a City Temple intercessory service, said:—

> "Like spectators stretching over the ropes to see some great procession, so creation waits and looks and watches for what the sons of God will do. We are the sons of God. We cannot say it glibly and without humility, still we must say it."

How woefully disappointed creation must be, for the so-called sons of God have never done anything worth waiting and watching for, while they have done much to be profoundly ashamed of.

How scared the newspapers are in admitting that any well-known man is a Freethinker! Even the *Times* does injustice to itself in this matter, for, in reviewing Mr. Thomas Hardy's latest book, it says "You might call him a pagan." We might be saved from similar exhibitions if all press articles were signed, for no man worth his salt would subscribe his name to such nonsense.

"Girl Burned to Death" runs a headline in a daily paper If the Christian superstition be true, countless millions of human beings are being burned for ever. That is, evidently, not worth a paragraph, let alone a headline.

At a meeting of the Southwark Diocesan Conference last week, a resolution was carried pledging the Conference "to keep the morals and manners of the country as good as possible." A nasty snub to poor, old Providence.

Archdeacon Escreet, interviewed by the *Weekly Dispatch* stated that he believed in "one man one wife." Just so! And if the Archdeacon had been born in Turkey, and his parents had been Mohammedans, he would have had a different belief.

Evidences in favor of Christianity steadily accumulate. The world has seen a bottle of the darkness that overspread Egypt, the portrait of Jesus on a napkin on which he wiped his face, the tail of the serpent that tempted Eve, and numerous other proofs of a similar character. Now we learn, from the *Daily Telegraph* of November 26, that Dr. C. M. Coburn, Archæologist to the World's Bible Conference at Baltimore, has announced the discovery of the rock that Moses smote in the wilderness. We do not know how identification was established, probably Dr. Coburn saw the mark of the blow, in any case, we may take it that the evidence is quite satisfactory to the World's Bible Conference. Dr. Coburn also dwelt upon the relics of early Israelite civilisation, including the mummy of Joseph, which are in the possession of the Mohammedans, and which are "quite inaccessible," and of which "no one is allowed a glimpse." That is as it should be. *Inaccessible* evidence that no one is allowed to see is the kind that cheers the believer and confounds the sceptic.

The bullet-deflecting New Testament is not to have all its own way. One of the morning papers last week gave a photograph of a bullet-stricken Jewish prayer-book that had saved a German soldier's life. On the same day an evening paper published a photograph of a cigarette case that had served the same purpose. This war is shattering many things, and among them the life-preserving character of the New Testament. When common cigarette cases and Hebrew prayer-books serve the same purpose, it looks as though Providence had been neglecting its duty. Presently we shall hear of a wad of the *Pink 'Un* doing a like service.

The *Hartford Courant*, the oldest living newspaper in the United States, has just celebrated its 150th anniversary. It has lived through two American revolutions—that which saw the birth of the United States, and the other which threatened the existence of the Union. It is a proud record for any periodical. Two outstanding figures in these gigantic events, Thomas Paine and Abraham Lincoln, were both Freethinkers.

What educated men journalists are! In a recent article in the *Evening News*, written with the obvious purpose of belittling Germany, that newspaper jumbles together quotations from Goethe, Frederick the Great, Sir Alfred Mond, Sir John Brunner—and Mr. Cadbury. Perhaps we expect too much hustled history for a ha'penny!

Mr. Harold Begbie has been described as a young man in a hurry. It seems as if the jest were true, for his latest work is entitled *The Proof of God: a Dialogue with Two Letters*. There are so many gods; is Mr. Begbie going to settle each of them with a dialogue?

The Young Men's Christian Association is establishing a number of soldiers' club-houses, and an appeal has been made for gifts of gramaphones, ping-pong, puzzles and other games, and pianos. Ping-pong and piety! What Secularists these Christians are!

Commenting on the new tax on tea the *Catholic Times* has the following, which we think contains a truth that is too often ignored:—

> "We wish the Chancellor had not taxed tea, which is a necessary of life, especially in the world of labor. But if the tax helps to convince the women that war is a waste and an evil, and often a crime, it may lead them to realise that they, who mould the young idea, can do a great deal to ensure peace in future by teaching their children to hate war. Women are said to love soldiers, when more probably they only like uniforms. Anyhow, war affects women as well as men, and this tax on tea, which hits women and children so hard, will prove beneficial if it awakens the understanding of women to the duty of teaching their children the blessedness of peace."

It is so often assumed that woman's influence makes for peace, that many are inclined to take it at that without further examination. Yet constant experience shows that women welcome militarism in general, at least as much as men, and face the prospect of war with as few misgivings. Undoubtedly, women have it in their power to play a great part in the promotion of peace, but up to the present that influence has not been conspicuously exercised. We agree with the *Catholic Times* that if the horrors of the present War arouse women to a sense of what may be done by them to end war, that will be one great compensation that the world will receive from this catastrophe.

God preserves his own! We are called on to admit the fact, even while we question the judgment displayed in the people preserved. Colonel Fornechou reports that in Rheims, although shells were demolishing buildings, and bombs from aeroplanes destroying people, he and other Salvationists remained unhurt. The people around said, "God protects the Salvationists." The Colonel calls this "a remarkable testimony." Very remarkable! It shows that the type of mind attracted to the Salvation Army is much the same in England as in France. Less egotistical people might wonder why the favors of God are not more widely and more generally dispersed. There are plenty of opportunities in the North of France.

Warden: "So you got rid of your pastor?"

Elder: "Yes; he was a good man, but he was too dry in his preaching—always giving us a history of the Jews. But we don't like our new pastor very much, either."

Warden: "What's the matter with *him*?"

Elder: "Well, he preaches with tears in his voice all the time."

Warden: "I see. The old pastor was too historical, and the new one is too hysterical."

A "down South" colored philosopher recently remarked: "Life, my breddern, am mos'ly made up of prayin' for rain an' then wishin' it would cl'ar off."

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To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £272 6s. 6d. Received since :—James Davie, £1; "Ernest," 10s.

J. D.—Sorry for delay.

GEORGE BRADFIELD.—We can't follow the Kaiser round the world with a shorthand notebook. We must trust the newspapers in some things. Besides, he has always been talking in the way you don't believe him guilty of. We have referred to the same thing during many years. Addressing his soldiers forming a part of the Punative Expedition to China, he told them to deal with the Chinese as the Jews were ordered to deal with the Amalakites. He talked in a similar way when he visited Jerusalem, and again when he visited Constantinople and walked with Abdul Ahmid. And didn't you hear of his letter to President Wilson and his justification of the horrors of Louvain? You are really *too* incredulous where your idol is concerned. We don't propose to answer any more such questions.

E. B.—You are quite right about the letter of Sir Lawrence Gomme, quoted in "Sugar Plum." It appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* of November 13, not November 12, as stated. It occurs on col. i., p. 4. Sorry the date should have been wrongly given.

J. C.—Pleased to read your interesting and even encouraging letter. After all, is not the writer's signature the mark of honest journalism—not how much he is paid for his work? It may not always be a certain guarantee even then, but it is the nearest you can get. "We" is no deception, of course, when the writer's name stands at the bottom or the top. It is a question of etiquette.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid :—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Lloyd lectures to-day (December 6), afternoon and evening, at Abertillery, Mon. Admission to both lectures are free. We presume that the local train service will admit of those Freethinkers in the district, who desire to hear Mr. Lloyd, doing so. In that case there should be crowded meetings.

A cynic once said that Mr. Blatchford wouldn't be a bad writer, if he only knew anything. This is a way cynics have, but there is at least an element of truth in the criticism. Mr. Shaw is a born writer, a wit, a humorist, and full of originality. No one will ever call him a second Cobbett or a second anything else. He is too much like himself to be like anybody else; which sounds like an Irishism, though it isn't. But we mustn't go on in this way. Our object is a different one. Both these gentlemen have been writing, characteristically, on the War, both are old Socialists, both are at daggers drawn in their views of the War, and both say the Socialists are the only people who are right—now and evermore. So we shall let them differ; partly because we don't deal with common politics, and partly because, whether he is right or wrong, Socialists are always unpleasant people to discuss with. But both Blatchford and Shaw are Freethinkers; and, characteristically again, Blatchford is most a Freethinker when he is addressing Christians, and Shaw is most a Christian when he is addressing Freethinkers; and there is a certain moral in this if you can only dig it out. But all this is by the way.

Shaw gives many digs at Christianity in his *Common Sense About the War*. Here is one :—

"THE CHURCH AND THE WAR.

"And now, where in our society is the organ whose function it should be to keep us constantly in mind that, as Lassalle said, 'the sword is never right,' and to shudder with him at the fact that 'the Lie is a European Power'? In no previous war have we struck that top note of keen irony, the closing of the Stock Exchange and not of the Church. The pagans were more logical: they closed the Temple of Peace when they drew the sword. We turn our Temples of peace promptly into temples of war, and exhibit our parsons as the most pugnacious characters in the community. I venture to affirm that the sense of scandal given by this is far deeper and more general than the Church thinks, especially among the working classes, who are apt either to take religion seriously or else to repudiate it and criticise it closely. When a bishop at the first shot abandons the worship of Christ and rallies his flock round the altar of Mars, he may be acting patriotically, necessarily, manfully, rightfully; but that does not justify him in pretending that there has been no change, and that Christ is, in effect, Mars. The straightforward course, and the one that would serve the Church best in the long run, would be to close our professedly Christian Churches the moment war is declared by us, and reopen them only on the signing of the treaty of peace. No doubt to many of us the privation thus imposed would be far worse than the privation of small change, of horses and motor cars, of express trains, and all the other prosaic inconveniences of war. But would it be worse than the privation of faith, and the horror of the soul, wrought by the spectacle of nations praying to their common Father to assist them in sabring and bayoneting and blowing one another to pieces with explosives that are also corrosives, and of the Church organising this monstrous paradox instead of protesting against it? Would it make less atheists or more? Atheism is not a simple homogeneous phenomena. There is the youthful atheism with which every able modern mind begins: an atheism that clears the soul of superstitions and terrors and servilities and base compliances and hypocrisies, and lets in the light of heaven. And there is the atheism of despair and pessimism: the sullen cry with which so many of us at this moment, looking on blinded deafened maimed wrecks that were once ablebodied admirable lovable men, and on priests blessing war, and newspapers and statesmen and exempt old men hounding young men on to it, are saying 'I know now there is no God.' What has the Church in its present attitude to set against this crushed acceptance of darkness except the quaint but awful fact that there are cruder people on whom horrifying calamities have just the opposite effect, because they seem the work of some power so overwhelming in its malignity that it must be worshiped because it is mighty? Let the Church beware how it plays to that gallery. If all the Churches of Europe closed their doors until the drums ceased rolling they would act as a most powerful reminder that though the glory of war is a famous and ancient glory, it is not the final glory of God."

"It is no use giving tracts to a missionary" is another of Shaw's witticisms. We believe it is true, but we wonder if he has tried.

"OBSOLETE TESTS IN THE ARMY.

"Another matter needs to be dealt with at the same time. There are immense numbers of atheists in this country; and though most of them, like the Kaiser, regard themselves as devout Christians, the best are intellectually honest enough to object to profess beliefs they do not hold, especially in the solemn act of dedicating themselves to death in the service of their country. Army Form E 501a (September, 1912) secured to these the benefit of the Bradlaugh Affirmation Act of 1888, as the enlisting soldier said simply, 'I, So-and-So, do make Oath,' etc. But recruits are now confronted with another form (E 501, June, 1914), running, 'I, So-and-So, swear by Almighty God,' etc. On September 1st, at Lord Kitchener's call, a Civil servant obtained leave to enlist, and had the oath put to him in this form by the attesting officer. He offered to swear in the 1912 form. This was refused; and we accordingly lost a recruit of just that stardily conscientious temper which has made the most formidable soldiers known to history. I am bound to add, however, that the attesting officer, on being told that the oath would be a blasphemous farce to the conscience of the recruit, made no difficulty about that, and was quite willing to accept him if he, on his part, would oblige by professing what he did not believe. Thus a Ghoorka's religious conscience is respected: an Englishman's is insulted and outraged."

Freethinkers are all glad to hear Mr. Shaw denouncing superstition in this way. Lord Kitchener appears to be able to defy even the law in the interest of his own religious belief.

Mr. Shaw refers only to the treatment of Freethinkers on enlisting. But since the opening of the War we have had many letters from soldiers in the various camps relating to the injustice done them *after* enlisting. All soldiers are legally absolved from attending a religious service in which they do not believe. We hear, however, that a common trick—for it is nothing more than a trick of the most contemptible kind—is for an officer to order some kind of work to be done while the rest of the regiment is at church. This is clearly a punishment for non-attendance, and some of those who have written us have expressed their determination to bring the matter before their superior officer. If this is done we hope the officer will be sufficient of a gentleman to put a summary stop to what is no more than an expression of stupid bigotry.

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We are asked to announce that a meeting of the Glasgow Branch of the N. S. S. will be held in the Good Templar's Hall, 122 Ingram-street, at 12 o'clock to-day (December 6). The subject for discussion will be Mr. J. T. Lloyd's paper on "Nietzsche." Admission is free.

The December number of the *English Review* contains an important article on "Socialism, Materialism, and War," signed by H. H. Hyndman and H. E. Belfort Bax. The review copy has not reached us yet.

We feel there is a great deal in the following resolutions of the Humanitarian League that is worthy of consideration. We also feel that very little publicity will be given them in the ordinary press in the present state of affairs, which is our main reason for inserting them here:—

"(1) Upon whatsoever Government the immediate responsibility shall rest by the verdict of history, the ultimate cause of the outbreak of war will be found to be much deeper than the action of this or that nation during the last few weeks which preceded it, for that cause lies in the ideas and methods common to all European nations. An international system based upon selfishness, and upon the exploitation of the weaker by the stronger, is always liable to produce the results from which we are at present suffering.

(2) Atrocities which have occurred are not wholly the outcome of any particular way waging war, but are to a large extent inherent in what is known as a state of war.

(3) The expression 'Civilised Warfare' is a contradiction in terms. War is necessarily brutal and dehumanising. What is needed is not the destruction of this or that European military system, but of any system, by whichsoever nation maintained, which makes aggressive war possible for any purpose.

(4) Assuming that the present war, and the participation in it of Great Britain, were alike inevitable and just, the attitude of many British people with reference to it, now it has broken out, is much to be regretted. As instances, the Committee specially note the private compulsion of men to enlist; the clamor for the indiscriminate treatment of aliens—even when naturalised—as potential spies and combatants, especially when it takes the form of calling for the discharge on to the streets, penniless and friendless, of boys and girls, regardless of what may become of them; the indecent eagerness to capture enemies' trade, even at the risk of depriving individual aliens of their livelihood. These, and other proceedings which might be mentioned, discredit Great Britain in the eyes of belligerents and neutrals alike."

Atheism and the War.

THERE is a certain clergyman—his name is F. C. Spurr, and he is, I think, a Baptist by occupation, although his particular brand is of no moment—whose great occupation in life appears to be that of killing Atheism. This, it may be said, is the occupation of all clergymen, and so it is, but this parson sets to work in a cold-blooded and deliberate way that almost places him in a class by himself. He announces beforehand that he is going to do it, then he goes away and does it (I am relying upon his own statements for this), finally he returns and invites people to come along and inspect what he alleges to be the corpse. The only criticism ever offered on such occasion comes from the corpse—which the bad taste of Atheism permits to the end. But Mr. Spurr is unaffected. He publicly buries Atheism—and then straightway sets out to kill it over again. He reminds me very strongly of Mark Twain's coroner who held an inquest on an Egyptian mummy, and charged compound interest from the time of Moses.

Some years ago Mr. Spurr heard there was a deal of Atheism in Australia. His crusading spirit was aroused, and he left for the Antipodes, publicly announcing that one object of his visit was to stem the tide of unbelief there. He went, he preached, he returned, and Australian unbelief does not appear to have been seriously affected by his campaign. Then he returned to England; and one of his earliest discoveries here was that "Rationalism" was bankrupt; and in the course of a very muddle-headed article in the *Baptist Times* he offered proofs—or rather *proof*, because only one was given. Forty thousand pounds had just been raised for the Y.M.C.A., and, said Mr. Spurr, Freethought organisations were crying out for funds. Could there be any doubt that Freethought was once more dying? The proof was absolutely convincing—to Mr. Spurr. An institution that could raise £40,000 must have something in it. And other clergymen agreed. A fortieth part of that sum would have convinced them.

Now, once more Mr. Spurr has turned up with his usual song of victory over an enemy that he is never tired of killing, and which is, apparently, never tired of being killed. This time it is on the subject of "Atheism and the War," and he makes two discoveries, each of which cancels the other. That is what one would expect from Mr. Spurr. Most writers, even though they may be wrong in what they write, manage to keep consistently wrong for a least a single article. Mr. Spurr is above such juvenile consistency. That a paragraph shall be consistent with itself is, apparently, all he demands of himself. For a whole article to be consistent with itself would be absurd; it might be even dangerous, for some people might suspect Mr. Spurr of being tainted with "Rationalism," or even Atheism. And if any popular preacher can say, in the spirit of the parson who thanked God there had never been a pleasant Sunday afternoon in his church, "Thank God, I have never tried to rule my life by Reason," it is Mr. Spurr.

Atheism is responsible for the War. That is the first of Mr. Spurr's discoveries. The War will probably kill the Rationalist propaganda. That is the second, and they are both equally true. How does Mr. Spurr find out that Atheism is the cause of the War? The Czar of Russia, the German Emperor, the King of England, the Emperor of Austria, are all Christians. There is no doubt of that. The vast majority of the people in all the countries engaged in the War are Christian. There is no doubt of that either. Does Mr. Spurr mean that the minority of Atheists have been powerful enough to plunge the world into one of the greatest wars in history? If so, what becomes of the powerlessness and ineffectiveness of Atheism? You really can't have it both ways. Even Mr. Spurr should be able to see that if he sticks to the one thesis he must give up the other.

It all, apparently, turns on two men—Nietzsche and Bernhardi. Mr. Spurr, it will be observed belongs to that class of profound thinkers who believe that a nation can be plunged into a war such as the present by a single individual. And, of course, when a man believes that he ought to be able to believe anything. Individuals *express* social tendencies; they do not create them. Clever, strong personalities take advantage of these tendencies, but the fact that they can utilise them proves that they are dealing with forces that lie beyond their own personality. And the very people who place the responsibility for the War on the Kaiser are the ones who also point out that this military tendency in Germany dates back to at least the time of Frederick the Great. Germany, they say, was always the same at bottom. This may or may not be true; but, if it is true, away goes the theory that Germany has been led into this War by the Kaiser. If *he* can do what he is credited with doing in Germany, then we may be quite sure that he represents the dominant tendency of German life. The only real leaders of a people are those who represent them—not merely in the political sense, but in the deepest sense of all.

This, however, I am afraid, will be lost on Mr. Spurr, so I return to his indictment. It is Nietzsche and Bernhardi who are responsible for the War. Nietzsche was unquestionably an Atheist, and Mr. Spurr admits that there is a good deal to be said for him in the character of a pacifist. More, "It would not be just to his memory to saddle him with the direct responsibility for the War." But after Nietzsche comes Bernhardi, and he—although Mr. Spurr does not say so—was a Christian. On the contrary, he calls him—no matter what he called himself—"an Atheist, a hard Materialist, an Anti-Christian." He translated into militarist language what Nietzsche preached as a philosopher. War is to him "a biological necessity," and "both Bernhardi and Nietzsche crystallised into severe forms

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the Atheism which, for a generation, has cursed German life."

Now, I am not defending this thesis of Bernhardi, that war is a biological necessity, and without it a race grows decadent. I do not believe it, and have often given my reasons for thinking it false. But why saddle Atheism with this teaching? Why even blame the German, Bernhardi, more than other militarist writers in every other country? For instance, here is an American, General Homer Lea:—

> "As physical vigor represents the strength of man in his struggle for existence, in the same sense military vigor constitutes the strength of nations; ideals, laws, and constitutions are but temporary effulgences.....The deterioration of the military force and the consequent destruction of the militant spirit have been concurrent with national decay."

From Mr. Roosevelt:—

> "In this world the nation that is trained to a career of unwarlike and isolated ease is bound to go down in the end before other nations which have not lost the manly and adventurous qualities."

Lord Roberts, widely eulogised as an ideal Christian soldier, declared, almost in the words of Bernhardi, that "War prevents decadence and effeminancy." And Canon Knox Little denies that war, as war, is wrong:—

> "Christ's approval of the military profession admitted of no contradiction.....When speaking of war as not being forbidden by Christianity, but commended in its proper place, it must be remembered that the history of nations was the history of their wars, and that nations were the creation of God's providence.....War might only be the means, under God, of reforming corrupt communities, and of clearing out what was evil and bad. It was God's scourge, God's writing in the temple."

Now, what is all this but Bernhardi's teaching pure and simple? What is the teaching of men like Spenser Wilkinson and other militarists in England, America, and France, but identical with Bernhardi's "War is a biological necessity"? And what of the scores of sermons preached since the War opened, extolling the military as a school of virtue, and without which certain virtues could only exist in an attenuated form? The truth was properly summed up by the late Professor William James: "Without any exception known to me, militarist authors take a highly mystical view of the subject, and regard war as a biological or sociological necessity." *That* is militarism; and it is, unfortunately, not confined to Germany. It is there in a more pronounced, and therefore more dangerous, form than elsewhere; but it exists wherever a militarist party is; and that we have a militarist party in this country none but fools or knaves will deny.

Bernhardi said that war is a biological necessity. This is quite false, and irretrievably stupid, since it is not the biologically fittest that survive in war, but the biologically unfittest. We deliberately select the fittest for the firing line, and keep the unfit at home. This is so plain that it is puzzling to see how the military mind—dull as it is—could escape its realisation. But, as a mere matter of fact, we have had since this War began, and in practically all the pulpits of this country, Bernhardi's doctrine taught under another form. We have been told by preacher after preacher, and writer after writer, that war is a great school of virtue. It develops sacrifice, love of country, devotion to duty, loyalty to comrade, etc., etc. Well, if all this is so, we are really saying that war is a psychological and sociological necessity. We are saying that the nations that go to war will increase in these virtues, and that without war these qualities will decay. Substitute "psychological" or "sociological" for "biological," and we have Bernhardi's formula repeated and endorsed by the overwhelming majority of the clergy of Britain. And the one formula is as false as the other. War does not develop the higher psychical qualities any more than it develops the biologically fittest. War utilises qualities that have been developed by other means. Man is not made better by warfare; its inevitable and invariable outcome is demoralisation—even when war is unavoidable. If Mr. Spurr and the rest of the clergy have wisdom enough to see this, and courage enough to say it, they can make an honest attack on Bernhardi. But until that occurs they are all supporters of the Bernhardi doctrine.

But what has all this to do with Atheism? Mr. Spurr admits that "many professed materialists and militarists and Rationalists are ardent pacifists," and, if he knows anything of the European Peace movement, he must also know that an overwhelming majority of European Freethinkers are anti-militarists. In this country, I should say that Freethinkers are anti-militarists to a man. Suppose Christians in anything like the same proportion had been anti-militarist; should we in that case now be in the midst of a great war? Such a result is inconceivable. In spite of all the froth and fume of Mr. Spurr, there is that solid fact before him. The overwhelming majority of Freethinkers are always in favor of peace; the overwhelming majority of Christians are always ready for war. How else would war be possible? How else would it be possible for the people of Germany, of Russia, and even of England, to manifest, not merely a readiness for war, but to so glory in it. Compare the pomp of the funeral of Lord Roberts, and the universal eulogies paid his memory, with the manner in which Britain buries a great thinker, and you may see the *genuine* sentiments of a Christianised public.

C. COHEN.

(*To be concluded.*)

A Chapter of My Autobiography.

THE SECULAR CHARTER.—II.

THE Secular Society, Limited, being registered without a hitch, much to the disgust of certain ill-tempered pessimists, a good deal of preparatory work had to be done before it could be properly launched on the ocean of life. Despite the fact that the first year's subscription was ten shillings, we got some hundred and fifty members together; Miss E. M. Vance was appointed Secretary, and I was quite naturally elected Chairman of the first Board of Directors. It was understood that I should do my utmost to keep all the Directors members of the National Secular Society, so that there might be no collision or collision of interest; an object in which I am happy to say I have always succeeded.

. .

During the summer months following the registration of the Society I was very active on the Free Press Defence Committee, and when I settled down I found I had excited the interest of a financier, Mr. Henry Hess, editor, and I believe owner, of the *Critic*. He was good enough to call me "a man of strong personality and great ability," but I was apparently all the more dangerous on that account.

Mr. Hess argued, however, that I might reasonably be asked questions respecting the Secular Society I had incorporated. He contended that I "asked people" to support it, and that this gave the Press the right to be inquisitive. But did I ask "people" for support? I asked the Secular party only, and solely through the columns of the *Freethinker*. Nevertheless, as this is perhaps a point which is open to discussion, I will deal with what Mr. Hess said about the Secular Society, Limited.

Mr. Hess admitted that the National Secular Society "lacked specific provision for possible sources of income—legacies and the like." I am in a position to add that thousands of pounds were lost to our movement in this way. This, indeed, was my chief reason for devising a scheme which would practically circumvent the Blasphemy Laws, at least as they were universally interpreted before the judgment of Lord Coleridge on the occasion of my trial in the Court of Queen's Bench. Incidentally, of course, the Incorporated Society involves certain other advantages. It does place both work and funds on a

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basis of legal security; and the fact that I, and I alone, had provided the Secular party with this legal instrument is a sufficient answer to those who affirmed, either honestly or malignantly, that I desired to profit by a state of illegality and confusion.

I have now to say that I hope Mr. Hess studied the Memorandum and Articles of other Companies more profoundly than he had studied those of the Secular Society, Limited. He stated that the Society "had this week [Sept.] taken definite form." As a matter of fact, which can be verified at Somerset House, I registered the Society on May 27. It is also alleged that I gave it "much booming in the columns of the *Freethinker*." Where else could, or should, I boom it? And why should I *not* boom it? Is it not my duty to use the *Freethinker* for the promotion of an object of transcendant importance to the Freethought party? Mr. Hess allowed that he could "find no particular fault with the prospectus of the Secular Society, Limited," and then he proceeded to find fault with some of the very provisions which are its highest merits. That as to the admission of members he described as "curious"—a word so elastic as to be quite unintelligible in this connection. Now what is this provision? Intending members have to be proposed and seconded in writing, and admitted by the Board of Directors, who are elected at the Annual Members' Meeting. Surely this is the veriest common-sense. It excludes no one who ought to be included. I may add that not a single application had yet been rejected. Mr. Hess also applied the word "curious" to the "absence of dividend," but this only showed that he had not grasped the elementary principles of the scheme. By providing that no member, as such, is to derive any sort of profit from the Society, by way of interest, bonus, dividend, or otherwise, all the advantages of a trust are secured. The funds must be used, absolutely and entirely, in promoting the objects set forth in the Memorandum of Association, and those objects include all the essentials of Secularism. It was easy for Mr. Hess to sneer at "altruistic" language, but what else did he expect in the prospectus of a non-commercial Society, established for impersonal ends? Certainly the language of the prospectus is of severe simplicity. It passed the careful and protracted examination of a thoroughly competent solicitor, and the close criticism of an eminent counsel.

* * * * *

I confess I did not understand Mr. Hess's remarks on "allusions to the property" of the Society. He said that this was a "trifle premature," and that the Society "apparently had no property, nor seemed likely to have any." Now this was worse than "premature." How did Mr. Hess know that the Society would never have any property? How could he tell whether Freethinkers would or would not leave it substantial bequests, or give it substantial donations? To my knowledge several Freethinkers had already put the Society in their wills for legacies which are substantial enough in the eyes of a comparatively poor party. Mr. Hess further sneered at the allusions to debts and liabilities as perhaps "sadly prophetic." But he knew very well that such allusions were inevitable. They were necessary formalities in a document that must contain provision for every possible contingency. Such criticism was really a waste of words.

One great advantage of this Incorporated Society was glimpsed by Mr. Hess. It established "an unimpeachable trust" for receiving, holding, and expending money for Freethought purposes; and if I have achieved nothing else for our party, I am entitled to a little gratitude for this. Not only have funds been guarded by legal security, which no one will infringe, either without or within, but Freethought leaders will be largely relieved from the possibility of certain sinister accusations. Bradlaugh received several personal legacies in his time, and it was always open to anyone to say or insinuate what could not, from the nature of the case, be disproved, that such legacies were *meant* for party purposes.

Soon afterwards, when the Society settled down at its registered office in the Strand, I wrote an Open Letter to Mr. Justice Wills in the *Freethinker* on his imprisonment of one of the Peculiar People for obeying the Bible. I was asked to allow it to be printed as a pamphlet for general distribution. I gave permission for this to be done, and it *was* done—gratuitously, as far as I was concerned. Yet the editor of the *Critic* referred to it as "Mr. Foote's commencement of the exploitation of the Secular Society, Limited." Mr. Hess appears to have thought I was of the same nature as himself. He has "done time" himself since then, but it was for a worse crime than "blasphemy."

* * * * *

Some enemies and traducers of the Society forget that I never was exactly an ass. It would not have occurred to me to supplement one illegal (or rather non-legal) society by another. What I wanted (how many times must I say this?) was legal security and nothing else. It is suggested that *my* law, and my law *only*, stands at the Society's basis. Mr. Hess was not caught with that nonsense. He admitted that the Secular Society, Ltd., constituted "an unimpeachable trust."

The fact is, as I told my readers at the time, that Mr. Thomas Harper, the solicitor who aided me in giving the project legal form, had helped me afterwards in obtaining eminent counsel's opinion (Mr. Brett). Two or three alterations were made at his suggestion, and then he gave us, in writing, his opinion that the scheme would stand at law. He could not be absolute and peremptory, because there was no precedent; but short of that his own opinion was distinctly in favor of the scheme's legality.

(To be concluded.) G. W. FOOTE.

The Touch of a Snake.

SOMETIMES strange difficulties obtrude upon the man who seeks to see Humanity living a reasonable life. There are times when all his ideals fall into the mire; times when it seems as if the ugly in Nature were really the predominant factor; as if the brute in man were unconquerable, and the ideas that sparkled like stars in the darkness of his dreams only the fireflies of thought.

It is as if some unknown Goddess with cold and deathlike face, whose lips are set hard with cynicism, and whose metallic voice sounds like an echo, had come from the innermost recesses of Nature to bid him cease fooling. He lives in a fool's paradise, she says. He romances, thinking himself a prophet, the harbinger of good tidings of great joy to men. He has metamorphosed the values of Nature and rejoices in absurdities. He worships man as the master of things, forgetting the awful majesty of the flea. He glorifies reason while the blood of his veins is lustful. Around Humanity he hangs the cloak of communal brotherhood, while in the deeps of his heart there lies the instinct for fighting. Striving to subdue Nature, he forgets he is but a minute part of the whole. He is a fool-man, even when most rational.

Petrifying his desires and chilling his longings, the visitant departs. She has stricken his enthusiasm with palsy, and his mental life has become as the skeleton of a leaf. The fire of his spirit has burned out in her presence. With her coming and going the vision has changed. Where once he saw a luxuriant Humanity living the life of his dreams, he sees now only the cold nude body of the unknown Goddess. The lightless eyes have cast a sense of desolation upon his mind. The closed lips, about which played no lively lines of affection, have impinged upon him a feeling of repugnance. Into his heart creeps a sorrow-sickness; and hopelessness, grimly repellant though it be, forces his soul into the

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depths of stagnation. He shudders; for a snake has touched him.

And then, after a while, he begins slowly to wonder. Looking out, in broad prospect, over the vast plane of Nature named Humanity, he sees things that have often amazed him, and have often fanned the flame of endeavor in his heart. Priceless energy and effort he sees being poured profusely into the mass, to be swallowed up and lost. Sacrifice, terribly tragic, too intense to be recorded in words, he sees—individual sacrifice that should bear some fruit; but the human portion of Nature seems as relentlessly morally, immobile as the inhuman. Lives are being immolated on the altars of causes For what? The drops in the ocean of Humanity are but drops, and the ocean itself is but an infinitesimal part of Nature.

A few scattered drops would move the mass! What nobility of nature! What egoism! What conceit! What cheek!

But the determination of the endeavor is no flickering emotion; it is steadfast, keen, obdurate, and convincing. It is no spasmodic outflowing of heated fancy, nor is it fever bred by folly. Thought pits itself against overpowering odds, and yet retains a native royalty that brooks no taunt of foolishness. Ideas suffer no obstacle to daunt them, no barrier to retard them, no apparent self-insignificance to make them cower. Against the whole force of Nature an idea never quails; and those men and women drops in the little ocean of Humanity possess a magnificence that makes their folly serious, the magnificence of thought. So he once imagined; but now his old dreams float wearily upon a sea of stricken visions. Everything is cold.

Courage unexampled in military histories, bravery that no soldier ever rivalled, daring unparalleled in national myth, he sees; and there is no song sung for the courageous. The little people who do the great deeds and think the great thoughts are the fools of Nature, doing and saying vainly the things wise men say are of the future. Animated by a passionate earnestness, they struggle against the inevitable, and are laughed at and mocked by those they would serve. Enthused by dream-zeal, they toil to open the minds of the average; they labor to widen the safety-valve of Nature; and the average looks and listens, but never moves. They are fighting Nature as man never fought man, and the great mother of men performs not one cycle more nor less. She regards the endeavor indifferently; for they, too, are but detail parts of her, and their ministrations have no more or no less importance than the workings of the meanest parasite.

His mind quickly travels over his knowledge of the history of man. Back in the misty regions he sees development. One modification in an æon of time, one step forward in a span whose terminals cannot be marked, one advance with a thousand new disadvantages, he sees. And then, after many gradations, man was as he is, the plaything of customs that had grown around him, customs full of the forces of Nature, social habits that gave power to the strong and slavery to the weak, that segregated Humanity, like the animals and plants, into factions whose life-interests were and are antagonistic. There is no glimmer of hope there.

Heroically have the fools striven to subdue the forces that kept Humanity within the bounds of its shores. Grandly have they struggled to widen and deepen the one little portion of Nature that seemed to them to matter. Admirably have they assailed the average, attempting to impregnate it with ideas that would extend its operations into a presumed more glorious joy. Far back into the picturescope of human history he sees men who, for an instant, raised their heads above the waves, and their voices above the noise of the waters, calling upon their fellow-men to think and be free. But it was only for an instant; for the waters soon engulfed them, and he could see no signs of change in the vast ocean of Humanity.

The shades have melted for him into a normal. Environments, customs, nationalities, colors, have faded into an average. Physical and mental strength have merged into calmness. Good and evil have fallen into negation. The ugly and the beautiful have no value. Time characteristics have dropped away, leaving only a dull level. He sees no purpose in anything; and man's puny purpose is a thing to be scorned, so foolish is it in this great unethical mass of turgid mankind.

In the transmogrification the knowledge and enthusiasm of the so-called pioneers, all their bravery and labors and spirit and passion, become as falling pieces of glass in a river; and the irrationality against which they fight sinks like a heavy stone into the ocean.

Man cannot rise above Nature's limitations, her averages. The depth and perspicacity of his mind are the shallowness of his dreams, and the reaches of his heart but the little tottering steps of a child who cannot grow up. Between the greatest thought and the meanest physical necessity the distance can never be measured; there is none. Between the ape-man and the civilisee the difference is one of imagination; the natural values are the same. Best and worst are but nightmares, or the two sides of the tinted bubble of morality, the air-bell of many colors that is never still, the diaphanous globe of ethic conceit that a breath of wind from the forest past can blow out.

And so he raved to himself in his own way, as so many people are raving in their own way in these days of unclothed barbarism. War had not much affected him physically; but in his mind was the picture of the Goddess, and in his heart was the hopeless sadness she had brought; and the sense of failure and a touch of cynicism were there to keep it company. And there were times when he shivered as if a snake had touched him.

ROBERT MORELAND.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON NOV. 26.

The President, Mr. G. W. Foote, occupied the chair. There were also present: Messrs. Bowman, Brandes, Cohen, Cunningham, Davey, Judge, Lazarnick, Neate, Nichols, Quinton, Roger, Rosetti, Samuels, Shore, Thurlow, Wood, and Miss Kough.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed. The monthly cash statement was presented and adopted.

New members were admitted to the Society.

After the transaction of routine business, the proposed issue of a pamphlet in relation to the War was discussed, and the President expressed himself as not altogether satisfied with the MS. It was concluded that the best interests of peace could not be served by writings advocating peace whilst this terrible war was in progress. Many suggestions were made as to the issue of tracts on the various aspects of the War, and it was finally decided to delay the publication.

The discussion then turned upon the liberty of the press, and the following resolution was passed:—

> "That this meeting protests against the Censorship being operated in England, at her own expense, and by her own delegated authority, as if she were a conquered country."

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary.*

Nurse (to moribund patient): "Why won't you take the brandy the doctor ordered? Surely you can lay aside your teetotal scruples at such a time as this."

Patient (to parson—faintly): "Do you think the angels 'll smell it in my breath?"

Willy: Do animals go to heaven, parson?"

Parson Goodman: "No, William, probably not—or, at least, we have no reason to think so."

Willy: "Then the milk and honey in heaven must be canned goods, I suppose."

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Mr. Bunham's, 56 Richmond-road, Barnsbury): Monday, Dec. 7, at 8, Business Meeting—*Re* Next Season's Lecturers, etc.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Oriental Café, Hill-street): 7, H. Clifford Williams, "Wellington, Napoleon, and his Marshals."

PROPAGANDIST LEAFLETS. New Issue. 1. *Christianity a Stupendous Failure*, J. T. Lloyd; 2. *Bible and Teetotalism*, J. M. Wheeler; 3. *Principles of Secularism*, C. Watts; 4. *Where Are Your Hospitals?* R. Ingersoll. 5. *Because the Bible Tells Me So*, W. P. Ball; 6. *Why Be Good?* by G. W. Foote. *The Parson's Creed.* Often the means of arresting attention and making new members. Price 6d. per hundred, post free 7d. Special rates for larger quantities. Samples on receipt of stamped addressed envelope.—MISS E. M. VANCE, N. S. S. Secretary, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.



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THIS Society was ormed in 1898 to afford legal security to the acquisition and application of funds for Secular purposes.

The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularisation of the State, etc., etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

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Secretary: Miss E M. Vance, 2 Newcastle-st. London, E.C.

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Occupation.....

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Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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There is not a more mean, stupid, dastardly, pitiful, selfish, spiteful, envious, ungrateful animal than the Public.—WILLIAM HAZLITT.

Advent.

THIS is the first day of the fourth Ember Week in the year, or, speaking ecclesiastically, of the first Ember Week in the new year, and the loyal members of the Anglican Church are commanded to fast during this week, especially on Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday. This is also the middle of Advent, the first season of the ecclesiastical year, including the four Sundays immediately preceding Christmas, instituted as a special preparation for the Feast of the Nativity. Ember Week suffices modern Christians to get ready for the proper celebration of that supreme event, though their forefathers in the Middle Ages needed to fast for the whole of the season. Advent was then as strictly observed as Lent, all places of amusement and entertainment being severely closed. How different things were in ancient Greece! The Festival of Dionysus at Athens was celebrated at the theatre adjoining his temple. On such an occasion theatre-attending was an act of worship. From the first, Christianity has frowned upon innocent pleasure, and insisted upon the observance of frequent periods of fasting, humiliation, and repentance. One would have thought that Advent would have been a time of unbounded rejoicing; but instead of that it has been, and is, ecclesiastically a period to wear sackcloth and to repent in dust and ashes. In spite of themselves, often, parsons are professional kill-joys. Only the other day a prominent Nonconformist minister said, "I am a good bit of the Puritan, and dancing does not appeal to me." Not long ago children were not allowed to play on Christmas Day, the gladdest day in all the year, it was alleged, except Easter Sunday.

The idea of devoting four weeks to the commemoration of an event said to have happened nearly two thousand years ago strikes one as irresistibly comical; and yet ministers of all denominations are just now delivering what they call Advent sermons, the object of which is to convince the hearers afresh that a supernatural birth did actually occur nearly two millenniums ago, the belief in which is admitted to be contrary to nature. Left to their own inclinations, the people would ere long drop the belief altogether. The mission of the clerical profession is to restrain the natural proclivities of human nature, and to form within it anti-natural habits. The more enlightened among the clergy are perfectly aware of the truth of that statement, and so they throw dust into the eyes of their hearers by speaking of the nativity stories as "art and poetry." But what the preacher describes sophistically as "art and poetry," the ordinary listener regards either as literal fact or as fiction. Common sense declares authoritatively that the event occurred or did not occur; and if it did not occur, what on earth is the use of calling it "art and poetry"? while if it did happen it is not "art and poetry." The vital point, however, is that if the supernatural birth of Jesus did not actually take place, the Gospel Jesus must be dismissed as a myth. Some other Jesus, born in the ordinary way, may have lived and taught, though we have no means whatever of knowing anything about him. Dean Inge naturally holds a brief for the historicity of the superhuman Gospel Jesus, but ludicrous in the extreme is his attempt to establish his historicity. It is frankly admitted that a considerable portion of the Gospel Jesus' message was entirely falsified by the event. He fully shared the superstitious beliefs of his time, and never once rose above them. He entertained wholly erroneous views as to his own future, and indulged in prophecies that have never found fulfilment. There is now a theological school which avowedly holds that the substance of the teaching of Jesus was of that mistaken nature, all the rest being "stop-gap morality, or invented by the Church later." As reported in the *Christian World* for December 3, Dean Inge said:—

> "That theory was sedulously, though insidiously, advocated by men who called themselves Christians, and threatened to trip us up whenever we went to the Gospels for spiritual guidance. Arguing against this view, Dr. Inge said it was a psychological impossibility that 'a deluded prophet' could have given us incidentally a rule of life which humanity has ever since accepted as a perfect morality and an example which we all feel to be the ideal perfection of human nature."

The Dean proceeded to discuss these predictions of Jesus, "the failure of which might have been expected to discredit him who uttered them"; but, true to his cloth, when confronted by a formidable difficulty, the very reverend gentleman fled for refuge to what he called "the spiritual interpretation" of such predictions. That is the coward's city of refuge, and, beholding him taking his flight thereinto, the genuine critic can only laugh in his sleeves. The theologian's game is up when recourse is had to "art and poetry" and "spiritual interpretation." It is a ruse to cover a retreat.

Dean Inge has no right to throw the responsibility of his theological foibles on the shoulders of humanity. It is utterly false to say that humanity has accepted the rule of life given by Jesus as a perfect morality. It is a well-attested fact that a larger percentage of mankind has adopted the rule of life elaborated by the Buddha as a perfect morality. Even Christendom approves of Christian morality only in theory, not in practice. In theory, nothing is easier than to eulogise the Sermon on the Mount, as a well-known divine recently did with moving eloquence. He dwelt with enraptured delight upon its spontaniety, beauty, and truth; but he knows as well as we do that in practice it is the deadest of dead letters. Christendom completely ignores it. Dr. T. R. Glover has just delivered a lecture at Cambridge on "Christianity and War," in the course of which he explained that "the question of the relation between Christianity and war was to him really a question of Christ and war." He is reported as having spoken thus:—

> "Could the speaker of such words as Matthew v. 39, 'Resist not him that is evil,' endorse war? Does society's dependence on war invalidate Jesus Christ? We are living in a world of fact, and the ultimate test of any opinion is its correspondence with the world of experience. We believe that the facts of life and experience are of God's ordinance, that our progress depends on getting into touch with the whole body of God's facts. The question is, Does Jesus Christ clash

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> with our experience, negative all the facts we know about race and nationality, or does he help them?"

Assuming the accuracy of the report, we are bound to affirm that Dr. Glover has put his foot in it very nicely. We are told that it is impossible for Christ to endorse war. Then we are assured that "the facts of life and experience are of God's ordinance." It logically follows that war, being beyond doubt a grim fact of life and experience, is of God's ordinance, and that, consequently, on the subject of war God and Christ are at loggerheads. Christ's teaching does incontrovertibly clash with our experience and negative all the facts we know about race and nationality. Judging him by the Sermon on the Mount nothing can be clearer than that Jesus is an uncompromising enemy of war, but judging him by society's perpetual dependence on war, we must pronounce him unquestionably and most utterly invalidated.

We rejoice to learn that Dr. Campbell Morgan is now slowly progressing towards complete recovery from his severe attack of typhoid fever, but regret to find that he is as incorrigibly superstitious and illogical as ever. From his sick-bed he has sent a Christmas message to his people at Westminster Chapel, in which the following passage occurs:—

> "The Incarnation is the supreme demonstration of the fact of the government of God in his universe, and assures us that God will not be defeated, whatever forces may be ranged against his kingdom. Therefore, never were we so glad for Christmas."

It is the same old story in practically the same old words. Dr. Morgan has assured us again and again that with him facts have not a feather's weight against his belief in the absolute sovereignty of God. While unwaveringly holding that faith, he is not prepared to speak of the fact of war as being of God's ordinance. War is of the Devil, not of God; but as long as the Devil exists and engineers wars, God's sovereignty cannot be absolute. But, assuming its absolute character, in what way was Christ's advent in the flesh its supreme demonstration? What has he ever said or done to prove that God "doeth according to his will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth"? Most emphatically we claim that he has never reigned as the Prince of Peace; never drawn all men unto himself in fulfilment of his own prophecy; never set his enemies under his feet; and never made the difference in the world which his self-styled ambassadors so glowingly depict. In other words, his predicted saviorhood, his reign in righteousness and love, his conquest over all the fell forces of evil, all have been, and are, but beautiful dreams of the over-credulous, dreams that are no nearer to coming true to-day than they were nineteen hundred years ago.

With all these significant facts before us, we have no choice but to relegate the lovely story of the Advent to the limbo of all forlorn hopes and discredited theories. Numerous beyond computation are such advents in ancient mythology, and the Christian story differs on no essential point from all the others. They all belong, without distinction, to the same category. Neither Dean Inge, nor all the divines combined, can alter that fact. It is indelibly engraved upon the face of the Nature of Things. Nature knows nothing of either Father to send or Son to be sent. Her only great Advent is the advent of the sun from one hemisphere to the other once a year, and this advent for the North occurs this month, and is laden with all the sweet promises of spring, and the rich and glad fulfilments of summer. The depressing gloom of winter now receives notice to quit, a notice that has never yet been disregarded. Neither war nor peace either delays or hastens the processes of the sun. Nature never breaks her word, is never a second behind time, never disappoints those who intelligently wait upon her.

J. T. LLOYD.

Atheism and the War.—II.

(*Concluded from p. 779.*)

MR. SPURR affects great jubilancy over the decline of Freethought, the terrible straits in which Freethought journals find themselves, and the increase of religion; all, it must be remembered, owing to the War. I shall not waste time and effort by calling on Mr. Spurr to prove the truth of these statements, because I am certain he would not attempt to do so; and I am also certain that he would fail if he did attempt it. To take only one instance. I suppose the *Freethinker* has stood the shock of the War as well as any paper in Great Britain—and better than most. Scores of papers have suspended publication altogether. Others have considerably reduced their size, or the number of pages, in order to curtail expenses. The *Methodist Times*, to take one example out of many, dropped from about twenty-four pages weekly to eight pages. Personally, I should not dream of twitting the *Methodist Times* with this. But the *Freethinker* has at least maintained itself both as regards quantity and quality, in spite of the War. And the real reason for this is that the overwhelming majority of its readers do not belong to a flighty class that has its interests completely divorced from serious intellectual matters, even by the shock of a great war.

I am not going to seriously contest any of Mr. Spurr's statements about the decline of Freethought. That, of course, could be done, and has been done. I purpose exhibiting on a different plan this gentleman's muddled state of mind. I think it can be shown that, assuming Mr. Spurr to be right about the growth of religion and the decline of Freethought as a consequence of the War, that would be a compliment to Freethought and to the discredit of religion. Instead of gloating over it, Mr. Spurr ought to be ashamed of it—that is, if Mr. Spurr were someone else with a more rational brain and more intelligible principles. One need only give him enough rope for the proverbial consequence to follow.

Mr. Spurr rejects with loathing Bernhardi's teaching that war is a "biological necessity." So do I; although it is only what scores of people in this country have been teaching for years, and what the bulk of the clergy are teaching under another form from the pulpit to-day. For all the eulogies of the military life to which we are treated, the sermons and writings pointing out that by war people are taught duty and loyalty to their country, devotion to each other, and a readiness to sacrifice self in the service of others, are only the Bernhardi doctrine in other forms. Bernhardi said—as Lord Roberts said—that a nation cannot keep biologically fit without war. The others, who are cursing Bernhardi, say that society cannot keep morally and mentally fit without war. The one thesis is only a variant of the other. If one stands the other stands. If one is false the other is false.

Now, I will assume that Mr. Spurr is rational enough to agree with me thus far. I will assume in rejecting Bernhardi's teaching that war is a biological necessity he also believes that a state of war does not make men more humane, more considerate, more responsive to the higher ethical and intellectual obligations. He need not look very far for proof of this. Theoretically, it does not appear very likely that man develops kindliness by shooting, stabbing, throwing bombs, or firing great cannons. Theoretically, it would seem that war cannot even create courage and a sense of duty, since it is upon courage and a sense of duty that warfare depends. War may call for the exercise of these qualities, but they must be bred apart from war, and—of equal significance—maintained apart from war. For the striking fact is, that human nature, being what it is, cannot stand the strain of war without being demoralised. Soldiers long at war may become careless of hardships, but they also become careless of other things. The final and conclusive count against militarism is

Every church cries: "believe and give."—*Ingersoll.*

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that it cannot even maintain the qualities that make militarism—for a time—possible. It is parasitic through and through.

So much for theory. From the practical side the evidence is just as conclusive. Germany, we are told, is seething with hatred of England. The statement may be true enough, and it is, therefore, not very strong evidence of the purifying effect of war on the Germans. I do not think the hatred of Germany in England is so intense that we could say England was seething with hatred of the Germans; but it is here. People hate Germans who never hated them before, and those that did, cherish a still stronger hatred. People's minds are, quite naturally, filled with war. We accept the slaughter of thousands of the enemy with glee, we hail it—if we are religious—as an example of God's goodness to us. Evidently the War does not make for kindliness of disposition in England. But beyond welcoming the death of our enemies, there are the deaths of our friends, of our sons, brothers, parents. At the beginning of the War the first list of casualties was received with horror. Then we began to get used to it. We take our daily dose of thousands killed and wounded over our breakfast as quite a matter of course. We are, of course, sorry that such things should be, but we are getting accustomed to it. The War is hardening us at home, as it hardens those who are doing the actual fighting. Meanwhile, the higher life of the country is, if not at a standstill, seriously retarded. Social reform is stopped. Publishers will not issue books of a serious character; there is no public for them, they say, until the War is over. We have the lower elements in command of the field.

Wartime is, then, a period of demoralisation, and, ultimately, of degradation. Either that is so, or Bernhardi is right, and war is really essential to the health of a nation. I ought to say, by way of interjection and to prevent misrepresentation, that accepting the truth of what has been said above does not mean either that England was not justified in going to war, or that no one should volunteer to do the fighting. That is quite a different position. A particular war may be inevitable; a country being at war, it may be anyone's duty, or everyone's duty, to take a hand in the fighting, since we are all part of the same society, and must share in its profit or its loss. All it means is that we shall recognise, clearly and distinctly, from whatever cause a war may exist, whether it be our fault or someone else's, or the fault of both combined, that war demoralises, it degrades, it sacrifices the higher to the lower. It does not even take away from the respect one may feel, and ought to feel, for the many thousands of young men going to the War in response to what they believe to be the call of duty. It only means that we recognise here, also, while some young men may pass through the ordeal comparatively uninjured—mentally and morally—none are made better by it. War involves a coarsening and a hardening here as elsewhere.

I need not labor the point further. Under penalty of accepting Bernhardi's teaching, Mr. Spurr is bound to believe that warfare involves a process of hardening, of coarsening, of demoralisation, and of degradation. If he does not believe this, all his fulminations against militarism are so much bombastic insincerity.

Now, Mr. Spurr claims, and it is very unskilful for an advocate, and dangerous for a Christian minister, that during the time that higher things of life are in abeyance, and the national taste and temper is undergoing a progressive coarsening, "men who have not darkened the doors of churches for years are now appearing at services for intercession. It is easier for many men to preach than it was a year ago"; there is abroad "an atmosphere more congenial for worship and prayer." Now, I am not saying this is not so, although I have only Mr. Spurr's word for it. But, if it is true, what follows? Mr. Spurr draws from this the conclusion that Atheism has broken down. Well, when he brings forward Atheists who have been converted, we may pay attention to him. What really does follow from this creation of a favorable atmosphere for worship and prayer, is that religion tends to flourish in any period when the higher ethical and intellectual aspects of life are undergoing an eclipse. That is where our preacher really lands himself in the end.

And I, as an Atheist, as one who has devoted himself to the propaganda of Freethought, am not inclined to seriously disagree with him. So long as this War continues on its present basis, I do not expect to see any considerable growth of Freethought. I do not anticipate any losses; but neither do I anticipate any gains worth bothering about. We shall mainly be marking time. After the War there will be a different tale to tell. With a healthier social atmosphere, with men and women whose minds are free to play round questions that involve the higher aspects of life, Freethought will once more go forward. This War, great as it is, will not write *finis* to civilisation. Its advance will only be arrested.

But, I repeat, I am not inclined seriously to disagree with the position that when the tone of social life is lowered, religion gains ground. I would even go farther and say, that if you could get the social state, by a process of retrogression, low enough, and maintain it in that condition long enough, Freethought would die out. If it will give Mr. Spurr any comfort, I am not only pointing out that Freethought is theoretically vulnerable, but I am indicating how it may be destroyed. I must admit that here, unconsciously, Mr. Spurr led the way. He points out that under a state of warfare, which he must believe degrades social life, religion gains strength. I am only following him in pointing out that if you could get the social state low enough, if you could harden and coarsen human nature sufficiently, if you could only check interest—as this War has checked it—in scientific, philosophic, and literary pursuits, religion would once more reign supreme. That is all I am pointing out—following Mr. Spurr.

Mr. Spurr is welcome to the conclusion that follows from his statements, and to any comfort he may derive therefrom. The essence of militarism is barbarism. That is what we are all proclaiming against Germany, and it is true of militarism everywhere. It involves a negation of the higher and more cultured aspects of social life. It is ultimately an appeal to force as against reason. It involves social demoralisation, as Mr. Spurr says is the case in Germany. But he also finds that this state of things induces a better atmosphere for worship and prayer. This I am not inclined to dispute. For religion, as I have pointed out, belongs in its essence to the barbaric or the savage state. Anything that revives barbaric feelings is likely to strengthen religion, with which it is so closely associated. Religion and militarism, for this reason, have always gone hand in hand. Both are primitive in outlook, both appeal to the same primitive feelings. It may be true that in days of darkness, ignorance, and degradation many turn to God. It is enough that with progress and enlightenment men turn to reason and humanity.

C. COHEN.

Fresh Fruit from an Old Tree.

"In our fat England the gardener, Time, is playing all sorts of delicate freaks in the hues and traceries of the flower of life, and shall we not note them?"—GEORGE MEREDITH.

AMONG modern English writers whose fame would seem to be assured, Mr. Thomas Hardy occupies the foremost place, and it is pleasant to reflect that he is an "intellectual." Indeed, the attentive reader cannot fail to notice the essential Freethought embedded in his admirable books. Even in the earlier stories, amid their picturesque color, their delightful atmosphere, their delicious pastoral scents and sounds, we find a frank Secularism. As the author advances in reputation and grows in intellectual power, the note has deepened, until, in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, it grows into a cry of defiance, and afterwards, in *Jude*

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the Obscure, a great sob of pain. These two books are noble and significant works, worthy in every way of this great living English author. They are an arraignment of Providence, and as we read we recall the words of the blinded Gloster in the greatest of all tragedies:—

> "As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods;
> They kill us for their sport."

It is a further proof of Mr. Hardy's genius that he has achieved success in poetry no less than in prose, and as he gets older he turns more and more readily to the muses, and writes with all the zest and enthusiasm as if he were a young poet beginning his career instead of a veteran who has enriched the literature of his country with masterpieces of poetry and prose for two generations. And Mr. Hardy has the Shakespearean quality of unlocking his heart in his verse. We do not for a moment underrate the novels. These remain, by virtue of the author's genius, among the finest literary works of our time. In the poems, however, we have Mr. Hardy's own passion, and, so packed with emotion are the verses, that, instead of having worked on the book, the author has worked straight on us. He defies, like Whitman, our æsthetics, and proves that the greatest thoughts are just those which are quickest dismembered and absorbed by the reader, and turned into part of himself.

To open Mr. Hardy's new volume of poems, *Satires of Circumstance, Lyrics and Reveries*, is to be confronted with a book of singular power and one full of the pure stuff of poetry. Rarely has anyone combined with such poetic gifts as the author possesses, the keen and subtle intellect of the philosopher. His highest poetry arises from the combined action of two faculties, often separated widely, for he has the power of vision and the power of understanding. Take, for example, that fine and imaginative poem, "God's Funeral." The author pictures a slow procession moving across a plain at twilight, and bearing a strange form, that seems now appearing man-like, and then seeming cloud-like. He listens to the lament of the mourners for the being they have themselves created, and whom they cannot any longer keep alive:—

> "Framing him jealous, fierce, at first,
> We gave him justice as the ages rolled.
> Will to bless those by circumstance accurst,
> And long suffering and mercies manifold."

"Sadlier than those who wept in Babylon" follow the mourners, and some of them refuse to believe that all is over; and, "dazed and puzzled twixt the gleam and gloom," the scene closes. It is a daring piece of work, comparable to Heine's vision of a dying god having the last sacraments of the Church administered to him, albeit there is none of the bitter irony of the German singer.

Mr. Hardy has other melodies, strange and alluring as a linnet's song in the pauses of the wind. Listen:—

> "Yes, I accompany him to places
> Only dreamers know,
> Where the shy hares show their faces,
> Where the night rooks go;
> Into old aisles where the past is all to him,
> Close as his shade can do,
> Always lacking the power to call to him,
> Near as I reach thereto."

In still another mood the poet sings:—

> "We two kept house, the Past and I,
> The Past and I;
> I tended while it hovered nigh,
> Leaving me never alone."

Sometimes there is a touch of regret, as in the lines:—

> "Every hearth has a ghost, alack,
> And can be but the scene of a bivouac
> Till they move perforce—no time to pack."

Contemporary literature is so sugary, so full of romantic imaginings, that such writing brings a sense of largeness; a reminder of the great winds and waters and wide horizons of the West Country, where men and women know how to live and how to die, not submissively but fiercely. Modern drawing-room readers of poetry are ill-prepared for Mr. Hardy's virile verse, and primly straighten themselves as his muse passes. They are a little afraid of Mr. Hardy's plainness of speech, his probity, and his emphatic gestures. But others there are who perceive the beauty of fact which underlies his stern verses, and understand the distinction conferred on English literature by the writings of a rare poet who is also a philosopher.

In these verses of an alert and capacious mind the world, however, is not all immitigable gloom, and the poet's mood is sane enough. His advice to us is to face the facts of life, and to trust humanity:—

> "The fact of life with dependence placed
> On the human heart's resource alone,
> In brotherhood bonded close, and graced
> With loving-kindness fully blown,
> And visioned help unsought, unknown."

These vivid verses bring out with admirable clarity an aspect of the world which, though often overlooked in the hurry of modern life, challenges the consideration of all lovers of literature, for their author is among the select few who, among the many writers of to-day, are likely to challenge the verdict of posterity.

MIMNERMUS.

A Chapter of My Autobiography.

THE SECULAR CHARTER.—III.

An Interlude.

IT is difficult to make some people understand one's meaning, particularly when they have a rooted objection to understanding anything you say in a sense that does you any honor. It may be remembered that in the first section of this history (p. 757, col. 2) I pictured ill-wishers of mine showing how I had arranged the payments of legacies to my own advantage. This I showed to be an impossibility. As a matter of fact, I said, "money had to come through the Society's bankers by cheque, endorsed by the Secretary and two Directors, of whom the Chairman was not necessarily one." I might be one of the two, or I might not. It was all a matter of chance. If I signed it was not as the Chairman, but simply as a Director. The only signature that was *compulsory* being the Secretary's. As to my own signature being fairly *frequent*, it is easy to see that it would be so. I was Chairman all the time, and generally present when such business had to be taken.

The oddest thing is that the person who challenged my statement, through the secretary, wanted to know why it was that they had always seen Mr. Foote attach his signature after hers. And thereby hangs a tale. The Chairman's signature, *as* Chairman, does come first on the Company's *cheques;* which is merely an internal rule between the Board and the Bankers.

The formula between inverted commas in the advertisement of the Society appearing so frequently in the commercial columns of the *Freethinker* is not a direction but an assistance. It does not belong to the Society's Articles. People can make gifts or bequests to the Society in any other language they please, as long as it is legal; but most people are glad of a little help in legal phraseology, and to save them from confusion and distraction Mr. Harper drew up a *sufficient* form—not a *necessary* form of bequest. It was really meant to lessen the trouble of both sides in postal communications.

It is not a pleasant thing for the chief of any establishment to have to show that burglary is not as easy as traducers of his have been so fond of representing it, but even disgusting things have to be done at times in the way of duty. The other day a Marquis was carrying slops in Dr. Haden Guest's French-English War Hospital not far from Paris. Somebody had to do it, he said, and, as it was all for France, why not he as well as another?

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I come now to the Boulter case in 1908-9, the inci-

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dents of which are fresher in the minds of my readers. It will be remembered that I took up the case at Mr. Boulter's request, as President of the National Secular Society, and all the costs (over £200) were contributed by the readers of the *Freethinker*, who accepted my assurance that Mr. Boulter's language may have been "blasphemous" enough, but was certainly not "obscene." The part played by the Secular Society, Ltd., was technically slight but really considerable. Having received several legacies, it was in a rather prosperous condition, and it undertook to lend first £100 and afterwards £200 to the National Secular Society in order that the expenses of a first-class legal defence might be assured.

This put a fresh face upon the whole case. Mr. Boulter had been refused a postponement of trial at the Old Bailey. Who was he? Obviously a person who had no money. But as soon as it was found he had moneyed friends behind—as soon as it was seen that Mr. Atherley Jones, as senior counsel, demanded delay in the name of justice—the case was altered, and another month's leisure was placed at the defendant's disposal.

It may well be imagined that I sat out the whole of the trial in a very crowded court, which had often rung to the eloquence of voices pleading for freedom. Defendants, or prisoners, are generally called last into court, and there are other occasions for observing the jury.

Some of the jury may have been indifferentists, but on that occasion, and for that purpose, they were probably all Christians. They all took the usual oath, so there was no Jew among them—at least, no orthodox Jew. And, in spite of the seriousness of the situation, I could not help noticing its humor. Twelve Christians in a jury-box, one Christian on the bench, and one Christian acting as counsel for the prosecution—fourteen of them altogether—were assembled to try a solitary poor Freethinker for "blasphemy"—that is, for treating their own faith with insufficient respect. There were also three Christian witnesses, all policemen, including Chief-Inspector Jenkins, who carries on a sort of mission of his own in North London. These seventeen Christians, all helping to try one Freethinker for offending their faith, took their business very gravely. Nothing but the bitter spirit of persecution could have enabled them to keep their faces. Had they possessed a sense of humor, or given way to it so far as to see the real character of the situation, they would have laughed at the farce and told the "blasphemer" in the dock to go home to dinner with his trembling wife, or even invited him to dine with them at a neighboring restaurant. Oh that blessed sense of humor! What a different world we should be living in if it were only more common! Bigotry and persecution would die a natural death. No man who saw a joke, and enjoyed it, could ever sit with sixteen pious friends to try another man for criticising their common faith in an "offensive" manner. Seventeen butchers might as well try a sheep for offensive vegetarianism.

Of course the Christian jury found the Freethought sinner Guilty. They were asked if he had offended their feelings; they said he had; he was therefore guilty of the otherwise indefinable crime alleged against him. He *was* Guilty. And the Judge also had his opportunity.

As the judge began—"Harry Boulter," after the verdict of "Guilty," my mind went back to that Monday night at the Old Bailey, twenty-five years before, when I stood up, with a full knowledge of what was coming and heard Judge North say "George William Foote." The whole scene from that long past flashed across my mind in a second. I saw the crowded, excited court; I heard, and I despised, the cold malice in the judge's voice; I half saw myself as I confronted him with a face that answered his challenge and was calmer than his own; for I was filled then, and in prison afterwards, with a high and even gay disdain of the bigots who had me in their toils—and I knew what George Fox meant, in spite of his theological language, when he said that God lifted him up above his persecutors and they were as dead men under his feet. But that flashing picture did not last as long as I have taken to describe it. I never lost a word of what Mr. Justice Phillimore was saying. I noticed his changed tone of voice, and I saw in a moment what was going to happen. He had got his verdict of "Guilty," but he hesitated to sentence the "blasphemer." And that very fact showed what a change had taken place in twenty-five years.

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Now I come to a point of vast importance. I differed in our consultations from both solicitor and counsel in one respect. They held that the law of blasphemy was really what it used to be before 1883, and that if the old law had become obsolete the offence of "blasphemy" had ceased to exist. I agreed with them as a matter of logic, but not as a matter of fact. Those who remember my controversy with George Jacob Holyoake, not very long before his death, will recollect how firmly I argued that the Secular Society, Limited, which I devised (and which the Rationalists copied) was perfectly secure. My starting-point was Lord Chief Justice Coleridge's summing-up at my third trial (for I was tried no less than three times) in 1883. He laid it down as the law *then*, whatever it had been *before*, that—"If the decencies of controversy are observed, even the fundamentals of religion may be attacked without a person being guilty of blasphemous libel." That one sentence gave me the key to a legal frustration of the Blasphemy Laws from a financial point of view. I asked consulting counsel, I asked the late Dr. Hunter "Would any judge, on his own responsibility, go behind that dictum of Lord Chief Justice Coleridge?" They had to answer, however reluctantly, "No." "Very well then," I said, "that is the rock on which I propose to build." The result was the Secular Society, Limited, which has secured thousands of pounds (through wills) for the Freethought movement, which would otherwise have been lost. And now we see Mr. Justice Phillimore accepting Lord Chief Justice Coleridge's dictum, and even going beyond it; for he released a convicted "blasphemer" on his undertaking to abstain, not from attacking Christianity, but from the use of "shocking" language in doing so. "A man is free," Mr. Justice Phillimore says, "to think and to say and to teach that which he believes about religious matters." Lord Coleridge provided the rock on which I built the Secular Society, Limited; and Mr. Justice Phillimore declares that this rock is immovable and indestructible. So far, then, the new "blasphemy" trial was a great victory for Freethought.

But while I have held that we are perfectly safe, collectively and financially, I have also held that we are not safe individually and personally. This is one of the anomalies of a changing order of things. And it is by no means to be neglected. It furnishes an excellent reason for the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws. None of us are safe until that is effected. Even the superfine, respectable Freethinkers are not safe—unless they are innoxious enough to be useless; in which case they will always enjoy the safety which results from contemptuous indifference on the part of "the enemy." Blasphemy, in spite of the language of indictments, is now laid down to consist in the *manner* and not in the *matter*. If you attack Christianity you must do it in a way that Christians will not resent. Now, this is a law against wit in favor of pedantry; a law against the bright-minded in favor of dullards. You may attack Christianity with *argument* but not with *ridicule*. But ridicule *is* an argument. It is the *reductio ad absurdum*. It is employed by Euclid himself, who often ends a demonstration with the words "which is absurd." Moreover, it is only in regard to religion that controversy is regulated by law; and the regulation is only applied to Freethinkers. Christians may be as vulgar and offensive as they please; it is only the Freethinkers who must mind their "P's" and "Q's."

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For this very reason the late Mr. Justice Stephen said that every law of blasphemy rests upon "the principle of persecution." If the law," he said, "were really impartial, and punished blasphemy only because it offends the feelings of believers, it ought also to punish such preaching as offends the feelings of unbelievers." Mr. Justice Stephen also pointed out that a law which says that you may discuss religion but may not ridicule it, takes away with one hand what it gives with the other, and tends to "confine the discussion to a small and in many ways uninfluential class of persons." I know that these uninfluential persons regard themselves as extremely influential; it is a way they have—but they are mistaken. I appeal to the verdict of history.

The upshot was, that Incorporated Societies, such as the Secular Society, Limited, were perfectly secure; and that the Blasphemy Laws are still a menace to individual propagandists. That had been my publicly expressed view for the previous twelve years, and I invited those who differed from me, sometimes rather maliciously, to take note of the fact. I am liable to be mistaken, as other men are; but I differ from many other men in taking the trouble to think (as far as I can) all round a matter I want to deal with.

G. W. FOOTE.

(*To be concluded.*)

LORD WESTBURY.

This great legal luminary, who, if half is true that was said, was really a Freethinker. As Richard Bethell he was very sarcastic in speech. He used to say that he owed his success in law and in life to the practice of the Christian virtues. A precisian in language, he said this as if the words "by others" were understood. Of one of his clients he observed, "He had changed what he was pleased to call his mind." Gladstone and Bishop Wilberforce were his two great opponents when he carried the Divorce Act against all the weight of the Church. Of Gladstone he said: "If the right honorable gentleman had lived—thank heaven, fervently, he had not—in the Middle Ages, when invention was racked to find terms of eulogium for the *subtilissimi doctores*, how great would have been his reputation"; while his reference to the Bishop of Oxford as "saponaceous" gained for Wilberforce the *sobriquet* of "Soapy Sam" for the rest of his days. He opposed, too, Wilberforce's scheme for constituting foreign bishoprics without first procuring the license of the Crown. Curiously enough, these opponents both died at the same time—in July, 1873.

There was little love lost between Westbury and Wilberforce. W. P. Frith, R.A., tells in his *Autobiography* how, when he painted his picture of the marriage of the Prince of Wales, "when the Lord Chancellor sat for me, his eye caught the form of the Bishop of Oxford, and he said, 'Ah, I should have thought it impossible to produce a tolerably agreeable face, and yet preserve any resemblance to the Bishop of Oxford.' And when the Bishop saw my portrait of Westbury he said: 'Like him? Yes; but not wicked enough.'"

His criticism of Darwin's *Origin of Species* was keen. He said that, while he was convinced it was impossible that all forms of life had come from one and the same creative act, the greater difficulty was to suppose that they had all come from one and the same creative mind.

On Westbury's elevation to the Woolsack someone remarked that, after the heated atmosphere of the House of Commons, he might fancy himself in Paradise when presiding over the peers. "I might, indeed, do so," the Chancellor replied, "but for the predominant and excessive display of lawn sleeves, which at once dispels the pleasing illusion." On a later occasion he objected to a Bishops' Resignation Bill, giving as his reason, "The law in its infinite wisdom has already provided for the not improbable event of the imbecility of a bishop."

One of the best legal anecdotes is told, not of him, but of Lord Bramwell. Someone asked him if he could draw up an indisputable will. "No," he answered; "God Almighty tried it, twice; but people have been wrangling about his testaments ever since."—*J. M. Wheeler.*

A negro woman who was a cook had a Chinaman for a beau, and the mistress of the house, to discourage the marriage, asked the negro woman if she had ever thought what their children would be. "Oh, yes," said the negro woman, "we has talked it all over, and knowed the children would all be Jews; but we don't kear."

Acid Drops.

We commented, a week or two ago, in our Correspondence, on a recent utterance of Rev. R. J. Campbell in connection with Secular Education. Here is what he actually said:—

> "If I had my time to come over again I would never vote for the relegation of religious instruction to a subordinate place in the day schools. We want not less of it, but more. Character is more important in a teacher than accomplishments; the moral should come before the mental; we do not want to grow a nation of sharpers, but of earnest God-fearing men and women."

We reproduce Mr. Campbell's exact words because a correspondent writes wondering whether we have not misrepresented Mr. Campbell. It will be seen that Mr. Campbell's own words place him in a more objectionable light than our summary of what he said. Then we were content to say that his talking about Secular Education relegating religion to a subordinate place in the schools showed that he had never even understood what Secular Education meant. For Secular Education does not propose to place religion in a subordinate position in the schools. It means leaving religion out altogether as a subject with which the State has no right of interference. That implies neither inferiority nor superiority. The State remains simply neutral. And as a matter of fact the Education Act—while it does provide for religious instruction—actually places it in a subordinate position. It can only be introduced during a prescribed time, and must not be introduced during five-sixths of the school time.

Mr. Campbell is not bound to agree with secular education—although, as a "Free Churchman," he ought to be strongly opposed to the State teaching religion anywhere or to anyone. Still, as a public teacher, he is bound to try and understand it, and also not to misrepresent those who believe in it. And his remarks that he considers character of importance, and that we do not want to turn out a nation of sharpers, with the implication that secular educationalists do not believe the one and achieve the other, is no more than a piece of slimy Nonconformist impertinence. Whatever may be the value of the elementary schools as trainers of character, that value is certainly not lessened by the removal of religion. And not a few of the very best of the teachers in this country believe they will find their power in developing strong and desirable characters to be enormously strengthened when religion is cleared out, and the time given to that devoted to rational methods of character training. And apart from the principle of non-interference by the State in matters of religion, one count against the present system is that it does *not* turn out the character that should be turned out, and, in addition, turns many hundreds of teachers into hypocrites. No one wants to turn out a nation of sharpers. Besides, the thing is a sheer impossibility. You might have half a nation of sharpers, but the other half must be fools or the sharpers would starve. And Mr. Campbell belongs to an order that has always seen to it that there shall be no scarcity of the class that provides the possibility of the sharper's existence.

Mr. Blatchford offered some criticism of Mr. Bernard Shaw's *Common Sense About the War*, to which the latter replied in the *Weekly Dispatch*. In the course of that reply Mr. Shaw said:—

> "I have demanded several things for the soldier which Mr. Blatchford also demands, and two things that he has not demanded. One is that our soldiers should not be deprived of their rights in the Prussian manner, the other is that men of Mr. Blatchford's opinions concerning religion should be enabled to enlist without having their consciences outraged by being forced to take an oath in which they do not believe. Anybody but Robert Blatchford would be grateful to me for standing by him. But Robert regards it as a liberty on my part to meddle. I am sorry, but I shall go on meddling."

So far as the last point, at least, is concerned, we hope that Mr. Shaw will keep to his word. It is well not to think of the soldier as mere "cannon fodder," and we are afraid that praise of the soldier often goes little further than this. If we want *men* for soldiers, the surest way of achieving our ideal is to treat them as men, once we have secured them.

The Rev. R. S. King, rector of St. Clement's Church, Leigh-on-Sea, suggested in a recent sermon that "it might be the sheer wickedness of man that had brought calamity to the whole earth." Does the reverend gentleman think that the two Kaisers are God's destroying angels?

The Bishop of Chelmsford, speaking at St. John's Church, Southend, said that the force causing men to sacrifice their

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lives in the service of their country was due to Christian teaching. Of course! To the shoemaker, there's nothing like leather.

The restraining power of religion is often spoken of by the clergy. At a sale of work, in connection with the Southend Girls' Shelter, recently, the Rev. F. D. Pierce said they had members of the Greek, Roman Catholic, Dutch Reformed Churches, as well as the Church of England, under their care. Apparently none of these religious institutions can prevent girls taking the wrong turning.

The Young Men's Christian Association is asking people to give £800 buildings for the War camps, one hundred of which are "wanted at once." This looks as if the Y.M.C.A. had given up the spiritual work of soul-saving for the secular delights of a building society.

"God himself is on trial" during this War. It is not we who say this, or it would be downright blasphemy. It is taken from a leading article in the *Christian Commonwealth*. The writer is very anxious to know what God thinks about the War, although the clergy have been telling us ever since the War began that they know, and that he quite agrees with us. Still, this writer is not quite easy, and he confesses to a feeling "like a bad dream" that "God cannot really care, or he would not allow things to go such lengths that are happening now. No human father would let things go to such lengths as our heavenly father does." Now that, we take it, is a good example of normal human feeling warring against theological teaching. All England is blaming the Kaiser for causing or permitting the War when he might have prevented it. And yet the same people refrain from blaming God, who surely might have prevented the War more easily than the Kaiser. Nay, they not only refrain from blaming him, but they actually go on their knees and compliment him on his wisdom and benevolence. We agree with the *Christian Commonwealth* that no human father would act as our "heavenly father" does. And we add that if he did, all decent people would shun his company.

But of course, being a Christian, the *Commonwealth* writer dare not push his opinions to their logical conclusion. Instead of doing this, he falls back upon the absurd position that "It is more reasonable, as well as more religious, to believe that God holds the reins than to believe that there are no reins to hold." How on earth can this be more reasonable? Certainly it is the more horrible of the two. It is bad enough to think of the present state of Europe, and to reflect upon the madness of nations that can bring about such a War as the present one. But at least we can see that it does result from human stupidity and greed and cruelty and ambition, and we can hope for improvement some day. It is only an undeveloped human nature that we have to fight against. But to believe that someone is holding the reins, that all this is part of a plan, that these millions of men—hardly one of whom owe those they are seeking to kill any individual ill-will—to believe that all the blood and horror of this war is brought about by a God who is "holding the reins,"—why, to believe this is almost to invite suicide or insanity. No one ought to be able to hold such a belief and remain sane. And no one could hold and realise what such a belief involves without going insane—at least, we hope not, for the sake of common human decency.

It may be disheartening to British Christians, but there is undoubtedly a marked tendency in the German world of piety to treat the War as a religious one. British Christians will naturally resent this as they resent the Kaiser calling on God. They appear to believe that as Britain rules the waves, so she dominates heaven. Heaven is not exactly a British colony, but it is within our "sphere of influence." Germany, however, seems inclined to contest this. The *Times* tells us that "a religious wave has swept through the country since war broke out, the Kaiser leading the way. In every telegram, in every message, the Almighty's name is mentioned." The writer of the above adds: "I have never witnessed a more touching service than in Cologne Cathedral one Sunday morning in the middle of October. The priest happened to mention the destruction of the Cathedral of Rheims, and a heartrending sob was heard among the worshipers. There was a long silence, and then the priest knelt down and ended his sermon with a prayer for peace." Devotion and destruction, piety and plunder! There is more than an alliterative connection between them.

As we are assured that religious feeling is being everywhere strengthened since the War began, it is well to note its influence in inducing kindly and humane feelings. Most people are aware that in Russia the Jews are confined within certain provinces, beyond which travelling is forbidden. This area may be contracted or enlarged at the discretion of the authorities. This means that every Jew is deprived of a right which other Russian subjects can only lose by committing a crime. Now the beneficial influence of the religious enthusiasm, which we are told is sweeping over Russia like a wave, may be gauged by one or two points from an article by Prince Paul Dalgorukoff in a Russian magazine dated November 1. He points out that although trade in Poland has been brought to a standstill, Jews are not allowed to go outside the "pale" in search of work. They must starve with their co-religionists. Worse than this is the fact that although wounded Jewish soldiers are distributed all over Russia, their relatives are not permitted to see them, as that would mean their travelling beyond the pale. To do justice to Russia, we ought to point out that there is one condition which enables a Jewish woman to travel outside the pale—that is, if she registers herself as a prostitute. And, as a matter of fact, this has been done by respectable Jewish girls in order to be able to study at some of the Russian Universities.

As another sample of Russia's love of religious freedom, we may mention that Pastor Fetler, a Baptist minister, has just been sentenced—after a trial behind closed doors—to four months' imprisonment. The charge against him is that of proselytising.

Rev. J. D. Jones, who has just returned from a visit to Australia, says:—

> "The Churches are up against the spirit of materialism, just as in England—perhaps more so. Climate, plus prosperity, makes the work of the Churches pretty difficult. They may not have the same fight against social unrighteousness, and they have no problem of poverty, as we have. But there is the climate difficulty, and the problem of prosperity presents itself in that materialistic temper. The climate encourages open-air life, and that constitutes a difficulty for the Churches."

This seems a long way round to say that religion doesn't flourish where people are contented and prosperous. And yet that is all Mr. Jones does say. In England preachers complain that people are drifting away from Christianity because of the injustice of social conditions. In Australia it seems they are drifting away because the injustice is not there, or at any rate, is not so acute. Strange it doesn't strike the very profound J. D. Jones that the people will gradually leave Christianity whether economic conditions are good or bad. It is part of the general effects of intellectual development.

Why doesn't someone travel about with the Bishop of London, and so save him from saying many stupid things? He is now shrieking for Great Britain to imitate the example of Russia, and prohibit the sale of intoxicating drinks. The poor man appears to be under the impression that the ukase prohibiting the Government sale of vodka applies to all alcoholic drinks. This is not so. It is vodka alone that is prohibited. The sale of beers and wines continues—and has increased.

Another clerical follower of Bernhardi! Rev. W. Sutherland, of Bath-street U. P. Church, Glasgow, says that the War "is going to bring to the Church of God, to the Empire, and to Europe, that revival for which we have been praying and striving. Over the bloodstained fields of France and Flanders the seed was sown, and the harvest would be nations purified in their moral and spiritual lives. Could they not see the signs of triumph in the self-sacrifice, the national unselfishness, the fair lily of patriotism, and the earnestness displayed in supporting our righteous cause?" We are under the impression that the New Testament denies the possibility of getting grapes from thistles. Mr. Sutherland knows better.

A little while ago the Archbishop of York scandalised a number of people by protesting against the vulgar abuse of the Kaiser, and blamed his advisers for bringing about the War. This has upset a good many very earnest Christians, who have since been writing to the papers, protesting in the name of Christian patriotism against any consideration being shown the German Emperor. The Vicar of Clitheroe, for example, says he read the report of that speech with disgust, although he professes to believe in a religion that teaches love to one's enemies, and to treat with kindness those that despitefully use you. A suggestion was made at a Conference of the Whalley Rural Deanery that we should pray for our enemies, but it is reported that the suggestion met with a hostile reception. Some have written suggesting in a roundabout way that it is only the Archbishop's position

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that prevents his being mobbed. All of which is a very delightful illustration of the Rev. Spurr's statement that Atheism cannot stand the strain of the War. It really looks as though Christianity is breaking down under the strain.

We like to recognise common sense wherever it appears, and *apropos* of what has just been said, we venture to quote the following from a leading article in the *Church Times* :—

> "However much English statesmen strove at the critical juncture to keep the peace—and we believe they left no stone unturned, however earnestly the English people tried to avoid war—and our lack of preparation is warrant for that, it is either self-deception or hypocrisy to pretend that national jealousy, national vanity, and national ambitions on our side have nothing to do with the development of those circumstances which led to inevitable war. Vulgar abuse of the Kaiser, as the sole author of evil, is a drug for our consciences. It implies a paltry untruth. Englishmen are now heartily ashamed of the indecency with which caricaturists bespattered Napoleon a hundred years ago. To repeat the offence now is worse. Napoleon was a man of commanding genius, if of deplorable character, and he did himself almost control the vast forces which he launched, time after time, against the peace and the liberties of Europe. The Kaiser is a second-rate man of ordinary abilities, whom accidents have made conspicuous in the gigantic movements of to-day. To make him the chief mover is to make oneself ridiculous."

Common sense is always useful, and it was never of more value than at the present time.

The *Evening News*, in a recent issue, asked scathingly "who thought that the German nation was enlightened? Those, presumingly, who regard Atheism and enlightenment as synonymous." Even a penny-a-liner might have heard of "The Messiah," the "Dead March" in "Saul," the "Spring Song," and countless hymns by German composers, all of which, obviously, are the work of "wicked atheists."

Mr. Bernard Shaw's pamphlet, "Common Sense and the War," has aroused a veritable hornets' nest. His opponents have called him "Von Bernhardi Shaw," and his admirers retort with "The Great St. Bernard."

"At what point in the stupendous series of animate existence is immortality evolved? Is the baboon immortal? The elephant? The dog? The canary?" These questions are asked by Mr. William Archer. This reminds us of Voltaire's jest, that, if fleas be immortal, he hoped that they would be self-supporting in the next world.

The Right Hon. G. W. E. Russell says that at the time of the Boer War "a good many preachers, of all denominations, raved like recruiting-sergeants." Why drag in the sergeants?

"The Church had very little opposition until she did the Devil harm." This exquisite language was used by the Bishop of Chelmsford, and represents the high-water-mark of culture of the English Government religion. A critic might suggest that it was not markedly different to sentiments used frequently by medicine-men on the Gold Coast.

In an article deriding German "culture," the *Evening News* refers to Mr. Bernard Shaw in the following elegant terms: "the malign ass who gabbles of the glories of his Superman is not wholly removed from amongst us." An unkind critic might suggest that Carmelite House courtesy was indistinguishable from vulgar abuse, and that the office-boy need not be employed, necessarily, in lampooning an author of European reputation.

"In the matter of reconciling religious enemies, the God of Battles succeeds where the Prince of Peace has failed. Christians and heathens fight side by side, the German Lutherans and the Austrian Catholics besides the Mohammedan Turks, the Protestant English beside the Hindoo. The blood of comrades in arms is thicker than that of the blessed sacrament and holy communion."—*Truthseeker* (New York).

The Kaiser has just taken a step which gives one more proof of his devotion to the Christian religion. The *Catholic Times* points out that on learning that some of his Irish Catholic priests desired their religious needs to be assuaged by Irish priests, at once applied to Rome to satisfy their religious requirements. As a result, some well-known Irish priests have left Rome for the prison camps in Germany, and the *Catholic Times* contrasts this conduct of the Kaiser with that of the British Government which, it says, has failed to send enough Catholic chaplains to the front. Evidently the Kaiser is more pious than our own Government.

After working the spy business almost to death, Mr. William Le Queux has now turned his attention to prophecy. We do not think Mr. Le Queux has any novels dealing with prophecy, although he has several dealing with spies. Anyway, he is now engaged in a controversy with Miss Marie Corelli over a prophecy of Father Johannes, said to date from the year 1600, which foretold the present War and the destruction of the Kaiser and his army. The lady laughs at the prophecy, and Mr. Le Queux says he can "smile" at her. The *Daily Call* has opened its columns to a discussion on the subject, and Mr. Le Queux is backing the prophet. On the whole, it is a pity that Mr. Le Queux found his astonishing revelations about spies so generally laughed at—people were beginning to wonder how on earth *he* knew all about them; that might have saved him, at least, from such an idiotic obsession as that of prophecy.

If this War does not convert us into a nation of soldiers, it bids fair to turn us into a nation of beggars. Funds of every conceivable kind are afoot, and in addition begging is taken up as a hobby by thousands of people, some of it of a very questionable character. Thus, in one case that came before a London magistrate, it transpired that a girl who was summoned for obstruction, was selling for the benefit of the Belgian refugees. How much the Belgians benefited may be gathered from the fact that out of every 5s. the makers of the article took 2s. 4½d., the seller took 2s. 6d., and the Refugees received 1½d.—that is, assuming they got all that was arranged for them. As an illustration of another method of collecting money, we may cite the case of a lady author who writes to the *Daily Telegraph* that she sold twenty-one copies of a shilling book, by herself, and was sending the proceeds to the *Daily Telegraph* Shilling Fund. The title of the book sold was given in full, so doubtless the advertisement was well worth the outlay.

The "Agony Column" of the *Times* and other papers offer numerous instances of individual begging—with the War as a pretext. At the rate of at least six shillings per announcement one "officer" advertises for kind friends to assist him in buying a sword, and another one for half the cost of his military outfit—which may be anything between twenty and seventy pounds. The most objectionable begging is that which is going on for soldiers, not merely for luxuries, but apparently for the necessaries of the campaign. If these are really required it is little short of a scandal to the whole of the nation. In any case, it is a most objectionable form of acquiring things that are necessary to the comfort, if not for the health, of our troops. That is clearly the first business of the Government, and if the people were wise they would take care that this duty was not neglected. The scandal of sending soldiers out on such a campaign as the present one, and then trusting to private charity to see that they are properly looked after, is only equalled by offering a soldier's wife as "relief" or charity that which the nation owes her as a debt of honor

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It was a worthy pastor
  Who saw with grief and care
His congregation go to sleep
  Or which was worse—elsewhere.

He pondered long and deeply
  This wise and pious man,
And at last hit on a simple
  And most effectual plan.

Next Sunday, of his sermon
  The text when he had said,
He slid adown the pulpit stairs
  And stood upon his head.

By thousands flocked the people
  That preacher great to hear,
And the trustees raised his salary
  Five hundred pounds per year.

A lady of rank, whose Sunday duties had long been neglected, was moved one day to attend, with her daughters, the morning services at the little chapel of St. James's Palace. Unluckily, there was no room; every seat was filled. "Well, never mind, dears," said my lady to her girls, as they turned away. "Anyhow, we have done the civil thing." She had paid her "call."

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To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £237 16s. 6d. Received since:—J. Paul, 1s.; A. Sheil, 10s.

J. G. BRIGGS.—We do not see how a sharp division can be drawn between physical and mental labor. They make each other fruitful. Physical force without mental force produces nothing—and *vice versa*. There is no unskilled labor; the fact is that some labor is more skilled than other; and, in the long run, the more skill the more value. Of course, we cannot answer questions by disquisitions in this column.

WELSH SUPERSTITIONIST.—Not only ignorance and superstition, but all human failings, go to the making of war. It is possible that in some cases a certain moral good is done, but in such cases there must be great room for improvement. Read our *Shadow of the Sword* if you can.

OLD REPUBLICAN.—We are as Republican as we were in 1869-'70 and '71, but we are not in such a hurry to realise the millennium as we were then. We have been working at ways and means instead of ends during that interval. The world is rather better than worse on the whole, and we see no vanity in hoping that our humble but earnest efforts may have produced a small share in the total good result. We do not expect any recognition from "Artifex" of the *Manchester Guardian*. We need not join in the general cry for justice and generosity to the Belgians; that might have injured *them;* but we were pioneers of toleration when Spanish progressists fled to England from the tortures of Montjuich, etc. Swinburne's *Mater Triumphalis* sent waves of passion surging through our breast when we first read it in our ardent youth, and the passion itself has never changed except in its power and intensity, which, alas! are at the mercy of time and mutability. He who has once thrilled at the glorious cry "My voice is up before the lark with thee" knows the meaning of what the later, more numerous, and more popular apostles of freedom and justice can never understand. "Pioneers! O Pioneers!"

"MARTIAN."—"Civilised warfare" is fighting under a sort of "Queensberry Rules" designed for better things ostensibly, but usually resulting in robbing the underdog of his last chance of a bite, which must clearly depend on accident.

A. R. WILLIAMS.—Thanks for the Voltaire story, but it was published in these columns soon after it appeared in the *English Review*.

W. SPIVEY.—We are obliged for the list of addresses. Specimen copies will be sent as desired. We are always pleased to receive names and addresses for this purpose.

C. CLARKE.—Received. May make use of it later.

W. L. ROWE (Montana, U.S.A.).—Your letter with enclosure received, which has been handed over to our shop-manager.

"EARBY."—The *Bon Sens* of the Curé Meslier is of no commercial value—not more than a couple of shillings, but it is a book that had a great influence in its day.

B. DUPREE.—*Bible Romances* is for the present out of print, but the 6d. edition of the *Bible Handbook* is still in stock. You must press your newsagent to get what you require.

A. STAPLES.—See "Sugar Plums." The incident is a very regrettable one, and we will consider what can be done in the matter. Most probably the N. S. S. Executive might be inclined to deal with the matter.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Cohen lectures to-day (December 13) in the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester. There will doubtless be the usual good audience, and the subject, "The God of Battles and the Prince of Peace," should prove of interest to many others besides Freethinkers. The lecture commences at 6.30.

Mr. Cohen wishes us to state that he is responsible for an error in last week's issue in connection with the Honorarium Fund. Subscribers to this Fund will doubtless have congratulated all concerned on noting last week's total. This was given as £272 6s. 6d. And in such a year as the present there would have been every reason for congratulation. But, alas, things are not as stated. The real total of subscriptions received and acknowledged—and every subscription received is acknowledged—was £236 6s. 6d. There was an error in addition—or by inadvertently writing a wrong figure in the total—of £36. The Fund is still over sixty pounds short of the amount of £300, although most of this will probably be made good before the year closes.

The London Freethinker's Annual Dinner has been fixed for the second Tuesday in January. The place is the same as on the last occasion—Frascati's Restaurant, Oxford-street. There is, however, one alteration in the program rendered necessary by the new early closing order. The dinner this year will commence at 6.30 instead of 7.30. The number of tickets is limited, and early application is advisable for many reasons. Tickets this year will only be sent to those who apply for them, and it will be quite impossible to purchase tickets on the evening of the dinner, as was done on previous occasions. There will be the usual musical program and speeches by representative Freethinkers, concerning which particulars will be announced later.

A lecture on "Nietzsche and the War" will be given by Mr. J. T. Lloyd at the Humanitarian Society's meeting-place, Fife Hall, Kingston-on-Thames, to-day (December 13). Admission, we believe, is free. We hope to hear of a good meeting.

The *English Review* for December contains a lot of interesting matter, but the shadow of the great War is too much over it all, and the writers are all too ready to explain this great catastrophe. It might do some of them good to have it suggested that they may be mistaken. At present the world seems almost to owe an apology to Messrs. Hyndman and Belfort Bax for not heeding the teaching of Socialism, which has collapsed like a house of cards in a gale of wind—as we expected; just as suffragette arson and slaughter disappeared when the real thing came upon the scene. Folly and ill-temper seem, after all, the residual psychology of this unprecedented contest. But there is room for hope yet. Hundreds of German prisoners, the other day, were marching through the principal street in Southend-on-Sea towards their floating prisons at the end of the pier. They presented all sorts of human nature, but rags and misery were the prevailing types. Some of the more hooligan population, at a certain corner, were for greeting the captives with groans and jeers, but they were shamed out of that by the manly protest of one human voice. Here and there an Englishman offered his unfortunate German brother a soothing cigarette, which was accepted with a grateful smile. There is the secret of the world's salvation. Neither keys nor statesmen will do it. We have nothing to trust to but the multiplication of the kind-hearted. At present they are only "the remnant." Not War, but Wisdom drives man towards his Millennium.

"No sword
Of wroth her right arm whirl'd,
But one poor poet's scroll, and with *his* word
She shook the world."

We notice in another column Mr. Bernard Shaw's timely demand that soldiers who do not believe in any of the stock religions of the country shall be treated by the powers that be as though they possessed a conscience. We have received many complaints from both soldiers and sailors in respect to this question, and the general burden of them is that whatever "religious freedom" is promised them on joining, these promises are treated as a mere "scrap of paper," to be torn up when convenient. The latest complaint we have received is from one of our battleships, and is a peculiarly offensive case of bigotry. A sailor who joined the Navy as a boy was duly entered as belonging to the Church of England. With maturity came a change of opinion. Having served his time in the Navy, he became one of the Naval Reserve, and was called up on the outbreak of war. He at once made a request to his captain that the description on his paper should be changed from Church of England to that of Freethinker. "What do you want to change your religion for?" asked the captain. He was told that the man had ceased to believe in Christianity. "What religion do you want to change to?" was the next question. To this the answer was made, "None at all; I am a Freethinker, sir." The reply was, "Not granted," and the man was dismissed. So that in this case an avowed Freethinker will be punished if he does not attend "Divine Service," after having respectfully requested to play the part of a honest man and not that of a hypocrite. We venture to suggest to both the military and naval authorities that this kind of treatment is not calculated to attract the better type of character into either Army or Navy, and still less to imbue the men with any strong faith in the reality of British freedom.

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Autumnal Fires and Festivals.—II.

(*Concluded from p. 774.*)

IT is a noteworthy feature of these semi-religious festivals that, in the various accounts that exist of their quite modern celebration, men as well as lads participated in their grand anniversary. But as these Hallowe'en festivals had always borne a suspicious resemblance to Pagan customs, in addition to the fact that they were frequently the occasion of boisterous and unseemly behavior, the Puritan divines were therefore enabled to set their severe countenances against them with an easy conscience. From being the serious regard of adults of both sexes, who danced and sang round the roaring flames, the fire festivals of All Hallows' Eve declined into the mere amusements of school children, and even in the homes of their most honored observance their one time solemn significance has been practically forgotten. Fortunately, the hand of the antiquary has recorded much of the evidence of their former importance, thus affording invaluable help to the folk-lorist who sifts and weighs the records in question, and which, in the larger light of modern anthropology, enables the evolutionary philosopher to, in some measure, restore the strayed history of the past.

From this standpoint alone it is fortunate that the lighter side of these celebrations has, to some extent, persisted in the fireside pastimes of Hallowe'en. The fires that formerly blazed and shone on the open heath have been replaced by the hearth-fire, around which the house-dwellers, with their invited guests, long continued to assemble to commemorate with chat and pastime the departed splendors of an aforetime seriously important anniversary.

In the district of Buchan, in North-Eastern Scotland, Hallowe'en fires were built to burn the witches. Not only the rustics, but the farmers themselves regarded the bonfires as something essential to their lives. The boys begged at each cottage door for a peat to burn the witches. In many districts the lads collected straw, furze, and other inflammable materials, which they made into a mound, to be afterwards set ablaze. Each lad in turn lay as near the burning mass as he conveniently could without being singed by the flames, while the others rushed through the smoke, and leaped over their recumbent companion. When the fire was exhausted, they scattered the ashes in every direction, and it was a point of honor to see who could scatter most. With reference to the Scottish celebrations, Dr. Frazer quotes an old writer to the following effect: "The Hallow-even-fire, another relict of Druidism, was kindled at Buchan. Various magic ceremonies were then celebrated to counteract the influence of witches and demons, and to prognosticate to the young their success or disappointment in the matrimonial lottery." As late as the middle of the nineteenth century, the Braemar Highlanders carried flaming torches round their fields at Hallowe'en to promote their fertility in the coming year.

Superstition naturally flourishes longest in remote districts, and in the Scottish Highlands the faith in divination was very firmly entrenched in the minds of the people. Even now the fancy is deeply fixed in the average Celtic Scot. This figment of the imagination was by no means confined to the natives of Northern Britain; it was equally in evidence in the Lowland counties. Regarding the beliefs immortalised in Burns' poem, "Hallowe'en," Dr. Frazer suggests that his Lowland countrymen may have imbibed these beliefs, not from their Saxon ancestors, but from the customs of the Celts, who were subdued by the Teutonic settlers in Scotland. On the other hand, it seems equally feasible that these superstitions—at least in their fundamental forms—were once the common property of the entire Aryan race.

In both the Highlands and Lowlands of Scotland the youth of both sexes assembled on the Eve of All Hallows to indulge in pastimes, which were thinly disguised forms of Pagan divination. The wedded bliss, the wretched or joyous bachelorhood, the perpetual spinsterhood, and the riches or poverty of the couples mingling in the games, were then decided. Another curious Hallowe'en custom was to steal unobserved into a neighbor's kailyard, and with closed eyes to pick up the first kailstock the hand encountered. Unless the cabbages were purloined without the knowledge or consent of their proprietor, they were worthless for divining purposes. It was also essential that the owner of the stolen cabbages, whether man or woman, should be unmarried. When the above conditions were complied with, the pilfered kail was carried home and inspected, and from its weight, form, and features, were to be inferred the length, breadth, and beauty of the future spouse.

> "The taste of the *custock*, that is, the heart of the stem, was an infallible indication of his or her temper; a clod of earth adhering to the root signified, in proportion to its size, the amount of property which he or she should bring to the common stock. Then the kailstock, or *runt*, as it was called in Ayrshire, was placed over the lintel of the door; and the baptismal name of the young man or woman who first entered the door after the kail was in position would be the baptismal name of the husband or wife." *

Girls also scattered hemp or lint seed in the fields, crying aloud that the seed was sown, and that he who was destined to wed her must come and harrow it. Then the maiden would glance over her left shoulder and dimly distinguish the figure of her future lord in the gloom.

Many other quaint Scottish customs prevailed at this period, such as those of the winnowing-basket, the thrown shoe, the wet shirt, and the clue of blue yarn. All of these modes of divining the coming misery or bliss of the parties concerned were conducted in the open air. Several others were confined to the house, before the grateful glow of the fire. At Hallowe'en certain marks on the white of eggs placed in a goblet of clear water enabled the performer of this rite to completely answer the awkward question which Mrs. Harris put in vain to Mrs. Gamp. There was also a widespread Celtic belief that babes born at Hallowe'en were endowed with the wonderful power of perceiving and conversing with supernatural beings. The fireside customs included the simmering nuts, the milk and the meal, and the salt herring among others, all of which were designed to reveal what lay pregnant in the womb of the impending year. Robert Burns refers to these gatherings where he writes:—

> "Some merry, friendly country folks
> Together did convene,
> To burn their nits, and pou their stocks
> An haud their Hallowe'en."

The Hallowe'en fires were very popular in North Wales less than a century ago. The bonfire was kindled on the most commanding site in the neighborhood of the dwelling, and when the blaze had died down, all present flung a stone into the embers. Each stone was marked for subsequent identification. This ceremony completed, the people prayed round the ashes, and then retired to bed. As soon as they arose next morning they collected the stones, and should any one have disappeared, the person who had thrown it was certain to shuffle off this mortal coil before Hallowe'en came round again. A writer of a hundred years ago informs us that the

> "Autumnal fire is still kindled in North Wales, being on the eve of the first day of November, and is attended by many ceremonies; such as running through the fire and smoke, each casting a stone into the fire, and all running off at the conclusion to escape from the black short-tailed sow; catching up an apple suspended by a string with the mouth alone, and the same by an apple in a tub of water; each throwing a nut into the fire, and those that burn bright betoken prosperity to the owners through the following year, but those that burn black and crackle denote misfortune. On the following morning the stones were searched for in the fire, and if any be missing, they betide ill to those who threw them in."

Dr. Frazer notes that Sir John Rhys held that the

* *Balder the Beautiful*, vol. i., p. 285.

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Hallowe'en fire festivals probably linger even now in Wales, and that old people were recently to be found, and may be living still, who remember the practice in vogue in their youth of waiting until the flames had burnt themselves out, when a sudden rush would be made, everyone shouting "The cropped black sow seize the hindmost!" This assuredly appears like a humanised modification of an original sacrifice of one of the celebrants. It is also significant that in Carnarvonshire the name of "the cutty black sow" is sometimes utilised as an easy expedient for scaring children.

The Welsh Hallowe'en divining customs so closely resemble those of Scotland that there can be little doubt of their common origin. The ladder of yarn employed by Welsh girls to divine the coming spouse was a mere variant of the Scottish "clue of blue yarn." Another mystical Welsh ceremony consisted in arranging three basins on the table. Clean water was poured into one, dirty water into another, while the third remained empty. The maidens usually, and occasionally the boys as well, then proceeded to ascertain their fate. Their eyes were bandaged, they were guided to the table, where they groped their hands towards one of the bowls. "If they happened to dip into the clean water, they would marry maidens or bachelors; if into the dirty water, they would be widowers or widows; if into the empty bowl, they would live unmarried."

In an eighteenth century account of the Hallowe'en ceremonies of Ireland, variants of the Welsh and Scottish customs may be seen. Brave preparations were made for the annual feast, which bore a striking resemblance to the Christmas celebrations as they existed down to Pickwickian days. It was the great season for foretelling the future, and for divining the identity of one's destined partner. The similarity of the picture presented by the writer, General Vallencey, to that drawn by Burns in his poem, points to a close kinship between the Irish customs and those of the Ayrshire peasants.

In County Leitrim and in Queen's County the Irish girls ascertained the nature of their future husbands with the help of cabbages, just as in Scotland. The boys silently gathered ten green ivy leaves, one of which they rejected and set the remaining nine under their pillows, so as to dream of their own true loves at Hallowe'en. A further form of divination was to place a nut and a ring in a cake, which was baked and eaten. The lucky one whose slice contained the ring would be first wed. The finder of the nut would mate with a widow or widower, but if the nut proved to be a mere shell, the lad or lass would die unwed.

> "In County Roscommon, which borders on County Leitrim, a cake is made in nearly every house at Hallowe'en, and a ring, a coin, a sloe, and a chip of wood are put into it. Whoever gets the coin will be rich; whoever gets the ring will be married first; whoever gets the chip of wood, which stands for a coffin, will die first; and whoever gets the sloe will live longest, because the fairies blight the sloes on the hedges on Hallowe'en, so that the sloe in the cake will be the last of the year."

In Celtic Manxland the celebrations of this season were kept up on a lavish scale till comparatively recent days. The Hallowe'en fires were kindled and the observances designed to disarm danger from witches, imps, and fairies were religiously commemorated. The Manx youths traversed the Isle at night, and at each house-door they chanted a rhyme which means "This is Hollantide Eve," Hollantide being a Manx modification of the Old English *All hallowen tide*. A medley of vegetables and fish, skilfully mixed with butter, was the customary dish for this occasion in the Isle of Man. Here, again, divination is in evidence. The mistress of the house "fills a thimbleful of salt for each member of the family and each guest; the contents of the thimblefuls are emptied out in as many neat little piles on a plate, and left there overnight. Next morning the piles are examined, and if any of them has fallen down, he or she whom it represents will die within the year." Relics of a fast fading period are these quaint superstitions, but how instructive concerning the toilsome ascent of the human race through the terrors of a dark religious past!

T. F. PALMER.

"The Great Liberator."

A GLANCE at the number of memoirs and biographies in publisher's lists, leads one to agree with Carlyle that this class of literature must have an inordinate interest for mankind. In 1900 the bibliography of Abraham Lincoln ran into 135 pages, and showed some 800 titles of books and pamphlets, to say nothing of thousands of magazine articles, sermons, panegyrics, etc. The latest edition is a "Life," by Rose Strunsky, recently issued by Methuen. We are told nothing new by Miss Strunsky, indeed she admits that, since the monumental work, in ten volumes, by Nicolay and Hay (the secretaries of Lincoln) was issued, nothing has been added to Lincoln biography. Yet her biography has this advantage, that we get the salient points of "the great liberator's" career. The stories of the old log cabin, the backwoods, and similar episodes are all interesting in their way, but they are of small import to the world at large. These incidents in his life are no different to those of thousands of others. Lincoln's place in American history is that of "the great liberator," and this Lincoln is all that really counts. Miss Strunsky apparently realises this, although she does not say as much.

Temperament influences mental as well as physical life, and Miss Strunsky does well to devote so many pages to this factor. Lincoln was a temperamental *libertaire*, and every phase of thought that was agreeable to his temperament, stimulated and quickened the organs of volition and action. Thus Lincoln, in his antipathy towards religion and Christianity, must necessarily be taken into account by any serious biographer, since it was meat and drink to him, temperamentally.

Notwithstanding that Nicolay and Hay, together with Lamon (who stand for Lincoln as Moncure Conway does for Paine) have given us, not "gospel truth," but "documented truth," of Lincoln's heterodoxy, pious biographers still continue to claim him as a religionist, if not a Christian. Indeed, since America teems nowadays with Lincoln museums, societies, fellowships, etc., nothing short of an annual reprint by Congress of Remburg's *Abraham Lincoln—Was he a Christian?* will stop the halo of religion which Christian America is artfully weaving around the head of Lincoln. Walt Whitman once took these parsons severely to task for their impudence and arrogance in claiming all and sundry, even to "seizing the keys of the bedroom and closet," as he said. If he had lived to see the way the clerics are "staking their claims" for Lincoln, one can imagine him saying: "Damn it, they've even pushed their way to the tomb."

The new "Life" of Lincoln by Miss Strunsky is fortunately not of the class referred to. This lady speaks frankly of his heterodoxy, and endeavors to show that, like his political philosophy, it was bound up causally with his temperament. Freethinkers cannot too often emphasise the *credi* of their "captains," as Whitman would say, and therefore I venture to quote Miss Strunsky's words regarding Lincoln's religion:—

> "Fatalistic, he had no personal God. Herndon says he never used the name of Jesus or Christ. He had no creed. In his later speeches the word God entered, and in his second Inaugural we find, 'If it be the purpose of the Almighty,' but it is evident that he used the phrase in the classic conception of Fate. It is interesting that the suggestion to use the name of God in his State papers came from Chase, which Lincoln accepted.....His ardor made him religious in the sense that he bowed humbly before the great events of life which he could not control, yet he had no vision of a cosmic order. He was brought up among the sceptics

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and disbelievers of the pioneers. In his youth he read Volney and Paine. At twenty-six he wrote a small work on infidelity which unfortunately was burned by a zealous friend. As late as 1854 he made Herndon erase the name of God, which he wrote in a speech. In his race for Congress in 1847 he was accused by his opponents of being an Atheist, a charge he never denied. 'He would die first,' he said to Herndon.' "

That is an honest and straightforward statement, with no hedging; and if any parson has an anniversary sermon for Lincoln next February or April, perhaps he will "mark, learn, and inwardly digest" this passage before he closets himself within his study to write it, unless he buys his weekly wail by the yard from the usual vendors.

There is, however, one point in Miss Strunsky's book that must be challenged, and that is the Gettysburg speech. Lincoln's most reliable biographers have pointed out that many of his speeches and papers have been "Bowdlerised" to suit the Philistines, and notably this famous speech. In one portion of this there is a well-known interpolation, which surely must have been patent to the knowledge of Miss Strunsky. Here is the passage as she quotes it:—

> "This nation, *under God*, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

The words that I have italicised are an acknowledged interpolation, and since Miss Strunsky considers the speech "one of the basic documents of American history," surely some sort of comment should have been made. Not that it was unlikely for Lincoln to have used such phrases, as we have seen. Indeed, we know that he once confessed to Wendell Phillips that he had to do all sorts of "soft soaping" to please the religionists, for he wanted to save the Republic, and religious strife added to the political would have been fatal. Yet in this particular case Lincoln did not use the pious phylactery.

But I suppose the true Gettysburg speech (*sans* "under God") is beyond the hope of repair in America. It is learnt, nowadays, by heart by every child at school, and the "under God" is accepted as "sure" as the truthful Washington story, which has also been authoritatively denied. However, concerning the latter, that a lie was never known to pass the lips of George Washington, I have been assured by a friend, that the story is true after all, since the Americans talk through the nose.

H. GEORGE FARMER.

Christian Apologetics.

THE REV. Z. B. WOFFENDALE (No. 3).

IN commenting on the Rev. Woffendale's third proof of the Resurrection—"There is the honest testimony, thirdly, of the Apostles, who were also eye and ear and hand witness to his Calvary wounds and risen bodily condition"—I had remarked, after naming all the apostles, "Where are we to look for the *honest* testimony of these? Where are we to look for *any* testimony of these twelve men? As a matter of fact, we have *no* testimony that can truthfully be affirmed to be that of the apostles." In reply to these statements Mr. Woffendale, in his own journal, said:—

> "Well, if Abracadabra is really so ill-instructed as not to know, we must perforce enlighten him. James begins his Epistle by declaring in clearest words that he was 'a bond-servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ,' and ends by attributing to Christ a still living, divine, and superhuman power in regard to healing the sick: 'The Lord shall raise him up.' This is undoubtedly the language of an apostle, and it is a decided testimony to the risen Jesus."
>
> "Next, Peter, in his first Epistle.....begins by saying that he is 'an apostle of Jesus Christ,' and he blesses 'the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,' who 'begat us again into a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.' Here, then, we have, in addition to James, Peter's testimony.....Again, surrounded by the Apostles, and speaking in their midst, and as their mouthpiece on the day of Pentecost, Peter stood up and testified publicly to the multitude in Jerusalem that 'Jesus of Nazareth.....whom lawless men did crucify and slay; whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death.....*whereof we are all witnesses.*' In the face of such clear, emphatic, and public testimony from Peter, speaking in the name of 'All' the apostles, we ask once more, What are we and our readers to think of the knowledge and fairness of an adversary who asks, 'Where are we to look for *any* testimony of these twelve men?' By this time even our Agnostic readers must begin to realise the meretricious value of the mental furniture of Abracadabra," etc.

My reply (here much abbreviated) to the foregoing was as follows.

First, as to the Epistle of James. Here, it will be seen, the rev. gentleman first assumes that the writer of the Epistle was an apostle; and, next, that "the Lord" who would heal the sick was Jesus. Now, the writer, throughout the Epistle, speaks of the Hebrew deity as "God," "the Lord," and "the Lord of Sabaoth" (i. 5, 7; v. 4, 10; etc.). It was not Jesus who was to raise up the sick, but the god Yahweh.....Moreover, the writer of the Epistle nowhere says that he was a witness of the resurrection of Jesus. Every word he has uttered might have been written by one who was merely a believer in that event. Again, the fact that the authenticity of the Epistle of James was questioned by the early Church, though it afterwards secured a place in the Canon, is entirely against its apostolic authorship.

Next, respecting the Epistle ascribed to Peter, Mr. Woffendale makes the same assumptions he does to that attributed to James. The writer, he asserts, was the apostle Peter; mention is made of "the resurrection of Christ from the dead": therefore, he concludes, we have the testimony of Peter to the reality of the Resurrection. By this way of looking at evidence, any Christian believer who speaks of the alleged resurrection of Jesus Christ as an actual fact is a witness to that event. Yet, for anything the rev. gentleman knows to the contrary, the Epistle was not written by Peter at all, nor even in apostolic times. If this be the case, where are we to look for the "honest testimony" of that apostle? Oh, says Mr. Woffendale, you will find it in "the Acts," where "surrounded by the apostles.....Peter stood up and testified publicly" to the reality of the resurrection of his Master. And not only have we the "testimony" of Peter, but we have that of "All" the apostles; for they did not contradict Peter, or, if they did, Luke has discreetly omitted to record it. The rev. gentleman appears unable to see that in this story we have neither the testimony of Peter nor that of any other apostle. At the very most, we could only have the testimony of the writer, Luke. But we have not even that; for Luke does not say he was present on the occasion. All he does is to give a place to the incident in his book. We cannot even ask him whether he took the story from some apocryphal writing, such as the "Acts of Peter," or whether he fabricated it himself. We *do* know, however, that the long speeches placed in the mouths of Stephen, Paul, *and Peter* in "the Acts" were composed for the different occasions by Luke himself. This fact has been fully proved by sound criticism. And such being the case, where is the "honest testimony" of Peter and that of "All" the other apostles to the resurrection of Jesus Christ? Echo answers, Where?

Returning to the Epistle of Peter, I select from it the following passages:—

> "Christ also hath once suffered for sins.....being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in *the spirit, in which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison*.....For unto this end *was the gospel preached* also *to them that are dead*, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit" (1 Pet. iii. 19; iv. 6).

These passages prove the Epistle to be post-apostolic. The words quoted are not those of an apostle who relates an event of which he had been an eye-

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witness; they are the utterances of a credulous Christian teacher of a later age, who was acquainted with, and fully believed, the story contained in the apocryphal "Gospel of Nicodemus." According to this story, Jesus Christ, during the time his body lay in the tomb, descended in the spirit into Hades, the abode of the spirits of the dead, and there preached to the spirits of ancient Biblical men, including Adam and other antediluvian patriarchs, and David, Jeremiah, and others of a later age. There cannot be the slightest doubt as to the fact that the writer of the Epistle of Peter referred to this story; nor can it be doubted that he was as ignorant and credulous as another alleged apostle—the writer of the "Epistle of Jude"—who believed and quoted from the lying book of Enoch.

The Rev. Woffendale ought to have had some knowledge of his subject before he presumed to speak upon it. He should also have stated that "Christian antiquity" does not date earlier than the end of the second century. But the most amusing feature of this discussion is that the rev. gentleman appears to have really believed that his flimsy arguments, based upon unwarrantable assumptions and an absurd and irrational idea of evidence, have effectively disposed of my "baseless, shallow, and untrustworthy" contentions. In his third reply he boasted that "the Philistine giant of Agnosticism has been met in fair combat, and thoroughly defeated. .....He may wince and try to wriggle off the point of the spear upon which we have impaled his arguments; but he will find that all his contortions will be in vain."

This reverend gentleman, as will be seen, excels in the game of Brag and Bluster, like many of the outdoor speakers connected with the so-called Christian Evidence Society—which Society, having never had any "Christian evidence" to offer, and not even knowing what constitutes evidence, spends most of its time in heaping abuse upon the heads of those whom it calls "Infidels."

ABRACADABRA.

"The Cosmic Roots of Love."

BY REV. HENRY M. SIMMONS.

(Published by the World Peace Foundation, Boston, U.S.A.)

ONE of the latest papers published by John Fiske is his Phi Beta Kappa address on the ethical aim in Nature. It is entitled "The Cosmic Roots of Love and Self-Sacrifice." It seems, however, to leave these roots quite short of cosmic. It locates them in the prolonged infancy and close motherhood of mammalian life. But, surely, they reach lower than that. The hen is no mammal, and her infants walk the first hour; yet she shows so much "love and self-sacrifice" that even Jesus took her to illustrate his own. Poets back to Euripides have praised the devotion of birds for their young. Nor is it limited to their young, but we read of them dying of grief for mates; and Darwin tells of pelicans and crows, old and blind, but faithfully fed and cared for by their companions. Here seems a foregleam of the benevolence that builds our hospitals for the aged and infirm. Even the parental devotion in every bird's nest shows the growth of love already begun.

Below birds it has begun, and Romanes says "parental affection" is found among reptiles and fish. Back in the old Jurassic swamps and Devonian seas there was some virtue. Even below vertebrates, in the insect world, there was something like it. Bees sacrifice themselves for their community, dying for their hive as patriots for their country, or attacking another as devotedly as Christian armies sack Chinese towns.

So the ant is praised by even the Bible as an example for men; and not only "sluggards," but most citizens, might "consider her ways" and be wiser. Professor Everett said, "In the ant-hill there is a civilisation very like our own,"—and in some respects it seems better. An ant community may contain more members than there are men in Louisville; yet Lubbock says they never quarrel, but are all "laboring with the utmost harmony for the common good." They may have no moral sense, but they do their duty better than many a man who boasts of his. They may have little sympathy; but Lubbock says there are "good Samaritans among them," helping wounded sisters with something like "humane feelings," while all show extreme devotion to the larval infants that are not even their own. When we think further of their vast numbers—more in a square mile than there are men in America—all and ever busy in work which Spencer calls "almost wholly altruistic," we see that "the roots of self-sacrifice" not only reach far below mammals, but pervade a vast world of social insects.

Lower still this social and altruistic principle may be traced down the animal scale, to the very sponge, which is a genuine society, made of many individuals united in service of each other and their community. Such societies may have no ethical or even conscious life, but they already proclaim the ethical principle of mutual service for the common good. They show the "roots" we are searching—only roots, indeed, and with no hint of the rich fruit to come, but already started in life so low that it used to be thought vegetable.

Even in vegetable life they have started. The plant, too, is a sort of society, with varied members united in mutual service and sacrifice. Leaves give their lives for the tree, like good families for the State. The flower is a family, botanists say, with even the wedding of sexes and parental sacrifice for the offspring. The flower may not be conscious of its virtues—and we often wish that some human families were, in this respect, more like it. But in it the ethical principle is on the way to consciousness.

It is on the way far below the flower. Down among the moulds and microscopic algæ we see two cells of different sexes, giving themselves to each other and their offspring with something of the same principle and process seen in the bird's nest and the human home. To such unions even so unfanciful a scientist as Haeckel ascribed the origin of love, tracing its source back to what he called "the elective affinity of two differing cells." Even so orthodox a writer as Drummond, using the same term as Mr. Fiske, and somewhat before him, spoke of their "self-sacrifice," and said, "Love is not a late arrival," but "its roots began to grow with the first cell that budded on this earth." So do they reach to the lowest foundations of life.

Do they not reach even back of life to the inorganic world? The same principle of union and co-operation is found in everything there. In every rock and crystal of the mountains and drop of the sea, molecules have united in systems; and each molecule in turn is called a marriage of atoms. Not only Haeckel's "affinity of differing cells," but all chemical affinity, is at least prophetic of that which unites us in societies and families.

(To be continued.)

Her organ was pumped by a self-willed old sexton, who had his own ideas as to how long an organ voluntary should last, and would shut off the wind when he thought there had been enough. One Sunday the organist thought she would forestall any such accident by writing an appeal in the early part of the service, and giving it to the sexton. The old man received the note, and supposed it was for the minister. In spite of her frantic beckonings, he went straight to the pulpit with the note, and the astonished preacher read this message: "Oblige me this morning by blowing away till I give you the signal to stop."

A little girl going to church with her mother one Sunday saw some men working on the street-car tracks. "See those men breaking the Sabbath," said her mother, thinking to suggest a moral lesson. The little girl watched them gravely. Then she looked up into her mother's face and said, "And God can't mend it."

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LEICESTER (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, C. Cohen, "The God of Battles and the Prince of Peace."

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—J. H. NEWMAN.

Christmas.

MITHRA, we are mythologically informed, was born on December 25, and it is well known that Mithra was a sun-god, whose birth synchronises with the sun's passing the winter solstice. Dionysus and Adonis, though Vegetation Deities, were also born on December 25, as was, likewise, the Egyptian Horus, which proves that these were also sun-gods. The birthday of Jesus Christ, however, lacked a fixed date for many years. By some it was observed in May, by others in January, simply because the actual date was entirely unknown. Ultimately, December 25 was chosen, with the object of plagiarising and of Christianising the Roman Saturnalia. When Jesus was born no one knows, and there is no possibility of making any discovery on the point; but it is an undeniable fact that the worship of Mithra was exceedingly widespread in the Roman Empire in the first half of the second century, from which cult the Christian propagandists did not hesitate to borrow in the most bare-faced fashion. It is a highly significant fact, to say the least, that the birthday of Jesus happened to be identical with that of so many Pagan divinities. This is a question Christian apologists generally ignore, on the ground that the date of the Savior of the world's birth is quite immaterial, the only vital point being that he entered the world through a supernatural door. As Sir William Robertson Nicoll puts it, in the *British Weekly* for December 10, the all important fact is that the Son of God, "for our sakes, deigned and consented to be born" in the manner related in the Gospels, or as the hymn that will be sung in all churches and chapels in our land next Friday informs us, the message of Christmas is this:—

> "Hark! the herald angels sing
> Glory to the new born King;
> Peace on earth and mercy mild,
> God and sinners reconciled.
> Joyful, all ye nations rise,
> Join the triumph of the skies;
> With the Angelic host proclaim,
> 'Christ is born in Bethlehem.'"

Sir William goes a step further, and states that "he who, for our sakes, deigned and consented to be born, for our sakes also deigned and consented to die." He came into the world by a supernatural birth, and he left the world by a supernatural death. Sir William continues: "He was crucified, dead, and buried. The third day he rose again. He ascended up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God, from thenceforth expecting till his enemies shall be made his footstool."

Such, according to the theologians, is the message of Christmas to mankind, but it is a wholly lying message. The promise of "peace on earth and mercy mild" has been completely falsified by the event. We are amazed at the temerity which enables Sir William to ignore the facts and say of Jesus:—

> "He is on the throne to-day, caring for that world which brought him down to die. We have not only his Gospel but his Presence. His Gospel is the Gospel of the Divine Self-Sacrifice and the Divine Passion. The Christian Gospel of sacrifice rests on history, and is a manifestation of the eternal purpose which was fulfilled in the Incarnation."

Does Sir William really and honestly believe that a Being charged with omnipotent love is caring for the world and desiring its salvation? Can he with open eyes and ears conscientiously declare that the Prince of Peace is on the throne to-day, reigning supreme over the countries which are waging this fiendish war upon one another? Does he not rather perceive that the glorious Gospel of the blessed God exists only in his own brain, and has no effect whatever, except a deleterious one, upon mankind? We challenge him to prove that any eternal purpose whatever was fulfilled in the so-called Incarnation.

Sir William is a noted advocate of the reality of sin. A few years ago he could not find words strong enough to condemn Mr. R. J. Campbell because he thought and spoke so very lightly about sin, which, in the reverend knight's opinion, is the secret of the world's degradation and misery. Well, it apparently does not occur to Sir William that, in thus speaking about Jesus, he is flagrantly discrediting the Gospel of which he is an ordained minister. Many a time has he assured us that Jesus lived and died on purpose to save the world from sin, to destroy the works of the Devil, and to cleanse the earth from all iniquity; but if what he says about the prevalence of sin and the works of the Devil is true at the present time, it follows that Christ's mission remains unfulfilled, and that the Cross of Calvary is nothing but an empty name. We maintain, on the contrary, that sin is an invention of the fancy, or, as Nietzsche calls it, "the most perilous and fatal masterpiece of religious interpretation." It is true that if this view of sin were generally adopted "it would make Christianity superfluous and the world contented"; and what a priceless boon that would be. The evils from which the world is suffering are not sins against God, but symptoms of human imperfection, or so many indications that the evolution of social life has not yet reached the desired goal. Nothing is easier than to pour contempt upon the heads of men like Renan, and nothing more difficult to Christians than to be just to them. It is true that Renan was temperamentally light-hearted and joyous, and that in this sense he had a "volatile intellect" but to charge him with having a "shallow heart" is to wickedly misrepresent him. No one can scrupulously read his letters to his sister and accuse him of shallow-heartedness.

Sir William's remedy for the evils of the world is a remedy that has signally failed in all ages and countries alike. The evils are still as rampant as ever after nineteen centuries of the quack specific. "A preacher of the last generation wisely said that religions had to be tested in the street," and we hold that Christianity has been tested in the street and found egregiously wanting. Sir William dwells pathetically upon the case of a fallen woman upon whom shame and misery, want and the fear of want, remorse and despair, have done their work. Of course, the majority of prostitutes enjoy their life, and know nothing of remorse and despair; but if and when one of them is the victim of lugubrious thoughts and guilty fears, the only thing that can

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really help her is, not the love of Christ, but human sympathy, the kind, cheery word out of a heart suffused with fellow-feeling. If the advent of Christ had ever taken place there would have been no fallen women and fallen men to-day; Christ would long ago have made their existence a literal impossibility. The persistence of evil is a positive proof that the Christian Gospel is a gigantic sham.

Sir William points to "the cultured gentleman whom education and civilisation have somehow failed to cure of selfish and cruel lust." We beg to point to the Christian gentleman whom the grace of God and the love of Christ have somehow failed to cure of selfish and cruel lust. What do we find to-day? The Christians of Germany looking down upon and denouncing the Christians of Great Britain with unmitigated contempt, and the latter Christians returning the compliment with compound interest. Again and again has Sir William Robertson Nicoll been guilty of this great fault. Indeed, the whole of the article under consideration is an implied bitter attack upon German Christianity. We distrust all forms of the Christian religion; but we utterly fail to see that the British brand is any improvement upon the German.

Sir William avers that "Christianity is not defeated because there has emerged in history the visible work of Satan"; but, surely, common sense declares that if Christ came into the world to destroy the works of the Devil, and the works of the Devil are in strong evidence everywhere to-day, it follows that Christ has conspicuously failed and Christianity been openly defeated. "What have we to set against all this?" asks the reverend knight, and answers, "Nothing but the Christmas message." But the Christmas message has been constantly proclaimed for nigh two thousand years, and yet the works of the Devil are as much to the fore as ever. It is all very well to assert that "God in Christ has taken the field against the principalities and powers of evil, and that he must prevail"; but men of God have been saying that from the beginning at Jerusalem and Antioch; and yet it is safe to say that the principalities and powers of evil have never been mightier than they are at this moment. Is it thus that God in Christ prevails? Surely, Sir William must see that he is talking sheer nonsense. His Christian faith seems to deprive him of the capacity to see things as they are.

"Christmas in Time of War" is the title of Sir William's article, and this is what he says:—

> "The descent of the Eternal into the world of Time was a special Divine interposition. Shall we not say the same about this War? If we could not, our hearts would fail us. The reign of Christ and his ultimate triumph are no vain figments, but profound and consoling truths. We do not believe that this World-War is to be explained by the action of natural laws and forces.....Above Nature is the Personal Will of God. He allows men to go on till they begin to think that he is silent and heedless, and then he suddenly arises from his throne and brings them to the consciousness of his rule.....The God of judgment, who is also the God of salvation, had to send us this fiery trial that we might be purified. We say it reverently, but it seems as if God had no other way of calling men to the remembrance of his law, his Gospel, his judgment, and his mercy."

How easy it is to speak in the name of a being concerning whom absolutely no knowledge is obtainable. It is Sir William's total ignorance of God that enables him to be so dogmatic as to what he does or does not do. Christmas is a farce, the message of Christmas a lie, and the Christian Gospel a contradiction in terms. Fancy believers going up and down the world this coming Christmas Day, singing "Glory to the new-born King, peace on earth and mercy mild," while the children of God are brutally murdering one another in thousands almost daily in their Father's holy name. The Churches may keep such a god and welcome; we will have none of him.

J. T. LLOYD.

Sir Oliver Lodge and Immortality.

A GREAT deal of attention has been paid by the press to a recently reported utterance of Sir Oliver Lodge as to the reality of a future life. That in itself contains a moral. For Sir Oliver said nothing that scores, nay thousands, of others have not said before him. He affirmed the reality of a future life, he declared that he possessed proof of its reality, that he had actual evidence that it was a fact. Now, there was certainly nothing unusual in this. There has always been "clouds of witnesses," who have said these things, and some have believed them, while others doubted or smiled—or smiled *and* doubted. The significance of the pronouncement lay wholly in the position of the man who made it. Sir Oliver Lodge is a prominent man of science, and the importance attached to what he said did not lie in the fact that he produced evidence. He did not. It was entirely due to the fact that it was a very unusual thing for a scientific man to say. And the moral of the fuss made is the admission that the general run of scientific men lean very strongly in quite the opposite direction. Sir Oliver stands alone, or has, at most, a mere handful of scientific men with him. The vast majority, as he himself admits, are very strongly opposed to him. His pronouncement cannot, in any way, be called a scientific pronouncement; it is a mere expression of belief from a man of science, whom other men of scientific attainments ask vainly to produce reliable evidence.

The address, in the course of which Sir Oliver affirmed that a future life was "scientifically proved," was delivered in Browning Hall, Walworth, on November 22, and a verbatim report of it appears in the *Christian Commonwealth* for December 9. Now, after reading that address, I beg to say, and with a full sense of the value of every word said, that it is not an address such as one has a right to expect from a man of science. It is not a scientific address at all. It does not follow scientific lines; it does not subscribe to scientific rules of guidance. It offers no evidence; it does not tell one how or where the evidence may be obtained; it is a mere tissue of statements, led up to by a dwelling upon the indisputable fact that, in spite of our knowledge, we know very little of the universe in which we are living. It is really what one may call a tendency lecture—that is, the whole purpose of five-sixths of the lecture is to get the hearers to agree with the concluding sixth part, on behalf of which no evidence is given, and which has no organic connection with what has gone before.

What are the rules of scientific procedure, and what are the characteristics of scientific evidence? All scientific procedure is from the known to the unknown. It does not, as Sir Oliver reminds us at great length, deny the existence of the unknown, but it insists that the only way to explain or to understand the unknown is in terms of the unknown. We must proceed from what we know to what we do not know, verifying each step of our progress. In this way we affiliate each advance made to the knowledge we already possess, and so make the whole perfectly coherent, so far as it goes. In the next place, there is nothing occult about scientific knowledge. There is no esoteric side with which only certain gifted adepts are acquainted. There is no necessary appeal to faith or to our confidence in the teacher's honesty.

Mark, I say this is not *necessary*, although we may place a great deal of faith in our teacher's honesty. Still, that is not essential, because the conditions of a scientific demonstration is that the proofs are patent to all normally conditioned minds, and anyone who cares to give the necessary time and labor may verify the result for himself. The genuine scientific teacher is not telling you about something which has occurred to him, and an account of which is backed up by some society's report. He is telling you how each one may pass through exactly the same experience as himself, and under identical conditions. It does not matter, for example, whether a

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teacher of chemistry or physics, is a confirmed liar or a notorious swindler. His facts and deductions are quite apart from his character. The personal equation is, in a scientific statement, reduced to an absolute minimum.

Now let us see how far this address of Sir Oliver Lodge complies with these conditions. A very large part of his address is taken up with an elaborate emphasis of the ignorance of mankind. This may be, at times, a very useful lesson, but it adds nothing to Sir Oliver's case—except against those hypothetical and almost inconceivable individuals who believe that they already know everything. But it is strange Sir Oliver Lodge does not recognise that he is really more open to the charge of pseudo-omniscience, that is, the disbeliever in a future life. For, ultimately, his position amounts to this: certain things have happened to me, and, so far as I can see, the only way to explain them is that communications have taken place between myself and certain "dead" friends. The sceptic replies: "I do not, or at least I need not, deny the reality of your experiences. I may accept them as either objective or subjective happenings. But I hesitate to accept your explanation. It may be that some other explanation is possible. And wider knowledge, a more complete acquaintance with all the phenomena described by you may render your animistic explanation quite unnecessary. At any rate, there is a difference between my not being able to explain your experience in terms of known forces, and accepting your explanation as being the only one possible."

Now, surely, under such conditions it is coming very near the ridiculous to turn round on the sceptic and lecture *him* on the folly of pretending to know everything, and telling *him* that he really understands but little of the universe. That is precisely part of his case against Sir Oliver Lodge. He does not claim that he understands all that is to be understood about natural phenomena. And he warns the believer in a future life against being rash enough to encourage in himself any such delusion. It is the sceptic who is setting the believer an example of intellectual caution and modesty.

There are people who believe, says Sir Oliver Lodge, man's existence

> "is very ephemeral; that there is nobody to look after him, nobody that understands the universe better than he does; that he understands all about it, that he could have made it, if he had been called in, and that he represents the highest product of evolution—as, in fact, he is the highest product of terrestial evolution at the present time—and that, therefore, nothing higher can exist."

Now, I am not aware of anyone who believes that he could have made the universe if he had been asked—although many have suggested improvements—nor do I know of anyone who claims to know all about it. If Sir Oliver's departed friends have no more solid existence than these suppositious sceptics, they are hardly worth bothering about. Nor is a sceptic called upon to deny the bare possibiilty of there being in existence—on some other world—forms of life higher than the human form that graces, or disgraces, this planet. Like most religious pleaders, there is very often little connection between Sir Oliver's premises and his conclusions. Of this, the following passage—offered as a comment on that already cited—is an illustration:—

> "We know that there are other worlds, and that there may be beings on them. And are these all the beings that exist? Is it to be supposed that every intelligence in the universe must be like us, have bodies like us, made of matter? There is no such limitation likely; certainly there is no such limitation proved.....If you are making assertions of that kind you are stepping outside the scientific world and dogmatising in a negative direction."

Now, granting all this to be true, one may well wonder as to its connection with the belief in a future life—except so far as it is calculated to numb one's critical faculties and prepare one for the reception of what is to follow. It is like an anæsthetic that precedes an operation. Sir Oliver asks us to admit the possibility that on other planets there are forms of intelligent life—although he asks us also to grant the quite inconceivable proposition that they are without bodies. But, at any rate, this is not what he is trying to prove; and an admission of the likelihood of intelligent beings existing on other planets will not help him in the slightest degree. What he is trying to prove, what he asks us to believe, is that our intelligence—the personality of John Smith or Tom Brown—will exist after death. To say that there may exist somewhere in the universe non-terrestrial intelligent beings has not the remotest connection with the question of personal survival. They may exist, and if so they may be born and develop and die as we are born and develop and die. And if we think about them at all, we are bound to think of them as being like the forms of life we know—at least in their essential constitution. Sir Oliver says, very dogmatically, "I tell you that there are higher intelligences to which we are as the ants." Very well; but it is not a question of there being higher intelligences in existence, but whether these higher intelligences are born and die, and above all whether *my* intelligence persists. To tell me that there are in existence beings as much higher than me as I am higher than the ant seems a presumption against immortality—unless it is claimed for the ant.

Sir Oliver proceeds with another dose of the anæsthetic:—

> "What does science show? It shows a magnificence of law and order in world upon world. The revelation of the skies is typical of a grandeur of existence that we might easily have missed. It is very instructive to remember that if the atmosphere had happened to be opaque—or, rather, had been permanently a little more opaque than at present—we should have known nothing of any other worlds. Fortunately, we have seen something of the infinitude of creation. I will not dwell upon the astronomical facts; they are overwhelming when you try to realise them. Your conceptions are benumbed when you try to penetrate into the infinitude of space and realise that there is no end, and that worlds upon worlds without limit to infinity is apparently the actual truth of things; and all governed by law, all regulated by the same laws that we know here."

Please note that in the very act of administering the anæsthetic Sir Oliver Lodge introduces a piece of counsel that should act as a restorative. All this wonderful display of "worlds upon worlds," etc., etc., are "all governed by law, all regulated by the same laws that we know here. The same physics and chemistry are found in the most distant stars."

Really, I might almost stop at this point, and, like a counsel before a judge, say, "M' lud, that is my case." Everywhere we find the same laws expressed—in the most distant star as in the nearest planet, on the earth as on the earth's sister globes. And surely in that case it is safe to say that what holds true of the chemistry and physics of other planets will also hold good for any forms of life that may exist thereon. They may be of a different color or size to those on earth; they may be more or less intelligent than human beings; but they will be "all regulated by the same laws that we know here." Therefore, the question of immortality may be—indeed, must be—decided by a study of life as we know it around us. And all this talk of other worlds and other intelligence is wide of the mark; it has nothing to do with the question at issue. It merely dazzles the uncritical and satisfies the unthinking, and so prepares them for a quite irrelevant and illogical conclusion.

C. COHEN.

(To be concluded.)

Christian Apologetics.

DEAN FARRAR.

A SMALL, but somewhat pretentious book, entitled *The Witness of History to Christ*, from the pen of the late Dean Farrar, furnishes an excellent illustration

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of the spirit in which apologetic works were written two or three decades ago. In this book one would naturally expect to find, from the title, matter relating to early Pagan and Jewish evidences; but not a scrap of anything of this nature is given. The title is misleading; Dr. Farrar brings forward no historical witnesses to the historicity of Jesus Christ—nothing, in fact, but the Gospels themselves. These anonymous writings are simply assumed to be history. In dealing with the Gospel miracles in this volume, our great apologist says (p. 15):—

> "The central doctrine of Christianity is based upon a miracle, and in no small realm of literature the impossibility of miracles is calmly insisted upon as a discovery which needs no demonstration.....Nay, unshaken amid the storm of contemptuous assertion, *we reply* that it requires *a loftier height of intelligence* to believe in miracles than to reject them, because it involves the realisation of *loftier than mere material verities*, and the recognition of *wider than purely physical laws*."

It is quite true, as our reverend apologist states, that in many quarters "the impossibility of miracles is calmly insisted upon." Renan, for instance, says:—

> "It is an absolute rule of criticism to give no place in historical documents to miraculous circumstances. .....Facts of that kind can never be verified. All the pretended miracles that we can study closely resolve themselves either into illusions or impostures," etc.

Rational statements like the foregoing are what our rev. apologist calls "contemptuous assertion." That such statements, though unquestionably true, should be powerless to shake his orthodox convictions may not, perhaps, be very surprising; but that "it requires *a loftier height of intelligence* to believe in miracles than to reject them" is a statement which is not in harmony with fact.

In the age in which the Gospels were written, all Christians—both Jews and Gentiles, including the Gospel writers—believed, not only that miracles were possible, but that they were of daily occurrence, and could be wrought by Satanic agency and magical arts as well as by the power of God. They further believed that epilepsy, rheumatism, insanity, and other afflictions were caused by invisible demons who had taken up their abode in some of the cavities of the human body, and that when these "evil spirits" were ejected the disease or afflictions departed. These beliefs, as everyone knows, were due simply to the ignorance and superstition prevalent in that age. Yet, if we credit the very confident assertion of Dean Farrar, the Christians of the apostolic age possessed "a loftier height of intelligence" in believing in the working of miracles than does any of our present-day scientists in rejecting them. Our orthodox Dean, moreover, ranks himself amongst those who are possessed of this "loftier height of intelligence," by the possession of which he is able to believe, with Tertullian, that an alleged miraculous occurrence must be true "because it is manifestly impossible." It is, no doubt, his "loftier height of intelligence" which impels this apologist to speak of laws "wider than purely physical laws," and to make fatuitous suppositions. There *may*, of course, be anything one chooses to imagine; there *may* be a race of two-headed men living in the moon, or that satellite may be composed of toasted cheese. No one can deny—at least, in theory—what is beyond our means of verifying; and it is for the latter reason that Christian apologists talk of "higher laws" which may suspend the action of the ordinary or natural laws. If these individuals be asked for an instance of the operation of the "higher laws," or to point to some fact that may tend to support their absurd contention, all they can do is to refer to stories of miracles recorded in the Christian Scriptures, which stories were written by ignorant and credulous men in pre-scientific times.

Our clerical apologist knows, of course, that what is called a "law" is merely a record of what has been invariably found to happen under certain conditions, and which consequently may under the same conditions be expected to happen again. This being the case, the idea of "higher laws," or laws "wider than purely physical laws," which can suspend the action of the ordinary laws, is pure nonsense. Experience has shown, for instance, that a stone, or any solid body, if thrown up in the air, invariably comes down again. The fact that it has always been found to do so is called a "law," and this has been known to be the case ages before science discovered the cause. The upward course of the stone continues only until the impetus with which it was thrown is exhausted or overcome by the attraction of the earth; it then inevitably descends. It is thus simply impossible for any solid body or material substance to get away from the earth. Bearing this fact in mind, we know without descending to argument that the stories of Elijah and Jesus Christ ascending beyond the clouds are fables (see 2 Kings ii. 11; Luke xxiv. 31; Acts i. 9). Hence, the absurd contention of a "higher law"—one unknown to scientists—which would enable the before-mentioned personages to leave the earth, will be seen to be a mark, not of "a loftier height of intelligence," but of scarcely any intelligence at all.

Further on (p. 37), our great apologist endeavors to draw an argument in favor of miracles from the fact that science has not discovered the cause of all known phenomena. He says:—

> "It is the nature of things to gravitate towards the centre of the earth, and yet a balloon of vast weight, and containing many persons, will rise majestically and rapidly to the clouds.....To a savage *the result might well appear to be miraculous*, nor would it be easy to make him understand that the balloon rises in virtue of the very same law which makes the pebble fall. May it not be so with the acts of God?"

Here I must remark, in the first place, that our scientists are not in the position of the savage in the foregoing illustration. If they do not know everything, they have at least discovered sufficient facts to prove Dean Farrar's suggestion of "higher laws," which suspend the action of natural laws, supremely ridiculous. The balloon is but another example of the invariability of the laws that govern the universe. If a savage, beholding the ascent of a balloon, believed that the law of gravitation had been suspended by some higher law "wider than purely physical laws," he would be mistaken. Nothing is known of any such "higher laws." Dean Farrar himself does not know; he simply makes foolish suggestions. If the "acts of God" are dependent upon laws "wider than purely physical laws," then no miracles were ever performed at all.

With regard to the alleged resurrection of Jesus Christ, our reverend apologist says (p. 40):—

> "You pronounce it impossible that, after the rigor of death and the flaccidity of corruption, the veins should flush once more into healthy life; how is it more possible that, in the womb of her that is with child, should begin the systole and the diastole of the beating heart, and the unapproachable individuality of the living soul? The event is in no respect greater, it is only different."

With regard to the last statement it would be useless to offer an opinion. The question is, not which of the events named may appear the greater, but which is in accordance with the known laws of nature. It is certainly a most wondrous fact that seed, whether animal or vegetable, should reproduce its own kind, but this being known to be one of nature's laws, no surprise is felt at the occurrence of such events. When, however, a person who has been medically examined and found to be dead is three days later declared to have been restored to life, the case is different. The latter alleged event is not in accordance with the operations of nature; neither in the present day, nor at any past time, has such an event been known to have taken place. Hence, before seriously considering a case of this kind, we naturally ask upon what evidence the alleged restoration to life is founded. And, with regard to Jesus Christ, the answer is in every instance the same. We have no evidence whatever; no one ever witnessed the event, and the originators of the seven conflicting stories of his resurrection and of his appearance to his disciples are unknown. This applies to every case of alleged restoration to life recorded in the Old or the New Testament.

ABRACADABRA.

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"The Cosmic Roots of Love."—II.

BY REV. HENRY M. SIMMONS.
(Published by the World Peace Foundation, Boston, U.S.A.)

(*Continued from p. 797.*)

IS not the earth itself member of a society which is something like a family? Even the most prosaic astronomers call the planets a "sisterhood," which have all sprung from the solar mass as a common mother, and have in turn given birth to a score of satellite daughters. All these worlds form a family; and, though they have separated so far, they are still held together by a sort of family affection, which is none the less real because named gravitation. Under its rule, each daughter world not only bends her onward impulse into a filial orbit around her mother, but turns from her course to greet every passing sister planet. Even the wayward comet's sons come back from their wide wanderings to be welcomed and warmed again at the family hearth.

A foolish fancy, of course, but yet a fact! The very gravitation which unites the solar system is another of these mutual attractions which we have been tracing. Nor is it limited to our own, but is seen in many a system of double or triple stars moving about each other or around their common centre. It not only moves worlds, but gathered and globed them to begin with, astronomers say; and in the spiral streaks of many a nebula we seem to see the movement starting, and matter slowly drawing together to shine in new suns and systems.

So does this attraction and union, in one phase or another, pervade the universe—a cosmic principle. It is ever attended by the opposite one of separation, but is the more creative of the two. It blesses everywhere, from the gathering and warming of worlds in systems up to the gathering of animals in societies and of men in families warm with sympathy and love. In it, rather than in the mere prolongation of infancy, would I see the "cosmic roots of love"—reaching back of mammals and of all motherhood, back of Haeckel's cells and oldest suns, running through the wreaths of the nebula, threading every atom, thrilling through the infinite ether, already alive in that mysterious gravitation which, like the spirit of God in the Biblical story, first moved on the face of the abyss, and said, "Let there be light."

I fancy there may yet come some poet-philosopher who will commence his ethical study, not with scripture, not even with human souls or lowest cells or solar systems, but, back of them all, with the first movement of matter toward union. He will read in the lines of the gathering nebula a heavenly scripture already revealing the law of love, and in every star a text in prophecy of Christ. He will simply trace this cosmic principle of *union* through its advancing phases in creation.

It is ever opposed by repulsion, separation, strife; but is ever harmonising the strife. Just as, in gravitation, it gathered diffuse matter into globes, and the separating globes in systems, so on our globe, in the finer chemical affinities, it combined atoms in molecules, and these in compounds ever more complex. In condensation and cohesion it brought liquids and solids. In crystallisation it built the myriad shapes of beauty in the rocks. In more marvellous vital organisation it combined compounds in cells, and these again in the countless forms of life.

Among these individual forms came that cruel competition and strife which pessimists make so much of, and which has indeed given to nature a tragic aspect. But in melioration of the strife our principle took a *social* form, uniting individuals in societies of mutual help, which pessimists forget. This social principle has everywhere prevailed, not only in the vast insect world, but in animals of all sorts, from buffaloes on the plain to beavers in the pond, bringing swarms, schools, flocks, herds, and myriads of minor co-operations, like those told in Kropotkin's book. He holds that, even "as a factor of evolution," the fraternal principle of mutual aid has been much more important than "mutual strife," and has thus largely redeemed Nature from the common charge of cruelty.

Most of these animal societies seem to be merely utilitarian, with little real sympathy. But this comes with the higher union of the *family*. The family begins low, as we saw, and its affection is long and feeble. Even conjugal love is at first fleeting. Among some insects the bride does not hesitate to slay her husband when the nuptials are over. Maternal love may be no stronger. Even among vertebrates, eggs and infants are widely left to perish, as they may well be when there are so many of them. When the progeny of a single herring would soon fill the ocean solid, maternal care would hardly be a virtue. But, with higher organisation and fewer offspring, that care increases. In birds it becomes proverbial; and the mother, if not loving her neighbor as herself, at least loves her infants as herself, and so seems almost to have begun to be a Christian. Her love is very limited, however, and lasts only a month, after which, her moral law is suspended till another season.

But the mammalian structure carries that union further — unites mother and infant much more closely and longer. At length the delicate human body and brain so prolong the helpless infancy that the union has to last for years, and thus becomes a habit to last through life. The family becomes permanent, and its affection fixed. Its permanence also extends the union—holds together parents and children and children's children in a widening circle of kinsmen. So we reach one of those clans, gens, or little tribes, in which society seems everywhere to have started. This cosmic principle of union, working from atoms upward, has at length unfolded its higher meaning, and brought, not merely a utilitarian society of animals, but a human brotherhood inspired with sympathy.

This little *tribe* often shows that brotherhood perfect between its own members, however cruel to others. Boyle says that even the Dyaks, so famed for ferocity and murders, were yet, among themselves, "humane to a degree that might well shame" us. Some refuse to believe this of savages, especially of heathen. But why? Why think affection impossible among barbarians, when it abounds among birds? Why think self-sacrifice impossible among the heathen, when it is the law of every ant-hill? Why think Pagans cannot keep the Ten Commandments, when the mere moon keeps every one of them, except that of the Sabbath? Kindness comes by nature, and even by necessity, for the tribe cannot hold together without it. It is still confined to the tribe, however, and perhaps is fiercely hostile to outsiders, only the narrow harmony of a hornet's nest.

But our principle works on through history to extend the harmony. It unites little tribes in larger, and these in larger still, until a *nation* is formed. The nation keeps new peace within, and cultivates the juster ideals seen in ancient literature. Plato wrote, "May I, being of sound mind, do to others as I would that they should do to me"; and already the sentiment was familiar from Athens to the end of Asia. This brotherhood, however, was only national. Even the comparatively humane Greeks did not try to be so to foreigners; and Plato, in giving the Golden Rule, did not mean for a moment that it was to be practised toward barbarians.

But the principle worked on, joining nations in larger union and extending the *humanity*. In the West this extension came through the Roman rule, uniting peoples from the British Isles to the Euphrates, and giving to ethics a cosmopolitan tone. In the century before Christ, Cicero and the Stoics preached universal brotherhood; Varro, in giving the Golden Rule, no longer left it local, but said it should embrace all the nations of mankind. In the time of the Apostles, the Pagan, Lucan, predicted that the world would soon cast aside its weapons, and all nations learn to love. In practice, too, there

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was for two centuries, in the *Pax Romana*, such a world-peace as earth never saw before or since. The Romans, however, were not the people to perfect that union. They had brought it through vast wars, and still kept class divisions and cruel wrongs that made the Stoics' precepts seem a mockery.

But now came from the nation of *Israel* a movement to further that brotherhood, and, still more important, to identify it at last with religion. That nation itself well illustrates this law of ethical growth. It had started, according to the Biblical story, in one of those primitive families, with not even the domestic virtues yet fully established. Jacob robs his twin brother and deceives his dying father, and is incited to this by his mother; and his sons, the fathers of the tribes of Israel, seek to slay their best brother and finally sell him into slavery. These tribes, too, though fairly united within, had fought each other, and had well-nigh exterminated Benjamin. But they had at length united in a nation, reached a larger justice, and learned the Decalogue. The justice, however, had been only national. Even eminent saints in Israel denied the Decalogue in dealing with other peoples. They burned town after town even in the name of the Lord, and "utterly destroyed all that breathed." Of course, we need not believe it was really so bad as this; and the Bible often shows these annihilated towns and tribes reappearing right afterward, active as ever. But the stories show no less the low ideals of the authors, in both morals and religion. These ideals, however, continued to rise, until the great prophets of the eighth century B.C. not only plead passionately for brotherhood within the nation, but even predicted the union of nations, when swords should be beaten into ploughshares and the world should learn war no more.

But, most important of all, this brotherhood was made the essence of *religion*. It was taught that the Lord cared little for their ceremonies and prayers, wanted no more blood of animals or men, but only that they should "do justly and love mercy." This teaching, though of course unheeded, continued among the best Jews. Rabbi Hillel, in giving the Golden Rule, called it "the substance of the law"; and Jesus called it both "the law and the prophets." Jesus' Beatitudes are only ethical, and do not hint that religion is anything more. They give the highest blessings to those who "hunger and thirst after righteousness," to "the meek" and "the merciful"; and, if God is mentioned, it is "the pure in heart" who shall see him, the "peace-makers" who shall be called his "sons." It is the simple religion of righteousness and brotherhood. Jesus seems to have cared for little else. He preached "mercy and not sacrifice." He ordered men to leave the altar until they were reconciled to others. This reconciliation was itself the best prayer: "for if ye forgive others, your heavenly Father will forgive you," and he will not otherwise. Forgiveness was the true religion, and must be repeated "seventy times seven" times. This was also taught among his disciples, one of whom wrote that, "if we love one another, God dwelleth in us," for "God is love." Love was itself God and the only way to find him. Saint Jerome tells how John, when an old man, kept repeating "Love one another"; and how, when asked why he said no more, he replied that no more was needed. So did early Christianity promise to perfect the union which the Roman empire had brought.

But the promise failed. Between barbarians without and corruption within, that uniting empire went to pieces. Even before it fell, Christianity fell worse—fell from its high ideals of harmony to things that divided. It separated into sects quarreling over theological questions. It opposed the social sentiments with ascetic practices, and sought sanctity by fasts and bodily penance rather than by brotherhood. Many a holy hermit abandoned his own children to save his soul, and a nun was said to have been sent to Purgatory for loving her mother too much. Formal observances were again exalted until they seemed holier than innocence itself. Baptism, which Paul once thanked God he had practised so little, came to be thought more important than purity; and ceremonies to atone for a crime seemed more meritorious than not to commit it. Such opinions prevailed for centuries, and Jesus' religion of love was so buried that his professing followers sometimes sought to serve him by slaying each other.

Yet, all this time, the tendency to union was also active, and was aided much by Christianity. Whatever the quarrels of the Church, it still taught brotherhood. Amid all the divisions of the falling empire and of the feudal system, the Christian name and organisation kept alive the feeling of unity. Even then Crusades helped to unite Europe, and the wars which followed them were partly redeemed by gathering conquered peoples into great nations again.

But the union has been furthered more by the *secular* forces that revived with the Renaissance. The arts undermined intolerance. Learning linked men of even different religions and races in a common cause and sympathy. Advancing science softened bigotry, and the Agnostic spirit began to show the folly of quarreling over questions about which neither side knew anything. Increasing commerce joined the nations ever more closely, and economics slowly learned that the interests of each were the interests of all.

(*To be concluded.*)

Acid Drops.

As we are nearing Christmas some of the papers are reviving a story of the Franco-Prussian War which may or may not be true. It is said that on Christmas Eve a French soldier stepped out from the trenches, in full view of the enemy, and sang a Christmas carol. The Germans ceased their firing, and both sides maintained a truce while the song lasted. Then the singer stepped back and the firing recommenced. The story is being retold because in some unexplained way it is supposed to support the power of Christian faith. *How* it does this it is difficult to understand. It did not put an end to the fighting, it did not make the Christians on either side less ready to kill each other, and it did not affect the issue in the slightest degree. It is just as likely that had the soldier stepped forward and sang a secular song, the enemy might have refrained from shooting. To our mind the story illustrates the impotence rather than the power of Christianity. The common religious belief of French and German could not prevent that or other wars. It could not prevent those wars being pursued to the bitter end. It could only add the fanaticism of religious feeling to feed the already powerful malignancies of national hatred.

The value of the talk about this War ending all war may be seen in what is taking place in America. It is probable that the United States has less cause than any other nation in the world to fear an invasion, or an attack from other great Powers. Yet the Navy Department, having but just placed orders for three new battleships, which are to be the largest in the world, has decided to ask Congress to authorise two more, as well as six destroyers, eight or more submarines, and other odds and ends. It is proposed to spend £29,000,000 during the coming year. The aim is to have the strongest navy in the world, and there is to be a corresponding increase in the army. It looks as though the present War will only break down Prussian militarism to establish universal militarism. For no nation is likely to possess a powerful navy or a large army without others following suit, and at least one of them is bound to be the cause of trouble sooner or later.

We have a cheap press; but what about a free press? Last week four Irish papers were suppressed by the military authorities, and others were threatened for using plain language concerning the European crisis. The *Times* calls the papers concerned, "rags," but the question of free speech is bound up with such action, and all the *Times* can do is to call names.

Mr. A. G. Gardiner, editor of the *Daily News*, says, "It does not pay to go against the popular tide." That is the testimony of the editor of a mild Liberal paper, which has a large circulation. What would he have said had he edited a paper such as the *Freethinker*, which has championed

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unpopular ideas for thirty-three years in the teeth of a tempest beside which the still waters of Liberalism are but a mill-pond.

Christians resemble the heathen Chinee on occasion. The Southend Education Committee recently had to deal with the question of the opening of a recreation ground on Sundays. The donor had expressed his wish that it should be open; and so they passed a resolution that the place should be opened from 4 p.m. till sunset, which, at this time of the year, means but a few minutes. Maybe, they hope, tremblingly, that Providence is too busy with the War to notice that recreation ground.

"Should Christians ever go to War?" is still being discussed in the religious papers. They ought to begin with the preliminary question, "Have Christians ever ceased to go to War?" In all the Christian centuries there has never been a single generation, during which Christians have not been fighting with each other. The soldier has never been worshiped as the Christian nations have worshiped him, and it was left for Christians to turn the chief energies of civilisation into military channels. And Christians have been so impressed with the importance of the military life, that it has entered into their hymns, and figures largely in their symbology. Religious leaders, like the late General Booth, understood that the most powerful mode of appeal to a Christian public was by way of military terms and a military organisation. And even the teaching that war is a biological necessity and makes for the health of States —of which teaching Bernhardi is quite wrongly made the parent—could only have gained ground among a people that have been brought up to reverence the military ideal.

The impossible Waldron, Vicar of Brixton, of course joins in the discussion, and adorns it with his usual puerilities and absurdities. He concludes that Christians ought to go to war when it is a just war—as if *any* nation ever engaged in an unjust war. Each one claims that justice is on its side, just as each side is claiming the support of God in the present War. He also discovers that the War is bridging the gap between the rich and the poor—we shall see how effectively when the War is over. He also illustrates the power of Christianity by pointing out that "the trenches have accomplished more for Christian humanitarianism than all our social legislation." What a confession for a Christian minister to make! Fancy admitting that even war, with all its brutality and suffering and destruction, is yet more powerful to encourage humanitarianism than are Christian influences during times of peace! Anyone would expect that people would see in this a proof of the impotence of Christianity. Mr. Waldron sees in it a proof of the power of the Christian faith.

What a fine thing religion is for inducing feelings of kindliness and brotherhood! Rev. A. C. Dixon, of the Metropolitan Tabernacle, was invited to join in the City Temple Intercession prayers, which are carried on daily. But Dr. Dixon would have none of it. He could not bring himself to pray in the same building with men who had denied the supernatural birth of Christ, and he informed Mr. Campbell that if he would confess his sin before God, that would do more to help the Allies than a lifetime of daily prayer. This is wholly delightful from every point of view. Here is Dr. Dixon believing that God will decline to help the Allies because he is offended with Mr. Campbell, and then we have Mr. Campbell dilating on the love that religion breeds with Dr. Dixon's letter before him. Really, it seems almost plain enough for a blind man to see that religion is the one thing that never does serve to induce brotherly feelings. People will sink their differences on any other subject, when occasion demands, but they will continue venomous on religion right up to the end.

Whilst the Bishop of Chelmsford was at Bethnal Green, daily prayer was resorted to in order to obtain money for the restoration of the church. Two ladies responded with sums of £18,000 and £3,000 respectively. Next time we hear of the poverty of Bethnal Green we shall remember those two "sisters in the Lord."

The Bishop of Chelmsford says "the churches of the country are not full." Thank you, my lord! An unsolicited testimonial to the *Freethinker*.

The clergy do not give much away. They buried Lord Roberts in St. Paul's Cathedral, and now they are "booming" the late Field-Marshal as the example of a great soldier "who had family prayers for fifty-five years." It may catch the fancy of spinsters who work beaded slippers for curates; but even schoolboys know that Napoleon and Frederic the Great did not waste much time in prayers—family or otherwise.

The Canadian Government has appointed January 3 to be a day of prayer "for the speedy ending of the War." This does not mean, necessarily, that "Our Lady of the Snows" has "cold feet."

The *Daily Telegraph* refers to the "day of public prayer already fixed for France by her bishops." This is not altogether inaccurate, but it is misleading. There is no day of public prayer fixed for France. Only the Government could do that, and the Government has nothing to do with religion. It is the bishops who have asked all their followers to pray on a given date. These may be all over France, but they are not France. The day of prayer is a purely private religious venture.

"It is true to say that the German Kaiser is fighting a community of saints," writes a Roman Catholic Army Chaplain in the *Daily Mail*; "General absolutions to regiments, or very large bodies of men, have been the order of the day." Heigho! If the hundreds of thousands of Catholics in the German and Austrian regiments have also received absolution, "saints" are fighting "saints."

The Gospel Temperance movement has been at work for a great many years, and, in spite of the alleged support of "Omnipotence," has achieved little success. The military regulations, and compulsorily limiting the hours of selling drink, has had a marked effect in reducing drunkenness. Secularism is always better than Supernaturalism.

A striking cartoon appeared in the New York *Evening Sun*, depicting the figure of Faith pointing to a battlefield strewn with corpses, and bearing the ironic question, "Why?" It would puzzle the clergy of the Christian world to answer that simple query.

The Comedie Francais and the Opera Comique in Paris gave their first performances since the beginning of the War on Sunday afternoon. The religion of the Man of Sorrows is alleviated by gaiety in the country of Moliere and Voltaire.

Owing to the number of the dead being excessive after a recent battle, the Army Chaplains arranged for a Jewish Rabbi, a Catholic priest, and a Government religion minister, to conduct the funeral services. Priority was given to the Rabbi on account of his age—and it was due, as his religion bore the same relation to the others that butter does to margarine.

Owing to mechanism being employed to produce wind for church-organs, the organ-blowers find themselves less in demand than formerly. They may find consolation in the parson's bellows.

The Young Men's Christian Association has succeeded so well with its hut-building that it proposes to erect more huts and reading-rooms in France. Let us hope, prayerfully, that Roman Catholic regiments, who have received "absolution," will not be the tenants.

"Who Owns the Air? British Government Recognises no Sovereignty." These are two headlines in an English Tory newspaper. It is comforting to think that the ownership is in dispute, otherwise we should all be charged two shillings per 1,000 feet for air to breathe.

The Pope is endeavoring to bring about a truce in the European War during the Christmas season, but there is little hope of its succeeding. Poor Papa! He is the only Christian of any consequence who sticks to his colors.

At Acton recently a woman said she had not seen a half-crown during the thirteen years she had been married. She was nearly as poor as the founder of the Christian religion, who was sold for thirty shillings.

"Germany must win, God cannot desert his children," said a Teutonic professor. Commenting on this, the *Daily Mirror* says, "If they fail, Gott will have to undergo the same criticism as the Prussian generals; for what is he but

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a Prussian general glorified, this tribal demon of theirs, this dreary Gott of their insolence." The *Daily Mirror* does not write in this strain in the piping times of peace.

In Sunday's *Weekly Dispatch* a third of the front page was devoted to the momentous war-news that the Kaiser's hair was turning white. Perhaps some self-denying Christian will send the Emperor a bottle of hair-dye.

"Baronet in the Dock" is a headline in the newspapers. This should not cause much sensation in a country where most people believe that "God" was once in the same position.

Christian veracity is not a conspicuous virtue, but orthodox editors not only leave truth at the bottom of her well, but put the lid on and padlock it. In a recent issue, the *Daily Mail* referred to the German Kaiser as "the coolest Rationalist." The German Emperor is not "cool," and he is not a "Rationalist." Otherwise, the statement is correct.

The Bishop of Manchester has authorised a prayer for "the humble beasts" for use in his diocese. This anxiety for the welfare of animals is somewhat belated, for the Christian world generally agrees with St. Paul's contemptuous remark, "Does God care for oxen?" And the bullock bellows dolefully over the balmy meads.

We rather like the way one of the religious weeklies winds up the notice of a new book, published at 10s. 6d. It describes the headings to the chapters, and then adds, "These finally leave to God." There you are! A kind of Cook's tour to Deity; and all for half-a-guinea. Why, many a man has spent a fortune over the business, and then failed.

In the course of a protest against British military aviators flying over Switzerland, the Swiss Government has put in something like a claim for the sovereignty of the air. Against this Great Britain has quite properly, and quite naturally, protested. If not exactly a British possession, Christians in this country have always looked upon Heaven as coming within the British sphere of influence, and to have passed over the Swiss claim without protest would have been to forgo one of our dearest traditions.

An American paper says that we ought to give the Turk some credit. He hasn't announced that Allah is on his side.

Now that the word "culture" is so much in evidence, many will be glad of a definition. Here is one supplied by Rev. Dr. Jowett. True culture, he says, "is the reverent and diligent co-operation of the will of man with the holy will of God." Bravo! Now all we want to know is, What is the will of God? and then we shall at least have a definition that is intelligible—even if we do not agree with carrying out the will of God. But at present Germans, British, Turks, and Russians are engaged in killing each other to carry out the will of God, so the definition does not really help us very considerably. Perhaps it would be better to leave such a doubtful quantity as the "will of God" out of consideration altogether.

The military and local authorities between them are preparing work for the doctors at Southend-on-Sea. Servant girls and soldiers parade freely in the evening, and the lights are turned out or down soon after daylight. This is considered a very pious arrangement, especially as the public-houses are closed at eight-thirty. Medical men are not flourishing now, but they expect to be busy in due course.

A rather curious article—curious, that is, because of its author—appears in the *Daily Chronicle* of December 10 from the pen of Mr. Eden Phillpotts. The subject of the article is "English and German Ideals of God." With the greater part of the article we find ourselves in agreement, but the conclusion is strangely ambiguous and undecided. Mr. Phillpotts says that the English and German ideals cannot both be of God, because they contradict each other. We do not see that this is conclusive. A man's god is, after all, no more than a cluster of ideas, to which he gives the name of God (we hardly think that Mr. Phillpotts believes in an actual objective deity), and to say that these ideas clash is to say no more than that they are discordant. The question of which is true, or which has the larger measure of truth, must be decided on some other principle than that of an appeal to God. There are all sorts of gods in the world, and, consequently, all sorts of notions as to what they really desire.

There is one clear point scored by Mr. Phillpotts. All the neutral nations believe in God, and yet "No King, no President has allowed enthusiasm for humanity to open his mouth and record a whisper of protest from any nation in the enjoyment of peace. They know that moral influence is as powerful as the sword, but abstain from exerting it, since at present to state their opinion of Louvain or Rheims, or the massacre at Ardenne would be an unfriendly act. The neutral ruler sells his soul for his country's peace, and in the name of politics. As politics are constituted, that is often the sudden sacrifice they demand, and few be they who will make it." This is indeed an aspect of the case that deserves stressing. If war is to be conducted even within the rules that "civilisation" protests against their infraction, to be effective, must come from neutrals. It is useless one of the belligerents protesting. And yet, in spite of the undoubted crimes committed during the present war, not one of the neutral, and Christian countries, has had the moral courage to raise a voice against their continuance. That is one test of the value of their Christian training.

But we do not think that Mr. Phillpotts is on equally strong ground when he argues that the truth about the world's belief in God will emerge from this war. Whichever side triumphs, the religious on both sides will see the "will of God" declared, either to chasten or to reward. Of course, the logical conclusion from this belief would be, as Mr. Phillpotts says, that all would accept the issue and be content. But logic does not rule in such matters, and the outcome cannot fail to be more ill-will than existed before the War. Hatred for defeat on the one side, and an unjustifiable sense of superiority, springing from conquest, are emphatically not the conditions that lead to goodwill, to fellowship, to co-operation, and so to genuine progress. These can only be secured by nations—as is the case with individuals—meeting on a basis of common humanity. And war very seldom helps in this direction. Most generally it means an interruption of the civilising forces already at work. And the only part played by the belief in God is to provide a semi-ethical excuse for passions that without religion would most likely be recognised in their true nature.

At a recent meeting of "Our Dumb Friends' League," a society for the promotion of kindness to animals, a mongrel in the vicinity disturbed the serenity of the proceedings by prolonged howling.

Over 300,000 copies of Princess Mary's Gift Book have been sold in a week. The Bible Society, which publishes the book of "The King of Kings," will be almost green with envy.

Mr. Arthur Machin says "we have languished now for many years under the intellectual rule of the Twopenny Antichrists." It is appropriate that such a sentiment should be published in the halfpenny *Evening News*.

"The Reformation of St. Katherine" is a paragraph heading in the daily press. We do not know the lady, but a number of the saints were "nuts" in their earlier days.

A report on "The Care of Ancient Churches" has been issued by the Archbishops Committee. We advise them to have it translated into German, and to have copies sent to the Teutonic generals, most of whom would appreciate the gift.

"What is the Western civilisation, after all?" asks Mr. Uchimura, a well-known Japanese educationalist. And he answers:—

> "War, war—war upon the slightest pretext—that is their cry and inborn propensity. To say that their civilisation is based upon the Gospel of Peace is the grossest falsehood. The present conflagration of Europe is the veriest evidence, written with hell-fire upon the face of the sky, that theirs is a sham civilisation, beautiful upon the surface, but within dead vacuity. Like thunderstorm on a summer afternoon, the two poles of human wrath come to earth to spend itself, to leave the sky clear for the better and more beautiful thing."

Neither the Japanese nor the Chinese welcomed Christianity *before* the War. They will now be able to point to a striking object-lesson of its utter worthlessness as a civilising factor. Meanwhile the missionary societies, who seem quite dead to the realities of the situation, are appealing for funds to carry the Christian Gospel from the lands of the Allies to China and Japan.

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To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £238 7s. 6d. Received since:—A. D. (Glasgow), 10s.; E. A. H., 5s.; R Bell, 5s.; F. E. W. Hicks, 10s.

F. GATENSILL.—You would find little but disappointment during the War. Glad you and your friends esteem the *Freethinker* so highly. We should say that Jack London, the novelist, is undoubtedly a Freethinker.

A. P. (Glasgow).—There is no objection, so far as we can see, to every Provincial Branch of the N. S. S. having its own Annual Dinner, nor to the Scotch Branches following. But so far as the Society's Annual Dinner is concerned, that must be held somewhere, and London—if only because the Society's headquarters are there—seems the fittest place. You must try and induce your fellow-Freethinkers in Glasgow to arrange an Annual Dinner if you think it would exert a "brightening influence" on the Branch. You have our best wishes in the matter.

G. LOCKWOOD.—Not quite up to the standard, but we are in agreement with your sentiments, and that is a matter of much greater importance.

R. BELL.—We agree with you as to its being almost impossible to drive sense into some people's heads. But the fact of our contributors dealing with certain well-known clergymen does not in the least imply that they hope to "convert" these gentlemen, or that they have an extravagant opinion of their importance. Still, they are well known in the religious world, they are so far representative, and serve to add point to an argument.

G. BRADFIELD.—There seems to be a bit of a misunderstanding. Mr. Foote's view of the German Emperor does not differ materially from your own, or from that of the views expressed in the paragraph of which you approve. We note your appreciation of the *Freethinker* articles.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

The Annual General Members' Meeting of the Secular Society, Ltd., will be held at the Society's registered address, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, London, E.C., on Tuesday evening, at 7 o'clock. Members are earnestly requested to attend, by person or proxy. Proxy forms, which should be sent with the Report and Balance Sheet from the Office, should be filled in and returned to the Secretary at least two clear days before the date of meeting. It should be noted that the stamp, duly obliterated according to the proxy form, is indispensable; so, also, is the witness's signature. Probably most proxies will be made out in favor of Mr. Foote or (in his absence) Mr. Cohen. There are important reasons why this should not be neglected on the present occasion. Any member who fails to receive his (or her) Report, Balance Sheet, and Proxy Form, at least by December 18, should apply for it without further delay, and also see that the receipt for current subscription is duly received.

Mr. Foote cannot yet resume his story of "The Secular Charter." He has been made one of the chief witnesses in the Bowman Will Case, and he finds it impossible to state many things in a public newspaper that he has, or may have, to give evidence of by affidavit in a Court of Justice. Some of his readers will remember a certain Contempt of Court included in a certain libel action, in which the Christian enemy sought to strike him down by means of that law, of which he barely realised the existence—*then*. Had the judge's place at that time been occupied by a bigot, it would have been an easy new way of punishing Mr. Foote as editor of the *Freethinker*. It was known that the prosecution counted on £100 fine and a fortnight's fresh experience of the royal hospitality.

Tickets for the London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner are now on sale, price 4s. each, and can be had on application to Miss Vance, the Society's General Secretary. Only tickets that are applied for will be sent, and, as the number is limited, it is advisable to apply early. The President, Mr. G. W. Foote, will be in the chair, and will be "supported" by Mr. Cohen, Mr. Lloyd, Mr. A. B. Moss, Miss Kough, and other well-known Freethinkers. All we can say about the musical program at present is that it will be a good one. Those who have attended previous dinners will need little assurance on that point.

Apropos of our note last week on the manner in which Freethinking recruits are treated in the New Army, we may cite the following letter which appeared in the *Daily Chronicle* of December 11:—

> "SIR,—It is quite possible that at the end of the War the Church of England may claim to have had a vast preponderance of members of their Church serving in the War; possibly the following might be the explanation: My son, when enlisting in a regiment yesterday, was asked what his religion was. He answered: 'I am an Agnostic.' The officer asking the question said: 'Oh, we have not got that, so I will put you down Church of England.'—L. S."

We fancy that many military officers are still a long way off treating soldiers as if they were really human beings. They seem to regard them as things to be praised when they deserve it, to be cared for and looked after so far as mere animal necessities are concerned, but that a soldier might have opinions, and that these might be the better part of him, never strikes them as possible.

Rev. William Carlile, chief of the Church Army, sends us a begging letter in which he calls us one of his old supporters. We were not aware that we possessed the honor.

The period covered since the outbreak of War has been a very trying one for all advanced movements. Some societies appear to have suspended operations altogether, and in all cases there has been a falling off in the number of meetings held. From reports to hand we are pleased to learn that wherever Freethought meetings have been held, the attendances have been as large as ever, and in some cases larger. In some towns there is a difficulty in obtaining halls—owing to these being taken for military purposes, but apart from this there seems no reason why the Secular Societies throughout the country should not prepare for a vigorous campaign in the New Year. People's minds cannot be always monopolised by a single subject, even that of war. Sooner or later other interests clamor for attention, and those who are responsible for the conduct of Freethought propaganda would do well to bear this in mind.

In the course of a fine article on "Thoughts on This War" in *Scribner's*, Mr. John Galsworthy has the following scathing indictment of Christianity:—

> "Three hundred thousand church spires raised to the glory of Christ! Three hundred million human creatures baptised into His service! And—war to the death of them all! 'I trust the Almighty to give the victory to my arms!' 'Let your hearts beat to God, and your fists in the face of the enemy!' 'In prayer we call God's blessing on our valiant troops!'
>
> "God on the lips of each potentate, and under the hundred thousand spires prayer that twenty-two million servants of Christ may receive from God the blessed strength to tear and blow each other to pieces, to ravage and burn, to wrench husbands from wives, fathers from their children, to starve the poor, and everywhere destroy the works of the spirit! Prayer under the hundred thousand spires for the blessed strength of God, to use the noblest, most loyal instincts of the human race to the ends of carnage! 'God be with us to the death and dishonor of our foes' (whose God he is no less than ours)! The God who gave His only begotten Son to bring on earth peace and good will toward men!
>
> "No creed—in these days when two and two are put together—can stand against such reeling subversion of its foundation. After this monstrous mockery, beneath this grinning skull of irony, how shall there remain faith in a religion preached and practised to such ends?"

Inevitable or avoidable, in defence of national freedom or in pursuit of schemes of national aggrandisement, the indubitable fact remains that Christianity has done nothing to make such a conflict as the present one impossible, and has done much to make it sooner or later certain.

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Newspaper Culture.

I THINK it was Plato who said that the eyes of the majority of mankind were not strong enough to behold Truth. And I am of the opinion that some lesser light in the history of our untidy planet said that truth should be spoken behind closed doors. It would appear that the dissemination of truth was a delicate and difficult project, fraught with all the dangers and penalties of a voyage through Hell in a boat made of wax. We may truly ask, granted that the truth be dangerous, to *whom* is it dangerous? As we shall never get an answer to our question from the army of molecatchers in our midst, we may say at the outset that a knowledge of truth is dangerous to religious authority—in fact, it is dangerous to authority of any nature which is founded on ignorance.

Truth being planted, as it were, in a quagmire, if we are to believe our later-day soothsayers and magicians, we may fairly expect that the spirits who set out to discover it may reasonably experience abuse, misrepresentation, slander, and even death. The search for truth is a deliberate tilt at authority. Let no man buckle on armor who prefers peace of mind; let him rather follow in the track of those who make Sunday a day of feast and prayer. Prayers on a full stomach are very soothing—we might call the combined sensation the pinnacle of happiness, the height of ambition, or celestial translation. Any of the three terms would satisfy the aspiration of those whom Plotinus termed as people possessing the political virtues; that is, a people loving comfort. The people of this nature occupied a low place in the classification of mankind as formulated by Plotinus; and, as we believe that types of man never vary, the people with the political virtues of the present day are represented by the suburban newspaper-cultured Christians. And this brings us to the matter of our argument.

Some may consider Caxton as a benefactor of mankind. Well, for our part, we think he was responsible for the bringing of scatter-brain ideas of Nietzsche to the above-mentioned class. That they should hate him is natural; that they should misunderstand him is quite feasible when we remember that they receive him second or third hand; that is, through the doubtful conduits of journalism, and, it is with no idea of defending Nietzsche, that we say the hired journalists of a kept press, whilst not even whispering truth behind closed doors, have wantonly cried out lies from the housetops. With a few honorable exceptions, we might say they have remained true to their modern tradition. In time of peace they were an insult in print; in time of war, like the leopard, they could not change their spots.

Nietzsche was, and is, anti-Christian. For that I, as an insignificant writer and Freethinker, honor him. He chose the path of solitude, of comparative poverty, and he made the grandest and most sublime mistake that endears him to all men who are not modern eunuchs or—journalists; he tilted at authority in more than one form, and the comfortable class, true to their type, stoned him. In effect, we hear them say he is not one of us; he says, "There will be no remorse in man's heart any longer"..... "but the Christian religion is essentially a product of the slave class."....."One only needs to read any one of the Christian agitators—St. Augustine, for instance—in order to realise, in order to *smell*, what filthy fellows came to the top in this movement." In our imagination we can see battalions of the feast and prayer class stooping down to pick up stones to level at his head. And the journalists will instruct them in their good old Biblical game of stoning the prophets.

This, then, was one of the men who influenced the Christian Emperor of Germany in his lust for war. By the wooden shoes of St. Joseph, it is a paradox that could only emanate from the mind of one who can swallow whole the Athanasian Creed! It reminds the present writer of something he saw in a curio shop in Boulogne in happier days than the present. In the middle of the shop window was a plaster cast of Christ on the cross; on the right-hand side was a bust of Voltaire, with the head turned towards the pathetic figure on the cross, and the lips of the scoffer were parted in that well-known grim, sardonic smile—commercial adversity makes strange bedfellows; and to say that Nietzsche was one of the causes of the War is the same as saying that Voltaire crucified Christ.

Abuse of Nietzsche has declined somewhat at this stage of the War, and we are almost tempted to think that the muddle-headed journalists, saying the wrong thing by instinct, have overshot the mark. A lie may be used to kill an idea; but if the idea did *not* exist in the mind of sane thinking people, journalistic flimflam was superfluous. In fact, these studied distortions of the truth about Nietzsche may be the means of getting people to inquire about the writings of one who has a permanent place in philosophy, and he will still occupy that place when Fleet-street is used as a menagerie for the imbeciles of falsehood. That Nietzsche was aware of all that Fleet-street stands for may be gathered on reading this one sentence: "We mistrust any form of culture that tolerates newspaper reading or writing." To our everlasting credit let it be said of the Freethinker that no *newspaper* speaks well of us; when they do, there will be good grounds for suspicion.

It was a great and telling argument of Nietzsche's, that, as animals and birds were the color of their environments for self-preservation, so the masses of mankind adopted what he termed "herd morality." In other words, "do as others do, and no one will laugh at you." Publishers would scarcely look at his works, and in later life, with the exception of a few friends, he spent his days in isolation, more, we think, as payment for his anti-Christian ideas than his morose temperament. The herd, with their leader's crook in hand (*apt simile*), cannot tolerate one who ridicules their so-called sacred institutions; to hell or Coventry with him. He has ventured too far in the search for Truth. He has flouted us, and tweaked the beard of our leaders; let us give his body to the dogs. Let us canonise Sankey and Moody, the Pilgrim Fathers, and Simeon Stylites, but this man Nietzsche shall not thrust forward with his ideas—write him down as the cause of this war.

To conclude, the search for Truth is not profitable. It has long been a cherished idea of the present writer that Freethinkers are more spiritual than Christians, and, with abundant proof to hand, we shall continue to think it is so. We could not imagine Nietzsche being encumbered with too much of the world's wealth, as are our clever divines with shares in armament concerns: "Verily, not to a nobility which ye could purchase like traders with trader's gold; for little worth is all that hath its price." And, again, "Let it not be your honor henceforth whence ye come, but whither ye go." No Freethinker would stoop to pick up stones to hurl at the writer of that, and, if Nietzsche is misrepresented, let us in charity assume that it was caused in a decadent Christianity by that last word in civilisation, the "modern journalist."

CHRISTOPHER GAY.

The Terrors of Superstition.

THAT religions arose through terror, were maintained by fear, and would perish with the departure of supernatural bugbears, were convictions eloquently expressed by the greatest of all Roman poets, the rationalist, Lucretius. These allegations have been hotly disputed by priests and metaphysicians, and have not infrequently been questioned by semi-sceptical writers. But of their substantial accuracy there can be but little doubt, as modern anthropologists are more and more willing to allow. Professor Westermarck has already unreservedly proclaimed his adherence to the view enunciated by

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Lucretius, and that Professor Frazer's judgment is of a similar character is to be easily discerned in many passages of his magnum opus, *The Golden Bough*.

There are various indications that comparative religionists are steadily returning to the theories of Tylor and Spencer as to the potent part played by the beliefs in baleful spirits in shaping the theological speculations of mankind. The ghosts of the dead constantly confront us in every department of anthropological study, and Dr. Frazer has himself admitted that it is quite possible that all the gods may ultimately prove to be the deified ghosts of departed men. It is somewhat significant that the spirits of the dead are the essential characteristic of that dangerous malady, modern spiritualism. And the same may be said of that baneful aspect of savage superstition which Sir Oliver Lodge and other half-emancipated people are struggling to restore. Perhaps, to complete the picture, it may be necessary to include social bugbears as powerful instruments in the preservation of theology, for it must always be remembered that, however cold men's feelings toward religion may really be, outward conformity to the current creed is still demanded by the organised hypocrisy of the hour.

It is indeed difficult for the contemporary educated European to realise to what an extent life has been made miserable among savage, barbarous, and even civilised races by the superstitious dread of ghosts and goblins. As Dr. Frazer, in a striking passage, reminds us:—

> "Bred in a philosophy which strips nature of personality and reduces it to the unknown cause of an orderly series of impressions on our senses, we find it hard to put ourselves in the place of the savage, to whom the same impressions appear in the guise of spirits or the handiwork of spirits. For ages the army of spirits, once so near, has been receding further and further from us, banished by the magic wand of science from hearth and home, from ruined cell and ivied tower, from haunted glade and lonely mere, from the riven murky cloud which belches forth the lightning, and from those fairer clouds that pillow the silver moon or fleck with flakes of burning red the golden eve. The spirits are gone even from their last stronghold in the sky, whose blue arch no longer passes, except with children, for the screen that hides from mortal eyes the glories of the celestial world.....Far otherwise is it with the savage. To his imagination the world still teems with those motley beings whom a more sober philosophy has discarded. Fairies and goblins, ghosts and demons, still hover about him, both waking and sleeping. They dog his footsteps, dazzle his senses, enter into him, harass and torment and deceive him in a thousand freakish and mischievous ways." *

All the ills that overshadow human life, all the accidents of our earthly career are attributed by uncivilised man either to the spells cast upon him by his enemies or to the spiteful trickery of the spirits. To rid himself of his ghostly persecutors the savage has devised innumerable methods. When prayers prove unavailing, primitive people adopt the more drastic measure of driving their invisible adversaries away.

It is not, of course, contended that aboriginal man dwells in an environment of unrelieved gloom. He has his bright intervals like the rest of us, but the imposing array of evidence accumulated by Dr. Frazer points only too plainly to the truth that the lives of uncivilised races are ever accompanied by apprehension of ever impending evil.

Among the Australian natives supernatural beings on all sides abound, and these perverse spirits cannot resist the temptation to injure and alarm the inoffensive people. In Africa, the Negro stands in daily dread of the wicked demons who sleeplessly await their opportunity to do him harm. The god of the Bantu negroes of West Africa is credited with the act of creation, but that feat accomplished, his interest in human affairs came to an end. As this divinity heeds not the Bantus, they heed not him. But the sinister spirits that dwell in the country are far from indifferent to the doings of the people. *Their* interest is better known than appreciated, and the natives in their prayers implore them to depart and return no more. The Ewe peoples appear to possess a dim conception of a superior divinity, which is, perhaps, due to missionary influences, but the gods that really count with these African savages are the good and evil ghosts. A competent observer, Zündel, informs us that:—

> "The people are much more zealous in their devotion to the evil spirits than in their devotion to the good. The reason is that the feeling of fear and the consciousness of guilt are much stronger than the emotions of love and gratitude for benefits received. Hence, the worship of the false gods or spirits among this people, and among the West African negro tribes in general is, properly speaking, a worship of demons or devils."

Again, among the Boloki of the Upper Congo, a missionary admits that the occupation of that powerful personage, the medicine man, would be gone were his potent spells not deemed necessary to outwit and overcome the malignant spirits that swarm on the creeks and streams, in the shadow of the forest, and in every available nook and cranny.

In the New World, the same phenomena are to be seen. The famous anthropologist, Sir Everard im Thurn, tells us that in South America, among the native races of Guiana, the entire continent is peopled with supernatural creatures. He says:—

> "If, by a mighty mental effort, we could for a moment revert to a similar mental position, we should find ourselves everywhere surrounded by a host of, possibly, hurtful beings, so many in number, that to describe them as innumerable would fall ridiculously short of the truth."

These Indians dread the dark, and on the rare occasions in which they venture from the camp fires by night, they bear burning brands in their hands to enable them to watch their ghostly foes. The chief duty of their sorcerers is to disarm these ghosts and goblins, and, as a matter of fact, this savage spiritualism is "the main belief of the kind that is generally called religions of the Indians of Guiana."

Passing from the genial climes of Southern America to the desolate coasts of Labrador, we meet with a people equally enslaved by imaginary beings. The Eskimo believe that every detail of their lives is controlled by spirit agencies. These ghostly powers are the deputies of a greater goblin, and each native has his attendant evil genius who watches, with unwinking eyes, for an opportunity of inflicting harm upon his innocent victim. These impish spirits are propitiated by offerings of food, drink, and dress. And, in addition to these guardian spirits, there is a multitudinous assortment of ghosts which haunt the sea, the land, the sky, the clouds and winds, in fact, everything in nature. All these spirits are baneful, but some are more spiteful and vicious than others, and these last are those that receive the major part of the prayers and gifts of the people. The lesser spirits are all subordinate to the great spirit, the Tung ak.

> "The shaman (or conjuror) alone is supposed to be able to deal with the Tung ak. While the shaman does not profess to be superior to the Tung ak, he is able to enlist his assistance, and thus be able to control all the undertakings his profession may call for. This Tung ak is nothing more or less than death, which ever seeks to torment and harass the lives of people, that their spirits may go to dwell with him."

The religion of the Polynesian Islanders of the Pacific is, at first sight, less melancholy than those above mentioned. Every natural phenomenon is guided by an invisible spirit. Sun, moon, and star, the gale and the whispering breeze, the mountain, the rocks, the vale and the rushing river, all are abodes of spirit intelligences. Yet these spirits are seldom, if ever kindly, towards man. And as regards the ghosts of the dead, these primitive islanders, in the words of Ellis,—

> "imagined they lived in a world of spirits, which surrounded them night and day, watching every action of their lives, and ready to avenge the slightest neglect or

* *Golden Bough*, "The Scapegoat," pp. 72, 73.

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> the least disobedience to their injunctions as proclaimed by their priests. These dreaded beings were seldom thought to resort to the habitations of men on errands of benevolence."

The Tahitians, as Captain Cook testifies, attributed all their misfortunes to one or other of their devilish divinities. The deities of the Maories again were, without exception, of sinister character. With the Pelew Islanders the gods are invariably of malevolent disposition, whose perverse nature can only be appeased by propitiation and magic. In the Philippine Islands the religion of the natives consists in a very firm belief in demons, who are responsible for all the woes of human life. Among the Melanesians of New Britain the gods, in the opinion of the people, are—

> "entirely perverse, deceitful, maleficent, and ceaselessly occupied in injuring us. Diseases, death, the perturbations of nature, all unfortunate events, are imputed to them. The demons exist in legions; they live everywhere, especially in the forests, desert places, and the depths of the sea."

The dark cloud cast on the lives of the people by the baleful beliefs indicated above, holds equally true of the other Pacific races. The Papuan pantheon is populated with a multitude of divinities much more diabolical than beneficent. Not only in Dutch New Guinea and "German" New Guinea, but in British New Guinea, the natives are never happy unless their goblin gods are inactive. These deities appear incapable of a single benevolent act.

In the Malay Archipelago it is much the same. The ghosts are not to be trusted; they are good or evil, just as the fancy seizes them. In Timor, Borneo, Celebes, Bali, Java, Sumatra, and elsewhere, the calamities of human existence are all ascribed to the rage or malevolence of the ancestral and other ghosts. Writing of the Battas or Bataks of Sumatra, a Dutch missionary remarks that—

> "if there is still any adherent of Rousseau's superficial theories about the idyllically happy and careless life of people 'in a state of nature,' he ought to come and spend a little time among the Bataks and keep his eyes and ears open. He would soon be convinced of the hollowness and falsehood of these phrases, and would learn to feel a deep compassion for human beings living in perpetual fear of evil spirits." *

Throughout the Eastern World, fear and the ceremonies born of fear may be said to constitute the religion of all savage and barbarous races. The Nicobar Islanders spend a large part of their lives in ceremonial observances, designed to drive off or appease the spirits. A feeling of terror of the native ghosts is so deeply ingrained in these savages, that two hundred years of missionary effort has signally failed to impress it. The religion of the Mantras, an indigenous people of the Malay Peninsula, seems to consist entirely of plans to frustrate the machinations of the demons that everywhere abound. In far off Kamtchatka, where a native or artificially introduced belief in a high god appears to prevail, the evil spirits are far more feared and reverenced than the chief divinity.

(*To be concluded.*) T. F. PALMER.

The Undiscovered Country.

The Unknown Guest. By Maurice Maeterlinck. Translated by A. T. De Mattos. (Methuen; 1914.)

SINCE M. Maurice Maeterlinck was compared with Shakespeare, it has been hard to be just to him. It is never safe, nor is it consistent with sound criticism, to pick up some popular favorite of the day and compare him with one of those intellectual giants whose work has survived in undiminished splendor the lapse of centuries. M. Maeterlinck's gifts are few and simple and distinct, and hardly anyone can be blind to them. Nor have we any wish to underrate his persuasive gifts, his delicate artistry in words, and his dainty imagination. His voice is musical, and what he has to say is always worth saying.

Some time ago M. Maeterlinck issued a treatise on *Death*, in which he sought to show that the terrors of dissolution arise largely from associations which are accidental, and urged considerations justifying cheerful anticipations. The dread of death, he said, arises from its strangeness, and we should strip it from the terrors of the imagination. But M. Maeterlinck is a charming poet as well as a brilliant philosopher, and he could not help decorating his ideas, as when he spoke of the last struggle "which hurls us suddenly, disarmed, abandoned, and stripped, into an unknown that is the home of invincible terrors." In another passage he urged us "to look upon death with the same eyes that look upon birth." In order to glorify the future, he disparages the present. "It seems fairly certain," he said, "that we spend in this world the only narrow, grudging, obscure, and sorrowful moments of our destiny." This seems the rhetorical echo of a theological platitude; and, for the rest, the speculation is sufficiently fanciful for the pulpit. As a fact, M. Maeterlinck's book contained less about death than speculation concerning immortality. The poet was always elbowing aside the philosopher, and jumping from the springboard of actuality into the waters of fancy. The chief value of his book, however, was that the ordinary Christian conception of a hereafter, comprising a paltry paradise for the minority and a horrible hell for the majority, was no longer held by cultured persons.

Since the publication of his book on *Death*, M. Maeterlinck has again returned to the subject, and, in *The Unknown Guest*, he states the case for a survival hypothesis. As he is largely in agreement with the Spiritualists, and often quotes from the "Proceedings" of the Society for Psychical Research, his book has a wide interest. It is not M. Maeterlinck's fault that, though his book is concerned with the large question of man's immortality, it is full of talk of telepathy, psychometry, phantasms, and "The Elberfield Horses." In the last analysis the Spiritualists base their case for the soul's immortality on these things, and M. Maeterlinck but follows their lead.

As explained in the clear and beautiful language of M. Maeterlinck, the newest and most up-to-date Spiritualism is very like the old. The hand may seem the hand of Esau, but the voice is the voice of Jacob. Behind all the verbiage of telepathy, clairvoyance, automatic writings, precognition, the "mathematics" of "educated horses," there is always "Sludge the Medium." Krall's horses may have put M. Maeterlinck to mathematical shame, figures having always inspired the poet with "invincible terror"; but, like the British sailor drinking lager beer, we get "no forrader." Reduced to a plain statement, the Spiritualist position as explained by M. Maeterlinck is that "the best part of life" is that it leads to death, but that what death is nobody knows. It is a conclusion sufficiently humorous to wrinkle the faces of the "educated" horses with smiles.

In spite of "Sludge the Medium," new or old, the riddle remains unanswered, the sphinx is still silent. Couched in scientific language, presented with all the resources of persons who have devoted their lives to the subject, it is yet in the last analysis but an appeal to emotionalism. Heine hit the right nail on the head when he smilingly hinted that the idea of immortality may have suggested itself to a lover in the arms of his mistress, or to some Nuremberg burgher sipping his beer in the cool of the evening. It is, in the last resort, but a desire for personal continuance, to be for ever as we are. In spite of man's importunity throughout countless centuries, "the rest is silence."

The new Spiritualism gives no better answer than the old, and the later "messages" from the "other side" are as unconvincing as the earlier. The poor

* Quoted by Frazer, "Scapegoat," pp. 87, 88.

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Indian dreams of his happy hunting grounds; the Mohammedan peoples his paradise with houris; the Christian imagines the jewelled streets of the New Jerusalem; and Sir Oliver Lodge and other cultured gentlemen are satisfied with "spooks." The world is no nearer a solution than in the far-off days of Lucretius, or in the even earlier time when primitive man cowered in his cave in mortal fear of the lightning. The oracles are contradictory with regard to a next world. All we know for certain is that man is mortal, but nature is immortal. The world grows old and we grow old with it; but nature is ever fair, and young, and eternal. The flowers of the spring return year by year, lads and maidens are ever wandering at eventide. The love of husband and wife is ever consecrated by the coming of new life springing from their own. Though our personality be blotted out by death, our influence goes to swell the volume of human worth. As for the undiscovered country beyond the grave, no traveller has ever returned to reveal the secret of the universe.

MIMNERMUS.

I Would Not Be an Angel.

Yes, of the earth and earthy, I,
And Pagan to the inmost core;
I love the things beneath the sky
That common men have loved before.
And two things stand in Time and Space,
Amid the things that fade and fleet—
The beauty of a woman's face,
The pathos of a baby's feet.

I would not be an angel,
For ever to intone
Loud sycophantic praises
Before God's awful throne.
I crave no life eternal
Beyond the mortal span;
I would not be an angel;
I choose to be a man.

Within the pearly portals
I do not seek to pass;
I ask no golden highways;
Give me earth's living grass!
I'd barter all your cherubs
For an earth-babe, black or tan;
I would not be an angel;
I choose to be a man.

I would not be an angel
And shout with holy glee
While groaned Hell's countless victims
In deathless agony.
The good can know no Heaven
While Hell holds even one;
I would not be an angel;
I choose to be a man.

Dark are the ways of Heaven!
Ah, who can with them grapple?
Who knows another Adam
Won't eat another apple?
Heaven may end as badly
As Paradise began;
Let those who will be angels,
I choose to be a man.

I love this dear old earth-home,
Its sunny sky above,
Its children's frolic laughter,
Its woman's holy love.
To make it fairer, freer,
Is life's divinest plan;
Let those who will be angels,
I choose to be a man.

When falls the last great darkness,
And I have done my day,
Give back the dear earth-mother
The gift she gave, and say
But this: "Forgive his failings,
His errors gently scan,
For though he was no angel,
He tried to be a man."

WALLACE CELSON.

Night.

I COUNTED the clouds in the western sky
As they stole up troubled and grey;
And I stared at the sun with an aching eye,
But his crimson has died away;
And the bats, like phantoms, go whirring by
In search of their tiny prey.

I watched the petals of many a flower
Fold up in the eventide, [shower
And the grass parched and dead as it watched for the
It had prayed for before it died;
And the trees in the dusk that like ogres tower
Up into the heavens wide.

I counted the lights of the stars that crept
Thro' the chaos of cloud and night;
And I heard a bird cry like a woman that wept
With fear at some hideous sight;
And the rest of the universe seemingly slept
In the grip of an anodyne tight.

But where is my God in the midst of it all?
Does he sleep with the flowers in the gloom?
For the earth is as still, save that woman-like call,
As the eve of the morning of doom;
And nothing but nature's thieves hover and crawl
In the heart of this sky bounded tomb.

The flowers are sleeping, the night becomes chill,
And the brown grass is dripping with dew;
And a ground mist's white billows drift silent and still
O'er the whole of the landscape in view;
But a thousand forms lurk in the darkness to kill,
And a thousand more tremble anew.

Yet they told me to look to the wonderful earth
If I wanted to find God again; [birth
And I look: and it seems that each form that finds
Is born to less pleasure than pain;
And I fancy the smaller the creature's girth,
The surer it is to be slain.

The night is the night, and the day is the day:
But which of the two is God's own?
The night is assigned to the creatures that slay;
And the day? God leaves that alone;
And the pleas for his pity when breaking hearts pray
Are lost on their way to his throne.

JAMES L. RAYMOND.

The Battle of Reason.

A GENTLE knight comes riding o'er the plain,
No armor rich doth deck his supple frame,
No retinue of rogues, no thirst for gain,
But Love and Hope are all his heart can claim,
And these two joys no gods above can blame;
For Fortune gives and likewise takes away
Her gifts: to one much gold, another shame.
Thus doth she in her fickle fancy sway
With gifts of gold, or place, or power; but none can stay.

Forth to the country of despair he rides,
And many knaves and scoundrels on the way
Are scourged or slain; but still in mounting tides
His foes arise, to curse, to jeer, or pray
That he may never live to see the day
When this bleak land shall 'gain resound with song.
When once again the minstrel's pleasing lay
Shall soothe all ears and drive sad night along;
When Right shall sit enthroned, supplanting vicious wrong.

WILLIAM REPTON.

The saloon on the corner was burnt,
And the ministers prayed next day,
Telling the Lord he was just and right
In moving the pest away.

But the lightning struck the holy church,
And burned it to the ground;
Then the liquor people thanked the Lord
That he passed such things around.

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BY

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THE

Freethinker

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Words are the only things that last for ever.
—WILLIAM HAZLITT.

The Great War.—I.

IT was very fortunate for me that I spent the past summer in Europe. While at times I felt a bit nervous, and was afraid I would never be able to find a ship to take me home, on the whole, I had enough stimulating experiences to compensate me fully for any anxiety or inconvenience the War may have caused me. For the first time in my life, I was face to face with the sternest realities. Such a storm had never burst upon me before. The state of mind I was in was very provocative of thought. My head was like a bee hive. In my sleep, even, I was at war—giving and receiving blows—at war with the institutions, the civilisation, the religion, which was too dilapidated, too shabby, too threadbare, too hollow, to be of any help in a crisis. I kept a diary of the impressions and events of the day, and of the alternating sunshine and storm in my own mind. I intend to quote freely from my notebook. Without going to the front, or anywhere near the firing line, I was close enough to the heart of things to catch the throb and fever of the battlefield—to feel the smart of the bullets in my flesh and hear their shrieking in the air. I was wounded and died with every brave soldier in action. I wept with every mother upon the neck of her son; and with every sweetheart I kissed her lover good-bye. At the thought of the Germans marching in shining armor and singing as they marched, "Der Wacht am Rhein"; and of the French facing the deadly fire of the siege guns, singing the "Marseillaise"; and of the English lads *playing* under the murderous fire of the enemy, and singing "It's a long way to Tipperary" I glowed all over with pride and wonder.

London offered excellent opportunities for an investigation into the causes and persons responsible for a war which, in a short time, had converted Christendom into a shambles. I had also as fair a chance to study the French phase of the question in London as I should have had if I had been in Paris. London was full of Frenchmen, and more of them kept pouring into the city every day, until one heard so much French spoken in the streets, the restaurants, the hotels, and the theatres, as to give one the illusion of being in France instead of in England. I also met many Belgian refugees, and heard their tales of woe. But, of course, I had no immediate contact with the Germans, and am not so well informed of their explanations of the causes of the conflict now raging in Western Europe. I may say that I did my best to read impartially everything I could procure about all the belligerents—the German "White Book," Bernhardi's *Germany and the Next War*, Professor Cramb's work on Treitschke and his school, and the Germanistic pamphlets containing contributions from distinguished American professors. I also read what our friend and teacher, Professor Ernst Haeckel, had to say on England's responsibility for the gory scenes of which Europe is the theatre to-day. I have, therefore, some preparation for a discussion of the War between Germany and Austria on the one hand, and the Allies on the other.

At times London had the appearance of a camp. The railway stations were jammed with departing soldiers and arriving wounded. Mere lads not yet fifteen or sixteen years old could be seen by the hundreds, dressed in soldiers' uniform and carrying rifles. Children at the age of ten, and younger even, with paper caps, wooden swords, and tin cans for drums, were marching through the streets, dressed in rags, with enough holes in their trousers to show that they had been in action. Everybody had caught the war fever. The hotel parlors were turned over to women sewing for the wounded. The newspapers, announcing now a victory and now a disaster, kept the people in a swing between hope and fear—enough to make the stoutest of them dizzy. Hardly an hour passed without witnessing the tramping of the recruits through the streets—the dear boys, marching straight into the cannon's mouth, inspired by love and duty—and the girls walking at their sides, and trying to smile.

Yet London was not so deeply moved by the War as Paris. That joyous city was a veritable sepulchre; her radiant boulevards were as sombre as the alleys in a cemetery. Imagine Paris at night—the lights extinguished, the stores closed, the amusement halls like morgues! The only signs of life were in the clouds, dropping fire upon the heads of those below. Were the awful scenes of 1870 to be re-enacted! Poor Paris! Was she again to become the target for Prussian guns!

In Berlin—in splendid Berlin, fast getting to be the rival in beauty of Paris, and in activity of London—the agitation of the people must have been equally intense. Germany exposed to the attacks of seven nations! Whose fault was that? Seven nations on top of one! A nation for each day in the week for the Germans to fight! Whose diplomacy was that? Think of a country, in the noonday of its prosperity, in the zenith of its power—young and lusty—manœuvred into the mouths of the cannons of seven nations! Whose *chef-d'œuvre* was that? We cannot even imagine the state of feeling of the people of Germany when the distant thud or *r-r-r-ump* of the cannon called every able-bodied man to the front. "We win, or we perish!" cries the nation, as it leaps forth as one man—one against seven iron-clad powers!

I see by my notebook that the first word I have written down and commented on is the word *militarism*. By militarism the majority of people mean the Prussian War Party. The indiscriminate outcry against militarism did not impress me. If by militarism be meant extensive and expensive warlike preparations, all the nations of the world are guilty in proportion to their resources. Great Britain spent eighty millions—nearly half a billion dollars—annually on her Army and Navy. To say that a nation with so colossal a war budget was not prepared for war, or that it is free from militarism, would not be a defensible statement to make. But if by militarism be meant the nation armed for defensive purposes, armed to maintain its sovereignty, armed to compel aggressors, invaders, chauvinists, or imperialists dreaming of world conquests, to beware, then I am for it heart and soul.

—A lecture delivered in Chicago, by

M. M. MANGASARIAN.

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Sir Oliver Lodge and Immortality.—II.

(*Concluded from p. 803.*)

I SAID last week that Sir Oliver Lodge's lecture might properly be called a "tendency lecture." Statements are made in order to support a desired conclusion, and without, apparently, any other reason. For example, I do not think that any careful scientific thinker would, to-day, define evolution as being an "unfolding." That conception properly belongs to what one may call the infantile stages of evolution. The root idea here was that a seed contained a miniature plant, a germ or a cell contained a miniature animal, and the evolution of plant or animal consisted in an "unfolding"—on a larger scale—of their microscopical contents. Of course, this is not true. The seed does not contain the fully formed flower, any more than the germ contains the fully formed animal, or the acorn an oak tree. All we have is the possibility of growth or development along a particular line, partly determined by the arrangement of forces represented by the seed or germ, and partly determined by environmental forces. That is the true conception of evolution; but it is easy to see why this conception of "unfolding" is stressed by Sir Oliver Lodge and other religious writers. It supports the notion that instead of living phenomena being a part of natural phenomena as a whole, it belongs to a class apart, and is merely seeking the appropriate physical conditions to "unfold" itself. And of that there is not the slightest shred of evidence.

Here is another example of the same kind. Everyone must have observed how fond the modern "mystical" Christian—perhaps one ought to say "mystified" Christian—is of appealing to the East. The East is a long way off; its habits are far removed from ours; and in this we find another illustration of the truth that the less we know about anything the more useful it is to religion. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries most Europeans were willing to credit almost any marvel concerning the East. Fabulous wealth, men with eyes between their shoulders, heads under their arms, or stupendous powers of magic, were all attributed to the East; and although we have outgrown the physical aspect of these wonders, mental marvels are still placed to the credit of the gorgeous East. So Sir Oliver, having to admit that Western science is not inclined to support his view of the soul, says:—

> "Mind you, some nations have attended more to spiritual things than to the others. We have some friends from the East here. The East has very much to instruct the West in. We can instruct them in business habits and practical life; they can instruct us in things relating to the soul and meditation. They enter into the silence and meditate a great deal more than we do."

Now this appeal to the East is pure delusion. The notion that because in the East the figure of the religious Fakir has never died out, therefore it *knows* more about the soul than the West is simply ridiculous. True knowledge on any subject is not gained by retiring into solitude and merely meditating; that is to invite and to secure illusion. Meditation is only valuable on the basis of actual knowledge. Meditation without knowledge is of no use to anyone. There was a time when the West did as the Eastern religious Fakir still does. It meditated without knowledge; and the result was the religious rubbish of the Dark Ages. Sir Oliver does not realise, apparently, that the West has passed through, has actually outgrown, that stage of religious thought which still has power in the East. Nor does he appreciate the fact that the development of life and knowledge in the East is killing the method of the religious Fakir in the East in exactly the same way as it has been killed in the West.

"Once you realise," says Sir Oliver, "that consciousness is something outside the particular mechanism which it makes use of, you will realise that survival of existence is natural, that it is the simplest thing." Quite so. Once we bring ourselves to the point of believing that twice two make five, it is a simple thing to agree that half of the sum of twice two equals two-and-a-half. But it is not a question of believing this or that; it is solely a question as to whether we have enough evidence to justify the holding of a particular belief. Sir Oliver says that he possesses this evidence, which may or may not be so; but in any case it is evidence only to him, and may be quite inadequate to compel belief in others. The evidence, we are told, "is recorded in the volumes of a scientific society such as we have got, and there is more evidence for everybody who is able to study the subject." Sir Oliver is referring to the Society for Psychical Research, and he speaks as though the evidence published in the Society's volumes was absolutely conclusive, and as though this evidence was unknown to sceptics. Neither of these assumptions are justified by the facts. Far from the evidence being conclusive, it is not even the fact that all the members of the Psychical Research Society are convinced that the evidence collected proves the reality of a future life. Many doubt it very strongly; and while that is the case it is hardly admissible to point to these volumes as though they contained unimpeachable evidence for a future life.

Nor is there any need to recommend these volumes to sceptics as though here was a whole field of evidence with which they were unacquainted. Thoughtful students of the question know these volumes well. They are able to study the evidence that has been collected—some of them have written about it, and they have not been slow to point out its inconclusive character. And their dissidence, along with that of many members of the Society for Psychical Research, quite destroys the value of Sir Oliver's declaration "on definite scientific grounds" that "we shall continue to exist." Such language is quite out of place. To state a thing "on definite scientific grounds" should mean, and ought to mean, that the evidence is of such a nature that it will compel conviction with all who examine it. But in the case of Sir Oliver Lodge this is no more than a personal conviction. It may be a guarantee of his sincerity in the matter; but it is his accuracy, not his sincerity, that is in question.

Sir Oliver Lodge believes that "we ourselves are not limited to the few years that we live on this earth; we shall go on without it; we shall continue to exist; we shall certainly survive," on the ground that he has actually conversed with departed friends. That is, he believes not in a mere survival, but in the survival of *personality*—which is what one ought to mean when they talk about immortality. Well, it is interesting to note how this belief is introduced by him. He says:—

> "Mind and consciousness are not limited to the brain. That is an extraordinary doctrine that people have—that the brain is the mind. Why do they think that? Because if you destroy the brain your mind appears to go. What goes? Not your mind really out of existence. Your consciousness is still there, but it can no longer manifest itself, for it has lost its instrument of manifestation."

Now, I do not know that I should care to say that the brain is the mind, any more than I should care to say that motion is heat. From one point of view the statement would be true enough, but it would, from another point of view, be a very loose way of stating the case, and it is curious that Sir Oliver should prefer the loose to the more exact statement.

Still, even accepting Sir Oliver's position that brain and mind are two quite distinct things, bearing to each other, to follow his own illustration, the relation that an organist bears to an organ, it is impossible to see how he can get the survival of personal identity on this ground. For, note, that there are all sorts of personalities. As Sir Oliver Lodge would say, the manifestations of mind are varied in form. How is this to be accounted for? The materialistic expla-

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nation is, of course, simple—and it covers the facts. Brain and mind being related as organs to function, variation in the one corresponds to variation in the other. And this is so self-evident that the Spiritualist admits its truth. He does not, at least he need not, deny that in some way mind and brain are related, as organs to function, and, consequently, that the variations in the two will synchronise. But he argues that this is not due to the inseparability of brain and mind, but because mind manifests itself through a material organism, and its expression is therefore conditioned by the medium through which it passes.

Now, granting all this to be the case, it does not help in the least a theory of the survival of personality. For, even on this theory, the creation of the personalities, we know, is due to the difference of bodily constitution. Sir Oliver Lodge is different from Bill Sykes, because the instrument through which mind manifests itself is different. If Bill Sykes possessed the brain that Sir Oliver Lodge possesses and had passed through the same experiences, he would think and believe as Sir Oliver thinks and believes. This truth is still further emphasised by the fact—admitted by the Spiritualist and Materialist—that any alteration in the brain, by accident or by disease, entails a corresponding alteration in the mental manifestations. From both points of view, then, the brain remains the condition of the persistence of personality. Destroy the brain—and there is no question of *its* destruction—and, so far as we can see, the sole condition of the continued existence of personality disappears. The survival of mind—in the shape of personality—is thus as inconceivable on the hypothesis advanced by Sir Oliver Lodge as it is on that held by the Materialist.

The truth is, that what Sir Oliver Lodge puts forward as a scientifically demonstrated truth is no more than a personal conviction that owes its being to strong religious prepossessions. He has experienced certain things, and assumes that they demonstrate the reality of a future life. Others have had much the same experience, and have regarded either the experiences themselves, or the explanations offered, with grave suspicion. It is not quite true to say, as Sir Oliver Lodge does, that the scientific world refuses to listen or to examine the evidence. It has done both, and its conclusion has been adverse. To say that people will not listen because they will not believe, is acting as religious preachers have always acted. It is the badge of their tribe. And there is a limit even to the utility of listening. When one has listened for ninety-nine times to a story and found it worthless, it is hardly to be guilty of culpable scepticism to decline listening on the hundredth occasion. From the dawn of history men have been proclaiming the reality of a future life. They have professed to have the strongest convictions and the clearest proofs. It has enlisted human attention and sympathy more than any other single subject. And the fact that, in spite of everything, the number believing in it steadily grows smaller, is surely presumptive proof against its veracity.

C. COHEN.

God's Sexlessness.

NOTHING is more marvellous than the garrulity of ignorance. The less a man knows about a subject the greater is his fluency in discussing it. Of God absolutely no knowledge is obtainable, and yet his alleged spokesmen are innumerable, and their communications of the most voluminous and intimate character. There is no building in the world large enough to contain the books which have been written about him, or even the sermons delivered in his name. Judging by their discourses, one would naturally infer that preachers possess encyclopædic knowledge of the Supreme Being; but it is their total ignorance that inspires their tongues. Three or four times a week they undertake to supply their fellow-beings with full information concerning his thoughts, purposes, and deeds. Prebendary Webster, of London, assured us a few weeks ago that God has thrust us into the present War; that it is his quarrel, not ours; and that our prayers for victory are not answered because we do not praise him sufficiently. But the most startling statement about God comes from Mr. R. J. Campbell, of the City Temple. It occurs in a sermon published in the *Christian World Pulpit* for December 16, and we must give it in his own words:—

> "Deity is of no sex. We have to use limiting terms when alluding to the Divine Being. It is just as inadequate to describe God as father as to describe him as mother; he is neither—and both."

We are aware that the theories of sex are practically numberless, but sexless beings are non-existent. We were told in our childhood that angels were of no sex, and that after death mankind would resemble them; but we have learned since that angels and a second life are alike figments. But even as children we were taught to regard God as belonging to the male sex, and it is well known that throughout the Bible the pronouns "he," "him," and "his" are applied to him. Both Jehovah and the Christian Deity have invariably been spoken of as males. There are, indeed, a few indications that Jehovah was double-sexed. In Genesis i. 26, 27, we find this remarkable language:—

> "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.....And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."

Be that as it may, it is a well-attested fact that most Pagan deities were double-sexed. Herodotus informs us that, originally, the Persians did not think that the gods had the same nature with man, but he adds:—

> "At a later period they began the worship of Urania, which they borrowed from the Arabians and Assyrians. Mylitta is the name by which the Assyrians know this Goddess, whom the Arabians call Alitta, and the Persians Mitra" (B. I. C. 131).

Who has not read of the Gods and Goddesses of ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome, all of whom had zealous worshipers? Indeed, a sexless deity is inconceivable.

"Deity is of no sex," Mr. Campbell dogmatically asserts; but, though of no sex, he is said to be in possession of all the qualities of fatherhood and motherhood at their best. It is an inadequate description of God to say that he *is* father, or that he *is* mother; "he is neither—and both." What can you make of a man who talks like that? "Deity is of no sex"; he is neither father nor mother, though he acts as if he were both. He is neither male nor female, yet partakes of the characteristics of both sexes. The following is a fine sample of Mr. Campbell's method of reasoning:—

> "Those qualities which we are accustomed to associate with motherhood at its best must be Divine qualities; they come forth from God, or we should never know them. If human motherhood is beautiful and worthy of reverence, if it possesses a value for us which nothing can replace, it is because its source is in the heart of God, and it is unceasingly nourished and inspired therefrom."

As a matter of undeniable fact, motherhood at its best is an instinct that has taken countless millenniums to develop into its present state of perfection in woman. Maternal qualities, of a high order, are exhibited among exceedingly low animals, and they steadily improve as one ascends towards the present summit of the evolutionary process. A female stork is as devoted to her offspring as any human mother can be, and nothing can be more beautiful than the unhesitating manner in which she sacrifices her life in their defence when their safety is threatened. No, "those qualities which we are accustomed to associate with motherhood at its best" have not come forth from God, but are the products of an extremely long course of evolution. Does Mr. Campbell really mean to say that motherhood at its best would be an impossibility if

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there were no God with an infinite maternal heart? With most of what he tells us about human motherhood we are, of course, in complete agreement. Whatever is distinctive and special in motherhood is the most beautiful thing in the world. There is nothing that can for a moment be compared with it. It is the holiest and most exalted reality known to us. Above and beyond it there is nothing, Mr. Campbell's God being merely misguided fancy's product.

The reverend gentleman's description of his sexless Deity is highly amusing. Listen:—

> "We can think of God as strong and masculine, inflexibly righteous, sternly just in his judgments. We can visualise him under these aspects without any difficulty, cannot think of him without them; but perhaps his more gracious qualities do not so readily force themselves upon the imagination. Even though we call him a God of love, and our Father, fully believing what we say, and deriving great comfort from it, the thought of his mercifulness and faithfulness, his inalienable, yearning solicitude for our welfare, is not, as a rule, equally clear to our conceptions."

We maintain, on the contrary, that it is quite impossible, with the history of the world in our mind's eye, to think intelligently and honestly of God in either of those capacities. Can you point to a single occasion during the last two thousand years on which he whom you call the absolute Sovereign of the Universe granted a tangible manifestation of his strength and masculinity, his inflexible righteousness, and his sternly just judgment? In what war has he ever defended right against might? The Bible tells us that he has a mighty arm, but when did he put it forth to protect the weak against the greed and lust of the strong? Has he not permitted beautiful Belgium to become a vast heap of black ruins, and its innocent people miserable exiles on the face of the earth? Has he not allowed Germany to shell three important towns on our north-east coast and kill and wound many harmless civilians within their borders? Surely such happenings cannot be cited as evidences that the world is governed by a God of justice and love. Mr. Campbell is of opinion that our Heavenly Father is neither the soft sentimentalist preached by many modern evangelists, nor the stern, cold-hearted sovereign the Puritans believed him to be, but the sexless being who is really neither father nor mother, yet possesses and exercises the attributes of both. Well, whatever God is or is not, whether he exists or does not exist, there is no doubt whatever but that the minister of the City Temple plays the part of a sentimentalist with a vengeance in the pulpit. Fancy his having the temerity to assure a man that what he cannot bear, God will bear for him; that if he suffers, it is not because God is indifferent to his case, but because he needs that pain in order to bless and exalt him, and that not one pang will be permitted beyond what that holy purpose requires. Such a Gospel is a lie, and tends to emasculate those who are foolish enough to listen to it.

The sexless Deity has an only begotten Son who became a man, and Mr. Campbell declares that we do not need to look further than the man Christ Jesus "for the meaning of motherhood in God." "Was ever any man so strong as Jesus?" he exultantly asks; to which question we have no hesitation in returning an affirmative answer. Many men have been much stronger than the Gospel Jesus. A genuinely strong man would not have broken down, as Jesus is reported to have done when he realised that a cruel death was at hand. Socrates did not enter Gethsemane and pray that he might not drink the hemlock. Giordano Bruno faced the flames without a tremor, and died a braver death than Jesus, which he would not have had to die had it not been for the superstitious belief in the Galilean. "Was ever woman more loyally tender to her own?" Mr. Campbell again asks; and again we boldly answer in the affirmative. Tenderness was not a conspicuous feature of Jesus' treatment of his disciples, while all others were denounced in the strongest terms. How often did he lose patience with and severely scold his small band of followers. Against all who did not take him at his own valuation his wrath was terrible, and Mr. Campbell exaggerates when he characterises his love for his own as "sweet beyond words." Well, out of the Gospel Jesus the Church has constructed Christ, and Christ reigns as King of Kings and Lord of Lords; and we know to our sorrow with what disastrous results. God is now in Christ reconciling the world to himself, and in the name of both Christendom is waging the bloodiest and savagest war in all history.

We conclude, therefore, that whether the Deity be of no sex or not, the belief in him has done nothing but harm, and that the sooner it dies out the better it will be for mankind.

J. T. LLOYD.

"The Cosmic Roots of Love."—III.

BY REV. HENRY M. SIMMONS.

(Published by the World Peace Foundation, Boston, U.S.A.)

(Concluded from p. 806.)

THE harmony of nations and the folly of their quarrels was also taught more and more by *eminent men*, from Sully and Grotius onward. Voltaire wrote most earnestly against wars. Benjamin Franklin said there never had been and never would be a good one. Jeremy Bentham denounced war as "mischief on the largest scale." Robert Hall condemned it as "the temporary repeal of all the principles of virtue." Carlyle asked whether the French and English soldiers who "blow the souls out of one another" have any real reason for it; and he answered, "Busy as the devil is, not the slightest." Long before General Sherman, Channing said that a battlefield is a vast "exhibition of crime," and that "a more fearful hell in any region of the universe cannot well be conceived." Auguste Comte closed his "Positive Philosophy" with congratulation that the old evil was ending; and at about the same time Emerson wrote that "war is on its last legs" and "begins to look like an epidemic insanity." Charles Sumner called it "international lynch-law" with works "infinitely evil and accursed;" and he said that the greatest value of the Springfield arsenal was that it had inspired Longfellow's poem against war. Theodore Parker wrote, "Posterity will damn into deep infamy that government which allows a war to take place in the middle of the nineteenth century." Even during our Mexican War, Parker denounced it as "mean and infamous"—as not only a "great boy fighting a little one," but as a fight where "the big boy is in the wrong, and tells solemn lies to make his side seem right." So Lowell opposed that war of his own country—made Hosea Biglow "call it murder," and made Parson Wilbur rebuke it in behalf of a higher "patriotism" and of that truer country which is not territory, but justice. In 1848 and 1849 great Peace Congresses for international arbitration and disarmament met in Brussels and Paris. At the latter Victor Hugo predicted the day when cannon would be obsolete and seen only in museums as curiosities. Even England, during a whole generation of peace, had reached the "belief that wars were things of the past;" and Buckle soon after wrote that the national taste for them had become "utterly extinct."

The work of union continued, and even the wars that followed were sometimes in its favor. Our own Civil War was in the name of "the Union." Italy was at last united again. The great German empire was organised where a score of petty States had once opposed each other. But union has been advanced most by the peaceful processes of industry, trade, travel, intercourse of every kind. Victor Hugo contrasted the great Industrial Exposition at Paris, where the nations had come together to learn good from each other, with "that terrible international exposition called a battlefield." Even the electric

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flashes through the Atlantic cable moved Whittier to sing,—

"Weave on, swift shuttle of the Lord,
Beneath the sea so far,
The bridal-robe of earth's accord,
The funeral-shroud of war."

Every peaceable ship is a fuller shuttle for that shroud; every railway train, with its merchandise and mail, adds its thread to that bridal-robe. Through these secular agencies, human sympathy has already widened until men give their tears and treasure for suffering heathen around the earth, whom once they would have thought it sacred duty to slay. The very laws of the world are working for the true Christianity and the final union of mankind.

Not, indeed, that we are near it yet. The nations still try to out-trick each other in trade. In the most "Christian" nations the citizens sometimes do; and possessions are not shared with perfect brotherhood even in the Church. No longer is Ananias struck dead for keeping back part of his property, but he and Sapphira sit safely in their pew, with no question about their land. No longer is Dives sent to "hell" on account of his wealth, but has become a deacon, and the preacher has found a way to get the camel through the needle's eye. Nor is Lazarus as peaceful as he used to be. He is ready to dynamite, not Dives only, but every Lazarus who will not join his strike to cut off the country's needed coal or beef.

For the spirit of *violence* still survives to rend society. It inspires not only the poor and ignorant, but their leaders and rulers, and sometimes takes possession of a nation. That long dream of peace to which we have referred was broken by a most destructive series of wars. Those of the ten years ending in 1871 are said by Mulhall to have cost nearly a million and a half of lives and nearly six billions of dollars. Since then the armaments in Europe have much further increased. A standard new History tells us that the "civilised Christian nations" now occupying the old Roman territory, though no longer in danger from outside barbarians, yet keep "under arms ten or twelve times the forces" of the pagan emperors. Military expenditures are vastly greater than any other. Even in our own country, in 1899, the Naval and War Departments and pensions consumed nearly three-fourths of the entire expenditures of the national government. President Eliot recently reminded us that the sum granted to our great Agricultural Department for a year was "about the cost of one day of the war with Spain;" while the annual amount given to the beneficent work of fish-culture was less than that spent in maintaining one battleship. Fifty years ago Charles Sumner said: "Every ship of war that floats costs more than a well-endowed college; every sloop of war, more than the largest library in our country." To-day, battleships are far more costly and numerous, and eminent Americans who profess much zeal for Christ want to increase them.

They want to use them, too; and even preachers are not always opposed to this. General Francis A. Walker wrote, in 1869, that in five years' pretty constant attendance at church, and in listening to sermons from fifty different pulpits, he had "not heard a single discourse which was devoted to the primitive Christian idea of peace, or which contained a perceptible strain of argument or appeal for international good will." A few years ago we kept our Christmas season of "peace on earth" by a clamor for a mighty war with England about a Venezuelan boundary. Our people and press had just been crying out against the horror of a proposed pugilistic fight between two fools in Texas, but now became eager to send into the ring half a million Christians to engage in battles beside which prize-fights would be bland and benevolent. Some even argued that our national character would be ennobled by a war, and our moral tone improved by bombarding a few towns and butchering their people. The excitement passed, and how that boundary question was settled few now know or care. But we have since tried that method of ethical training, though on a much smaller and safer scale. The ideals of the battlefield and of the "water-cure" have spread among the people, yet without the predicted moral improvement. Indeed, violence seems to have become unusually popular, strikers club and kill other workmen with mediæval ardor, and now and then a community gathers with the greatest delight to watch the writhings of a negro burning to death. In pessimistic moments one sometimes feels that our civilisation is little more than a film, beneath which the old savagery is still seething.

These evils, however, are exceptional, and we must not make too much of them. A little bad gets all attention, while the great current of good ones goes on unheeded, just because it is so great and common. The bad may even be a sign of progress; and part of the violence to-day is a passionate outcry against wrongs that have long been allowed, and that must be ended. But, amid the violence, peaceful methods are advancing, and arbitration is more and more settling labor troubles and preventing wars. Even the wars that do come are no longer between the foremost nations, but have mostly sunk into expeditions of some powerful people to conquer some feeble one. Even these inglorious conquests have become so difficult and expensive that they will not often be attempted; while real war between two great powers would be so vastly more so that M. Bloch pronounced it already impossible. Certainly, war seems destined to die at length by its own growth, to kill itself by its costliness. Even now, two equal nations could not long continue it without the bankruptcy of both.

So do the laws of progress work for peace. A wise man, when challenged, replied that any fool can propose a duel, but it takes two fools to fight. The nations will yet learn this. Already they are questioning the wisdom of wasting most of their wealth in endless preparation for wars which can be avoided, and which cannot come without mutual ruin. Already they see a fallacy in the system which spends millions on a battleship that soon becomes useless by the invention of a better one, and which is for ever improving walls to resist cannon, and then improving cannon to destroy the walls. They begin to see the folly of fortifying boundaries at infinite expense, when that long one between us and British America has been safe for nearly a century, without walls or warship, by mere mutual agreement. They see something worse than folly in the system which uses our noble youth like Falstaff's ragamuffins—as "food for powder" and "to fill a pit"—and, sometimes, to fulfil viler purposes. For the moral fallacy, too, is more and more seen. Why condemn brutality and crime at home, and then cultivate them abroad? Why hang for killing one man, and honor for killing a hundred? Why imprison a starving woman for stealing a loaf, and then praise rulers or soldiers for looting cities and stealing a whole country? Shall justice be abolished by a national boundary, and the moral law stop at the State line?

Emerson once said, "The arch-abolitionist, older than John Brown, and older than the Shenandoah Mountains, is Love, whose other name is Justice, which was before Alfred, before Lycurgus, before slavery, and will be after it." That same Love and Justice, older than battleships or the brutality that wants them, is still here—was alive before wars began, and will be after they are ended.

Doubtless this principle of union will work on until it links all nations by just laws, and settles their quarrels by peaceful courts. It will also unite all classes in them. It will not, however, cement society in any spiritless communism like an archaic sponge, or bind men in any tyrannic labor union which denies liberty to its members. For individualism also has been an aim in Nature—from rushing worlds to roaming bees and soaring birds and free souls. The perfect system will combine fraternity with freedom—"liberty and union, one and inseparable, now and for ever."

This principle will perfect religion also. So ancient prophets and apostles taught. So the best modern ones have taught. Dr. Putnam said the one thing

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he worked for was "the sense of universal unity and brotherhood." Dr. Channing not only made this his chief aim, but saw it as the substance of religion, and said, "The love of God is but another name for the love of essential benevolence and justice." So Emerson declared this sentiment not only "the essence of all religion," but the essence of Deity: "If a man is at heart just, then in so far is he God: the immortality of God, the majesty of God, do enter into that man with justice." These words seemed profane, but they are almost the same which the apostle wrote: "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us," for "God is love." Some pious people slur love as "not religion," but "only ethics." Only ethics! Only love; that is, according to the apostle, only *God!* But this is exactly what pious people were seeking. The "cosmic roots of love" are also those of religion.

Such is the sweep of this principle of union. It is indeed a "cosmic" principle, working from the nebula to now—from the primal atoms to the perfect civilisation and religion. The great Kant adored two wonders—the stars above and the moral law within. But the two wonders are one, and all the more wonderful because one. The moral law within is the higher music of the same law which "the morning stars sang together" and have been singing ever since. It is sung ever more clearly through creation—from solar systems up to human society, from nebular mist up to minds that outshine the stars, and to souls and sentiments that hope to outlast the stars. It has brought love. Rather, it is love, and has been love from the first. Its lesson is to work for love now, and to trust the Love eternal.

The Desert of Theology.

THERE is a land where sunshine never cheers
  The garish day, the bleak and woeful earth;
No moon e'er gilds the joyless barren spheres,
  No sound of song, no whisperings of mirth,
  No bridal blossoms and no happy birth;
But all is gloom with musings of despair,
  Each day declines lived out with little worth,
Each season brings no brightened vision rare,
For joy of life can find no place to wander there.

The confines of this land of blood and tears
  Are wrought of parchment, force, and bitter hate;
Flunkeys and fools, and madmen with their leers,
  Patch up the walls of this forlorn estate,
  Doomed to decay forever by stern Fate;
Yet those who live and toil within its walls
  Make fearful moan, but not their toil abate,
From birth, from early morn, or when night falls,
But struggle on, till Death his love words sweetly calls.

WILLIAM REPTON.

THE LITTLE VAGABOND.

Dear mother, dear mother, the Church is cold,
But the alehouse is healthy, and pleasant, and warm;
Besides, I can tell where I am used well,
Such usage in heaven will never do well.

But, if at the Church they would give us some ale,
And a pleasant fire our souls to regale,
We'd sing and we'd pray all the livelong day,
Nor never once wish from the Church to stray.

Then the parson might preach, and drink, and sing,
And we'd be as happy as birds in the spring;
And modest Dame Lurch, who is always at Church,
Would not have bandy children, nor fasting, nor birch.

And God, like a father, rejoicing to see
His children as pleasant and happy as he,
Would have no more quarrel with the devil or the barrel,
But kiss him, and give him both drink and apparel.

—*William Blake.*

Acid Drops

Mr. Lloyd George writes to the *Methodist Times* that he has been visiting the battlefield in France, and was quite surprised at what he saw. Among other things he observed a French officer telling a wounded Prussian prisoner that he need be under no alarm as the Allies treated all the wounded alike—which we quite believe to be the truth. It is no more than is usual amongst civilised nations, even when they are engaged in such an uncivilised thing as warfare. But Mr. Lloyd George had to find a *Christian* moral, and he does it in this way:—

> "I marvelled that this exhibition of goodwill amongst men who were sworn foes should be possible amid such surroundings, until my eyes happened to wander down a lane, where I saw a long row of wagons each marked with a great red cross. Then I knew who had taught these brave men the lesson of humanity that will gradually, surely, overthrow the reign of hate. Christ had not died in vain."

Mr. Lloyd George ought to know that wounded enemies received attention long before the institution of the Red Cross Society. That, indeed, had nothing Christian about its origin. It was started to look after the wounded because the purely military arrangements to this end were so ineffective. Its adoption of the Cross as a mark of recognition was natural, but yet accidental. To say that the Cross had taught these men humanity is sheer nonsense. Mr. Lloyd George ought to recollect that the wars in which wounded enemies have received least consideration have been those in which religion has entered most largely. When men are fighting an ordinary battle the expression, "sworn foes," is more or less symbolic. Very few of the men on the one side bear any personal enmity to those on the other; and, therefore, when the fighting is over the enmity dies down. But when people are led to fight in a religious war, each man feels himself to be in grim reality a sworn foe of everyone on the other side. And that feeling, as all experience teaches, dies out neither easily nor rapidly.

Mr. Lloyd George rather ingenuously cites massacres by troops in pre-Christian times, and adds "these were the accompaniments of civilised warfare before the advent of Christ." But why go back so far? Our pious Chancellor must surely be aware of the fact that massacres have commonly accompanied all wars until very recent times. More, for cold-blooded brutality, he need go no farther away than the country that has suffered so terribly during the present War—Belgium. History—Christian or non-Christian—contains nothing so deliberately barbarous as the massacres of the inhabitants of the Belgian cities by the Spanish Christians, and the slaughter of the Waldenses and Albigenses by Christian soldiers outdid in horror anything that the present War has seen. Such special pleading is quite unnecessary. The atrocities committed, when every allowance has been made, are bad enough, and ought to excite the indignation of decent people everywhere. Mr. Lloyd George's way of putting it must just be taken as an example of the disturbing influence of Christian prejudice.

The English Churches did well the other day by their special time of prayer. The Kaiser rested a bit in communion with the Lord, and during that time a powerful German fleet was prepared to make a raid upon some undefended towns on the English East Coast, in direct violation of the Hague Convention which the Kaiser himself had signed—but that, we all know, was "only a scrap of paper." Scarborough, Whitby, and other seaside resorts were nicely bombarded, without a gun to reply with. All they had to trust to was the God of intercession, who appears to have neglected them altogether. Hundreds of peaceable civilians—men, women, and children—were slain without a moment's notice. Then the German fleet heard the distant thunder of the British ships that were not made in Germany, so they made fast tracks for the land of their birth, which they reached in safety. We wonder what the British Christians think of their God now? What he thinks of them must be an easy problem.

From 8 o'clock on Wednesday morning until 8 o'clock on Thursday morning was the time devoted to prayer in the Cathedral. It was at first decided that women should not be allowed to remain after 9 o'clock at night, but eventually the hour was altered to 11 o'clock, and those who were there at that hour were allowed to remain, but newcomers were not admitted. One wonders why women could not be trusted in a Christian cathedral, or what a twenty-four hours' praying was supposed to accomplish? These people seem to treat God as a cute youngster

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does its parents. Sheer persistency often does the trick. However, the value of the performance may be gauged by the fact that it was during the time these people were praying that the German gunboats were bombarding the East Coast.

January 3 is the day set apart in England as a day of prayer on account of the War. We should have thought the St. Paul's experiment was enough for awhile, but the motto of the clergy is evidently "Business as usual." In this Day of Prayer, however, the English clergy are not to have it all their own way. The Archbishops and Bishops of Germany have ordered Sunday, January 10, to be observed as a general day of prayer and repentance. Both sides will pray; both will repent—and both will go on as usual.

In issuing a notice for the English "Day of Humble Prayer and Intercession," the Archbishops of Canterbury and York say:—

> "Never was there a time when the 'agreement' in prayer, to which so much is promised, has been so widely extended. The Roman Catholics and the Nonconformists in the United Kingdom have consented to co-operate with us. But, more than this, the Church of France is doing the same, and we have reason to believe that, so far as is possible in the circumstances, the Church in Belgium will do likewise. The Church of the great Russian Empire has been informed of our intention, and we may thankfully count upon sympathy in that direction. In neutral countries, too, and especially in America, there will be many to join in our prayers. We trust that throughout our Empire there will be a mighty voice of prayer raised to our Heavenly Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace."

The Archbishops, between them, might at least be accurate. The Church of France is not joining in the Day of Prayer, for the reason that there is no Church of France in existence. The Church *in* France may join in, but that is all. All the clergy with all the Allies will willingly join in prayer for the success of the allied forces, because they are fighting a common enemy, and are anxious for his destruction. And it is worth noting that this co-operation between Christians only becomes possible on the basis of hatred for someone else. So much for the value of the Christian doctrine of love.

The *Church Times* is hoping that the War will open up a brighter future for the Church in France. It says that Frenchmen have often treated the Church as an alien enemy, but the suspicion of the French workmen will be set at rest on observing the conduct of the priests during the War. Well, it is just possible that some people will form a better idea of the clergy as men than they did before. But the *Church Times* is very much mistaken if it imagines that the War will make any difference to the general policy of the Church in France once the War is over, or that those who opposed the Church before will embrace it in the future. Opposition to the Church in France, like opposition to the Church elsewhere, was based upon the perception of the truth that its strength threatened the wellbeing of society. It was not the expression of a mood, but the outcome of a deep and sincere conviction. Naturally, so long as the War lasts, and so long as national security and independence is threatened, internal quarrels are dropped, and amongst these the fight against the control of the secular State by clerical influences. But with the coming of peace the old social divisions and clash of opinions will reappear, and for our part we should be sorry were it otherwise.

The last sentence may be open to misapprehension, and a word of explanation is advisable. Very much has been said from the pulpit—as though it were something to be pleased at—that this War has had the beneficial effect of suspending all social and political quarrels; that threatened strikes, etc., have not materialised; that everything has been forgotten in the desire to defeat a common enemy. Quite so; and we agree as to the necessity for this; but we do not agree as to its being a move in the right direction. However poor many of our political and social quarrels are, society develops by the contest of opposing ideals and opinions. There is simply no other method by means of which progress may be achieved. And to suspend this kind of warfare is not a good thing, but a bad thing; it means, not progress, but stagnation or retrogression. It is the suspension of warfare on a higher scale in favor of warfare on a lower scale. And the pulpits, in praising this as one of the beneficent consequences of the War, are showing themselves to be, as usual, the enemies of sane and orderly progress.

The Church Army has received a letter concerning a late subscriber, as follows: "Mrs. Blank is dead, and would be therefore glad if the Church Army would cease sending more appeals. She is no longer able to send monetary support, much as she would like to do so."

The sub-editors have been using their biggest type to narrate the story of a German officer's narrow escape from a concentration camp in a packing-case, in which he was boxed up for thirty-six hours, with a rug, biscuits, and cheese. What a pity there was no Yellow Press when Jonah made his memorable trip in the whale's stomach.

A French pussy saved a British officer's life by curling around his neck and preventing him being frozen to death, and a monument is to be erected to the faithful animal. In ancient days cats and other animals were the object of adoration, and a dove is the symbol of one of the members of the Christian Trinity.

We have always felt a genuine respect for the judicature of this country. While recognising the inevitable prejudices that afflict human nature—and Freethinkers have more cause to appreciate this than most other people—and allowing for blunders and errors of judgment that *will* happen, we have always felt that there is no country in the world in which an accused person stands a better chance of a fair trial than in this country. Our judges do, on the whole, *try* to be impartial, and generally are impartial. Nothing has shown this more clearly than the quashing of the verdict by the Court of Appeal against the German Consul at Newcastle. In ordinary times the decision would not have called for special comment. But just now, when feeling runs so high, and immediately after the frightful and quite unwarrantable destruction of life on the East Coast by raiding German cruisers, the decision is a remarkable one, and should be recognised as such. We are not venturing on any opinion concerning the justice of the original sentence, or of the result of the appeal. We merely cite it as proof of the integrity of the English courts, and one which England's deadliest enemies ought to appreciate at its true value. From one point of view it is something that every one may contemplate with pride. The pity is that national disputes cannot be settled by a court composed of men—drawn from all countries—of the type of these judges, instead of by the brutal and senseless form of an appeal to arms. One day, perhaps?

Father Samuel has been entertaining a big congregation in Berlin with a lecture on "Is God Neutral?" The reverend gentleman took a negative view of the question. God was certainly on the side of the Germans (especially at Yarmouth, Scarborough, and a few other such places, where the people don't fight and have nothing to fight with). After the War the Germans will be the greatest people on earth. And when will that be? Father Samuel's power of prophecy ends at that point. Which is a great pity. For a good many gentlemen of his own race—though not, apparently, of his own religion—would give him a nice price for a "correct quotation."

We have not been giving the poor Christites our attention lately, but here are three from quite recent lists. It's a long, long way to Tipperary, so we'll take the Dean of that well-sung city first. Ven. Denis Harcan, D.D., left £3 527. Not a vast fortune, is it? but Ireland is not a country in which Catholic priests can expect to be very wealthy. Great improvement is shown by the Rev. Francis Lambert Cursham, vicar of Twenditch, Derbyshire, who left £32,459; and still more by Canon William Wolfe Capas, of Hereford, who left £41,977. We pause here, lest our pen should reach the top of the Tower of Babel.

Referring to the pulpit message, "Peace and goodwill amongst men," the *Daily Mirror* says that we can only send half of it. "Peace must wait till another year." This is a smart attempt to put the Christian Humpty-Dumpty on the wall again.

What "soulful" writing there is nowadays. Alluding to the great American railway stations, the New York Central Library, and some well-known stores, Mr. Stephen Graham finds that they are "temples of a new religion," in which "Americans pray more and aspire more to God than they do in the Churches." Pray and aspire, indeed! Prey and perspire would be more correct.

In the *Sunday Chronicle* for December 20 an unnamed "Labor Leader" writes of his conversion from pacifism to militarism. There is nothing very surprising in this. Many men lose their mental balance during times such as the present, and, so far, there doesn't seem any reason to give

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the Labor Leaders in any country special credit for maintaining theirs. So far as this gentleman's opinion goes, that this War, instead of ending all wars, will only tend to an increase of militarism, we agree with him. It is no more than we have said ourselves over and over again. War cannot be killed by war; of that we are quite certain. And when this conflict is brought to a close there will be a strong demand that our Navy and Army shall be kept at greater strength than hitherto, and this is only what must occur in all other countries. You cannot have universal disarmament by agreement, because nations do not trust each other sufficiently to agree upon this point. And if they did trust each other, you would hardly need agreement, as disarmament would come about almost of itself. Whoever gains or loses by the War, it is certain that militarism will gain. Amongst nations of approximately equal strength a purely defensive army is more or less of a delusion. In such cases a defensive army becomes, sooner or later, an offensive army. Of course, the offensive war is called a defensive one; that always happens. Even the German people had to be taught that their war was a defensive one; and the majority of Germans, apparently, still believe this to be the case.

But our converted "Labor Leader" is very wide of the mark when he says that the pacifists should not shrink from militarist abuse; "they should rather be thankful for the grace of moral courage that enables them to admit that they were mistaken." But were they mistaken? On the contrary, they were absolutely right in what they said. *They* never said that war could not occur. They knew that not only was war possible, but that militarists were going the right way to make it probable, and even inevitable. It was the militarists who said that the only way to secure peace was to prepare for war; and then, when war ensues, they say they were quite correct, only the preparations were not large enough. Well, but that principle, if true anywhere, must be true everywhere. It must be as true in Germany as in England. Did the German preparations for war make for peace? Why, the claim is that it was the German preparations for war that caused us to increase our military strength. And as one nation increases, others do the same—still maintaining the same relative strengths. And where is *that* process to end? Sooner or later one nation, finding itself with a huge army and navy, is bound to venture on trying conclusions with another nation. The thing is simply inevitable. The whole truth is that preparations for war mean war sooner or later. A nation does not *respect* brute strength on the part of another nation; it *fears* it—which is a very different thing. The War has fully justified all that pacifists have ever said on this head.

The only peace that comes from war is the peace that comes from the impossibility of further fighting. And the history of the world proves that this peace—or, rather, military inaction—is no guarantee against a recrudescence of war; quite the contrary. We see that kind of peace when two strongly entrenched armies face each other. Neither can advance; neither will retreat. There is a pause in the fighting, and each side uses this pause to bring up new troops, to devise fresh plans, for a more deadly attack. And that is really the kind of "peace" that war leaves behind it. The nation that is beaten plans for revenge; the nation that does the beating arms to prevent reprisals. Hatred of war and all that war means; a full perception of its inevitable folly, cruelty, wastefulness, and futility; a growth of intelligence, sympathy, and humanity; are the only forces that will ever end war. The pacifist said this before the War began. He is saying this now the War is on, and he will say it when the War is over, because all that has happened only illustrates its truth. The cannon is no better as a moral teacher than the whip.

The only "saint" that the English people cared for was "Saint John Lubbock," who was the founder of Bank Holidays, and who afterwards became Lord Avebury. His biography has just been published at the price of thirty shillings, and his most fervent admirers will have to wait until his book appears in a cheaper form.

The Incorporated Association of Headmasters holds its Annual General Meeting in the Guildhall on January 5. Amongst other resolutions is the following, which is to be moved by Mr. F. B. Malim, of Haileybury College:—

> "That in the opinion of this Association instruction in the elements of military drill and the use of the rifle should form part of the education of all boys in secondary schools."

Of course, this is not the first time that suggestions of this kind have been made; but coming now, and with some probability of its being carried, it is a good illustration of the value of the outcry against Prussian militarism. Intelligent hatred of this—and every other kind of hatred is worse than useless—would aim at protecting one's own country against militarism as much as possible. For whether we are to have Prussian militarism or any other militarism makes little real difference. The essential thing is to kill militarism everywhere, and to kill it by making it thoroughly abhorrent to people everywhere. And how is this going to be done by training people, from boyhood upward, in the very thing that we profess to dislike? Militarism in adult life is bad enough, but militarism in school life is infinitely more objectionable. School life, at least, should be kept free from this blot upon civilisation. To teach schoolboys the value and power of rational and moral ideals is to pave the way for peace. To accustom them to the rifle as the supreme arbiter of human affairs, is just as surely to pave the way for war. We hope that the other headmasters attending the meeting will be sane enough, and, in the best sense, patriotic enough, to recognise this and act upon it.

The Rector of Buckley, near Chester, has withdrawn the printing of the parish magazine from the firm that usually did the work on the ground that Dissenters were employed. A splendid thing is Christianity for inducing feelings of love and brotherhood.

Mr. Will Crooks, M.P., would sooner see every British man and woman blotted out than England defeated by Germany. He would sooner *see* them blotted out. The phrasing is expressive.

We feel sure that the Christians in this country will be glad to learn that the spiritual welfare of the German troops at the front is being well looked after. From an article in the *Daily News* we learn that the French troops captured a large consignment of little books compiled by priests and pastors for the use of German soldiers. The covers bear the inscription, "With God for the Victory," and inside there are quotations from the Old and New Testaments, forms of prayer, etc. It is also said that some of the soldiers, before going into battle, kneel down and entrust their souls and bodies to God. This is very gratifying, and we hope that British Christians will bear in mind that whatever the faults of the German troops, the majority are good Christians, and that their religious guides are as keen as our own to see that religious ministrations follow them to the field of battle.

The Christian Literature Society for India issues a special appeal for funds, pointing out that our debt to India is "immense," and that less than four millions out of three hundred and thirteen millions of the people of India are Christian. It therefore appeals for funds to send Christian literature to the people of India. We would suggest that a collection of the illustrated papers showing the Christian War in Europe would meet the case. The benighted Hindoo would be able to see how much better things are done in Christian countries.

The *Daily Mail* is a useful handmaid to the clergy. The following note was added to "A Prayer in Time of War" in a recent issue: "The War will change many things in art and life, and among them, it is to be hoped, many of our own ideas as to what is, and what is not, intellectual." "Carnage," to quote the poet's words, may be "God's daughter," but it does not straighten the tangle of the Trinity, or make the story of Jonah credible.

It is curious that so many people in this country should discover that Germany's repudiation of a treaty obligation is the result of "Materialism," or of neglecting the belief in God, etc. These good Christians should bear in mind that the repudiation of plighted words—whether written or oral—was raised to the level of a principle by only one institution in the world's history, namely, the Christian Church. "No faith with heretics" was made a principle of conduct by the Christian Church centuries before Bernhardi or Treitschke or Nietzsche were heard of. And the idea that no treaties should be made with heretics has been a common belief among Christians belonging to all Churches. When it comes to treading ordinary human obligations under foot the Christian Church generally can give every institution a long start and then make sure of an easy win.

The King of Siam, who has written a book on International Law, was formerly a member of Oxford University, and is yet another addition to the small list of royal authors. The most remarkable of these writers was the "King of Kings," whose masterpiece, the Bible, is one of the "blest books ever written.

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To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £239 17s. 6d. Received since:—H. Jessop, £5; G. F. Shoults, £1 1s.; Andrew Harvey, 10. 6d.; J. H., 5s.; F. E. Willis, 7s. 6d.; Mrs. Turnbull and Family, £1.; W. P. Adamson, £1 1s.; J. Robertson, 2s. 6d.; G. Sanders, 2s. 6d.; E. Dobson, 10s.

H. BAILEY.—The old lady's story has little point for such length.

F. E. WILLIS.—Glad you think the *Freethinker* articles on the War are "quite refreshing for their sanity and level-headedness."

T. O.—Yes, we are weathering the War-storm fairly well. You ask how we manage it? Our staff think for themselves, say what they mean, and mean what they say. Three lectures on Sunday, morning, afternoon, and evening, used to be the regular performance of special travelling lecturers. The object was to lower expenses. We did it ourselves. But it was killing work; and after a breakdown one Sunday, finding two lectures sufficient, we dropped the old practice, and the rule has been two ever since. It only wanted somebody eminent enough to break the old rule once for all.

H. JESSOP.—Very pleased to hear from you again, with substantial support as well as "every success" in our "fight for truth and liberty."

W. P. BALL.—Thanks for your cuttings.

E. B.—Your cuttings afford us great help.

WE have had our attention called to the fact that the poem, "I Would Not Be an Angel," in our last issue, is wrongly signed "Wallace Celson." The poem was by our old friend Wallace Nelson, and doubtless many British Freethinkers recognised for whom the name was intended. We regret the error, but we feel sure that Mr. Nelson, like ourselves, has been called many worse names than "Celson" in the course of his life.

G. BEDBOROUGH.—We thank you for the dainty little booklet and good wishes. Many a larger work has said less, and said even that, less well.

G. YATES.—The present is not a very *merry* Christmas, all things considered; and yet there is no reason why it should not be made as merry as possible. Joy and sorrow are individual matters, and there is no good done by pretence, or by trying to enforce gloom where it is not felt.

A. F. THORN.—Will see to the matter after Christmas.

AVON DALE.—Glad to have your good wishes. It is pleasant to know one is read with so much appreciation.

MRS. TURNBULL AND FAMILY.—We always remember you with Glasgow.

W. P. ADAMSON.—Fairly well, but the work is more taxing than it was—as, indeed, is only to be expected.

A. WYCHERLEY.—Rather late; afraid we cannot find room.

A. CHAPMAN.—Canon Green gets greener than ever. As long as we believe in God (Green's "God") the War is cheap. We don't exactly see how. But Green does, so it's all right.

G. BETTS.—Your open letter to Mr. Blatchford might do good in *his* paper; we can't see what good it could do in ours.

E. B.—Both statements may be true. The *Referee* is a very different paper now. Let us have the paper regularly, if you will; but the "cuttings" plan saves us trouble.

J. DISCOLL.—Christmas verses are not much of a treat to *our* readers, unless they are specially meritorious.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and *not* to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Bertram Dobell.

I AM not able to write at length this week on my old friend, Bertram Dobell, whose death took place recently, the funeral occurring at Golder's Green.

Obituary notices appeared in several newspapers, but I want to say something special about him, particularly with regard to old days and old interests. My contribution will, at least, be interesting to old friends.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

Our next issue of the *Freethinker* will be a New Year's number, as well as the beginning of a new volume. There will be special articles by the regular contributors, and this should form a favorable time for the introduction of the paper to new readers. No paper stands more firmly in the affection of its readers than does the *Freethinker* in entering the thirty-fifth year of its existence, but its influence for good might be much greater than it is were it not for the trade and other obstacles to a larger circulation. Our strongest ally has always been personal canvass on the part of our readers, and we look forward to this source of help in 1915 as in previous years. The bond between *Freethinker* writers and readers is not that of the ordinary newspaper and its *clientele*. It is that of fellow-workers in a common cause.

We trust that all members of the Secular Society, Ltd., have received the Annual Report and Balance Sheet, together with Proxy Form, to be used at the Annual Meeting on December 29, at 7 o'clock. Those who have not received due notice should acquaint the Secretary of the fact without delay. All Proxy Forms for voting must be returned to the office at least two clear days before the meeting, duly stamped and witnessed. It is, however, to be hoped that all London members, at least, will be present in person, and we hope to see a sprinkling of provincial members as well. The place of meeting is the Society's Registered Offices, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

We shall not have many more opportunities of calling the attention of our readers to the London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner on January 12. Known Freethinkers will have received from the General Secretary a notice pointing out that this year tickets will be only supplied on application. The Dinner will be held at Frascati's Restaurant, Oxford-street, W., which is easy of access from all parts of London. The price of the tickets are 4s. each, and there will be the usual program of vocal and instrumental music, accompanied by speeches. The Chair will be taken by the President, and the function offers a good opportunity for introducing the "Unconverted" to Freethinkers in their more peaceful mood.

Some of the London magistrates seem to need a little instruction as to what are their powers over those who prefer affirmation to the oath. The following is reported as having taken place at Tottenham on December 17, in the case of a witness who declared himself an Agnostic and wished to affirm:—

> "Alderman Huggett (the magistrate): What is an Agnostic?
> Witness: A magistrate should know.
> Don't you know?—Well.
> Well?—Yes; well. I will make a declaration.
> The Clerk: You cannot make a declaration until we know the grounds for your saying you are an Agnostic.
> Witness: I'll make a declaration.
> Alderman Huggett: Do you know why you object?
> Witness said he would read part of what was on the card. You will read the whole or none.—I believe in the Agnostic position.
> I want to know what that is?—Well, get on with it.
> Clerk: Don't be rude.
> The witness then took the book and repeated the oath in its entirety."

In this case the witness appears to have had but a hazy notion of his rights in a court of law, and it is a pity that he allowed the magistrate and the clerk between them to "jockey" him into taking the oath. But the conduct of the magistrate was quite indefensible. He had the right to ask on what grounds a witness desires to affirm. It was not the business of the magistrate to inquire the meaning of the Agnostic position, or any other. Any witness may decline to take the oath on the ground of its being contrary to his religious belief, or because he has no religious belief. Witnesses are strongly advised to stick to one of these two grounds and to decline—respectfully—to be drawn into any controversy. It is only fair to say that difficulties concerning affirmation crop up very rarely nowadays, but they do occur, as the above case shows.

As we go to press we regret to hear of the death of our old and esteemed friend and Vice-President of the N. S. S.—Richard Johnson, of Manchester. An obituary notice will appear next week.

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The Merry Birthday of the Man of Sorrows.

"On looking out of the window this morning I noticed my neighbors were drunker than usual, and I remembered that it was the birthday of their Redeemer."

—THOMAS CARLYLE.

THE convivial features of Christmas Day have been noted frequently, to the discomfiture of theologians; for it is one of life's little ironies that the birthday of the "Prince of Peace" was fixed in December from the urgent necessity of fighting Pagan rituals. Like all human institutions, the Christian Churches and their feast days have had to contend in open warfare for survival. The festivals of Pagan Rome were numerous. The public holidays, indeed, at some epochs, were so frequent that the Emperors, especially Marcus Aurelius, found it necessary to curtail them. It was to counteract the attractions which these Pagan holidays exercised over the people that the leaders of the Christian Churches sanctioned and incorporated some of these feasts.

"God's birthday" was not kept regularly until many generations after the alleged birth of Christ. When first observed, it was held on varying dates. The precise time of Christ's birth, like that of "James de la Pluche," was "wropt in mystery"; but it was not in December. Why, then, do Christians observe Christmas Day on December 25? The answer plucks the heart out of the Christian superstition.

It was in competition with the feast of Saturnalia, one of the chief Roman festivals, that Christmas Day had its date fixed in December. The anniversaries of Saturn and his wife were held from December 17 to 20, and the Emperor Caligua added a fifth day of rejoicing. On these five festal days of old Rome the schools were closed, no punishment was inflicted, the toga was replaced by undress garment, distinctions of rank were laid aside, servants sat at table with their employers, and all classes exchanged gifts. The propensity of converts from Paganism to cling to custom proved invincible. If the apostates were to be retained in the new religion, it became necessary to incorporate the old under the mask of the new. The struggle for survival has also incorporated other features. In the far-off centuries the white-robed Druids cut the sacred mistletoe with a golden sickle, and chanted their hymns to the frosty air. These features were absorbed also, and the mistletoe and carol singing still play their minor, if amusing, parts in the celebration.

"Peace and goodwill amongst men" proclaim the pulpits everywhere, whilst the clergy are blessing the colors, and praying for the troops of the contending armies. The nations which profess to worship the "Prince of Peace" are in the grip of Mars, the god of war. From the Elbe to the Spree, from the Seine to the Neva, Europe is a shambles, ankle-deep in blood. The countrymen of Moliere are cutting the throats of the countrymen of Goethe, and the compatriots of Kossuth are disemboweling the brothers of Tolstoi. The women of Europe, "like Niobe, all tears," are mourning their dead; whole nations, professedly Christian, are engaged in wholesale killing. The death moans of tens of thousands are drowned in the Te Deums of the victors, and the flags are blessed in the name of the "Prince of Peace."

To such a pass, after so many centuries of Christianity, has the Western world come. Milton's hymn on "The Nativity of Christ" reads like the bitterest irony:—

"Nor war, or battle's sound
Was heard the world around,
The idle spear and shield were high up hung;
The hooked chariot stood
Unstained with hostile blood;
The trumpet spake not to the armed throng;
And kings sat still with awful eye,
As if they surely knew their sovran Lord was by."

It reads like a beautiful fairy tale. "Peace and goodwill" must wait till another year; and the present celebration of "God's birthday" must make thoughtful men and women think. The Christmas festival itself, with all its hypocritical professions, is largely pretence and make-believe. It is the paradox of paradoxes that the woeful welter of tragic contest is going on in almost every corner of a world that professes to worship the "Prince of Peace" and to obey his commands of non-resistance and forgiveness. "The Merry Birthday of the Man of Sorrows" is an organised hypocrisy, a fitting celebration of an event that never happened.

MIMNERMUS.

Christian Apologetics.

DEAN FARRAR (No. 2).

THE orthodox Church dignitary, Dean Farrar, continuing his apologetic arguments on the genuineness of the miracles ascribed to Jesus Christ in the Gospels, reaches, on page 51, a definite and fairly radical conclusion. He says (*Witness of History to Christ*):—

"We arrive at length at this point—that the credibility of miracles is in each instance simply and solely a question of evidence, *and consequently* that our belief or rejection of the Christian miracles must mainly depend on the character of the Gospels in which they are recorded."

Here our reverend apologist is going a little too fast, as his words "and consequently" indicate. Many critics may be willing to admit that the credibility of miracles is "simply a question of evidence," though most Rationalists probably agree with Hume that *no* human testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle. Without going quite so far, however, it should at least be said that the evidence must be real and incontrovertible, and far stronger than is required for ordinary occurrences. But, up to the present, we have no such evidence for the miracles attributed to Jesus Christ. The Gospel narratives in which these wonders are recorded are not evidence that the miracles were actually performed, but only that some of the early Christians, including perhaps the writers, believed they had been wrought. And the ignorant and credulous Christians of that age believed any wonders they were told; the idea of investigation was foreign to the times, and never entered their minds. The spread of knowledge has, however, altered all that, and real evidence is looked for now.

Our Very Reverend Dean, as already stated, assumes without evidence that the Gospel stories were written by apostolic men in apostolic times, and that they are historical. Having decided, then, that the credibility of miracles was merely "a question of evidence," he next says that our belief in, or rejection of, them "must mainly depend on the character of the Gospels in which they are recorded." This deduction would be perfectly legitimate if the true "character of the Gospels" be admitted—viz., that they are all four unhistorical—but Dean Farrar makes no such admission; for in the next sentence that Very Reverend says:—

"Now into the question of the genuineness and authenticity of the Gospels *we need not enter*, because for our present purpose it has been sufficiently admitted by the most strenuous opponents of the truths which they reveal."

This is certainly a very clever *coup*. The credibility of miracles is simply a question of evidence; that is to say, the credibility is dependent on the character of the Gospels; but the Gospels have been admitted to be genuine and authentic by "the most strenuous *opponents of the truths* which they reveal." Thus, not only are the Gospels shown to be credible and historical *without going into the question of evidence*, but Rationalists who have denied these alleged characteristics are charged with strenuously opposing "the truths" which the unhistorical Gospels reveal. This sample of apologetic reasoning is almost as smart as that which proves that a dog has three tails—which may be stated thusly: One dog has one tail more

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than *no dog*; but *no dog* has two tails; therefore one dog—that is to say, *a* dog—(having a tail more than no dog) has three tails. Q.E.D. The Very Reverend Dean's argument is quite as fallacious as the latter.

But who are those "most strenuous opponents" of the Christian religion who have "*sufficiently* admitted"—whatever that may mean—"the genuineness and authenticity of the Gospels"? Our clever trickster does not say; but he appends in a note two quotations, one from Strauss and the other from Renan.

The first of these (Strauss, *New Life of Jesus*) reads as follows:—

> "The review of evidence with regard to the first three Gospels gives this result, that *soon after the beginning of the second century*, certain traces are found in existence, *not indeed in their present form*, but still of the presence of *a considerable portion of their contents*, and with every indication that the source of these contents were derived from the country which was the theatre of the events in question."

This is very far indeed from admitting the genuineness and authenticity of the canonical Gospels. If the latter were composed by the authors to whom they are ascribed, and in apostolic times, they would be in circulation soon after the middle of the first century. But Strauss only admits the existence of the matter common to the three Synoptics—that is to say, the primitive Gospel from which Matthew, Mark, and Luke took the main portion of their narratives—and this common matter as not existing until the early part of the second century. This critic does not admit the authenticity of the canonical Gospels at all; the latter he holds to be compilations made at a later date.

The quotation from Renan states that the more that scholar had reflected, the more he had been led to believe that the first three canonical texts "nous conduisent très près de l'âge du Christ, *sinon par leur rédaction dernière* du moins par les documents qui les composent." According to this statement, Renan was of opinion that the first three Gospels take us back to very near the time of Christ, *if not by their last written form*, at least by the documents of which they are composed. Here, it should be noted, it is not the canonical Gospels which he places "very near to the age of Christ," but the narratives which are common to the first three. When, however, we look at the notes and references which Renan appends as authorities for his conclusion, we find that they do not bear out his statement. We have no evidence that any Gospel narratives were in existence in the first century at all, though it is quite possible that the first primitive Gospel was composed in the last quarter of that century. Our astute and reverend apologist selected Renan because that critic had placed the composition of the Gospels at an earlier date than most other critics; but even Renan did not admit "the genuineness and authenticity" of the canonical Gospels. Hence, Dean Farrar's statement that "the most strenuous opponents" of Christianity *did* make these admissions is not in agreement with fact.

Next, our Very Reverend goes on to say:—

> "But that the three earliest Gospels at any rate, *in some form or other*, existed before the siege of Jerusalem, and that they had before the middle of the second century acquired a sacred authority, may be regarded as a conclusion which has been wrung from the inevitable candor of reluctant adversaries."

Here our reverend apologist takes the misleading statement of Renan—"very near to the time of Christ"—as correct, while ignoring that of Strauss and other critics, "the inevitable candor" being, apparently, that of Renan, who is also supposed to have been a "reluctant adversary." But when our Very Reverend speaks of the first three Gospels as existing "in some form or other," he tacitly admits that they were derived from earlier writings. And this being the case, what becomes of their alleged "genuineness" or their "authenticity"? The Gospels ascribed to Matthew, Mark, and Luke could not be called genuine or authentic unless they were original and independent accounts, written by Matthew, an apostle, and by Mark and Luke, the companions of apostles, in apostolic times. The writings which existed "in some form or other" were not the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

But, as a matter of fact, we have no evidence that *any* narratives relating to Jesus Christ, not even the matter common to the three Synoptics, were in existence before the siege of Jerusalem (A.D. 66—70). The latter event is fixed upon simply because in the first three Gospels Jesus is represented as foretelling the destruction of the holy city and the temple; for if this alleged prediction was written after the event—as it certainly was—there could then be no doubt of its being a fabrication. The only authority Dr. Farrar had for his statement was Renan's "very near to the age of Christ."

When the so-called "prediction" of the destruction of Jerusalem is examined line by line, and verse by verse, it is found to be a purely literary composition, made up from passages in the ancient Jewish Scriptures—the Old Testament and the Apocrypha—which referred to "the day of the Lord," or what was to happen "in the latter days." It was composed by Essenes or Nazarenes some time after the fall of the holy city, which event is the only historical occurrence referred to in the Gospels. The Essenes, it is scarcely necessary to say, had no foreknowledge of future events; but after the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, and the carrying away of the Jews into slavery, some of the members of that sect believed that the end of the world was at hand, and that they were living in "the latter days." It was in this belief that they made "Jesus the Nazarene," a well-known elder of the sect, whom, some years after his death, they came to regard as a prophet, give utterance to the prediction that he was coming to judge the world "immediately after the tribulation of those days" (Matt. xxiv. 29). The great "prediction" must therefore have been composed not very long after the capture of the holy city. Some years later, a certain latitude was read into the word "immediately," which was taken to mean before the generation then living (A.D. 70) had *all* passed away. We thus get to the last quarter of the first century.

In the second century the grand "prediction" had to be copied with all the other sayings that had been put in the mouth of Jesus, and the words "immediately" and "generation" had to be stretched a little. There was, however, no way of getting rid of the "prophecy"; it was too well known. Later on, the "generation" was interpreted by a pious Christian teacher to mean a thousand years (2 Peter iii. 8, 9). Now both "immediately" and "generation" are ingeniously explained away.

ABRACADABRA.

The Terrors of Superstition.—II.

(*Concluded from p. 812.*)

FROM the dawn of history to the present day the real religion of the uneducated natives of India has always been a belief in countless spirits of a more or less doubtful character. "Brahmanism, Buddhism, Islam, may come and go," writes Frazer, "but the belief in magic and demons remains unshaken through them all, and, if we may judge of the future from the past, it is likely to survive the rise and fall of other religions."

In dealing with the faiths of ancient India, that eminent authority, Professor Oldenberg, has emphasised the omnipresence of the spirits. All natural phenomena, living and lifeless alike, were endowed with souls. And in modern India the genuine religion of the common people remains the same. Professor Monier Williams assures us that—

> "The plain fact undoubtedly is that the great majority of the inhabitants of India are, from the cradle to the burning-ground, victims of a form of mental disease which is best expressed by the term demonophobia. They are haunted and oppressed by a

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perpetual dread of demons. They are firmly convinced that evil spirits of all kinds, from malignant fiends to merely mischievous imps and elves, are ever on the watch to harm, harass, and torment them; to cause plague, sickness, famine, and disaster; to impede, injure, and mar every good work."

Although benevolent beings are to be included in the Indian Pantheon, the natives fear, honor, and supplicate those of a sinister cast. With the Oraons of Bengal fear is the chief ingredient of their faith. Their pure divinities are powerless to alleviate, or are indifferent to, the sufferings of the people. But the evil gods, on the other hand, are aggressively malignant, and to them the praises and prayers of the Oraons are offered. In the neighboring country of Assam the theology of the Kasaris consists in a never-dying dread of the diabolical spirits. Of the Siyins of North-Eastern India it is said that they recognise no supreme god, nor believe in any after-life; but the world in which they dwell, unhappily,—

"is full of evil spirits who inhabit the fields, infest the houses, and haunt the jungles. These spirits must be propitiated or bribed to refrain from doing the particular harm of which each is capable, for one can destroy crops, another can make women barren, and a third cause a lizard to enter the stomach and devour the bowels."

Throughout Asia, in Tibet, Assam, Travancore, Ceylon, and Burma the malevolent spirits are in an overwhelming majority. Where Buddhism is the nominal religion, demonism is the real faith of the masses. Without the slightest exaggeration, it may be said of all the countries just mentioned that the mournful beliefs of the natives constitute the chief curse of their lives. In Siam, where the people are nominally Buddhists and place images of Buddha in their temples, they nevertheless pay more homage to spirits and fiends than to these idols. In addition to the legion of devils located in hell, the Siamese assert the existence of other bad spirits which occupy the air. To these aerial demons they trace all the misfortunes they endure. With the Thay of Indo-China almost every act of life is regulated by some religious superstition. "Spirits," affirms Bourlet, "perpetually watch him, ready to punish his negligences, and he is afraid. Fear is not only for him the beginning of wisdom, it is the whole of his wisdom."

In China the vengeful ghosts are omnipresent, and the superior gods are seldom appealed to, save to protect the people from the ill-conditioned spirits. In Corea, again, the demons are bitterly hostile to man. These baleful creatures are believed, states Mrs. Bishop, in her *Korea and Her Neighbors*,—

"to haunt every umbrageous tree, shady ravine, crystal spring, and mountain crest. On greenhill slopes, in peaceful agricultural valleys, in grassy dells, on wooded uplands, by lake and stream, by road and river, in north, south, east, and west, they abound, making malignant sport of human destinies.....This belief, and it seems to be the only one he has, keeps the Korean in a perpetual state of nervous apprehension; it surrounds him with indefinite terrors."

The religion of the wandering Koryaks exclusively relates to the infernal spirits and their damnable doings. The Koryak priest or shaman is the only person who possesses any influence with the demons, and his clerical duties appear wholly to consist in carrying on negotiations with the sinister spirits, so as to secure certain concessions to the persecuted people. The Gilyaks of Eastern Asia, who worship a multitude of gods, pay special respect to their evil divinities. There are various kinds of these peccant spirits, and they skulk everywhere, both in single spies and battalions. They are also capable of transforming themselves into the shapes of men and other animals. All are evil; the single feature which distinguishes one from another is the degree of its turpitude. Some of these spirit-gods are most accomplished robbers; others amuse themselves by afflicting the poor Gilyaks with aches and pains; while the wickedest of all inflict those mortal injuries apart from which man would never experience death.

But the relentless animosity of supernatural beings towards mankind appears to have reached its maximum of malignancy among the ancient Assyrians and Babylonians. All diseases, both of mind and body, were the manifestations of their malice. Every untoward event was the outcome of their interference in human affairs. Even the gods themselves were open to their enmity and outrage. The mighty god Marduk alone could deliver the people from the unending malevolence of these horrible fiends.

With the Egyptians of antiquity the spirits were arranged into two classes, the upright and the evil. The constant dread under which the pious Egyptian cowered from the malice of these malignant beings was considerably worsened by the circumstance that they were immortal, so that their powers for evil were never at an end. In modern Egypt, according to Lane and other authorities, the popular religion is, at bottom, mere devil-worship. The jinn, "a class of spiritual beings intermediate between angels and men," are simply omnipresent. Incredible as it may appear, the contemporary Egyptian is afraid to perform the most necessary acts of daily life until he has blessed and conciliated the unseen spirits that abound everywhere.

Even among the ancient Greeks the existence of the ghosts was very rarely doubted. It is true that the more enlightened deemed it prudent to conceal their scepticism from the multitude. But the fact remains, as Dr. Frazer reminds us, that one of the earliest, and certainly one of the greatest of the Greek philosophers, Thales, allowed the world to be inhabited with gods or ghosts. It is also true that this primitive delusion was seriously entertained by thoughtful and cultured Greeks right down to Christian times. Porphyry, for instance, unquestionably advocated a most mystical system of demonism. As Frazer somewhat sarcastically says:—

"His system of religious purification seems faithfully to reflect the creed of the savage on this subject, but a philosopher is, perhaps, the last person whom we should expect to find acting as a mirror of savagery. It is less surprising to meet with the same venerable, the same world-wide superstition in the mouth of a mediæval abbot; for we know that the belief in devils has the authority of the founder of Christianity, and is sanctioned by the teaching of the Church. No Esquimaux on the frozen shores of Labrador, no Indian in the sweltering forests of Guiana, no cowering Hindoo in the jungles of Bengal, could well have a more constant and abiding sense of the presence of malignant demons everywhere about him than had Abbot Richalm, who ruled over the Cistercian Monastery of Schönthal in the first half of the thirteenth century." *

Nor is the above likely to create astonishment in the minds of those who are acquainted with the amazing facts recorded in Professor A. D. White's *Warfare between Science and Theology*, or Mr. Evans' *Criminal Trials and Punishments of Animals*. These two important works, to name no others, contain overwhelming evidence as to the extraordinary degree to which demonism, in its direst forms, was fostered by the Church. The evil spirit that oppressed Saul with melancholy, and the weird story of the witch of Endor in the Old Testament, alone sufficiently indicate the extent to which spiritualistic beliefs obtained among the Jews. And while there is not a single passage in the New Testament that discountenances demonism, there are many passages which support it. As a matter of fact, the rationalistic outlook upon Nature which now prevails among men of science and culture is a practically new phenomenon in the mental evolution of mankind. This modern view has been begotten by two parents —Knowledge and Freethought—and by these alone.

But to return to the Abbot Richalm, whose story is too precious to miss. In his confession of faith, to which he gave the name of Revelations, this Catholic priest has furnished posterity with an amazing account of his spiritualistic superstitions. Every ailment of the body, and every stumbling of

* *The Golden Bough*, "The Scapegoat," pp. 104, 105.

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the will, the worthy Abbot sets down to the influence of the devils, who never gave him a moment of peace. "If the Abbot tossed on his sleepless couch," summarises Dr. Frazer,—

> "while the moonlight, streaming in at his window, cast the stanchions like black bars on the floor of his cell, it was not the fleas and so forth that kept him awake—oh, no! 'Vermin,' said he sagely, 'do not really bite'; they seem to bite indeed, but it is all the work of devils. If a monk snored in the dormitory, the unseemly noise proceeded not from him, but from a demon lurking in his person. Especially dangerous were the demons of intoxication. These subtle fiends commonly lodged at the taverns in the neighboring town, but on feast days they were apt to slip through the monastery gates and glide unseen among the monks seated at the refectory table.....If at such times a jolly rosy-faced brother appeared to the carnal eye and ear to grow obstreperous or maudlin, to speak thick, and to reel and stagger in his gait, be sure it was not the fiery spirit of the grape that moved the holy man; it was a spirit of quite a different order. Holding such views on the source of all bodily and mental indisposition, it was natural enough that the Abbot should prescribe remedies which are not to be found in the pharmacopœia, and which would be asked for in vain at the apothecary's. They consisted chiefly of holy water and the sign of the cross; this last he recommended particularly as a specific for fleabites."

Nor are these absurdities yet extinct in contemporary Europe. Demonism is by no means dead among our British peasantry, and it remains very much alive among the bucolic populations of the other countries of Western Europe. In the nearer East, the Roumanians of Transylvania are still sunk in the spiritualistic slough, and with them witches and goblins are held responsible for every disaster that overtakes the people. The Armenians of Asia Minor, again, although they are not Europeans, "have basked in the light of Christianity from the time when Central and Northern Europe were still plunged in heathen darkness." Nevertheless, these Christian Armenians are as devout in their demonism as the most unenlightened savage, and that this represents a real and not merely a nominal faith is evidenced by the scrupulous care with which they avoid all possible risks of incurring the active animosity of their spiritual enemies. The real religion of the vast majority of modern Armenians is not the Christianity they outwardly profess, but a far older goblin faith which flourished long before the rise of any of the leading world religions, and which gives fair promise of surviving them.

T. F. PALMER.

The Modern Moses.

A STRIKING forecast of the Kaiser's career, written in 1891, by the famous Portuguese author, Eca de Queiroz, was reprinted in the *Times* recently. The article shows conspicuous powers of observation and description, with a few delightful touches of scepticism, such as the following amusing parallel between the Emperor William and Moses:—

> "The world has never seen, since the days of Moses on Sinai, such intimacy, such an alliance between the creature and the Creator. The reign of William II. seems to be, as it were, an unexpected resurrection of the Mosaism of the Pentateuch. He is the favorite of God, he holds conferences with God in the burning bush of his Berlin Schloss, and at the instigation of God he is leading his people to the joys of Canaan. Truly he is Moses II. Like Moses, too, he never tires of proclaiming (daily and loudly so that none may ignore the fact and through ignorance contravene it) his spiritual and temporal relationship to God, which makes him infallible and therefore irresistible."

In a similar spirit of raillery, the clever critic dissects the imperial dilettante of divinity:—

> "In every assembly, every banquet where William II. holds forth (and of all contemporary kings William II. is the most verbose), he always introduces in the guise, as it were, of a law, the sacerdotal assertion that God is with him, as in the days of Abraham, in order to help and serve him in everything with the power of that formidable arm which can disperse, like particles of importunate dust, the stars and suns of ethereal space. The certainty, the habit of this alliance, grew so much upon him that he ever refers to God in terms of greater equality—as he might allude to Francis of Austria or to Humbert of Italy. Formerly he spoke of Him as the Master who is in Heaven, the Almighty who orders all things; latterly, however, while haranguing with flowing champagne his vassals of the Mark of Brandenburg, he speaks of God familiarly as 'My Old Ally!' Here we have William and God as a new limited liability company administering the universe. By degrees perhaps God will disappear from the signboard as a mere subordinate partner, who entered the business only with the capital of light, earth, and man, and who, quiescent in his infinitude, does no work, but leaves to William the management of this vast terrestrial concern; then we shall have only William and Company—William with supreme powers will direct all human undertakings; 'Company' will be the vague, condescending form with which William II. and Germany will designate Him to Whom, we believe, William II. and Germany are as much or as little as the sparrow now chirping on my roof."

Senhor Eca de Queiroy cannot resist pointing the finger of scorn at such pretensions:—

> "Nothing can make the fall of a man more disastrous than the proof, borne out by the crude contradiction of facts, that such a certainty was but the chimera of a mad infatuation. Then is realised the Biblical fall from the 'heights of heaven.' There was once a people that proclaimed themselves the elect of God; but it was proved that God had not elected them, nor preferred them before others, seeing that He disdainfully forsook them; they were overthrown with incomparable fury, dispersed through the world, lapidated, penned up in ghettos, their houses and tombs branded as is branded a counterfeit coin."

The critic insists with seriousness on the dangerous nature of the claim, and its probable consequences.

> "At the first disaster—whether it be inflicted by his burghers or by his people in the streets of Berlin, or by allied armies on the plains of Europe—Germany will at once conclude that his much-vaunted alliance with God was the trick of a wily despot.
>
> Then will there not be stones enough from Lorraine to Pomerania to stone this counterfeit Moses. William II. is in very truth casting against Fate those terrible 'iron dice' to which the now forgotten Bismarck once alluded.
>
> In the course of years, this youth, ardent, pleasing, fertile in imagination, of sincere, perhaps heroic, soul, may be sitting in calm majesty in his Berlin Schloss presiding over the destinies of Europe—or he may be in the Hôtel Metropole in London sadly unpacking from his exile's handbag the battered double crown of Prussia and Germany."

Nearly a quarter of a century has elapsed since this clever criticism was penned, and the startling events of the past year have but confirmed the singular judgment of the author.

M.

A wayward youth, having quarrelled with his parents, went forth from his native village to London town. While there, and a trifle down on his luck, he came across the parson of the village he had left behind, who, after finding out the lad's circumstances, exhorted him to return to his home; and then, instancing the reception of the Prodigal Son in the parable as an inducement, he eventually prevailed upon the lad to return to his sorrowing parents. A week later the parson, having returned from town, met the youth in the village, and expressed his delight at seeing him, assuring him that he felt from the first that his father would forgive him, and that he had no doubt that on such an occasion he figuratively killed the fatted calf. "Figuratively killed the fatted calf!" ejaculated the youth. "Not much, you bet; but he well near killed the prodigal son."

An old negro was out in a field near Charleston when the earthquake came. At the first shock he was frightened almost to death, and as the earth began to shake and tremble he dropped down on his knees and prayed: "Oh, Lord! come and help dis poh nigger. Oh, Lord, come quick! come yourself Don't sen' your son. Dis am no place for chillen!"

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G. W. FOOTE.

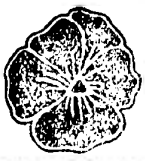
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