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Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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BRADLAUGH.

CHARLES BRADLAUGH.

Charles Bradlaugh: A Record of his Life and Work. By his Daughter, Hypatia Bradlaugh Bonner. With an Account of his Parliamentary Struggle, Politics, and Teachings, by John M. Robertson. (London: T. Fisher Unwin.) 2 vols.; 21s.

CHARLES BRADLAUGH has been dead nearly four years, and his long-promised Biography is now before the world. There does not seem to be any sufficient reason why it was not published earlier, nor would the work have suffered in consequence. Ample time has afforded an opportunity for over-elaboration. Sometimes a strain is put upon the patience of all but idolators. Charles Bradlaugh, for instance, learnt to write, just like other children who never become distinguished; but who wants to be informed that he wrote better at nine than at seven, or what texts and pictures were on the school-cards that contain his youthful caligraphy? Nor does the biography of Charles Bradlaugh seem the place for Mr. Robertson to argue Atheism, or to refute the views of Mr. Kipling on India. On the other hand, with all this plethora of detail—now most precious, and anon quite superfluous—there is a singular silence about some matters, while others are presented in a mixed light or with some distortion or exaggeration. The fact is, both Mrs. Bonner and Mr. Robertson have written from a special point of view.

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What they give us is not a complete portrait, but a variety of sketches. Perhaps we should say that they have collected and edited a lot of valuable material; but there is a great deal more floating about in the world, and when it is gathered together the whole mass, including the valuable matter in these bulky volumes, will be used by some artist in biography, who will give the world a truer conception of the mighty personality of Charles Bradlaugh. Years, perhaps *many* years, will elapse before this is done; but one of the greatest Englishmen since the days of Cromwell can afford to wait. There is really no hurry so far as he is concerned.

Having said this at the outset, so as to get rid of it once for all, we now proceed to express our gratitude to Mrs. Bonner for the great pains she has taken to vindicate her father's memory. It has been a labor, though a labor of love. In the grand old Roman sense of the word, her undertaking has been truly *pious*. Mr. Robertson, also, has compiled an extremely able history of Bradlaugh's parliamentary struggle. This piece of work is of high merit and permanent value.

We cannot say that we like the binding of these volumes; otherwise they have a neat appearance. The illustrations are generally excellent; the most interesting, perhaps, being a photogravure of Charles Bradlaugh, at the age of twenty, in the regimentals of the Seventh Dragoon Guards. The face is true "Bradlaugh," and the arms are folded over the chest, showing the backs of a pair of large,

serviceable hands. There is another portrait, dated 1877, in the best-looking period of his life. Mr. Walter Sickert's picture of Bradlaugh at the Bar of the House of Commons is also reproduced, likewise his portrait of Bradlaugh belonging to the National Liberal Club. The latter may have artistic merit, but the reproduction is rather ghastly. Then we have the monument at Brookwood, the unveiling of the Northampton statue, a photograph of Bradlaugh's library, and a really fine portrait of Alice Bradlaugh. No portrait is given of any dead colleague of Charles Bradlaugh, not even of Austin Holyoake; but we have a portrait of Prince Jérôme (Plon-Plon), and one of Madame De Brimont in a shockingly low dress, which should excite the indignation of Mrs. Ormiston Chant. It must be admitted, however, that what the lady reveals is shapely enough to disarm masculine resentment.

Mrs. Bonner's portion of these volumes—filling the first and running well into the second—is entirely biographical. She has mainly relied upon the *National Reformer*. Bradlaugh "made a point of destroying his correspondence," and "consequently (says Mrs. Bonner) I have very few letters to help me." Recourse has been had to old newspaper files in the British Museum, and in this respect Mrs. Bonner acknowledges her "great indebtedness to Mrs. Mary Reed," who has also compiled a very full Index to both volumes.

YOUNG BRADLAUGH.

Bradlaugh's family seems to have come from Suffolk, where the name is to be found on tombstones. His grandfather, James Bradlaugh, was a gunsmith in London; his father, Charles Bradlaugh, who died in 1852, was confidential clerk to a firm of solicitors. There was nothing remarkable about the family until it produced our Bradlaugh, who was born on September 26, 1833, in a small house in Bacchus-walk, Hoxton. He was baptised, as a matter of course; he also went to school, but he left at the age of eleven, and we may reckon him a self-taught scholar as he was a self-made man. The first introduction to politics was Cobbett's "Gridiron," and his first introduction to Freethought the open-air meetings on Bonner's Fields, where the lad joined in the wordy fray on the Christian side. The other side, however, had the best of the argument, and his faith became unsettled. To satisfy his doubts he sought the assistance of the Rev. J. G. Packer, the minister of his chapel; but the reverend gentleman acted like a bigot, and through his instrumentality the lad was driven from his home and his situation, and cast upon the wide world at the age of sixteen. Since Bradlaugh's death it has been repeatedly argued by soft-hearted and soft-headed Christians (we are sure about the soft-headed, anyhow) that if the Rev. J. G. Packer had not been a bigot his victim would never have been an Atheist. Upon this point Mrs. Bonner writes with vigorous good sense:—

"It is now the fashion to make Mr. Packer into a sort of scapegoat: his harsh reception of his pupil's questions and subsequent ill-advised methods of dealing with him are censured, and he is in a manner made responsible for my father's Atheism. If no other Christian had treated Mr. Bradlaugh harshly; if every other clergyman had dealt with him in kindly fashion; if he had been met with kindness instead of slanders and stones, abuse and ill-usage, then these censors of Mr. Packer might have some just grounds on which to reproach him for misusing his position; as it is, they should ask themselves which among them has the right to cast the first stone. The notion that it was Mr. Packer's treatment of him that drove my father into Atheism is, I am sure, absolutely baseless. Those who entertain this belief forget that Mr. Bradlaugh had already begun to compare and criticise the various narratives in the four Gospels, and that it was on account of this (and therefore after it) that the Rev. J. G. Packer was so injudicious as to denounce him as an Atheist, and to suspend him from his Sunday duties. This harsh and blundering method of dealing with him no doubt hastened his progress towards Atheism, but it assuredly did not induce it. It set his mind in a state of opposition to the Church as represented by Mr. Packer, a state which the rev. gentleman seems blindly to have fostered by every means in his power; and it gave him the opportunity of the Sunday's leisure to hear what Atheism really was, expounded by some of the cleverest speakers in the Freethought movement at that time. But in spite of all this, he was not driven pell-mell into Atheism; he joined in the religious controversy from the orthodox standpoint, and was introduced into the

little Warner Palace Hall as an eager champion on behalf of Christianity.

"Those persons too who entertain this idea of Mr. Packer's responsibility are ignorant of, or overlook, what manner of man Mr. Bradlaugh was. He could not rest with his mind unsettled or undecided; he worked out and solved for himself every problem which presented itself to him. He moulded his ideas on no man's: he looked at the problem on all sides, studied the pros and cons, and decided the solution for himself. Therefore, having once started on the road to scepticism, kindlier treatment would no doubt have made him longer in reaching the standpoint of pure Rationalism, but in any case the end would have been the same."

Bradlaugh tried all ways to earn a living, but he smelt of brimstone. One customer told him so when he tried to sell coals on commission. He ran into debt, and was often hungry. Yet he lectured with acceptance on Freethought, his first advertised discourse (apparently) being delivered in a little hall in Philpot-street, Commercial-road, on October 10, 1850. Mr. G. J. Holyoake took the chair, and the subject was an extensive one—"The Past, Present, and Future of Theology." The lecturer was just turned seventeen.

THE SOLDIER.

This kind of life could not last. The young reformer was crushed down by an appalling debt of £4 15s. A subscription was mooted, but he disliked the idea, and one day he enlisted as a soldier. The regiment he joined was the Seventh Dragoon Guards. On hearing this news, his father invited him home again to spend the Christmas Day. It was, at least, a semi-reconciliation, and the father appears to have suffered in his way as well as the son. We again quote from Mrs. Bonner:—

"I have a very strong personal conviction that the whole affair preyed upon the father's mind, and that the harshness he showed his son was really foreign to his general temper. Anyhow, his character underwent a great change after he let himself come under the influence of Mr. Packer. He who before never went inside a church, now never missed a Sunday; he became concentrated and, to a certain extent, morose, and at length, on the 19th August, 1852, some twenty months after his son's enlistment, he was taken suddenly ill at his desk in Cloak-lane. He was brought home in a state of unconsciousness, from which he was only aroused to fall into violent delirium, and so continued without once recovering his senses until the hour of his death, which was reached on Tuesday, the 24th. He was only forty-one years of age, and had always had good health previously, never ailing anything; and I feel quite convinced that the agony of mind, which he must have endured from the time when his son was first denounced to him as an 'Atheist,' was mainly the cause of his early death."

Bradlaugh's regiment was drafted to Ireland. He was the butt of his comrades, on account of his overgrown figure, until they learnt to respect him. They nicknamed him "Leaves," as he was fond of tea and books. He was a fervid teetotaler, and sometimes eloped from barracks to give a temperance lecture. Of course he got into a discussion with the chaplain, who once answered him from the pulpit; but as the man of God's first sentence was impertinent, the three hundred dragoons unhooked their swords and let them crash on the ground.

"Leaves" fought a right-of-way case; also with fifteen picked comrades he fought his way through Donnybrook Fair. Further, he had to assist at evictions, and learnt something of the blessings of English rule in Ireland, and of the supreme blessing of Irish landlordism. One of his experiences gave point to a speech he delivered in 1873 at New York.

"Those of you who are Irishmen will want no description of that beautiful valley of the Lee which winds between the hills from Cork, and in summer seems like a very Paradise, green grass growing to the water side, and burnished with gold in the morning, and ruddy to very crimson in the evening sunset. I went there on a November day. I was one of a troop to protect the law officers, who had come with the agent from Dublin to make an eviction a few miles from Inniscarra, where the river Bride joins the Lee. It was a miserable day—rain freezing into sleet as it fell—and the men beat down wretched dwelling after wretched dwelling, some thirty or forty perhaps. They did not take much beating down; there was no flooring to take up; the walls were more mud than aught else; and there was but little trouble in the levelling of them to the ground.

We had got our work about three parts done, when out of one of them a woman ran, and flung herself on the ground, wet as it was, before the Captain of the troop, and she asked that her house might be spared—not for long, but for a little while. She said her husband had been born in it; he was ill of the fever, but could not live long, and she asked that he might be permitted to die in it in peace. Our Captain had no power; the law agent from Dublin wanted to get back to Dublin; his time was of importance, and he would not wait; and that man was carried out while we were there—in front of us, while the sleet was coming down—carried out on a wretched thing (you could not call it a bed), and he died there while we were there; and three nights afterwards, while I was sentry on the front gate at Ballincollig Barracks, we heard a cry, and when the guard was turned out we found this poor woman there a raving maniac, with one dead babe in one arm, and another in the other clinging to the cold nipple of her lifeless breast."

Bradlaugh left the army in October, 1853, with a first-rate testimonial. His discharge was purchased out of a small sum of money left by his father's great aunt. Mrs. Bonner thinks the three years of army life were of great value to him, setting him up physically, and impressing him with the importance of discipline, which people seldom learn who have not at some time been subjected to it.

JAMES THOMSON.

A young man of genius came in Bradlaugh's way in Ireland. He was an army schoolmaster, and his name was James Thomson. The two became acquainted, and the acquaintance ripened into a close friendship, which lasted for twenty years. Thomson himself left the army and came to London, where Bradlaugh often befriended him. He lived with the Bradlaughs for some time, and Mrs. Bonner says the children "simply adored him." But his fits of intemperance, which were due to an hereditary predisposition, prevented him from keeping situations, and he was too independent a writer to earn a living by press work. Mrs. Bonner makes no scruple about speaking of his failing in the plainest language, and indeed there is no use now in concealment. When Bradlaugh and Thomson quarreled she naturally sided with her father. But she need not have made gratuitous revelations. There was really no need for the "silver cup" or the "Colt's revolver" incident, and the exclamation of "poor Thomson" is unjustifiably condescending. Certainly it was not necessary to speak of Thomson's "illness" in Spain with sarcasm. She ought to know, and having known she should remember, that Thomson had a sunstroke there, under which he hovered between life and death. Nor is it right to create the impression that the debt was all on Thomson's side to Bradlaugh. The strong man's generosity is unquestionable, but there was some return in having a man of genius about him. To say nothing of the mental stimulus, there were Thomson's contributions to the *National Reformer*. They might not have increased the circulation by a single copy, but they gave a certain tone to the paper, and they were done simply for the love of the work. After a period of estrangement, Bradlaugh and Thomson quarreled and parted. Mrs. Bonner says that "Mr. Thomson for some reason felt injured." But why allege "some reason"? Thomson assigned a definite reason. What it was we know, for he showed us a copy of the letter he sent Bradlaugh. He was then on the regular staff of the *National Reformer*, writing a weekly article and two columns of "Jottings." His weekly stipend was not large, but it sufficed for his very modest wants. What he resented was the "forcing" of Mrs. Besant, then a recent recruit, who was paid twice as much as himself, while the books of living interest were all handed to her for review. We do not justify Thomson's resentment. Bradlaugh had a right to pay the staff, and to direct their labor, as he pleased. Nevertheless, it is only fair to state that Thomson not only had, but assigned, a definite "reason" for feeling "injured." Both men are dead. We may leave them at peace in the grave. But if the reason of their quarrel *must* be pursued, we say that the explanation in this case, as in so many others, is afforded by the proverbial expression of *cherchez la femme*. Men have always quarreled over women, and they will to the end of the chapter.

MRS. BRADLAUGH.

Bradlaugh married Susannah Lamb Hooper in 1855. The marriage, of course, took place in a church—St.

Philip's, Stepney. Mrs. Bradlaugh's father was a sturdy Radical and Freethinker. He was deeply attached to his "Charles," and only survived him a few months. He was a fine-looking old man when we last saw him in 1890. Mrs. Bradlaugh herself was a fine, matronly woman. Up to 1869 she was occasionally to be seen at her husband's meetings. We remember seeing her at the Hall of Science in that year. But whispers were then abroad of domestic unhappiness, which Mrs. Bonner now unveils out of regard for her father's reputation. Mrs. Bradlaugh fell into habits of intemperance. She was not, apparently, an intellectual woman, and probably she found it dull at home while her husband was away on his lecturing tours. The home had to be broken up in 1870, and in 1877 Mrs. Bradlaugh died suddenly of heart disease "engendered by alcoholism." She loved her husband and children to the last. All who knew her, so far as we are aware, pronounced her a loving, generous woman; and we can understand the pain which Mrs. Bonner experiences in unlocking the door of this skeleton-cupboard. Some will doubt whether it should have been done, but Mrs. Bonner felt obliged to perform the "unhappy duty."

BRADLAUGH'S BROTHER.

Mrs. Bonner also feels it necessary to make some painful disclosures concerning Bradlaugh's brother. Mr. W. R. Bradlaugh is generally thought to have been "converted from infidelity," but he was brought up as a Christian, and never professed to be anything else. He is very strong on "virtue." As we write a circular of his lies before us, asking for money to defend a certain libel action. He declares that he is engaged in "an honest endeavor to drag into the light of day the obscene, filthy, immoral, and revolting character of the teachings and literature of Secularism." Such a boastful crusader should at least have a clean record. We do not find it, however, in Mrs. Bonner's pages. If her statements are true, Mr. W. R. Bradlaugh is a wretched hypocrite; if they are false, he should at once proceed against her as an infamous libeller.

Mrs. Bonner is indignant at his "public protestations of love" for her father, who "so well knew the worth of these phrases." She depicts him as the black sheep of the family. Bradlaugh found situations for him which he did not keep. He took to excessive drinking, and completely neglected his mother during the long illness which preceded her death. Early in 1872 he was sentenced at the Middlesex Sessions to six months' imprisonment for "embezzling various small sums from his employer." During these troubles his wife was assisted by the elder brother, and for some time afterwards Bradlaugh sent him money through his sister, Mrs. Norman. In 1874, while still receiving money from Bradlaugh, he attended some of Moody and Sankey's meetings, professed "conversion," and got "another berth" in connection with the *Christian Herald*. "From that day until my father's death," writes Mrs. Bonner, "his brother never ceased to try and annoy him—always, of course, under the cloak of religion and love." It would give her the "deepest pain and regret" to bring any injury upon her father's brother, but "he chose to pursue a course of conduct which has obliged me to tell the truth concerning their estrangement."

What will this "beautiful brother"—as Bradlaugh called him—do now? He has only the choice of two alternatives, if he has a spark of honesty; either to repudiate these charges as publicly as they are made, or to drop his Pharisaic airs, cease playing the censor, and "walk humbly with his God."

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

It seems to me that the bane of our country is a profession of faith either with no basis of real belief, or with no proper examination of the grounds on which the creed is supposed to rest.—James Russell Lowell.

Cain and Abel have been dead between five and six thousand years. According to the never-dying-soul dogma, Cain has been suffering the pangs and pains of hell-fire from death till now. Abel has been enjoying the bliss of heaven from death till now. At the day of judgment their "immortal souls" will be reunited to their "resurrected bodies," to be judged, then sentenced. One back to his everlasting burnings, the other to his abode of bliss. Does any sane person believe it?—*Anglo-Angelus*.

HYPOCRISY.

A FREETHINKER'S protest against the prevailing creeds is directed, not only at their untruth, but also at the hypocrisy which they engender. What we have very often to meet is not the conscientious opposition of genuine believers, whose faith is, as it were, the very life of their lives, and who actually live by it, and are ready to die for it—a belief which, however noxious, commands some respect by its sincerity; but the antagonism of interested professors who find their account in assuming a belief they no longer possess, of persons who think that religion is useful, and of those who merely believe that they believe, or play at pretending to believe.

We call this a Christian country, but, as a matter of fact, the mass of the inhabitants reject all that is distinctive of Christianity. They profess it with their lips, but their hearts and minds are far away. No one thinks of regulating his daily life and business by it. The good Christian takes anxious thought for the morrow, relies on doctors more than on prayer, and, like the Archbishop of Canterbury when robbed of holly, does not give his miseltoe also, but prosecutes the thieves. Christianity has little more than a Sunday existence. Few think ever of professing its precepts on other days, much less of practising them. Even on Sunday Rationalism is preached from the pulpit and disguised in Christian phraseology. On the subject of religion the age is honeycombed with hypocrisy. Unable to believe, it plays at pretending to believe, and is laboriously employed in decanting the new wine of modern thought into the old theological bottles.

Genuine belief, as Froude remarked, ended with persecution. When people really held that the soul's welfare depended on the suppression of heresy, they were prepared to suppress it at all costs. When they felt that to punish a man for maintaining an independent opinion was shocking and unjust, it was because a doubt had entered whether the faith was unquestionably true. Persecution logically follows belief in an infallible revelation from Jesus Christ, and that there is no other name under heaven whereby men can be saved. If Governments have it in their power to save men from everlasting perdition, they are warranted in doing so by the dictates of mercy as well as commanded thereto by the Bible. Indeed, says "George Eliot," "wherever the tremendous alternative of everlasting torments is believed in—believed in so that it becomes a motive determining the life—not only persecution, but every other form of severity and gloom, are the legitimate consequences."

Real belief in hell and in the damnation of unbaptised infants is becoming extinct, and we can hardly realise the gloom such doctrines were calculated to produce. Cross-examine a Christian on any article of Christian dogma, and you will usually elicit an expression of unconscious unbelief. Is he asked concerning eternal torments, he will probably make it evident he has never realised that as a possibility, at any rate, for himself. He may express a hope that even an Atheist may be saved, though he will not deny that "narrow is the way to eternal life, and few there be that find it." Satan is shelved, but the departure of the devil must not be supposed to herald the retirement of his celestial antagonist. Even the doctrine of evolution may be allowed, but one must not draw the inference that the story of creation is false. As a matter of fact, the dogmas now discarded were the very life of the old creed. Take, for instance, the Fall of Man. That doctrine lies at the very base of Christianity. If the Fall is a fable, then is the Redemption but a fiction. But who will now assert that the story of the Fall represents real fact?

The shifty wriggling and compromise, in the endeavor to reconcile contradictory notions, and to avoid a plain issue, is bound to be detrimental to character. In conforming to the faith that is no longer a faith in realities, but only a faith in names and in shams, men have lost the religion of self-respect. The hypocrites encourage the rogues even when they are not of their number, as they too usually are. And here I am reminded of a little fable, told by Horace Smith, in illustration of the hypocrisy of those who pretend, from pious motives, to retire from the world. "My dear children," said an old rat to his young ones, "the infirmities of age are pressing so heavily upon me that I have determined to dedicate the short remainder of my life to mortification and penance, in a

narrow and lonely hole which I have lately discovered; but let me not interfere with your enjoyments; youth is the season for pleasure; be happy, therefore, and only obey my last injunction—never to come near me in my retreat; God bless you all." Deeply affected, snivelling audibly, and wiping his paternal eyes with his tail, the old rat withdrew, and was seen no more for several days, when his youngest daughter, moved rather by filial affection than by that curiosity which has been attributed to the sex, stole to his cell of mortification, which turned out to be a hole, made by his own teeth, in an enormous Cheshire cheese!

To see the value the Archbishop of Canterbury attaches to religion, one must observe him among the ladies at a garden party.

Hypocrisy is always detestable, because the first condition of all improvement is to face the actual facts. Sincerity alone brings intellectual tranquility. Nothing is at last sacred, says Emerson, but the integrity of your own mind. Nothing can bring you peace but yourself. One of the best satisfactions in life is that of independent self-reliance. Let us, then, have done with all shams and pretences, think freely, and say out plainly what we think.

This, above all, to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE POWER OF CHRISTIANITY.

THE dawn of a new year is an appropriate time to consider the value of Christianity as a remedial force. Such a study has a special interest just at this period, when, from the various churches, sermons are being preached extolling Christianity as the harbinger of peace and goodwill, and exalting Christ as the great reformer who was to redeem the world from the cruelties, wrongs, and degradation to which for centuries the people had been subjected. The expounders of the Galilean faith appear to ignore the fact that the many defects which, although their religion has been existing nearly eighteen hundred years, still deface society, are proofs of the impotency of their system to regenerate the human race. Take as an illustration the poverty that abounds upon every side. What has Christianity done to remove this appalling evil? Jesus is reported to have said: "Ye have the poor with you always." The question, however, may fairly be urged: If Christ possessed "god-like" power, why were the poor always to be with them? It is a demonstrated fact that poverty is not only a curse to mankind, but the parent of other innumerable evils. It is a fertile source of crime; it robs the human mind of the vigor and independence which are so necessary to its proper action; it mars the harmony of domestic associations; and, further, it blights the noblest aspirations of our nature, and prevents many earnest toilers from realising the objects of their laudable ambitions. Surely this was a wrong which the "Reformer of Judea" should have striven to destroy; but he did nothing of the kind; on the contrary, he made poverty a mark of perfection, and pronounced the erroneous statement, "Blessed be ye poor." It is a significant comment upon the lack of wisdom in the "Master's" followers do their level best to avoid sharing in such "blessedness."

For centuries past, at the close of each year, the Church has been loud in its expressions of sympathy towards the suffering community; but what has the Church done to give practical effect to this sympathy? Why, comparatively nothing. The same fatal and degrading teaching to the poor has gone on. They are told to submit themselves to their "pastors and masters," to "honor the king" (or queen), to "be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward" (1 Peter ii. 17, 18). The language of the New Testament is: "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called" (1 Cor. vii. 20). "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. iv. 17). So far as we can judge from the Four Gospels, the principal object of Christ was to teach his followers how to die, rather than

to instruct them how to live. He regarded man as an alien in this world. Anything like a triumph of moral good over evil by human means, anything like an escape from the pangs of poverty, anything like a successful insurrection of right which should produce the dethronement of might, appear not to have crossed the horizon of his mental vision.

The annual expression, "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year," no doubt sounds very pleasant; but in the present social condition of society it is a mere conventional phrase. At Christmas time, for instance, the expressions of goodwill among the wealthy classes are profuse indeed; but, as the *Dispatch* of December 23 last observed: "Taken at its highest, what is their ideal and practice of Christmas goodwill? For many of them it is the only occasion when the needs of their poorer neighbors have the slightest claim upon them, and they dole out a little from their plenty in order that one day in the year may bring with it a satisfying meal. Especially is it so in our rural districts. . . . But, looking beyond motives to results, we know that in hundreds of our rural villages the doles that will be given away from hall and vicarage will, however kindly the intention, act as a further means of degrading the laboring population. It is because of the Christmas joint of beef, the frock for the child, or the bag of coals, that much of the power of our rural squirearchy exists, and that for the moment the social iniquities for which landlordism is responsible are hidden. The anticipation and the memory of the customary Christmas gifts turn many a man into little better than a serf, buy his vote for his landlord, and foster in him that paralyzing feeling of class dependence so ruinous to true manhood. . . . If we are to have the reign of peace on earth and goodwill to all men, it will not be ushered in by spasmodic outbursts of benevolence at fixed periods, but by striving towards that divine principle of ever-present justice which will make charity unnecessary. We do not desire to say one word that would lessen the generous impulses that prompt those who have much, to scatter with a liberal hand, some measure of comfort amongst those who have little; but we would put it in all seriousness to such: How much better would it be if they refrained from injustice in the first instance? We do not merely ask that class should draw near to class, but rather that all classes should be merged in the general brotherhood of the whole community."

This is common sense, and a true statement of the case. While every effort should be made to relieve existing distress, we should constantly aim to permanently establish that order of things where justice shall preclude the necessity of charity, which is too often humiliating to the recipient. In a land where there is enough for all, charity is an indication that there is a radical defect in societerian arrangements; and the really happy new year will be the one wherein commences an era of a fundamental improvement.

The boast that the power of Christ has established peace and goodwill is an utterly groundless one. If the words ascribed to him are to be relied upon, such was not his mission. For we read: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household" (Matthew x. 34-36). "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you nay; but rather division" (Luke xii. 51). "If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke xiv. 26).

The power of Christianity has been manifested in the realisation of the conditions here foretold. Its influence, according to the New Testament, did not prevent "contentions," "strife," and "indignation" among Paul and his contemporaries. And from that time down to the present hatred, slander, cruelty, persecution, and oppression have marked the history of the Christian propaganda. This is a fact that even some Christians have been candid enough to admit. For instance, the Rev. T. Finch observes: "With few exceptions, religious sects manifest an ample portion of a savage spirit, and endeavor to vilify and destroy one another." Dr. Campbell exclaims: "Nothing can equal the dogmatism and arrogance with which one sect pronounces sentence against another, except, perhaps, the

dogmatism with which the other retaliates upon them." Dr. Scott says of the Christian sects: "It is five hundred to one but that everyone is damned, because everyone damns all but itself, and itself is damned by four hundred and ninety-nine." Bennett writes: "Jealousy, detraction, and persecution are the sure attendants of a revival of religion." Chandler bursts forth: "What ruins and desolations—what rapines and murders—have been introduced into the world under the pretended authority of Christ!" Wyvil records: "The barbarities which professed Christians have committed against unbelievers, and against their own brethren of the same faith, exceed in horror whatever acts of cruelty have been perpetrated by tyrants."

It was this same Christian spirit that caused the rapine, desolation, and murders of the Holy Wars; that flooded the streets of Paris in the sixteenth century with human blood; that made the valleys of Piedmont a scene of most inhuman butchery; that instigated the sacrifice of more than three millions of lives by the conductors of the Inquisition; that prompted the enactments of the horrors of the Star Chamber; that produced the St. Bartholomew massacre; that prosecuted and imprisoned Freethinkers; and that to-day keeps "Christian nations" armed to the very teeth in consequence of their dread of each other. These facts show the hollowness of the contention that peace and goodwill have followed the alleged advent of Jesus.

Equally fallacious is the assertion that Christianity has been powerful in aiding national progress. J. A. Farrer, in his recently-published work, *Paganism and Christianity*, states: "Christianity, in the form it came to assume, did not improve in any essential respects the general state of the world. . . . No one can read the works of the fathers without at once perceiving that he has passed, not merely from an altogether different, but to an altogether lower, intellectual atmosphere. Painful to the last degree is the change from Cicero or Seneca to Tertullian or Augustine. It is like the change from Italian sunlight to an English fog. . . . There is a moral no less than an intellectual abyss; that is to say, that a man may derive more mental and spiritual profit, higher aspirations for virtue, toleration, and humanity from Seneca or Marcus Aurelius than from writers like Augustine or Tertullian. The moral teaching of the Pagans is on a purer and higher level than that of the fathers."

Similar truths are recorded by Lecky in vol. ii. of his "European Morals." On page 18 he shows that our civilisation is due to other than Christian sources. After pointing out that modern progress is attributable to purely secular causes, he observes that for centuries theology "numbed and paralysed the whole intellect of Christian Europe. . . . In medicine, physical science, commercial interests, politics, and even ethics, the reformer has been confronted with theological affirmations, which barred the way, which were all defended as of vital importance, and were all in turn compelled to yield before the secularising influence of civilisation."

It will thus be seen that the power of Christianity has not by any means always been exercised for good; and, although at the present time it is less powerful for evil than it was in former days, it is because of the secular forces with which it has to cope. A careful and impartial study of history reveals the fact that Christians have always been necessitated to modify their conduct in the presence of a high-toned morality. Hence the truth appears that it is morality that has purified religion, not religion that has purified morality. CHARLES WATTS.

Christianity and Islam.

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. To me, the wonder would be if it had Christianised the world. Its unfitness for saving the race, for an universal reception by mankind, seems to be shown clearly enough by the rise of Mohammedanism, and by the spread of that faith so far beyond the extent that Christianity ever attained as to include, in our day, a fifth part of the whole human race. That religion, imperfect as we see it to be, met needs and guided faculties, among certain races of men, which Christianity wholly neglected.—*Harriet Martineau.*

SCRIPTURE MATERIALISM.

WHEN Thomas Cooper, the doctor, not the Chartist orator, was accused of Materialism, he retorted that this was the Scripture doctrine, since the Bible says nothing of the immortality of the soul, but of the resurrection of the dead. He argued that, on the modern theory of an immaterial soul that survives the body and never dies, the resurrection of the dead would be a useless absurdity and a falsehood. When Jesus Christ talks of the resurrection of the dead, it must be the resurrection of that which is liable to death. It cannot mean the resurrection of that which is not liable to death, but, being immortal, never dies. Even when Christ is resurrected he never speaks of his soul, but says, "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is myself"; and he levitates to heaven with fish and honeycomb inside him. The Christadelphians, who, for the most part, are a plain people, very studious of the words of the book, take a similar position, and, on textual grounds, they really have a very strong case. They point out that the word translated soul has a number of physical meanings, and is sometimes even synonymous with "stomach." They notice that the curse of disobedience was death, and adduce the many passages in the Old Testament in which death is declared to be the end of all human beings.

Job, for instance, says explicitly, "He that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more"; prophets and psalmists declare that the wicked perish, while the preacher asserts "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; so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast; for all is vanity."

Christadelphians believe that we are all to be raised up from the dead, judged in the valley of Jehosaphat, the wicked sent dead again to their second death, while the righteous—that is, themselves—will have the gift of immortality, wearing crowns of glory, and judging the nations upon the earth. It is a cheeky faith, but what else can be expected from "Brethren of Christ"?

LUCIANUS.

IF CHRIST CAME TO LONDON.

If Christ came to London, and walked through the town,
His brow would be furrowed with many a frown;
A scourge he would make, not with "small cords," but big,
To teach pious Christians a punitive jig;
The churches and chapels, so costly and grand,
All built with the bread of the poor of the land,
He'd enter, and wrathfully listen and gaze
A moment or two, then his scourge he would raise,

And yell—not a doubt of it—
"Humbugs! come out of it!"

Wasting your money and time with these buildings,
Ethical essays, and carvings, and gildings!
Think you that Art and Philosophy please me?
Think you that praises and pew-rents appease me?
Hypocrites, liars, and thieves, ev'ry one of you!
Out of it, hussies! and each mother's son of you!

Christ's come to London!"

If Christ came to London at our time of day,
And entered a hospital, what would he say?
He'd say, midst the proofs of the skill and the care
Of Doctors of Science, the rivals of Pray'r:
"Is *this* the result of my death and my tears,
Of preaching my precepts for hundreds of years?
This temple of Science, the Atheist's friend,
Of Science the foe of my methods and end—

Come out of it! out of it!
Humbugs! come out of it!"

Godless and prayerless hot-bed of Science,
Atheist's providence, trust, and reliance!
Where are the 'signs' that should follow believers,
Promised by me to confound the deceivers?
Genuine Christians—so different from 'Spurgeons'—
Pray, and repudiate doctors and surgeons;
Always they're safe from disease and disaster,
Curing themselves through belief in their master.
Hypocrites, liars, and thieves, ev'ry one of you!
Out of it, hussies! and each mother's son of you!

Christ's come to London!"

If Christ came to London and read through a lease,
Inspected the Law Courts, and saw the Police,
Or entered an Orphanage, Warehouse, and Bank,
His scourge would be lashing out many a spank!
"What! Landlords, Policemen, and Lawyers, forsooth!
Pretend to be Christians with 'tooth for a tooth'!
No Christians, when damaged, redress ever seek;
They yield 'good for evil,' and 'turn the left cheek';
No Christians have 'savings' in banks nor elsewhere;
'Gainst 'thought for the morrow' my precepts declare.
The sceptics provide for the morrow, and try
To better the earth, where their *only* hopes lie;
But Christians, whose hopes are all centred above,
Obey all my precepts and trust in my love.
What! homes for the orphan, whose costs are defrayed
By usury, secular science, and trade!
Does *no* one believe what I oft did declare,
That God feeds the sparrows, and hearkens to pray'r?
Come out of them! out of them!
Humbugs! come out of them!"

Think of it! After these hundreds of years,
London I search, but no Christian appears.
Nothing but godless and sceptical creatures,
Hospitals, banks, and such secular features.
Fool that I was to attempt your salvation!
Ass that I was to endure degradation,
Pain, and discomfort, in all of their phases,
Death on the cross, and descent into blazes!
Hypocrites, liars, and thieves, ev'ry one of you!
Go to the devil, for *I* will have none of you—
Humbugs of London!"

G. L. MACKENZIE.

ACID DROPS.

FLUENT, genial, shallow "Tay Pay" concluded his New Year's article in the *Sun* by quoting Browning's

God's in his heaven,
All's right with the world.

We don't know whether God's in his heaven or not. "Tay Pay" seems to be better informed on this point than we are. But we are quite sure that all is not right with the world. "Tay Pay" himself is always trying to mend it. The fine income he makes at the business may have something to do with his optimism and his "unshaken faith."

In the late hurricane God rode upon the storm with vengeance, causing much destruction of life and property both by land and sea. In the Midlands and North many were killed by falling chimney-stacks and buildings, and all round the coasts there have been shipping disasters.

Sir Herbert Maxwell, in a recent number of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, draws attention to the awful havoc among birds, and even among denizens of the sea, in great gales. "It is," he says, "as if for a few hours the heavens and the earth had been given over to the power of some maleficent demon." How is this to be "reconciled with the scheme of a beneficent Creator"? Sir Herbert Maxwell does not try to answer the question. It is evidently too much for him. Those who talk about "the anger of the Almighty," he says, seem to regard him as "an angry old man in a blue coat, like a certain friend of Horace Walpole's."

The Liverpool *Daily Post* devoted about three columns to a review, with copious extracts, of Mrs. Bonner's *Life of Charles Bradlaugh*. The reviewer offers, as a palliative of the unjust treatment Mr. Bradlaugh received, that he wore himself out in trying to prove the non-existence of deity. It is an ancient device to misrepresent a man in order to justify rancorous hostility to him; but men of education should be above such tactics.

The Rev. R. A. Armstrong has written protesting against Mrs. Bonner's statement that Unitarians distinguished themselves by their hostility to Mr. Bradlaugh. Mr. Armstrong and several other prominent Unitarians are free from any charge of illiberality, but he need not go outside his own congregation to find pronounced instances of the contrary feeling. Prominent Unitarians voted in the City Council against letting the Picton Lecture Hall for the N.S.S. Conference in May last. Some Unitarians are very tolerant to their own wretched narrowness. Mrs. Bonner's strictures are generally justified.

The death of Miss Christina Rossetti reminds us of two incidents. The first is, that the most beautiful review of her beautiful poems was written by James Thomson in the *Secularist* in 1876. She was a fervid Christian, and he was a confirmed Atheist. The second is this. A dear friend of

Miss Rossetti's, who was also a dear friend of ours, wanted to introduce us to her. She declined, however, but not with ill-feeling. In a beautiful letter—beautiful in expression and written in a beautiful hand—she said that, while on intellectual grounds she might be proud of such an acquaintance, she could not see how honest Christians and honest Atheists could mix with each other; it was better, she thought, without judging each other, to keep apart. Such was the effect of religion on one of the tenderest women that ever breathed.

The Church Army service at St. Mary-at-Hill, Monument, advertises a discourse on Belial's Bullies, two solos by Miss Julie Glover, with orchestral accompaniments, and Darby and Joan given as a cornet solo by Mr. Frank Loker. The address is to be illustrated by dissolving views. Evidently the Rev. W. Carlile could have given some useful hints to the apostles.

Magic-lantern Sunday evening services are becoming popular with the Church Army. This is all very well for a beginning, but to thoroughly outrival Booth's big drums it may be necessary to get up a series of living pictures, and provide the congregation with spittoons.

Mrs. Josephine Butler is, we believe, the wife of a Canon of the Church, yet in the *Humanitarian* she speaks pretty strongly about the Bible being a *man's* book as opposed to *woman*.

The *Oban Times* reports a meeting of the Glasgow University Ossianic Society, at which a paper was read by the Rev. Dr. Russell on the Druids. This gentleman wound up by saying that if any of his hearers intended to give up Christianity (horrid thought!) he hoped they would return to the old religion of the Druids rather than adopt "the short-seeing doctrines of modern Secularism." Dr. Russell did not say whether they should also return to the primitive costume of the Druidic age, which sometimes consisted of plenty of paint and a few feathers.

The superintendent minister of the Lambeth Wesleyan Chapel sends to a vice-president of the N.S.S., among others, a curious begging circular, which illustrates how a faith, with omnipotence at its back, yet seeks aid from Mammon. The circular states that Lambeth Chapel, "once filled with Methodist families," has its congregations small and its sources very limited. "Despite the earnest ministry of a succession of able, devoted men, the cause has been going down, down continuously." But, says Mr. Pawlyn, "God is omnipotent, our few people are prayerful." Does he rely on prayer and omnipotence? Not a bit. He follows this by the declaration, "Meanwhile, our pressing want is *money*."

In the *Kirchenfreund* (Orthodox Church Friend), Professor Orelli writes on "The Secularisation of the Church," which he finds pervaded by worldly anti-Christian spirit. He says the open opposition of the social democrats is as nothing beside the treachery of conservatives who, while maintaining the forms of Christianity, wholly depart from its spirit.

He remarks that people praise the Bible and say it was never so well understood as now, while all their efforts tend to show it can no longer be considered the word of God. They praise Christ as a man, but will not admit him a god or follow his teachings.

Professor Orelli adds that in England and America, as well as on the Continent, "one denomination after another has been ravaged in this way. Communities which were built up entirely on the ground of personal faith, and had no other justification for their existence, have given up the principles of their faith, and yet live on."

A story is going the rounds about the new Czar. It is said that when, as a lad, he heard the story of the unfortunate end of the prophet of Nazareth, he much lamented his hard fate. His tutor drily remarked that, if J. C. were to venture to preach his doctrines in St. Petersburg, General Gresser, then Chief of Police, would have him arrested and committed to prison quite as unceremoniously as in ancient Judea.

That Scottish pulpit mountebank, the Rev. John Robertson, of Glasgow, says that "the theatres are mere houses of assignation, where rich and bloated men meet their mistresses and harlots." How about the gods in the gallery? Johnnie, like Mrs. Chant, has an eye for only one part of the house.

Johnnie is particularly wroth with the Moderates of the Church of Scotland and other ministers who have been seen in a theatre. "It's enough," he says, "to make the Covenanters turn in their graves." Yes, with anxiety to fill a seat at the performance.

Free Church Principles is the title of a printed address by the Rev. A. Holden Byles, of Hanley. The reverend gentleman does not believe in State Churches, but he believes in a Church, to which he of course belongs. This Church is inspired, and some of its inspiration has fallen on Mr. Byles. He is a dissenter from the Church of England, but no one must dissent from *his* Church. All dissent, he says, which does not arise from ignorance is a sin. Such are the principles of the *Free Church*! Was there ever a more facetious title?

Professor Newman once observed—and we have often made the observation ourselves—that the religion of barbarians is often decided by their chieftains. A curious illustration of this tendency may be found in Mr. R. G. Wilberforce's new book on the Indian Mutiny, the most conspicuous figure in which is John Nicholson, whom Colonel Malleson called "the greatest soldier and the most perfect master of men in India." He was adored by the Pathans and Afghans who followed him from the North, and a Nicholson cult arose among the Sikhs, who made pilgrimages to see him. After his death a whole tribe of them said, "Let us learn to worship Nickelseyn's god." They went to Peshawur, and were baptised to a man. "It may be doubted," says the *Westminster Gazette*, "whether, in India at least, any priest of peace ever had such a triumph."

Mr. G. L. Mackenzie having, in the *Echo*, drawn attention to the insincerity of Christians who preach peace and forget the texts where Christ says, "I came not to send peace, but a sword," and "he that hath no sword let him sell his garment and buy one," Mr. H. J. W. Morden writes to say that the word sword "means, in the local idiom, separation." What a pity the divine revelation does not say what it means.

At the examination of the Wick School Board, according to the *Northern Ensign*, the children were asked: Where was the Catechism written? Answer—On Mount Sinai. Who wrote the Catechism? Answer—Moses.

In the same district the Dunnet School Board opens with prayer by the chairman, the Rev. D. Mowat, Free Church minister. Soon after the Established Church minister, the Rev. W. J. S. Falconer, said: "I am not to be bullied by you," to which the chairman replied: "You are the bully." And the parish minister abruptly left the meeting in a passion.

Satolli, the Pope's vice-regent in America, has promulgated an edict from his holiness, placing under the ban of the Church as secret societies the Oddfellows, the Knights of Pythias, and the Sons of Temperance. The real reason is doubtless that the Pope fears these Orders may draw the faithful from their allegiance to the priests. The Jesuits are far more closely a secret society than any of these, but never were they more in favor with the Papacy than at present.

The Rev. Richard Watson, one of the lights of the Methodist Church, says of the ghost raised by the witch of Endor: "The real Samuel appeared, and the message uttered is so much in character, and so manifestly breathes the spirit of the divine commission, that, containing, as it does, an explicit prediction which was exactly accomplished, we must conclude (let loose and sceptical commentators conjecture what they please) that there was no deception here. The account not only shows that the Jews believed in the doctrine of apparitions, but that, in fact, such an appearance on this occasion did actually occur, which answers all the objections which were ever raised, or can be raised, from the philosophy of the case, against the possibility of the appearance of departed spirits."

Wesley is still more explicit, and says, in so many words, that "the giving up witchcraft is in effect giving up the Bible" (*Journal*, May 25, 1768). Dr. Adam Clarke, in his commentary on the passage, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" (Exodus xxii. 18), observes: "If there had been no witches, such a law as this had never been made"

Not the Anti-Gambling League, but the Chief Constable of Peterborough, determined to try if, having put down other lotteries, religious ones could be carried on with impunity. The Rev. Canon Moser was accordingly summoned for selling lottery tickets on behalf of a proposed Roman Catholic church. One witness stated that he had addressed 10,000 envelopes for the circulars announcing the lottery. On Canon Moser giving an undertaking that the lottery should not be proceeded with and the money returned, the magistrates adjourned the case to enable the promise to be fulfilled, stating that in the event of this being done there would not be a conviction.

The pious people who delight in suppressing other people's enjoyments draw attention to the profanity which

prevails at some music halls. A popular song, for instance, imported from America, has for chorus:—

He's up with the angels now,
With a bright crown upon his brow;
A pain came in his "tum,"
Then he went to Kingdom Come,
And he's up with the angels now.

No doubt it's awfully shocking, but the question as to whose taste should regulate popular amusements is not so easily settled as some people think.

The *Cape Argus* gives an account of the Dutch settlers in the country districts. It makes them out to be very pious, very ignorant, and immoral. It accuses the rich, smooth elders of the Church of having "bywonders" on their farms for purposes of immorality, and says: "Many of the children of those 'bywonders' are his children. Could it be otherwise? Nothing to read but the Bible; and surely the Old Testament is, according to my light, rather a dangerous book to put in the hands of such people." The writer goes on to say that they pay their ministers well and have numerous wealthy churches, but do nothing for education.

It appears, from a letter in the *Hampshire Telegraph*, that the ex-Mayor of Portsmouth was fully justified in referring to the sectarian character of the Royal Seamen's and Marines' Orphan School and Female Home, at its annual meeting, there being no other opportunity for subscribers to express their opinion of the management. It seems that the late Alderman Emanuel, the father of the ex-Mayor, was one of the original founders of the Home, which is now so perverted that it is only open to children of Church of England members, who are only 75 per cent. of the seamen and marines, while the subscriptions are drawn from all classes. Jack, if of the Church of England, is not such a churl as to desire that the children of a chum, who is not exactly of the same faith as himself, shall be debarred from privileges open to his own if anything happens to himself; and this matter should not be allowed to drop until either the Home is made unsectarian, or every collecting-box, card, and circular states on it the fact that the Home is for Church of England children only.

The general statistics of the Roman Church in the United States are as follows:—Archbishops, 14; Bishops, 75; clergy, 9,388; churches, 8,477; chapels, 1,763; stations, 3,485; colleges, 127; academies, 656; schools, 3,587; Roman Catholic population, 8,806,095. Monsignor Satolli has virtually transferred the Roman Catholic centre of operations from Baltimore to Washington, where the wire-pullers are ever ready to bring pressure on the Government.

During the past eight years, including 1893, the Catholic schools for Indians in the United States have received from Congress \$2,366,416, while fifteen of the other leading religious bodies have received but \$1,400,000. The publication of the facts will add to the movement for stopping all grants to religious bodies. The Catholics vote like sheep, with the object of dipping as deeply as possible into the public purse on every available occasion.

The close alliance of the Roman Church with the corrupt Tammany political organisation of New York has been strikingly manifested lately. Father Ducey was asked to assist the Commission of Investigation of New York Politicians with facts. He did so, and immediately received a peremptory mandate from Archbishop Corrigan not to appear before the Commission again.

M. Félix Lecaze, a Paris journalist, who is also a Catholic, has been lecturing at Frankfort on the Lourdes "miracles." He examined case after case, and found that the result was due to suggestion and hypnosis. No person has been cured who was blind or lame from birth. M. Lecaze denounces the "expropriation of the superstitious tendency" which is carried on by the Catholic dignitaries, who reap a rich harvest for the Church by this policy.

The secular press sometimes make some queer errors in dealing with things of the Church. A northern paper recently had a heading, "Churching of the Mayor," that individual being a male, unlike some of the mayors in New Zealand. This was almost as ridiculous as the paper which wrote of "suspended thurifers," the thurifer being the person who wafts the incense from the thurible.

Another attempt to get out of the difficulty occasioned to the orthodox by the fact that the Sinai MS. states that Joseph begat Jesus is made by "A Parish Priest" in the *Church Times*, who suggests that "begat" may only mean "was succeeded as his heir by." Apart from the fact that Jesus is not said to have inherited anything from his mother's husband, "A Parish Priest," moreover, omits to notice that verse 25 goes on to say, "She bore to him a son."

An article on Christmas in the *Vegetarian*, by J. S. Herron, makes some surprising statements. He says: "The rules the Apostles laid down, instructed by their Lord, were—No flesh, no fermented wine. The wine drunk in Palestine was not fermented; there was the vintage season when all the grapes were ripe, and everyone drank the juice of the grape, and had a great festival, though a harmless one."

Where did Mr. Herron find the instructions against flesh or wine? Christ and his disciples partook of the Passover Lamb, and Peter saw heaven opened and a sheet let down, "wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter, kill and eat." Thus, one of the apostles was instructed in slaughter as well as in flesh-eating.

Then as to the unfermented wine. What nonsense to suppose that the wine which is always spoken of in connection with drunkenness, which upset Noah and Lot, and made Paul complain that some of those who celebrated the Lord's Supper were drunken, was quite a harmless beverage. The attempts of Christian cranks to make the old book endorse their fads bring credit neither to the book nor to themselves.

The *Vegetarian* writer goes on to say: "The manner of celebrating the Christian festival now is taken from the pagan feast of Bacchus, a feast greatly delighted in by the Romans, where everyone got drunk and behaved in a most obscene and disorderly manner." He concludes by observing: "Unless the Christian Church is reformed throughout all its branches as to its purity, it will fall and never rise again."

The Rochford (Essex) School Board, under clerical domination, decided to introduce the Apostles' Creed into the schools. Three Dissenting members have appealed to the Education Department on the ground that the creed is a formulary such as is interdicted by the fourteenth clause of the Education Act. Should the Department decide that the creed is admissible, this forgery will, doubtless, be introduced in most of the schools where the clericals are in power; and it will be the duty of Freethinkers to everywhere expose the fictions of that creed and the facts concerning its concoction.

Nellie Laws, 19, and Maggie Winter, 14, were charged at the North London Police-Court with stealing a cash-box and £4 5s. belonging to Mrs. Morris. The prisoner Laws had been connected with the Salvation Army, and met Mrs. Morris at the Clapton Congress Hall. Afterwards she called at Mrs. Morris's and abstracted the cash-box, inducing her servant, Winter, to leave at the same time. The Salvation Army girl said Winter took the box, but admitted helping to spend the money; and she added, "God knows I have done everything I could for that girl, and prayed for her." In the dock each girl accused the other, and Laws declared that what she had done was out of "Christ-like love" for Winter.

Colonel Ingersoll called Shakespeare the greatest genius of this world, and Mr. Gladstone asked him how he knew that. Mr. Gladstone afterwards called Aristotle the greatest thinker of antiquity, and Colonel Ingersoll asked him how he knew that. Mr. Gladstone did not answer. He thought it best to lie low.

Mr. Swinburne is of the same opinion as Colonel Ingersoll. He calls Shakespeare "the mightiest genius that ever dwelt among men"—which the orthodox will think rough on Jesus Christ. Mr. Swinburne also refers to the spring of 1616, in which Shakespeare died (and for that reason), as "the darkest that ever dawned upon England or the world." Evidently, in Mr. Swinburne's opinion, Jesus Christ is not in the running.

Mr. A. J. Balfour, the Tory leader in the House of Commons, sowed his intellectual wild oats in *The Defence of Philosophic Doubt*. He will soon publish the fruits of repentance in a new work entitled *The Foundations of Belief*. We shall be happy to investigate Mr. Balfour's "foundations."

Archdeacon Farrar is one of the gassiest preachers in England. He makes a lot of money by writing about the poor Carpenter of Nazareth. We are not surprised, therefore, to learn that he is also a flunkey. For four months he fills the post of Deputy Clerk of the Closet in waiting on the Queen. We are unable to state the precise functions of this office, and perhaps they are better left to imagination.

Lord Erskine, hearing that a man had died worth a million, said: "Well, that's a good sum to begin the next world with."

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, January 6, Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, London, E.C.: 11.15, "Social Equality: Will it Ever be Realised?" 7, "The Freethought Outlook in 1895."

Wednesday, January 9, Hall of Science: 8.30, "A Night with George Meredith."

January 13, Hall of Science, London; 27, Liverpool.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—January 6, Chesterfield: 13, Leicester; 20, Nottingham; 27, Hall of Science, London. February 3, Hall of Science, London; 10, Camberwell. March 3, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

PETER DICKSON.—Hardly worth the price, we should say.

W. BOOTH.—Thanks for good wishes. See "Acid Drops."

MR. AND MRS. J. KENNEDY.—We heartily reciprocate your "best wishes" for the new year. The sight of your pretty country house on the card makes us feel sicker than ever of London's "long unlovely streets," and its dirt and din.

IMPARTIALIST.—The man acted generously, but it seems a little Pharisaic to put the occurrence in print. Besides, it would be no news to our readers that a Freethinker can be a tender-hearted man.

R. F. (Beswick, Hull).—Mr. Naewiger, 22 Osborne-street, Hull, will supply you with our literature.

G. MANCO.—Thanks. See "Sugar Plums."

G. LUCAS.—We will look into the matter. What is your fresh sub-intended for? Josephus does not mention the massacre of the innocents by Herod. He would have done so if he had heard of it.

G. R.—Shall appear. No room this week.

G. W. B.—Under consideration.

REBRAR.—Mr. Forder sees to your order. Glad to know you are so pleased with the *Freethinker*.

E. TIMEWELL.—There have been several articles on Spiritism in back numbers of the *Freethinker*, the dates of which we may supply next week. In our issue for August 12, 1894, there are several "Acid Drops" on the subject. *The Confessions of a Medium* (published by Griffith & Farren), Truesdell's *Bottom Facts Concerning Spiritualism* (Boston), and a work by Mr. Maskelyne may supply what you require.

G. GRAHAM.—There is no law to prevent a Freethinker from receiving a legacy. The law disables Freethought Societies.

G. F. WENBORN.—Glad to have your support.

A. J. MARRIOTT.—Will deal with it next week. Thanks.

MR. FOOTE'S FIGHTING FUND.—Mr. and Mrs. Durant (St. Thomas, West Indies), 7s.; W. A. Argall, 1s.

J. G. FISHER.—Handed to Mr. Forder. Kindly send in future direct to him.

J. NICHOLSON.—Cuttings are always welcome.

W. SIMONS sends us the annual report of the Ball's Pond Secular Sick and Tontine Society, which is as healthy as the members appear to be.

J. NEATE.—Thanks. See paragraph.

W. S. PARNALL.—Obliged for the cuttings. We note your hope that our New Year's number will be "as terse and classic as the *Almanack*."

A. J. NEWTON.—Thanks for the reference. Stevenson's intellect was too keen not to pierce through the Christian superstition.

H.—Please send future orders for literature direct to Mr. Forder. Mrs. Besant is not a Freethinker of "our class." We regard her present beliefs as a worse superstition than Christianity, though perhaps less malignant, being two thousand years more recent.

F. J. BOORMAN.—Mr. Foote wrote you on the subject. His letter must have crossed your second one in the post. He will gladly visit Chatham again either for lecture or debate.

W. J. HEATH.—(1) Glad to have your thanks for what you consider the spirit we have infused into the question of Secular Education. By the way, that spirit is likely to cost us something. There is still a deficit of over £10 in connection with Mr. Watts's candidature in Finsbury, for which we hold ourself personally responsible. It seems hardly fair to let us bear the burden of cost, as well as a heavy burden of work. (2) We will try to furnish precise references to our Freethought Gleanings, which would certainly be more useful with them.

E. H.—(1) We have recommended Greg's *Crest of Christendom* dozens of times. (2) The libellous Life of Bradlaugh may be the same as the one you refer to. We do not know. (3) We are unable to direct you to any cheap history of the Slave Trade. The literature of the subject is large and rather expensive. (4) Ratepayers have no control over the so-called Voluntary Schools, which are supported out of imperial taxation, though not out of the rates. They are now clamoring for a share of the rates too, and if they succeed it will be their destruction.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—Mrs. Hancock, 5s.; Ch. Girtanner, 5s. 9d.; Westminster Branch, 17s.; F. Rogers, 5s.; Daniel Baker, £2 2s.; J. Chamberlain, 2s. 6d.

T. E. M.—Your re-copy to hand. Shall appear at an early date. It is in the compositor's hands.

R. MORROW.—Thanks.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Dundee Advertiser—Cape Argus—Echo—Two Worlds—Western Figaro—Freidenker—Reynolds's Newspaper—Boston Investigator—Independent Pulpit—Crescent—Islamic World—Weekly Times and Echo—New York Sun—Chat—Truthseeker—Isle of Man Times—Twentieth Century—Liberty—Progressive Thinker—Liberator—Open Court—Torquay Times—Lucifer—Northern Ensign.

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

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

It being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—(Narrow Column) one inch, 3s.; half column, 1s. 5s.; column, £1 10s. Broad Column—one inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE lectures at the London Hall of Science on the first two Sundays in the new year. His morning subject to-day (Jan. 6) is "Social Equality: Will it ever be Realised?" In the evening he will lecture on "The Freethought Outlook in 1895." On the following Wednesday (Jan. 9) Mr. Foote delivers the first of two new literary lectures, the subject then being "A Night with George Meredith."

We hope to see a large and genial gathering at the Holborn Restaurant on Monday evening (January 7). It is the occasion of the seventh Annual Dinner of the London Secular Federation. Mr. Foote will preside, and be supported by Mr. Charles Watts and other well-known Freethinkers. There is sure to be a good "spread," and the Dinner Committee has arranged an excellent musical program to be alternated with the toast-list. Let us gather together for one evening and fleet the time merrily as they did in the golden age. After the merriment we shall all fight the better for "the good old cause."

Mr. Charles Watts lectured the last two Sunday evenings at the Hall of Science, London. Considering the holiday season, the audiences were very good. Mr. Watts lectures three times to-day, Sunday, January 6, in the Assembly Room, Market Hall, Chesterfield. We have no doubt that our Derbyshire friends will muster in good force.

The conclusion of Mr. Foote's article on "Who was the Father of Jesus?" stands over till next week, in consequence of the pressure upon our space by the Bradlaugh article. The cartoon also stands over till then for the same reason. Our readers must be satisfied this week with the fine portrait of Charles Bradlaugh.

Dr. Stanton Coit lectured for the Liverpool Branch last Sunday. The weather was generally dry, but bitterly cold, and to this must be attributed the fact that the audiences were not so large as the merits of the lectures deserved. Those who attended, however, were delighted with the powerful addresses given. The evening lecture was especially fine; Mr. George Wise opposed, and the proceedings were prolonged much beyond the usual time. Dr. Coit's replies to his opponent were crushing; but God's people have the privilege of singing hymns of victory even after defeat.

The Liverpool and Bootle Secular Tontine Society has concluded a very successful year. Two-thirds of the subscriptions were returned to the members in the divide, and the New Year opens with a good substantial reserve fund. New members are invited; all information being obtainable at the lectures on Sunday evenings.

Mr. C. Cohen has concluded the first half of his six months' mission at South Shields, and has just been enjoying a well-deserved holiday. He has made many friends in the district, and his services are highly appreciated by one and all.

The Camberwell Branch holds its general meeting of members this afternoon (Jan. 6) at 4. Tea and soirée (tickets 1s.) will begin at 6. South Londoners are earnestly invited to attend.

The Finsbury Branch holds its annual meeting in the Minor Hall of Science to-day (January 6) at 12 o'clock (noon). Officers have to be elected, and other important business determined.

Last week's *Athenæum* gave the place of honor to a review of Mrs. Bonner's biography of Charles Bradlaugh. Reservations are made, but on the whole the article is laudatory. The following paragraph is perhaps worth quoting: "The main facts of Bradlaugh's public life are too well known to need recapitulation, though, perhaps, the time has not yet come for such thorough understanding of them, or rather of him, as only dispassionate examination can secure. Throughout many years he provoked much opposition which was excusable, if not quite reasonable, and which was evidently not unwelcome to him, though he bitterly complained of it, by his persistent attacks upon opinions regarding secular as well as religious affairs held by most of his countrymen. On many occasions 'Iconoclast,' as he styled himself, went out of his way both to give offence and to take offence; but even in his stormiest days, as well as in the later and more statesmanlike stage of his career, he often showed a regard for justice and a spirit of generosity surpassed by few. In fact, he was a born fighter, the conditions of whose life inclined him to modes of warfare and placed him in battle-fields which involved much waste of energy and lack of dignity. But before going into the fray he always satisfied himself that his cause was a good one and worth struggling for; and it is notable that during the few years in which he was allowed to sit in Parliament he won the sullen admiration of even enemies by his peculiar dignity and sustained energy."

The *Pall Mall Gazette* says the two volumes are written with tedious minuteness, and uses hard words in speaking of Mr. Robertson's share of the composition. On the other hand, it admits, rather patronisingly, that Bradlaugh was "a really remarkable man," and "one of the greatest speakers of his day." This is qualified, however, by the statement that he had a "strictly mechanical, machine-like mind." Perhaps the *Pall Mall* reviewer will explain the difference between "mechanical" and "machine-like," and inform us how the possessor of such a mind could ever be a great orator. We pause for a reply.

The *Literary Guide* (Watts & Co.) for January is a good pennyworth, the principal feature being a review of the *Life of Charles Bradlaugh*. There is a valuable gratis supplement by Mr. F. J. Gould on "Who Wrote Genesis?"

A letter in the *Birmingham Daily Post*, signed "Pro Bono Publico," ably advocates the utilisation of the Board schools for Sunday evening lectures. Hundreds, it appears, were turned away who were eager to hear Dickens's *Christmas Carol* read at the Bristol-street Board school.

The *Ironclad Age* (Dec. 15) opens with a curious piece of verse from that erratic genius but stout Freethinker, George Francis Train, who, as usual, indulges wildly in capital letters.

The largest theatre in Boston was packed to hear Colonel Ingersoll's new lecture on the Bible. The *Boston Investigator* says: "The audience, intelligent, alert, appreciative, hung upon his utterances swayed, by his magnetism, fired by his eloquence into irresistible and continuous applause. What a victory for Freethought, what a triumph for genius! Voltaire, in the days of his greatest popularity, could never have received a heartier reception from the warm-hearted French people than was accorded the distinguished Freethinker, gentleman, and scholar on the occasion of his last visit to this city." Similar ovations have greeted him in the other towns where he has lectured.

Reynold's Newspaper, in noticing the *Secular Almanack*, gave a good extract from Mr. Foote's article on "The Progress of Freethought," and the *Weekly Times and Echo* says of the *Almanack*: "It is full of good matter, which, for the most part, no one need to be a Secularist to enjoy; and the calendar is a refreshing contrast to the usual stereotyped list of dates of kings and battles in which no one now-a-days takes much interest or cares to be reminded of."

On Christmas Day, December 25, 1894, the scholars' annual tea party was held at the Failsworth Secular Sunday School,

Failsworth. This party has now been held for over twenty years, and was, as usual, a decided success. Over two hundred sat down to an excellent tea. After tea, for which no charge is made to the scholars, a good program of songs and recitations was rendered by the younger children. Forty-nine volumes in all were distributed as prizes by Mr. Taylor. Refreshments and games followed, and the party spent a most enjoyable evening. The New Year's party will be held on January 5, 1895. After the tea the drama, "Leah the Forsaken," will be played.

The critical school of Dutch theology has made the Church in that country rationalistic, though it rests on our good friends of *De Dageraad* to uphold the banner of absolute Freethought. A writer in the *Church Times* was horrified to find that at the Amsterdam Free Evangelical Church they were having a course of lectures on "George Eliot." He says, moreover, that the congregations of the churches are very thin, the worshippers being mainly women.

Mr. Victor Roger, one of the N.S.S. vice-presidents, has been re-elected on the Lambeth Vestry. He has a Freethinking colleague in Mr. G. Coombes, and another in a member whose name we withhold. Mr. Roger had the *odium theologicum* raised against him. One prominent chapelite would not stand with Mr. Roger on any account. That is what he said, but he had to stand in the Progressive list with Mr. Roger, and now has to sit with him on the Vestry. It only remains to add that Mr. Roger was vigorously denounced by Christians at open-air meetings as a disgrace to the Vestry. The disgrace consisted in his vile, pestilent habit of thinking for himself.

In Bethnal Green three well-known militant Atheists have been elected on the Vestry—Messrs. Sumpter, Smither, and Neate, the last being the secretary of the local N.S.S. Branch. Mr. Smither has also a seat on the Board of Guardians, together with Miss Sumpter, who is a member of the East London Branch.

In Hackney we have Messrs. W. Vining and B. Dent, both of whom have lectured at the Freethought station in Victoria Park. Mr. Gay, a member of the N.S.S., has also been elected on the Hackney Board of Guardians.

In Poplar we have Mrs. Wilson and Messrs. Lansbury and Goult (all Secularists) elected as Guardians. Mrs. Groult has been returned as Guardian for Hoxton, and Mrs. Barralet for Homerton. Mr. E. Smith (Battersea Branch) polled over five hundred votes, but wanted ten more to win. At South Lynn Mr. Robert Green was elected as Guardian.

Annual Children's Party.

C. M. Jacob, 6s.; George Anderson, £2 2s.; Mrs. Donaldson, 6s.; "Not Bad," 2s. 6d.; Mrs. Bussie, 5s.; J. Chamberlain, 2s. 6d.—ROBERT FORDER, *Treasurer*.

A Brace of Saints.

St. Viar, a Spanish saint, has, it is said, been "evolved" from a curious error in reading an ancient stone (similar to the one discovered by Mr. Pickwick), which bore the letters S. VIAR. Spanish piety at once recognised a saint. Profane antiquaries, however, read the inscription otherwise. The letters are old Roman characters, and, if complete, would have read Prefectus VIARUM (overseer of roads). The stone was in honour of some Roman official connected with the highways.

On Soracte, a mountain in Italy, celebrated by Horace and Virgil, there is now a monastery of St. Oreste—i.e., the old name divided and softened into a saint. "These be thy gods, O Israel."—James A. Richardson.

How to Help Us.

- (1) Get your newspaper to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.
- (2) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
- (3) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.
- (4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.
- (5) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.
- (6) Get your newspaper to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.

NOTABLE BOOKS OF THE YEAR.

ONE way of taking stock of the progress of a period is by noting the number of books which it has produced that are likely to live. And the past twelvemonth has furnished its quota. Of fiction—of which, indeed, there is no dearth—we shall not deal at length. There have been several notable novels, though not perhaps any masterpiece, sent forth during the past year. There is George Meredith's *Lord Ormont and His Aminta*, which certainly is worthy of the author of *Richard Feverel*. But George Meredith, of course, will never be read by the multitude. *Lord Ormont and His Aminta* contains many examples of that twisted language and exuberance of writing, as it may be called, which is one of the distinguishing literary mannerisms of George Meredith, and which is, perhaps, seen most markedly in *One of Our Conquerors*. Yet, for all that, George Meredith is perhaps the most scientific and cultured writer of fiction in England to-day.

Amongst the other notable novels which may only be named are Hall Caine's *Manxman*, Mrs. Humphry Ward's *Marcella*, dealing in the Wardian fashion with Socialism, Stanley J. Weyman's *Under the Red Robe* and *My Lady Rothera*, and Blackmore's *Perlycross*.

What we wish to deal with principally, however, are those books issued during the past year which appeal particularly to the attention of Freethinkers. In this class we may place the much-boomed and certainly striking work called *Social Evolution*, by Mr. Benjamin Kidd. It would, of course, be impossible in an article such as this to give anything like an adequate idea of Mr. Kidd's work. For, be it said, it is decidedly ingenious. But one can appreciate its value briefly.

Now, the thesis of the book is that there is "no rational sanction for progress." Mr. Kidd maintains that the interests of the social organism are opposed to the interests of the individual, and that "reason" would eliminate or take no account of the social interests; hence the necessity of "religion" to supply those sanctions for conduct which "reason" cannot supply. In other words, Mr. Kidd argues that religion is the sociological ballast which keeps the ship of humanity from toppling over. And by "religion" Mr. Kidd distinctly means unreason. He is prepared to give the title "religion," apparently, to any form of supernaturalism, from Buddhism down to the fetishism of savage tribes; thus Mormonism, according to him, is a religion, whilst Positivism is not (p. 115). So that really—if it be not disrespectful to put it so—it would appear that any kind of humbug or emotional tomfoolery possesses, in Mr. Kidd's eyes, a sociological value which a reasonable, sane system of ethics does not possess.

We hope we have conveyed as accurate an impression of Mr. Kidd's position as is possible in this brief survey. Of course the book contains much that is valuable and interesting. But many of the religious organs have hailed Mr. Kidd's book as an admirable apologetic, and have exalted its author to a position in the scientific world which it is probable he never aspired to. To these, therefore, we would address a word. And it is this: The first, and the last, the only question for us to ask or discuss about religions and religious sanctions is: Are they true? All these "safe-side" arguments, these "hell-police-force" ideas, all this elaborate argument as to the sociological value of religion—all this is beside the question. *Are the religious sanctions true?* If they are, then we do not require your treatises as to their sociological value. If the religious sanctions be false, are we going to discuss the sociological value of a lie?

Mr. Kidd himself does not explicitly state that he accepts the religious motives as true. Possibly he does, more probably he does not. He is simply looking at their effect when believed by the masses. And he thinks that such belief is an essential condition of progress. Now, we would suggest, as our humble opinion, that Mr. Kidd is on the wrong tack altogether. We would gather that, as man has progressed so far against the forces of unreason, he would have progressed still more if he had not had to expend so much energy in fighting the forces of religion—using the word in the sense Mr. Kidd does. True, these forces of unreason were also set going by humanity—we will grant that. Humanity must be taken whole, so to say, with its weakness and its strength. But Mr. Kidd's error, it seems at least to us, is to put to the credit of the

weakness what is really the outcome of the strength. The race has progressed—we both grant that. Mr. Kidd says because of religion or unreason. Nay, we say, in spite of religion, because reason has been too strong for unreason. And we claim that history is on our side and against Mr. Kidd. For, if Mr. Kidd's thesis be true, we ought to find that the greatest progress was made in the ages when religion was strongest. Do we find such to be the case? Why, it is a commonplace of even the most un-Macaulayan schoolboy that the ages of greatest "faith" were the ages of greatest ignorance and greatest degradation; that, as religion waxed stronger, civilisation grew weaker; that with the natural revival of learning came the decline of religion, thus demonstrating that reason is a stronger force than unreason; and that, given time, no matter how strong the irrational force, humanity will inevitably recover itself. And if we are better to-day than ever before, it is, we claim, because religion was never weaker than it is to-day. Much even of the knowledge on which Mr. Kidd relies in his book was acquired and spread by men who were fought bitterly by the very institution which Mr. Kidd is justifying. Of course Mr. Kidd does not write by any means as a religious hack, making out a case for his religion at the expense of sanity and truth. Primarily he is a student of the social organism, and his appreciation of the value of the religious force was probably the result of his investigations and reflections, such as they were; yet the net outcome of his book is that religion is the steady element in society. But he has made a mistake. It may be necessary to re-examine our sociology; to test it and see if it has no weak places; but we cannot start to rebuild it on a false foundation. Truth is the keynote of all science—of all life, in fact; truth, in the long run, is the only safeguard against error and retrogression. And one might answer Mr. Kidd's proposition as to the value of unreason by adapting some eloquent and memorable words of the late Professor Clifford: "It can never be necessary for your race and for mine that, in order to progress, we must needs believe a lie: by trust in reason and in truth we have progressed so far hitherto; by trust in reason and in truth we shall never more fall back."

Perhaps we have devoted more space to *Social Evolution* than we should under the circumstances. For there is another book which has reached fame during the year—we mean Professor Drummond's *Ascent of Man*, that possesses considerable interest for Freethinkers. And here, remembering Mr. Kidd's book, we may emphasise a remark made some time ago in these columns, that really it is not necessary to go to sceptics for answers to the theologians; the theologians confute one another so brilliantly that it is superfluous for an Atheist to join in the task. It cannot be said, perhaps, with fairness, that either Mr. Kidd or Professor Drummond is a theologian; but they are both certainly on the theological side—they are both religious, they are both seeking to justify the ways of God. And as one would expect, they fall out. Really at bottom Professor Drummond's book is, to a large extent, a confutation of Mr. Kidd's whole thesis. Of that we shall presently deal. But even specifically Mr. Drummond devotes several pages to slating Mr. Kidd. He says of Mr. Kidd's work (p. 70) that "as an apologetic it only accentuates a weakness which scientific theology never felt more keenly than at the present hour." Theology can only retain its vitality, it seems, by being brought "into harmony with Nature and into line with the rest of our knowledge." Oh, that "harmony"! For ages they have been at it, and creating untold discord in the process.

But Professor Drummond goes bravely to his task, and seeks to show that the whole end of things was the Evolution of "love." There is a chapter on the "Evolution of a Mother," and another on the "Evolution of a Father," and so on, through pages of very pretty, semi-ecstatic talk. But it is not science. Indeed, when we meet early in the book (p. 47) a chapter headed "Why was Evolution the Method [of Creation] Chosen?" we know what to expect. But as Mr. Drummond answers Mr. Kidd by quoting a passage from Spencer, in which it is pointed out, in a word, that the social instinct is in reality a part, and an essential part, of the individual instinct, so we can answer Mr. Drummond by Mr. Kidd. Says Professor Drummond, referring to his question above: "The answer of modern natural theology has been that the evolutionary method is the infinitely nobler scheme." Now turn we to Mr. Kidd

and see how the "infinitely nobler scheme" works out, remarking, parenthetically, that "modern natural theology" never perceived the "infinite nobility" until science had discovered Evolution and compelled the theologians to accept it. Mr. Kidd writes: "We admire the wonderful adaptation of many of the ruminants to their mode of life, the keen scent by which they distinguish an enemy at a distance which seems remarkable to us, their wonderful power of vision, their exceeding fleetness of foot, and their graceful and beautiful forms. But the evolutionist has always before him the cost at which these qualities have been obtained. He has in mind the countless host of individuals which have fallen a prey to their enemies, or failed in other ways in the rivalry of life in the immense period during which natural selection was at work, slowly accumulating the small successful variations out of which these qualities have been evolved. It is the same with other forms of life; progress everywhere is evident, but the way is strewn with the unsuccessful which have fallen in the advance" (*Social Evolution*, p. 61). Thus we have produced the flower of love, in one little corner, and amongst a small portion of one race, at the cost of hatred, suffering, and death. Truly an "infinitely noble scheme."

However, like Mr. Kidd's book, Mr. Drummond's is well worth reading. And, taking its argument merely to mean that ethical conduct, love, self-sacrifice, the "struggle for the life of others," or what possibly Mr. Kidd means by social conduct, that this is as much the result of evolution as the physical structure of man, that there is nothing supernatural or irrational about it—taking Professor Drummond's argument at bottom to be this, it is justifiable, and it is an answer to Mr. Kidd. Of course, if the book be taken merely as another specimen of modern Paleyism, the beautiful-world-in-which-everything-goes-well-and-everybody-is-in-love idea, then the thing is worthless.

We have, we fear, spent too long over these books. And we have not touched on the essentially Freethought books of the year. There is, of course, the *Life of Charles Bradlaugh* by Mrs. Bonner, just published; Mr. Putnam's *Four Hundred Years of Freethought*; Colonel Ingersoll's lecture, *About the Holy Bible*; Messrs. Wheeler and Foote's little book on *Voltaire*; *The Bottomless Pit*, by W. Stewart Ross, and many others. One can only name a few. Certainly Freethinkers have no reason to feel other than gratified at a review of the year's books. For, even outside and apart from positive avowedly Freethought books, there is the permeation of general literature by Freethought ideas, which is always going on. It is to this general widening of thought, this loosening of dogmatic bonds, this gradual rusting away of the fetters—it is to this we look with pleasure, and it is in this we see the promise of a new and freer future.

FREDERICK RYAN.

Christianity and Reason.

When a man goes to a Christian church, he generally leaves his reason behind the door with his umbrella. "Were I to reason on religion as I do on science," says Faraday, "I could never be a Christian." Reason calls for knowledge, Christianity demands faith. Reason demands miracles now, if they were ever performed—Christianity demands acceptance of the wonderful past, that can never be repeated, on pain of eternal damnation. Christianity shocks our reason at every step, and the more reasonable men become the faster they outgrow it.—*William Denton*.

An Atheist on Agnosticism.

The Agnostic, while contending that it is unreasonable to deny a God, admits that it is likewise unreasonable to affirm a God, because, if consistent with reason, he, of course, would not be an Agnostic, but accept or retain the Theistic faith. He insists no evidence exists to establish such an hypothesis upon a basis of science and reason; that we have no knowledge, and can have no conception, of such a being; and, *a la* Ingersoll, successfully refutes all arguments advanced in favor of the mystic faith. Yet he says, "There may be such a being; I don't know." Is this reasonable? Just? If all the sciences fail to corroborate, no! repudiate the theory; if it mocks reason and sense, eludes the highest understanding, and baffles its own votaries, is it, can it be then, unreasonable to repudiate and deny completely such an unreasonable proposition? And if reasonable to deny it, is it not our duty to deny and proclaim the denial to all the world?—*Otto Wettstein*.

TRANSMIGRATIONS UP TO DATE.

(With Apologies to the "Vicar of Bray.")

In youth and beauty's halcyon days,
When Pusey was the fashion,
A zealous High Church maid was I—
Religion was my passion.
I went to church three times each day,
My faith no mere profession;
The comfort of my soul was then
Auricular confession.

Chorus—And this is law, I will maintain,
Until the day I die, sir,
That whatsoever fad may reign,
I always mean to try, sir.

But soon a change came o'er the scene—

I made a new alliance,
And criticised my former views
With all the lights of science.
The creeds of Christendom I held
Were so much foolish chatter,
And could explain the universe
In terms of force and matter.

Chorus—And this is law, I will maintain, etc.

Malthusian doctrines once I taught,
And checks to population,
Believing them the recipe
For national salvation.
I oft debated on the theme
With eloquence seductive,
And proved by figures easy seen
The race was too productive.

Chorus—And this is law, I will maintain, etc.

To Socialism next I turned,
With faith almost fanatic;
My views progressed until they were
Quite ultra-democratic.
Capitalists I loud denounced,
The bourgeois sleek I rated;
Carl Marx my prophet was just then,
And him I venerated.

Chorus—And this is law, I will maintain, etc.

Next to Theosophy I went,
By H. P. B. attracted;
For Eastern thought I bravely fought
When by its foes detracted.
A chela skilled I soon became,
And caused such great sensations,
When, by white magic, I produced
Materialisations.

Chorus—And this is law, I will maintain, etc.

In India I a Hindoo was—
For so the press reported;
While some allege, while in the States,
I was by Mormons courted.
Australia now I find my field,
And this is the result, sir—
Convinced by Antipodean priest,
I've joined the Maori cult, sir.

Chorus—And this is law, I will maintain, etc.

If time permits, I mean to try
The faith of every nation,
And, by my varied changes, prove
The truth of transmigration.
Now, will the cloister close my life,
Or shall I still meander,
Until at last I advocate
Anarchic propaganda?

Chorus—And this is law, I will maintain, etc.

S. SODDY.

Boggs says the French want to get back to Egypt, because they always hope for another plague of frogs.

Dying Planter—"Ah, Sambo, I fear I'm going, and I've a long journey before me." Sambo—"Nebber mind, massa; it am all down hill."

Superintendent—"Children, this is the Rev. Dr. Mc-Snorter, from Gowanus, who will address you a few brief remarks. Children, he has come all the way to try and save your souls from hell. You are not paying attention. Now, can any little boy or girl tell me where this gentleman is from?" Chorus of children—"From Hell."

THE SCIENTIFIC STANDPOINT.

THE *English Mechanic* for January opens with an article entitled "A New Branch of Science," in which it deals with what is called psycho-physiology. The purport of the article is to show that mental forces are as measurable as physical ones, and that all phenomena, from the highest to the lowest, are to be interpreted in terms of matter and motion. We quote the following passage as significant of the scientific standpoint of the writer:—

"To the evolutionist, as has been so frequently said, matter and motion are eternal. There is no creation or destruction, but only transformation of both. Holding this belief, which, despite the Marquis of Salisbury in his recent address to the British Association at Oxford, and despite the half-timorous jubilation with which that address was received by a good many journals, is an exceedingly well-founded one, the evolutionist is logically driven to the further belief that all phenomena are ultimately reducible to this—some form or forms of matter undergoing some form of motion. To him there appears to be no other rational explanation of things as they are. But 'all phenomena' include mental phenomena, include the so-called psychical phenomena. Hence we are led to believe that, with advancing human knowledge, mental phenomena, the phenomena of sensation, of the so-called will, of intellect—memory, reason, judgment, abstraction, imagination—in a word, the phenomena of the whole of our consciousness, objective and subjective alike, will be shown to be connected with the matter and the modes of motion of our nervous system—of our brains, with their infinite divisions and complexities, our spinal cords, our nerves."

Further on it says: "Let us once again remind the reader that a law of nature means simply an accurate scientific generalisation, a statement of some large principle induced from observation and experiment, and connecting and explaining a certain series of facts. It does not imply—nay, indeed, it rigidly excludes—the anthropomorphic conception of a lawgiver."

Christianity and Atheism.

In my arguments with Christians I always find that they do not understand Atheism; they seem to look upon it as something inferior to Christianity. I think I am right in saying that most, if not, all Atheists have been Christians, and have given up their creed for something higher and nobler. Most people, when they arrive at Christianity, prefer to stay there. They find a kind of rest for their minds, and do not trouble to rise any higher. Atheism is like all great things, it must be earned. The power of thought, and of reason, must be cultivated, till at last the Christian, having learned to live a fairly good life through being a true Christian, finds himself fitted for a higher natural life, free from the chains of superstition, and can look back upon Christianity, as upon all other religions, and feel that he has passed through that stage when he thought he knew that which he now knows he did not, and finds himself face to face with nature, and does his best to read her, instead of taking other people's imagination for his knowledge. Atheists are not born, they are made. It is easy for an unthinking man to become a Christian, but it is not so easy to be an Atheist. The intellectual, thinking Christian is moving onward towards Atheism.—*W. G. T.*

Priests.

I can find no evidence that seriously militates against the rule that the priest is at all times, and in all places, the enemy of all men—*Sacerdos semper, ubique, et omnibus inimicus*. I do not deny that the priest is very often a most earnest and conscientious man, doing the very best that he knows of as well as he can do it. Lord Amberley is quite right in saying that the blame rests more with the laity than with the priesthood; that it has insisted on magic and mysteries, and has forced the priesthood to produce them. But, then, how dreadful is the system that puts good men to such uses! . . . If there is one lesson which history forces upon us in every page, it is this: keep your children away from the priest, or he will make them the enemies of mankind.—*W. K. Clifford.*

Our fathers did not quite love God, nor quite hate the Devil; but they were afraid of both. They really wished to enjoy themselves with God in the next world, and with the Devil in this. They believed that the course of Nature was affected by their conduct; that floods and storms, diseases, earthquakes, and tempests, were sent as punishments, and that all good phenomena were rewards.—*R. G. Ingersoll.*

A GOD OF LOVE?

O CHRISTIAN, say, is *he* a God of Love,
Whose Bible reeks with war and blood,
Who drowned his children in the flood,
Who hurled down furious fire from heaven above?
A meek, mild God, the essence of sweet love.

Some men once ventured near his awful ark,
Then fiendishly he made them die
A fearful death of misery;
Behold, their bodies lying slain and stark!
I hear wild cries for mercy still; oh, hark!

That Satire throned in heaven, that peaceful dove,
Your dear God, slew in vengeance, then,
Full *fifty thousand* other men.
I think, dear Christian souls, if this is love,
God's love must sure make Hell of Heaven above.

And yet to-day each Christian praises him,
Whose bloody deeds are wide extolled
In Lunacy's wide Christian fold.
All honest eyes with sorrow's tears are dim;
Your God of Love is but a murderer grim.

J. J. BARRETT.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THEOSOPHY AND CREDULITY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In your issue for December 23 you quote from the *Weekly Times and Echo* a paragraph which says that the recent "exposure" of Theosophy shows the limits to which human credulity can be carried. I wish to point out that the human credulity of the British public seems to have been carried to the extent of enabling it to swallow anything, however unsupported, so long as it is a calumnious attack on some prominent person. Many of us know this from our own bitter experience. The *Westminster Gazette* writer knew that what the public wanted was abuse—not truth. Theosophists will hold all parties concerned to be innocent until they are proved guilty.—Yours, etc.,
H. T. EDGE.

[This is a characteristic epistle. The *Westminster Gazette* writer made detailed charges. To call such charges "abuse" is an abuse of the English language. Let the Theosophists answer if they can. If they cannot, they will not impose on sensible people by assuming virtuous airs.—EDITOR.]

PROFANE JOKES.

"Where do the wicked finally go?" was asked at a Sunday school. An observant youth replied: "They practise law, and then become judges or members of Parliament."

Pruyn—"Then you do not approve of the Universalist doctrine?" Mrs. De Piscopal—"Oh, I have nothing to say of their orthodoxy, but I'm sure they're not sufficiently exclusive!"

Visiting Clergyman—"And did your faith bring you to this?" Salvation Army Bill (serving his third term for disorderly conduct and drunkenness)—"No, not my faith, but my convictions!"

M. High (to St. Peter)—"I see they are drawing the lines pretty tight on the earth just now. You will please revise the conditions of admission accordingly, and cast out all who do not come up to the new requirements." St. P.—"It shall be so." (Thirty years later.) St. P.—"Who comes?" (A voice.)—"Bob Ingersoll." St. P.—"Come right in. You always meant well enough." (A few minutes later.) St. P.—"What! going so soon?" R. G. I.—"Yes; too lonesome. Nobody here but God and Dr. Talmage."

The Rev. J. Colquhoun, of Leight, was a man of extreme solemnity of demeanor. On one sacrament Sunday morning his wife, being desirous to have him nicely out for the occasion, had his coat rigged, well brushed, his shirt white as snow, and his bands hanging handsomely on his breast; and when she surveyed her gude man she was so delighted with his comely appearance that she suddenly took him around the neck and kissed him. Thereupon the Rev. John was so offended by this carnal proceeding that he debarred his wife from the sacrament that day.

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 post-card.]

LONDON.

HALL OF SCIENCE (142 Old-street, E.C.): 11.30, G. W. Foote, "Social Equality: Will it Ever be Realised?" (Free.) 6.30, musical selections; 7, "The Freethought Outlook in 1895." (Admission free; reserved seats, 3d. and 6d.) Wednesday, at 8.30, G. W. Foote, "A Night with George Meredith."

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7, members' quarterly meeting—important business. Tuesday and Friday, at 8, social gatherings.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 4, members' meeting; 6, tea; 7, soirée. (Tickets 1s.)

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Princes' Hall, Piccadilly): 11.15, J. H. Hobson, "The Waste of Labor Power."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, F. Haslam will lecture (weather permitting).

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, St. John will lecture.

COUNTRY.

BATH (Corridor Rooms): 11, Stanley Jones, "The Origin of the Bible"; 3, "Christianity and Social Life"; 7, "The Church and Science."
BIRMINGHAM (Coffee House, corner of Broad-street): Thursdays, at 8, papers, discussions, etc.

BLACKBURN (Secretary's house): 3, members' meeting.

BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 3, business meeting.

DUNDEE (City Assembly Rooms): 11, discussion class; 12, elocution class; 12.30, choir practice; 1, shorthand class; 2.30, R. Cameron, "Our Father in Heaven"; 6.30, secular concert. Friday, Jan. 4, at 7.30, annual festival.

FAIRFORTH SECULAR SUNDAY-SCHOOL (Pole-lane): Saturday, Jan. 5, New Year's Party—tea, followed by drama, "Leah the Forsaken."

GLASGOW (Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion class—D. Lindsay, "Public Affairs"; 6.30, Zosimus, "The Natural History of Christianity."

HULL (St. George's Hall, Storey-street): 7, members' annual meeting.

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 3, philosophy class—Ernest Newman, "Kant"; 7, Ernest Newman, "Christianity a Failure."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, R. Law, F.G.S., "The Earth as it was Eight Million Years Ago." (Free.)

NEWCASTLE (Irish Literary Institute, Clayton-street East): 7, R. Weightman, "Christianity and Secularism—a Moral Contrast."

PLYMOUTH (Democratic Club, Whimple-street): 6.45, Mr. Chubb, "Is there a God?"—affirmative.

PORTSMOUTH (Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea): 7, a meeting. Wednesday, at 8, dancing.

ROCHDALE (Working Men's College, 4 Acker-street): 11, discussion class; 2.30, Sunday-school; 3, Sam Standing, "Jesus the Wine-Maker"; 6.30, "What do we Mean by A.D. 1895?" 8.30, Branch meeting.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, limelight exhibition—see Saturday's local papers.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Thornton's Variety Hall, Union-lane): 11, O. Cohen, "Darwinism and Democracy"; 7, "Freethought and Morals."

SUNDERLAND (Lecture Room, Bridge End Vaults, opposite *Echo* office): 7, Robert Weightman will lecture.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—All Sundays until April, 1895, South Shields.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London, N.—Jan. 6, Bath; 13, Plymouth; 20, Chatham. Feb. 3, Edinburgh; 10, Dundee.

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