

The Free Thinker

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

HOLY RUSSIA.

II.—CONCLUSION.

It cannot be denied that there is much force in this Russian criticism of our Western democracy. The late Prince Albert was not exactly a political genius, and he was sneered at for saying that parliamentary government was on its trial; nevertheless there was a certain truth in what he said. Look, for instance, at France. What she requires is an element of stability, which she does not find in the perpetual sinking of ministries in the quicksand of haphazard parliamentary majorities. The consequence is that the Army, instead of the civil power, has become not only the sign but the substance of national unity; and it seems pretty clear that the Republic would be short-lived if there were only a strong, popular soldier to deal her the fatal blow. Government in England is only ostensibly conducted by parliament; it is really carried on by the Cabinet, which is quite unknown to the Constitution, and has crept into power undesignedly, through the force of circumstances. Seven hundred men cannot govern a nation; they cannot even make laws efficiently; and this is the reason why the government has passed into the hands of the Cabinet. It is a mere matter of business and common sense. Parliament is little else than a talking machine; what Carlyle called our great National Palaver; and many of us believe it will have to undergo serious changes in the near future if it is to survive as an organ of our public life.

Russia has no parliament, and our author hopes she will never have one. He prays God to save her from such an affliction. "Ability to find and to choose men," he says, "is the first essential attribute to power; the second is ability to direct them and to establish due discipline upon their activity." This is true and well said. But hereditary rulers are not commonly possessed of this attribute. The problem is how to get your ruler who does possess it, and this has never been seriously faced by the critics of democracy. Only one comity on earth has solved this problem of government, and that is the Roman Catholic Church. There must be election *somewhere*, or you have mere usurpation and tyranny; so every new Pope is elected by the Council of Cardinals. But he is the only officer who is *elected*; all the rest are *appointed*; and the student of human affairs knows what immense difference that makes in practical efficiency.

"The most precious gift of a statesman," our author says, "is ability to organise. It is a talent seldom met—a talent inborn, which no study will produce." Here is his picture of the born statesman:—

"Strength of imagination must unite to the capacity of promptly choosing the means of realisation. A comprehensive and foreseeing intellect is demanded, resolution in action, ability to seize the proper moment, to embrace rapidly the details of all work, without losing sight of its fundamental principles. Fine observation of men and knowledge of character are indispensable; knowledge of whom to trust, and experience that the best of men are not free from low instincts and interested motives."

Excellent! But this is not a picture of the Czar, Nicholas the Second, unless his portraits terribly belie him. Is it, indeed, a picture of any hereditary ruler in Europe?

M. Pobyedonostseff (we print his terrible name once more, under protest), with his eye on the evils of parliamentary government, points out that organising talent and great eloquence are not only distinct, but "almost incom-

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patible." But is not this an exaggeration? There is no reason why these two faculties should be found in the same individual; on the other hand, there is no reason why they should not. Cromwell was not an eloquent man, though he was a born ruler; but Chatham's eloquence was splendid and overwhelming, and he had great capacities of statesmanship. Perhaps the greatest ruler in history was Julius Cæsar, and Cicero admitted that his eloquence was consummate. A man may have great powers of mind, and great strength of character, *without* the gift of expression; he may also have them *with* the gift of expression. Rarity of co-existence is not incompatibility.

Let us now turn to this Russian statesman's views on religion. Faith, to him, is the basis of everything. "On faith," he says, "the life of man sustains itself in the midst of the tears, the regrets, the misfortunes, and falsehoods with which it is afflicted." There can be no religion without supernaturalism. A personal God is the necessary starting point. Reason has rights of its own, but they must not trench on the province of faith. Religion recognises "axiomatic truths unattainable by the path of induction"—which means that God, as Newman declared, does not speak through the wonders of nature, but through the voice of conscience. Mystery is not only inevitable, it is beneficial; it "embraces and calms the troubled soul." "Only fools," our author says, "have clear conceptions of everything. The most cherished ideas of the human mind are found in the depths and in twilight." He has a colossal scorn of scientific and philosophical substitutes for supernatural religion. After a long quotation from Mill on the Religion of Humanity, he writes:—

"Such a religion may indeed be sufficient for thinkers like Mill, secluded from the world in abstract speculation, but how shall the people accept and understand it?—the people, a living organism held in communion only by living sentiment and conscience, and repelled by abstractions and generalities. In the people such a religion, if it bore fruit at all, would bear fruit in reversion to paganism."

We may mention, in passing, that our author has fallen into a very curious mistake with regard to the late Mr. Justice Stephen, whom he refers to as "a convinced Anglican churchman," and as "a believer deeply and jealously attached to his Church." A little knowledge is a dangerous thing! Had our author read more of Sir James Stephen's writings than his reply to Mill's essay *On Liberty*, he would have known that this "convinced Anglican churchman" was a thoroughgoing sceptic, who looked upon religion as very largely artificial, and as having been forced upon the people everywhere by authority in education and government. Christianity (he remarked), like other religions, did not triumph without employing all the terrors of this life as well as those of the life to come.

Our author regards Scripture as the indubitable voice of God, and his devotion to Christianity is quite touching. He believes in spite of all difficulties. "When we consider," he says, "the endless tale of sanguinary warfare, dissension, violence, injustice, ignorance, and superstition in public as in private life, with terror we ask ourselves, Where is the fulfilment of the law of Christ in the hell in which we live?" Unbelief would sweep away Christianity altogether, and "fancy religions"—as the old swearing colonel called them—spring up on all sides to point a way out of this fatal contradiction between the profession and practice of Christendom. But there is only one remedy. Men

must cling to the true Church of Christ, founded upon the rock of ages. And which is the true Church of Christ? Why, the Orthodox Greek Church, of course. Our author criticises both the Roman Catholic and the Protestant Churches most severely. "Enter an English church," he says, "and watch the congregation. It is devout; solemn it may be, but it is a congregation of 'ladies and gentlemen,' each with a place specially reserved; the rich in separate and embellished pews, like the boxes of an opera-house. We cannot help thinking that this church is merely a reunion of people in society, and that there is place in it only for what society calls 'the respectable.'" Everything is bought and paid for, even church livings, in which there is a shameful traffic. "For the most part," in Protestant churches, "the preachers are the journeymen of the Church, with extraordinary whining voices, infinite affectation, and vigorous gestures, who turn from side to side, repeating in varying tones conventional phrases." All is different, our author says, in Russia. The Church there is the Church of the people. All meet together equal in the sight of God. Moreover, sermons are excluded from its services. Nor is this the whole difference between Russian religion and the religion of Western Europe, whether Catholic or Protestant. The dead are revered and watched over with chanting and prayer before burial. Southerners fly from the presence of a corpse, and Germans and Englishmen are actually beginning to dispose of it by cremation. But this is strange, inhospitable, and cold to the Russian. "May God deliver us," our author exclaims, "from dying in the land of strangers, far away from our native Russian soil!"

It will be seen, therefore, that this Russian statesman is deeply and sincerely old-fashioned. He belongs to a type which was once common in our own country. This type has largely disappeared in England, and it is already beginning to disappear in Russia—where, as our author laments, the "well-beloved of translators" are John Stuart Mill, George Eliot, and Herbert Spencer. The ferment of Western ideas is going on beneath the solid crust of orthodox religion and autocratic government.

G. W. FOOTE.

"THE SILENT TOMB."

IN our article last week we endeavored to show that fear is a potent factor in the Christian faith; and probably this feeling is most strongly manifested in reference to death. With ordinary Christians the cessation of life is considered of far greater importance than its active periods. Such persons derive comparatively little pleasure from the goodness in the world unless it is thought to have some relation to an assumed hereafter. They fail to experience happiness simply from the performance of useful work. Right-doing with them has but few charms unless it is regarded as the means of securing "mansions in the skies." Nobility of character, heroism of conduct, and devotion to duty are partially ignored except such virtues are stimulated by the hope of future bliss. If Christians think their faith will conduct them safely to the "next world," they appear to trouble very little about its effects in this. And yet, with the usual orthodox consistency, while they seem to be filled with joy in anticipation of their future existence, their lives are clouded with dread as to what will be their condition "beyond the tomb." Hence they exclaim: "What after death for me remains, celestial joys or hellish pains, to all eternity?" "Shall I be with the damned cast out, or numbered with the blest?" Further, they do their "level best" to put off as long as possible their departure to "heaven above." It may suit their purpose to dilate upon the beauties and happiness of the "kingdom of heaven," but "distance lends enchantment to the view." They have no desire to "be with God" while it is possible for them to remain with man.

The tomb should be looked upon as the abode of peace, but theology has made it, as it were, the entrance to the domain of anguish and torments. Christians are haunted with the devilish spectre of a being who is supposed to be the personification of evil. In fact, this notion forms the basis of the Christian system. As the Rev. Dr. Sewell, of Oxford, in his *Christian Morals*, writes: "No sooner does an infant draw the vital air than, in consequence of it,

being under the wrath of God, it is taken possession of by the spirit of evil..... We will hold and realise, and act upon the true, unfigurative, literal personality of a spirit of evil, tempting man, lying in wait for him, triumphing over him, hating him, going about seeking whom he may devour. On this main fact must rest the foundation of all Christian ethics." This is plain writing, but not more so than the language of the Rev. George G. Macleod, of Edinburgh, who, in his pamphlet on *Hell*, writes thus: "Why, men, if there is no hell, there is no heaven. They have the same foundation—God's truth—and if hell be a fable, heaven is a fable too! There is as much proof in this Bible for a hell as for a heaven. The threatenings are as numerous as the promises. God woos, and as distinctly thunders. Drown the fires of hell, and you drown the music of heaven, and, like our dogs, let us die. The plan of redemption is one. Take hell out of it, and the whole scheme is a dead failure."

Now, unfortunately, this is true, and the fact that the more intelligent professors of Christianity will not admit it to be so does not alter its truth. Take the fear of hell out of the Christian faith, and you rob the orthodox masses of the most powerful factor of their belief. Of course we rejoice that this cruel and revolting figment is being given up; but what does it prove? Simply that Christianity is incompatible with the intellectual status of the age. It is not, however, consistent for persons who have ceased to believe in the principal doctrines of Christianity to still cling to the name of Christian. To do so is only to pander to the dictates of fashion. Well might a weekly contemporary observe: "Those who still believe in the old theology—or who have not been taught by half-educated pastors the results of modern knowledge as to the Bible—will read with astonishment the sweeping repudiations made at the Church Congress of large portions of the Bible, seemingly with the approval of all the representatives of the clergy of the Established Church. It is really time that the shocking veil of hypocrisy and cowardice with which these subjects have been covered should be torn aside, that people should no longer be treated as credulous fools, but be told the truth. Alas! so many of the clergy are quite as incompetent, through ignorance, to perform this duty as the poor, illiterate lasses of the Salvation Army, who know as much about the history and foundation of religion as a parrot."

To us the tomb represents the anodyne of repose. In reference to it there is nothing to fear, for when once within its precincts all trouble is over. If it is asked why we make this allegation, our reply is that we do so for three reasons. (1) So far as we know, the feeling of happiness or misery depends upon consciousness, a mental condition unknown within the tomb. (2) Consciousness is always associated with life, which ceases before the tomb is reached. (3) Physical organisation is indispensable to life, and that organisation cannot continue in the tomb. These facts, which appear to us indisputable, should prevent anyone from having any dread of the tomb. In the language of the Bible, "the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward, for the memory of them is forgotten." "The very day man goeth to the grave his thoughts perish." Thus to mar the happiness of life with the fear of imaginary evils after death is condemned by the Secular view of the philosophy of existence. In the words of Shakespeare:—

The valiant never taste of death but once;
Of all the wonders that I yet have heard,
It seems to me most strange that men should fear;
Seeing that death, a necessary end,
Will come when it will come.

Christianity has invested the tomb with gloom, and with horrors which are detrimental to mental vigor, and which cast a blight upon the happiness of mankind. Secularism, on the contrary, professes to know nothing of worlds or duties beyond the tomb, feeling assured that if it should be discovered that there are such things can be known of them during our sojourn in what theology calls this "vale of tears." It is, therefore, worse than folly to feel alarmed about that of which we know nothing.

We wish to strongly emphasize the fact that, while theology does not rob the tomb of its alleged terrors, Secular philosophy does. We have watched at the deathbeds of Atheists, who passed away calmly without any misgivings, having no fear of the "beyond." We can fully appreciate the testimony of Professor Tyndall, who wrote:

"I have known Atheists, not only in life, but in death—seen them approaching with open eyes the inexorable goal, with no dread of a 'hangman's whip,' with no hope of a heavenly crown, and still as mindful of their duties, and as faithful in the discharge of them, as if their eternal future depended on their latest deeds." And why should not this be the mental attitude of all in the "last great scene"? Probably it would be so if it were not for the horrible teachings of the Churches and the New Testament. Lord Bacon said: "I have often thought upon death, and I find it the least of all evils." We are not sure death is an evil; sometimes it has proved a great blessing. But even if it were, we have nothing to fear. If there be an eternal sleep, it promises the positive gain of release from all suffering and sorrow, while the seeming loss of pleasure is cancelled by unconsciousness. The dreamless slumberer desires nothing, regrets nothing. "There the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest." The small and great are there, and the servant is free from his master.

In the presence of the silent tomb how insignificant are the passions, the jealousies, and the misunderstandings of life. Let us therefore recognise that it is our duty, ere we enter its portals, to strive to leave behind us a legacy of truth, love, honor, and usefulness, so that the world shall be the better for the good work we have done. Our immortality should consist in so living that when we are gone those who knew us during our "fleeting existence" shall have cause to delight in the recollection of their association with us. This would be an immortality not of creeds, but of deeds; not of theological faith, but of practical Secular work. Those who thus live can, when life's work is done, say with Brutus:—

If we do meet again, why we shall smile;
If not, why then this parting was well made.

CHARLES WATTS.

WOMAN DISDAINED BY THE BIBLE.

THE zeal of the advocates of Women's Rights occasionally runs in quaint directions. Some time ago I read in a feminist paper a letter from a lady who complained that men had monopolised the study of theology. Why, she asked, should not women take up this important science, and earn distinctions in so noble a branch of scholarship? I know not if her appeal found response. The Girton girls have not yet shown much disposition to write commentaries on the epistles to Timothy. It really is a singular thing that a great woman theologian has never appeared. Who expects to see a lady Calvin? And will Newnham ever turn out a female Hooker? Even if the women make a rush into this department of learning, and load their minds with exegesis, what will they do with it all when they have got it? A lady trying to turn to useful account her original analysis of the Athanasian Creed would be a very sad spectacle. No brutal man, of course, would desire to buy her precious science; and even the sisters of the Pioneer Club might not be eager to assist the lovely theologian.

All this, however, is only the economic aspect of the question. Even if women agree to let theology alone as a subject not likely to yield suitable salaries, a slight examination of the Bible might suggest other objections. Apologists of the Christian religion, and of the Bible generally, frequently declare that woman owes a great deal of the amelioration of her lot to the influence of Judaism and the Gospel. This is a topic often argued, and I shall not travel over the well-beaten field. I shall not stop to criticise the position of woman under the law, or her prospects under the New Testament. It is always open to the friends of orthodoxy to declare that they consider Jael an exalted character, and Sarah a nobler creature than Antigone. To answer such people is beyond my feeble powers. If a clergyman thinks it a fine thing for a woman to ram a big nail into a sleeping man's brain, there is no more to be said; we must leave him alone in his incumbency and his peculiar opinions. But there are two points which are beyond dispute, which, nevertheless, are seldom discussed, and which, to some readers, will come with an air of some novelty.

I have heard Christian people retort upon Freethinkers who speak of the Brotherhood of Man: "What! brotherhood of man! Illogical sceptics that you are! out of your own mouths we condemn you. How can you talk of men

being brothers without implying the Fatherhood of God?" It is a wretchedly superficial answer, and the reply is very simple. The phrase is only a figure of speech; but if Christian people insist on being so solemnly precise, we may rejoin: "Very well, if brotherhood implies the fatherhood, it also implies the motherhood of God." It is remarkable that the Bible discloses but one supreme throne in heaven, and the throne is occupied by a male divinity. Beside him is seated no fair queen. His sorrows—for God is said to have his sorrows—are eased by no consort. His joys he cannot share. There is no wifely hand to check the flight of his angry bolts. The bounties he grudgingly bestows must needs be scattered by his own hand, though a lady of heaven would dispense them with infinitely more grace. God dwells alone on the black peak of Sinai, or in the dark chamber of the Temple, or in the circle of the emerald rainbow. It is true that certain early Christian sects sought to give a mate to God. In the Gospel of the Hebrews a curious passage runs: "My mother, the Holy Spirit, took me by one of my hairs, and bore me up on the great mountain Tabor." There is also a hint at a mother-god in a Gnostic *Hymn of the Soul*.* In this old Syriac anthem the soul is represented as leaving Heaven by direction of its "parents," and coming down to the earth. There it receives a letter: "From thy Father, the King of Kings, and thy Mother, the Mistress of the East." These were stamped as heretical ideas and phrases. The Christian Church did indeed admit the Virgin Mary to a position of high rank in the celestial regions, but she was not permitted to carry the orb and sceptre of the universe. The cosmos is governed by a Salic law. I should have thought women—I mean New Women—would have felt seriously affronted at such a scheme of divine policy. The administration is wholly masculine. Even the Civil Service is nothing better than neuter; for in heaven they neither marry nor are given in marriage. Yet (but I may be a little deaf) I have never caught any murmur or protest from the ladies at this manifest onesidedness. This is the first point.

Now I come to the second. It is an extremely significant fact that not a single book in the Bible was composed by a woman—that is to say, according to the traditional view. The Higher Criticism has played havoc with our grandfathers' conceptions of the origin of the Scriptures. Certainly the Pentateuch was not the work of Moses; and, for all I know, the five books were penned by five spinsters. The dreadful Germans have long ago proved that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were not likely to have written the gospels which bear their names; and perhaps four deaconesses were responsible for the four gospels. But neither the Higher Critics nor the Lower Critics (whoever they are) have mooted any such theory, and I will wait till I hear it elaborated by a professor at Jena or Heidelberg. Meanwhile, I think it will be allowed that, so far as our information goes, no lady was considered sufficiently well qualified to take part in the writing of the Bible. I do not know what the women will say to this omission. My own opinion is that some passages would have been better edited had a council of ladies been consulted. A female historian would assuredly have given a more favorable picture of Eve in the episode of the Fall, and would either have reduced the number of Solomon's wives, or appended a scathing footnote to the record of his harem. I do not suppose that the ladies would have been uncandid enough to cut out the ominous text: "It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop than with a contentious woman in a wide house"; but I imagine they would have added a companion proverb which would have gently admonished ill-tempered husbands. When men occupy the pulpits, the sins of women are trumpeted forth to heaven and earth; but when the ladies mount the steps the vices of men are faithfully laid bare, and the Recording Angel has no excuse for overlooking male transgressions. Between Adam and Eve one may always be sure of getting the whole truth. Women would have added other delightful chapters to Holy Writ. We should have had scenes from domestic life in the Ark; we should have been edified with a very different ending to the story of David's dance and Michal's frank criticism; and we should have had twenty-four apostles instead of twelve, a dozen ladies being added to the original committee.

* Published by the Cambridge University Press last year; translated from the Syriac by Professor A. A. Bevan.

Like Figaro, I have made haste to laugh for fear I should weep. Let me close with a more sober word. I do not ignore the fact that in ancient Jewish and Christian times it would have been impossible to find women who could have taken a share in the production of the national and religious literature. On the whole, I am content with the Bible as it is, even though it contains no psalms by Rebekah, and has not delivered down to us the private correspondence of Queen Esther. But in these humaner days, when woman is rightfully accorded equality in work and honor, it should surely be clear that a Bible in which not a page is indited by a feminine hand is not the most appropriate standard of manners or morals.

F. J. GOULD.

FREETHOUGHT IN SPAIN.

I HAVE just returned from a brief visit to Northern Spain, and my experiences there with regard to the political and religious attitude of the people have caused me so much surprise that I think some account of them will not only be highly interesting to readers of the *Freethinker*, but also pleasing to all who rejoice in the advancement of the cause.

Spain is so generally believed to be still in a state of mediæval darkness in religious matters, so staunchly devoted to and so under the thrall of the Catholic Church, that to speak of Freethought in connection with it may appear almost incongruous.

Prior to my setting out on this journey, I was told by many who professed to have a knowledge of the country that a visit, whilst it was still feeling the effect of its recent misfortunes, might be very unpleasant, and even be attended with some personal risk. I was warned not to go out after sundown, and to avoid, above all things, making any allusion to political or religious topics. This counsel I readily accepted and determined to act upon, being myself possessed of the common impression that Spain is still the great stronghold of bigoted Popery, and that differences in religious opinion scarcely existed. I may mention that, though my long residence in South America had given me the advantage of acquiring a thorough knowledge of the language and some acquaintance with the Spanish character as developed in its former colonies, this was my first visit to the mother country. My observations upon the political aspect of the country would be perhaps of more general interest, and may be published elsewhere; but in this article I only propose to deal with the views of the people upon religion.

My first experience in this direction happened upon the day after I arrived in the country. I had engaged a boat to take me round the Port of Pasages, a beautiful little bay near San Sebastian. The boatman was an intelligent-looking fellow, a typical Basque in appearance and dress, and very talkative. He pointed out all the various points of interest as we passed them, and at length we came to a place named "Los Capuchinos." "This," he said, "was formerly the site of a great Capuchin settlement."

"Then they are no longer here?"

"No; and a good job too," he replied; "we don't want such gentry in our parts. It would be a good riddance if all the other priests were driven out; they are the curse of our country."

This was rather surprising language to hear from one of his race—the Basque peasantry—who had so freely laid down their lives only about a quarter of a century ago in defence of the cause of Don Carlos and the Church.

"Then Don Carlos," I remarked, forgetting all my previous cautious resolutions, "would not have much chance here now?"

"None whatever," he quickly replied; "the clergy deceived us once, but we shall not be so silly as to let them do it again!"

Of course it would not be wise to generalise from the utterances of an individual met by chance, but that a man of this class and race should speak so freely to a stranger on such subjects was certainly significant, and showed that he had no fear of being made to suffer for his words.

The next evidence I had came from a more representative and better-informed source. I had made the acquaintance of the editor of a local newspaper, whom I found to be very intelligent, and both freely communicative and ready

to discuss the affairs of his country with a foreigner. After much talk on the political outlook, our conversation turned to religious affairs. "Bah!" he remarked, "I know perfectly well what you English think about us, for I have been myself in England when a young man; but you are quite mistaken. The Catholic Church has very little hold upon men here; but for the feminine element, and of course its accumulated wealth of past years, it would soon have to close its doors. This must be evident to anyone who visits a church. There is scarcely even a man to be seen in the congregation, except a few old dotards."

"No," he said, in answer to my query, "Freemasonry has never made much progress here. Its forms of ritual and nonsense about 'The Grand Architect of the Universe' and Biblical traditions are distasteful to those who have left the Catholic Church in disgust at somewhat similar practices. In Italy it was somewhat different. Masons' Lodges were merely pretexts to cover political conspiracy."

This gentleman stated that most of his friends on the press are more or less of his way of thinking, except, perhaps, those who write for avowedly clerical papers. This is a hopeful sign of the times.

My next experience was yet more interesting. I had just arrived in Bilbao, and was walking for the first time through its well-built and bustling streets. At a corner I accosted a policeman, asking him the name of a large building in front. He was most obliging, and, seeing that I was a stranger, he walked with me all the length of his beat, pointing out whatever he thought would interest me. "There is much to see here," he remarked; "I shall be off duty the day after to-morrow, and if you would like it I shall be glad to guide you round."

This offer I readily accepted, and, as a guarantee of good faith, I gently endeavored to put a tip into his hand. What was my astonishment when he suddenly drew himself up to his full height, pushed my hand aside almost roughly, and said: "Señor, you have made a mistake; we Spaniards can accept nothing for mere courtesy."

Here was an indication of the celebrated Spanish pride, coming from a most unexpected quarter. I could only apologise in the most penitent manner, and explain that I had been misled by my experience of policemen in other countries. This breeze having blown over, the affable official asked where I was staying, and whom he should ask for at the hotel. I gave him my card.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, "you have the same name as the Admiral of the North American fleet. Are you by chance any connection of his?"

"No," I replied, "but if I had been would you have considered me as an enemy?"

"Not I," said he quickly; "for my part, I look upon the Yankees as the best friends that the Spanish people have had for many a year."

"How can you make that out?" replied I, somewhat astonished.

"It is like this. In the hands of the Americans our colonies will become better places for people like me than they have ever been. I know what I am talking of, for I have served seven years in Cuba in the army, and have seen the great chances for making money. With an administration such as the Yankees will give it, an industrious man will have the security of being able to secure and enjoy all that he can earn, instead of having had, as in the past, to submit to the impositions of a horde of black-mailing officials. So much do I believe this that I have determined, and so have many of my friends, to emigrate to Cuba as soon as the Peace is definitely settled."

"Well," I remarked, "you are very liberal in your views."

"I am in everything—religion as well as politics. You may judge this by the papers which I read—the *War to Privilege* and the *Freethinker*." (The names mentioned were, of course, those of Spanish papers of equivalent meaning.)

"What," I exclaimed, "do your authorities allow the publication of such periodicals, and are you, a public employee, not rather afraid for it to be known that you read and approve of them?"

"There is nothing in the law of Spain to prevent either free speech or free publication, as I shall be able to show you when we next meet. Meantime, I must be off on my round. *Hasta pasada mañana, Adios!*"

Punctually at the time arranged my cicerone appeared, this time in plain clothes. He saluted militarily, but evidently expected to be treated as an equal.

"I have brought you," he said, while on our walk, "copies of the papers I mentioned. Here they are; I think they will interest you, as you say that you also are a Liberal and Freethinker. But here is something which I think will interest you still more."

So saying, he produced a little pamphlet entitled *La Redencion (The Redemption)*. I glanced over it, and saw at once that its contents were very similar to the leaflets which were at one time widely distributed by our own National Secular Society. It was actually a reprint of an article which had appeared in the Freethought paper he had mentioned—*Las Dominicales del Libre Pensamiento*.

"Is there not opposition," I asked, "to the circulation of such tracts?"

"There is, of course; but what can the objectors do? If you will look at the note at the end of the pamphlet, you will see it stated: 'This article, when published, was denounced, but the case was dismissed.' You understand that by our Constitution everyone has the right of 'denouncing'—that is, of making a complaint to a magistrate about anything which he considers as a wrong to himself or the public; but a magistrate can only convict when he finds a law has been broken, and, as I have said, there is nothing in the law of Spain to prevent such publications."

Again I expressed my surprise, but, upon reflection, I said that perhaps it was not actually that the framers of the laws had been so liberal, but that they had been really incapable of conceiving at the time that anyone could ever be so wicked as to venture upon attacking the Christian religion, and so had omitted to make any provision against an unimaginable offence.

"I can tell you an interesting story about this very pamphlet," said my guide. "You know that on Good Friday we have here, as in all other parts of Spain, what the priests call 'a solemn procession'—a wretched farce I call it. Well, last Good Friday this affair was going on, when some disturbance was observed amongst the crowd of spectators. It turned out that a man was moving on just in front of the head of the procession, and was distributing copies of this pamphlet. This elicited several noisy protests, and the Alcalde (Mayor), who was taking part in the procession, as he usually does officially, gave orders to have the man arrested. I happened to be the nearest policeman, and so, curiously enough, I had to walk off my co-religionary to the station. On the way I asked him for some copies, and it is one of these which I have just given you. Next morning he was brought up before his worship the Alcalde, but they had to let him go. All they could do was to apply a small fine on account of conduct tending to disturb the public peace. So you see I am quite right in saying that there is nothing in our laws to prevent the publication of such works."

"Are there many of your acquaintances of your way of thinking?" I asked.

"Yes, a good many, and I believe that there are also Freethinkers among the rich people, though of course, in my position, I am not brought in intimate contact with them. Those whom I know are mostly employees, and a few artizans whom I meet at the *cafés* which I frequent."

"You have no Freethought society, nor any organisation?"

"None; nor do I think there is any in other parts of Spain."

"Have you the right of meeting and speaking publicly on religious and political questions?"

"There is nothing in the police regulations to prevent such meetings being held, and, so long as orderly conduct is observed, I do not think they would be interfered with by the authorities. I should explain, however, that since the war broke out the Government has declared a state of siege, which still exists, so that there is no guarantee as to what they would do."

"I can quite understand," I here remarked, "that Freethought was bound inevitably to make some progress in such a community as that of Bilbao, where there is a large body of industrious and intelligent workers, independent, to a certain extent, by their own work; but what about the South and other parts of the country?"

I proceeded to explain to my friend the analagous case of Ireland, showing that Bilbao might correspond to Belfast, whilst Cadiz and Cork might be similar in nature.

"No," he replied, "the Basque provinces in the north have always been the most devout adherents of the Church.

If they secede, you may take it that the priests have lost much of their power in Spain. In the South the people are more indifferent, perhaps, because too lazy and ignorant."

This ended our colloquy as far as the subject of religion was concerned.

The pamphlet which my guide had given me is of small form, 16 mo. (about 3 by 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches), and twenty-four pages in length. It begins by stating that the Christian legend of the Redemption is only a reminiscence of a far older Indian legend concerning one Christna, who is alleged to have lived about 3,500 years before the presumed era of Christ. The booklet proceeds to set forth the wonderful series of parallels which exist between these two legends; facts which are already well known to most of the readers of the *Freethinker*. The writer then asks: "What good did the coming of God to earth, in the mortal form of Christna, do for India? Do we not see it to-day, after having been for thousands of years enslaved by priests, fall at last degraded into the hands of the English? And so what good has the Christian Redemption done for the world?"

The long and eloquent answer given to this can be readily inferred by the readers of this paper, where so many similar ones have appeared. I shall only translate the concluding passage, which is remarkable as having been written and published some time before the declaration of war, but when Spain and America seemed drifting towards a rupture.

"People!" it says, "the great North American Republic, which piously leads by the hand all its children to school, and which does not tear sons from mothers' arms to send them to barracks or to war; which is doing away with servitude, and is substituting the man of mechanics for the mechanical man (*hombre maquina por la maquina hombre*); it is this great and powerful people, and not the Calvary before which heads have been bowed for so many ages, which is showing to you the way to the true redemption. People, the Redeemer whom you hope for will not come down from the heavens; you carry it within yourselves!"

I think that no one will be able to read these lines without some emotion, and it might perhaps be well if the Freethought party in England would convey some message of sympathy to their brethren in Spain. But what would be most pleasing of all would be if these few facts of my experience should become widely known in the United States, as they would lead the Americans to form a better idea of the Spanish nation, against whom so much has been said in their papers, all of which is doubtless believed.

JOHN SAMSON.

REMEDYING SOCIAL EVILS.

EIGHTEEN centuries of Christianity have not brought us the promised peace and goodwill. Social reformers are still brooding over the problems of life. They have still their riddles to solve, their tasks to perform. In the midst of our boasted Christian civilization we are surrounded by savagery unsurpassed. Gangs of ruffians infest the streets of London and commit unprovoked assaults upon peaceful citizens. Children are beaten and starved, bought, sold, and slain for profit. Men and women are murdered for gold, "thieves break in and steal," and little girls are brutally outraged. Czars, presidents, prime ministers, and empresses are assassinated, and wrongs innumerable flood the land.

Now, while we are all agreed that these and similar evils should be removed, and the sooner the better, we disagree as to the means whereby they are to be removed. What, then, are the means suggested? "The full penalty of the law," "extension of the cat," "united action against anarchists," are the cries raised—the first from the magistrates, the second from fancy journalists, the third from the various Governments. And penal servitude and hard labor with the lash is dealt out wholesale by men who, were they not themselves without sin, would not dare to cast the first stone. Some, no doubt will be deterred for a time by these methods; others will not, and never can be. But beneath the surface of society, away from the gaze of rigorous judges, legislators, and superficial observers, subtle forces are at work manufacturing criminals side by side with all other culminative results of a civilised society. In-

sufficient and bad education, the individualistic competitive system under which we live, unsanitary conditions, too much wealth for some and not enough for others, too long working hours and too low wages for the working class, too much work for some and none at all for others, are some of the forces at work. And I venture to predict that, unless these forces are arrested in their course, or modified, or else the effect thereof be led into other channels, criminality will not only not decrease, but will increase.

Let men go on whipping and imprisoning their fellows; but let them also stay for a moment and think. Is there, under the present conditions of society, work for all of us? Is society, as at present constituted, not bound to breed parasites? Suppose all those whom we lash and incarcerate for illegality were for a single year to stay their course, and turn their hands to a useful task—would they not, being of pushful dispositions, turn us, and some of their accusers, who are now earning an honest livelihood, into the streets; and should we—and they—not have to either meet our death by starvation, or get a crust as best we could? Let us consider before we accuse, and let us think before we act, when so much is at stake!

I repeat it: it will grow worse yet. The population is steadily increasing. Nothing is done to check its growth; everything is done to encourage it. The inventor burns the midnight oil, brooding over new scientific problems, in order to still further dispense with manual labor; and the millionaire is multiplying his millions at the expense of the workers. The "cat" may deter some timid souls for a time, but in the long run the great upon earth will have to adopt the course indicated by us, their humble brethren, as they have been compelled to do so many times heretofore.

J. K. MAAGAARD.

PITILESS PIETY.

THE earth, as it spins on its axis,
Reveals to the day and the night
A struggle that wanes not, but waxes;
A deadly perpetual fight.
A struggle 'twixt ev'rything living,
And also 'twixt living and dead;
E'en charity plunders in giving,
And joy is the parent of dread.

Our ev'ry intent is a mixture,
Compounded of present and past;
The past with the present's a fixture,
And both with the future are fast.
Although our dislike of an adder
Is minus admixture of blame,
Our killing it scarce makes us sadder;
Our wounding it ne'er gives us shame.

Philosophy steadies our thinking,
And softens the point of our hate;
The thought of all facts interlinking
Makes rancorous feelings abate.
But still, though we aim at perfection,
We cannot, we're bound to confess,
Bring all our dislikes in subjection,
Nor all of our hatreds suppress.

We often attempt—and not vainly—
To look upon reptiles, "and such,"
With some sort of kindness, mainly
Because we must hate them so much.
'Tis hard to be fashioned and fated
To live as a cause of disgust;
To live out a life that is hated
By haters who hate as they must.

But some of our foes we can scarcely
Regard with a feeling of ruth,
Because they oppose so perversely
Our efforts for progress and truth.
The pest that excites most our loathing,
And rouses our pity the least,
Is he that gives house, food, and clothing
To deity, parson, or priest.

With heartless folk earth is infested,
But none is more heartless than he
Whose virtues are loudly attested
And praised by a priestly donee.
The man is a foe of the people
Who gives—be he living or dead—
•A farthing to parson or steeple,
While workers work vainly for bread.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

PRIESTCRAFT IN AUSTRIA.

AT Wels, in Upper Austria, the trial took place to-day [October 6] of M. Sieveking, the Dutch pianist, who, it will be remembered, was arrested at Ischl on the charge of having offended the Roman Catholic Church by refusing to take off his hat to a priest who was on his way to administer the sacrament to a dying man, and aggravated his case by whistling. He was arrested at the close of a charity concert at Ischl, where he had been playing. The accused, looking very tall and thin, was to-day dressed in black. His hair is very long, and surrounds his face. A splendid diamond sparkled on his black cravat, and he wore the ribbon of an Officer of the Academy at his button-hole. He admitted that when the priest threatened to have him arrested for not taking his hat off he asked: "Are you a priest or a scamp?" He did not whistle intending to be rude to the priest, but to call his dog. It was his invariable custom to whistle for his dog the first phrase of the Fifth Symphony, and he treated the court to a small performance gratis, in illustration. Having always lived in Protestant countries, he had no notion what the priest was carrying; but his landlady at Ischl had told him afterwards. A jurymen asked the accused whether, having lived so long in Vienna, he had never seen the people kneel in the streets to a priest on his way to a death-bed. M. Sieveking answered: "No; the Vienna people do not kneel in the streets." The Wels jurymen shook his head, not so much at the wickedness of M. Sieveking as at the godlessness of the capital.

M. Sieveking's counsel said all the blame lay with the priest (who gave evidence in the dialect of the province), and said it was certainly not consistent with his clerical garb and position to stop a foreigner in the street, and quarrel with him; and certainly not while he had in his hand what his Church declares to be the body of our Lord.

M. Sieveking was finally acquitted of the offence of having behaved indecently by whistling and refusing to take off his hat, but was sentenced to three days' detention for having called a priest who was performing a sacred function a scamp.

—Daily News.

ACID DROPS.

JOHN KENSIT'S "Protestant Crusade" seems to be simmering down. It was a decided novelty to go and make a row in church, but the novelty is wearing off now; besides the Ritualists are taking "precautions" of a "muscular Christianity" character. Sir William Harcourt thunders away in the *Times*, but will he have the courage to lead a practical agitation in the House of Commons? Does he even think that the Liberal party would be united against the High Church "conspiracy"? It is just as likely that the whole thing will fizzle out. The fact is that Christian doctrines have very much fallen into discredit, and the High Church party has the sense to see that compensation must be sought in attractive ritual. Churches will more and more have to be run on the show principle to succeed. They must give Sunday entertainments, please eyes and ears, and cut down the sermons. Even the Nonconformists are subject to the same necessity. Everywhere they are going in for Pleasant Sunday Afternoons, the very name of which is an admission that the old Sunday performances were unpleasant. What we are witnessing is a grand transformation scene, preparatory to the final harlequinade.

Mr. G. R. Sims was very funny in last week's *Referee*—not consciously and deliberately funny, but funny in an unintentional way. After sundry reflections on the smashing of the Mahdi's tomb and the desecration of his body, and sundry remarks on the superior value of Old Testament methods over those of the New Testament when it comes to fighting your enemies, Mr. Sims wound up with a sort of reservation rignarole about the advisability of restoring the old honesty and morality amongst us. "It is the duty of the Church," he said, "to start the crusade." "But," he added, "before the Church can give us back those things it must set the example by being moral and honest itself." Well now, that is funny! Fancy the Church turning moral and honest! Mr. Sims must be dreaming with his eyes open. We thought he knew better.

Major Cecil Lester died, and an inquest had to be held over his body at Camberley. He had been treated by a lady Christian scientist, who did nothing but pray for him, for which the jury censured her; in fact, they regarded it with "a strong sense of abhorrence." Yet we dare say these gentlemen of the jury were all very good Christians. What a mad world it is! Those who pray on Sundays revile those who believe in prayer any other day in the week.

When the trouble began—or became rather acute—in

Crete, and there was endless praise of the Christian population as dear, sweet, innocent lambs, and endless denunciation of the Mohammedans as cruel and ravenous tigers, we ventured to remark that this was the veriest nonsense. The good and bad people in the world are not divided up in this simple way. The division between virtue and vice does not correspond with the division between this and that particular faith. Bigotry is always apt to think so, but bigotry is only a mixture of ignorance, prejudice, and egotism.

We pointed out that, in previous quarrels and fightings between Greeks and Turks, the former were quite as cruel as the latter, and sometimes more so; and we gave chapter and verse from Finlay's standard and impartial history. Finlay was a supporter of the Greek cause, but he set down the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, on both sides. Greeks hated Turks as Mohammedans, and Turks hated Greeks as Christians. Religion aggravated instead of softening the quarrel, and both parties too often behaved like devils rather than men, massacring unarmed men wholesale, and shooting and cutting to pieces helpless women and children.

Now we have a well-informed special correspondent of the *Daily News* gravely proposing that all the Moslem population should be sent away, at least from the inland parts of Crete, which should be left entirely to the Christians, as it is utterly impossible for them to live together. The Christians are in the majority, and the Moslems will have no peace; indeed, they will soon be exterminated.

Let us hear this *Daily News* correspondent: "The Christian leaders still deny that religion plays any part in the conflict, but the evidences of fanaticism are only too numerous. The communal banners too often bear the motto, 'Jesus Christ conquers,' and in a village merry-making the men address their partners in the dance by the name of 'Fellow Christian' with something of that emphasis which must have marked the title 'citoyenne' in the speech of a Jacobin during the Reign of Terror. The policy of the Christians of the interior has slowly changed as the conflict prolonged itself into its second and third years. Houses and olive groves abandoned by the Moslems, which had been left intact during the first revolt, were levelled to the ground in the second. This work of desolation had but one object. It was resolved that the Moslems should never return to their villages again. Whatever assurances the Christian leaders may give—and their promises to guarantee the lives of the refugees, and even to escort them to their own again, are doubtless sincere—it would not be in their power to save them against the determination of the rank and file of their following. The first murder of a Christian by a Moslem would be the signal for a massacre which, under the name of revenge, would aim at exterminating the minority root and branch. And occasions would not be wanting, nor pretexts hard to find. There are hundreds of villages where sons would be in daily contact with the murderers of fathers, husbands with the men whose boast it was to have violated their wives."

The religious journals have always pretended that the violation of women was a Mohammedan speciality. Christians, of course, were incapable of such horrors. But here we have the damning confession that the Cretan Christians have violated the wives of their Mohammedan neighbors; and, so far from being ashamed of it, they make it their boast. Of course it may be said that the Mohammedans first taught them this lesson. Well, they have copied it with great alacrity.

It is not often we find ourselves in agreement with any of the servants of the Most High. But the Rev. Forbes Phillips, Vicar of Gorleston, has our complete sympathy in his stirring attack on the steam-preachers on the beach at Gorleston. He says: "It is very hard that young children should be pursued in their holidays and hunted out of watering places by religious cranks, whose ideas of God would disgrace a North American Indian." From waxing contemptuous, the reverend gent grows indignant. He goes on: "Every year sees a migration of English parents to the French watering places, simply on account of so many English seaside resorts being pestered with these cranks, who howl and whine on our sands, and seem to take a delight in being miserable, and whose object in life is to convert our bright-faced, laughing youngsters into sullen-faced little prigs. If the borough authorities are going to permit this another year, certainly I shall do my best to warn parents not to come here with their children." Then he tells a pathetic sequel to the teaching of one of these whining, ignorant, miserable, howling Dervishes. "A delicate, sensible child," the Vicar says, "had a most horrible nightmare after attending some of these services, and listening to some nonsense about a monster, to whom he gave the name of God, who was going to send them to hell for their little faults." We should like to see this copied into every religious publication in the English language.

The Kilburn Sisterhood, numbering sixty-seven ladies under a Mother Superior, expected to have sixty-seven votes at parliamentary elections, which would naturally be cast on the Conservative side; but the Revising Barrister has disfranchised the lot of them, on the ground that their vows made them more dependent even than domestic servants.

Mr. Haldane Macfall, author of the *Wooings of Jezebel Pettifer*, dealing with West Indian negro life, has been interviewed by a representative of the *Westminster Gazette*. This gentleman does not appear to regard Christianity as of very much use to the blacks. "Mohammedanism," he says, "though a more stern, savage, and primitive civilisation, compels them to action—keeps them moving. That is the religion for the negro without any doubt. On the West Coast I always found the Mohammedan negro the finest type, for every man-jack of them had a trade or a craft. This was compelled by his religion."

Amongst themselves the negroes cherish the old Obeah worship—the cult of Death the Destroyer, symbolised by a snake—which their forefathers brought from Africa. Christianity is only skin-deep with them. "I can remember," says Mr. Macfall, "once floating round a corner in my surplice to take a negro funeral, and finding them gathered round the dead body chanting an Obeah incantation, which they very swiftly changed, as they caught sight of me, into 'A few more years shall roll.'"

Could there be a more decisive proof that Christianity is not a religion for all the world and every creature? Every religion which succeeds, and lasts for a long time, must be (as a religion) adapted to the peculiar ideas, opinions, and temperaments of its devotees. Above all, a religion for the temperate zones will never do for the tropics. Gods, like men, are creatures of circumstance, and natural selection is lord of all.

Professor Virchow, the eminent German biologist, after delivering the Huxley lecture at Oxford, and vigorously praising our dead Agnostic—not, indeed, for his Agnosticism, but for his scientific labors and his demonstrations of the truth of Evolution—let himself be interviewed in an evil moment by the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Coming from a drilled and regimented country like Germany, it is not surprising that Professor Virchow fails to understand the liberty allowed in England to parents who conscientiously object to vaccination. "You give the man in the street the right to a medical opinion!" he exclaimed. Yes, we do. We do not believe that doctors are infallible. We happen, indeed, to know that they hold amongst themselves the most diverse opinions on nearly every point of treatment. All that they really agree about is just what common sense teaches everybody—the importance of cleanliness, good food, exercise, and fresh air.

We are not inclined to let doctor Elisha wear the mantle and carry on the craft of priest Elijah. A medical dogma is no more respectable than a theological dogma. The despotism of body-curers is no better than the despotism of soul-savers. When they try compulsion upon their fellow-citizens they should be taught, firmly and even sternly, to mind their own business.

There is nothing like a dogma for making a sensible, and even a wise, man an imbecile. A religionist shall be bright and clever, and perhaps a man of genius, yet he will talk like a fool about the articles of his faith, and defend them with arguments which provoke the derision of every outsider—that is to say, of every person who is not under the same dogmatic spell. For the time being he is as much a lunatic as any inmate of an asylum.

Now the dogma of vaccination is as provocative of folly as any dogma in the repertoire of the Churches. Medical men are taught it in their novitiate, and it becomes a fixed idea in their minds; and, like other fixed ideas, it plays the devil with evidence and logic, and even with common sagacity. We are not in the least surprised, therefore, to find so distinguished a man as Professor Virchow talking the greatest trash on the subject of vaccination. He even went to the length of giving a case from his own personal experience; a method of proof which, on such a matter, is the most ridiculous. After declaring that vaccination gave almost absolute immunity from small-pox, he stated that his mother-in-law refused to be vaccinated, and she was the only one of the family who so refused. The result was that she caught small-pox, and "spread the contagion to nearly every person in the house"—all of whom were vaccinated! After that we can only wish Professor Virchow a safe journey home.

The Salvation Army has been feasting the Hooligans in South London. They did not pay much heed to the talker-talkee, but they fell valiantly upon the victuals. We wonder

if the Army will try to make an impression upon the Holy Hooligans of Peckham Rye.

John MacMahon, a single gentleman, aged sixty-nine, died while on his knees praying in the chapel of the Roman Catholic convent, North Kensington. That ought to have made him pretty sure of heaven; nevertheless, they fetched a doctor to bring him back if possible to this miserable vale of tears.

Canton Vaud has decided to give a vote to all adult women members of the Church. Henceforth they will vote at the election of pastors, and in all other Church business. This is a dreadful slap in the face for St. Paul.

The women incline more decidedly than the men do towards orthodox traditions. But this may mend itself in time. Now they are enfranchised they will probably give more thought to the subject. It may work wonders in freeing them from the oppression of priestcraft. At any rate we shall see.

"The ignorance so frequently shown by the children of the upper and middle classes in religious knowledge" is deplored by the St. Alban's Diocesan Conference. We hope there will be still greater cause for mourning in the future.

"Ensign" Gattrall, of the Salvation Army, has been fined 40s. and 15s. costs at Eastbourne for refusing to cease singing in Cavendish-square when requested to do so. He said he would rather suffer for Christ's sake than pay, and a distress warrant was issued. It is a pity that Christ does not look after his servants, and save them from becoming public nuisances. Hamlet said that Polonius should play the fool nowhere but in his own house, and that is where a Salvationist should murder melody.

Father Didon, who wrote a Life of Christ in opposition to Renan's, is hand in glove with the military party in France. He has been telling the people that it is their duty to stimulate the military spirit, to direct it, and to give it its most vigorous and manly impulse. In fact, he said, a country could get on better without science, art, literature, and philosophy, than without force. He did not include religion amongst the things that could be dispensed with. Religion and force, priestcraft and violence—these are evidently the two agencies which Father Didon relies upon. And perhaps he is wise—from his point of view.

The Bishop of Truro, in his way, is about as bad as Father Didon. Opening a new Sunday school in his diocese, he said that the first book to put in the hands of every child was the Church Catechism. That book was the foundation of all knowledge, the only foundation upon which they could build knowledge which would last and bear fruit. They could do without everything but that. The imagery is rather Hibernian, but the meaning is plain. "There is nothing like leather."

Mr. Quaritch, the great bookseller, is reported to have sold his copy of the Mazarin Bible for £5,250, the purchaser being an American. We wonder what a copy would fetch, if it turned up in the market, of the English Bible printed in the reign of Charles II., in which the "not" was omitted from the seventh commandment.

"Father" Dolling returned to Portsmouth to preach a sermon in All Angel's Church. After prophesying that the Church of England would be entirely Ritualistic in another fifty years, he "deplored the sparse attendance of men at Divine service," and declared that "the lack of men at the Holy Communion and confession was most serious." Well, if the men see through the tomfoolery and desert the Church, will it last another fifty years? "Father" Dolling should ponder this question.

We clip the following pious advertisement from a newspaper: "SPIRITUAL.—Wanted, Situation in the Lord's Field, anything, anywhere." We omit the advertiser's name and address. Our readers can have nothing to offer him. The only observation we make is that the Lord's field must be getting over-populated to inspire such an *ad misericordiam* advertisement.

Captain Ellis reported to the Hampstead Board of Guardians that he had visited Leavesden Asylum and found the inmates mainly occupied in going to church. Mrs. Finlay said that there were two services daily, morning and evening; it helped to relieve the monotony. For our part we should be sorry to see them deprived of this amusement. It is well known that lunatics have a strong taste for religion. We wish it were confined to them, and perhaps it will be some day.

Christians are progressing; yes, actually progressing.

Here is Dr. Barrett, in the *Evangelical Magazine*, asking whether it is really possible to believe that "a multitude of those little ones who were called away from this sinful world before they knew right from wrong, before the dawn of even the faintest light of moral consciousness, are in hell." Christians have taken nearly two thousand years to mistrust that infamous idea. Perhaps in twenty thousand years—if there are any Christians left then—they will discard the idea of hell altogether. Anybody can see that Christianity is a progressive religion. While other religions stick in the mud, Christianity advances at the rate of an inch in a century.

According to the *Christian World*, a child died recently in a certain parish without having been baptised by the clergyman, who told the parents that he could not bury it. If they liked, the child could be buried by the clerk without any service—at night! Evidently that clergyman does not quite agree with Dr. Barrett.

The Protestant Secretaries' Federation—whatever that is—appeals to all ministers of Protestant denominations to preach sermons on Sunday, November 6, in commemoration of God's wonderful deliverance of England from the Spanish Armada and the Gunpowder Plot. We always thought that Drake, Howard, and others, had a good deal to do with the smashing of the Spanish Armada, and that the Gunpowder Plot was detected and frustrated in a natural way. It appears that the ultra-Protestants run a special history of England on their own account.

The Czar of Russia should really keep some of his fine humanitarian sentiments for home consumption. Fresh measures are being taken against the Stundists, who have the impudence to differ from the orthodox Greek Church, and to live honest, sober, and industrious lives. For a long time they have been hunted down, imprisoned, and deprived of their property and civil rights. Nevertheless they increase rather than diminish in numbers, and it is therefore decided that they shall be treated still more severely; indeed, they may be suppressed by the simple process of annihilation. Holy Russia!

"Poetry and Religion" is the heading of a curious article in the *Christian Life*, an organ of Unitarianism, which boasts of being the only true form of Christianity. "The world," says the writer of this article, "has never known either any great Atheist poet, or any great Atheist painter or musician." Now this betrays inexcusable ignorance or worse dishonesty. Was not Shelley a great poet? Was not Leopardi a great poet? And what about Swinburne and William Morris, to say nothing of James Thomson? What, too, about half-a-dozen French names that might be cited, including that of Leconte de Lisle? Even when we take novelists, was not the great Flaubert an Atheist? Is not Zola an Atheist? With regard to painters, perhaps the *Christian Life* will find out what was the religion of Turner. With regard to musicians, Wagner was a pronounced Atheist, and Sir Charles Macfarren admits that the mighty Beethoven was an utter unbeliever. Finally, in order to give our Unitarian contemporary something to do that may improve its mind and add to its information, we venture to suggest that it should discover the religion of George Meredith and Thomas Hardy.

The ignoramus who edits the *South London Mail* refers in a leading article to "the atheistical writings of Rousseau and Voltaire." In all probability he has never read a page of either. Rousseau and Voltaire were both Theists and wrote against Atheism. It may be all very well to go in for a "fiercely earnest crusade" against "infidelity," but it would be still better on the part of a journalist to be decently informed on the subjects he writes about.

The editor of the *Mail* once more indignantly denies that he opposes the right of free speech. Stopping the mouths of Atheists is not persecution. This noble editor regards it as the height of toleration to allow all men the right to agree with him.

Two farmers riding along encountered a number of clergymen, when one of them said to the other: "Where be all these parsons coming from, neighbor?" To which his neighbor friend replied: "They be coming from a visitation." The other, no wiser than before, resumed: "What be a 'visitation'?" "Why," came his friend's answer, "it be where all the parsons goes once a year and swops their sermons." Being thus "enlightened," the questioner quietly but sadly remarked: "Ah, that be it, then. Well, dang it, but our chap mun get the worst of it every time."

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, October 16, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, at 7.30, "Confession in the Church: A Study in Priestcraft and Demoralisation."

October 23 and 30, Athenæum Hall.

November 6, Manchester.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—November 20, Sheffield; 27, Birmingham. December 4, Glasgow; 11, Liverpool.—All communications for Mr. Charles Watts should be sent to him at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

A. E. ELDERKIN.—Inserted. Thanks for cuttings.

W. COX.—Glad to hear that the Liverpool difficulty is taking a more favorable turn.

G. BERRY (Stockton) reports that Mr. Harry Snell has had four good meetings there, and that his lectures were much appreciated, particularly the last one.

EX-RITUALIST.—Your generous and encouraging letter is very welcome. Pleased you are joining the Secular Society, Limited, and so highly appreciate our efforts in designing and launching it. Your goodwill compensates us for a hundred insults.

F. J. HARBORNE.—Accidentally omitted last week. Now acknowledged.

W. H. HARBAP.—Mr. Foote does not supply literature to customers. Please apply direct to R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C., to whom we have handed your postcard.

WHEELER MEMORIAL FUND.—S. Alward, 7s. 6d.; J. Hague, 5s.; Bingley Friends (*per F. Gell*), 4s. 6d.; J. H. (*per R. Forder*), 2s. 6d.

C. J. WHITWELL.—Appreciated in the circumstances.

W. ELCOAT.—Thanks; see separate acknowledgments.

L. ORGAN.—Thanks for cuttings, etc. We note that you consider Mr. Mackenzie's verses first-class.

PETER WESTON.—See acknowledgment. Thanks. The matter you wrote about in July has not been lost sight of. The time was hardly favorable then.

J. HAGUE joins the Secular Society, Limited. This acknowledgment has been delayed.

E. JONES (Porth).—Glad to have your good wishes for the Secular Incorporation, in which you apply for membership.

HAROLD ELLIOT.—Thanks; see "Acid Drops."

F. GELL.—See acknowledgment.

W. G. ALLAN.—Glad you are joining the Secular Society, Limited. See acknowledgment and "Sugar Plums." Paper shall be sent.

N. S. S. TREASURER'S SCHEME.—Miss Vance acknowledges (*per R. Forder*):—J. W. de Caux, 10s.

R. TAYLOR.—Miss Vance has spoken to us on the matter. It is not true that the Christian Evidence Society puts Mr. Waldron forward as its representative to debate with Mr. Foote. If it does, Mr. Foote will debate with him immediately.

A. S. WELL.—Pleased to hear from a five years' subscriber who still looks forward to his weekly *Freethinker*.

STUDENT.—Spencer's works are very expensive, but that is principally owing to the limited demand for such books. We believe, however, that cheaper issues would lead to a considerably wider circulation. Mill's *Utilitarianism* we think is out of print. Copies can sometimes be picked up second-hand. His notes to his father's chief philosophical work, *The Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind*, are often valuable, like those of his co-editors, but that book is also expensive. Guyau's *Sketch of Morality* will well repay perusal.

A. W. HUTTY.—It is good of you to "wish it was much more," but if all who can would send what they can afford we should soon be working with a light heart.

J. H. FOSTER, joining the Secular Society, Limited, writes: "Too much credit cannot be given to you for the able manner in which you have conceived this project, and every *Freethinker* worthy of the name should rally to its support."

W. W. STRICKLAND.—We do not quite understand your objection. We are unable to recollect anything in the *Freethinker* to which they can apply.

ALICE M. BAKER.—It is pleasant to know that we are remembered by the widow of the veteran Daniel Baker. Kindly convey to her our best regards.

THOMAS MORGAN.—It is the best method of "nerving" a poor editor.

F. W. SWAIN.—Pray don't inconvenience yourself. All in good time.

J. JONES.—We have already explained what is to be done with the Circulation Fund. What is done must depend upon our resources, and we cannot further particularise until we are more ahead with the subscriptions. Perhaps we shall say something on this point next week.

RECEIVED.—Seaweed: a Cornish Idyll, by Edith Ellis—The Ethical World—Awakener of India—Sydney Bulletin—People's Newspaper—Truthseeker—Torch—Public Opinion—Isle of Man Times—Progressive Thinker—Buddhist—South London Mail—Free Society—Glasgow Weekly Citizen—Independent Pulpit—Lucifer—Freidenker—Torch of Reason—Secular Thought—Two Worlds—Christian Life—English Mechanic.

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

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.

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

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

THE National Secular Society's office is at No. 377 Strand, London, where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

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

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

SPECIAL.

SEVERAL correspondents have suggested that Shilling Week should be changed into Shilling Month. They say that this has had to be done on previous occasions, and should be done now, in order to give the less ready ones the opportunity of subscribing. Well, I have assented to this before, and I assent to it again. During the month of October, then, instead of merely during the first week of it, I ask my friends and readers to send me a contribution of one or any number of shillings, for the purpose of enabling me to advertise the *Freethinker* judiciously and to promote its circulation in other ways. The matter has already been explained, and I leave it now with the Free-thought party.

G. W. FOOTE.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE will occupy the Athenæum Hall platform for three Sunday evenings prior to his next series of provincial lectures. This evening (Oct. 16) he will take for his subject "Confession in the Church: A Study in Priestcraft and Demoralisation." Mr. Foote has not been at the Athenæum Hall for some time, and no doubt there will be a large audience on this occasion. His subject is of grave importance just now.

Mr. Foote lectured twice in the Secular Hall, Leicester, on Sunday. The morning lecture on "the Czar's Appeal to Europe" drew a good audience, which appeared to be deeply interested. Mr. Joseph McCabe occupied the chair. The evening lecture on "The Meaning of Death" packed the hall in every corner, and a more appreciative and enthusiastic audience could not be wished for. Mr. Sydney Gimson, who occupied the chair, made a touching reference to the death of an old frequenter of the hall who had just died at the great age of ninety-five.

The Leicester Secular Society is making a big effort in the line of organisation. Mr. Joseph McCabe, formerly the Very Rev. Father Antony, O.S.F., Professor of Philosophy at Forest Gate, and Rector of St. Bernardine's College, Buckingham, has been engaged as organising secretary. That is his technical designation, but he is really to be a resident "minister" of the Gospel of Secularism, which may as well have its ministers as any system of superstition. Classes are being started for the study of Astronomy, Logic, Psychology, Political Economy, Comparative Religion, Ethics, and Modern Philosophy, which Mr. McCabe will superintend himself. It is also intended to teach Modern Languages, Shorthand, and Type Writing. This enterprise will, of course, involve considerable expense, and the Leicester friends are straining themselves to find the wherewithal.

Mr. Foote was glad of the opportunity to spend an hour or two in Mr. McCabe's company. This gentleman is highly accomplished and possesses great ability. His manner is very unassuming. He is entirely without "side"—to use a slang word, whose excuse is its expressiveness. His latest book on *Monastic Life* is being widely and favorably noticed in the press. He has lost the career which was open to him in the Catholic Church, but we hope he will find compensation in being able to labor for the spread of his own con-

victions; and perhaps—for he is still a young man—he may live to see the Secular movement strong enough to afford its officers a satisfactory position, even if they miss red hats and high-sounding titles and pecuniary wealth. Anyhow, he is very much in earnest, and we congratulate the movement on having secured his services.

Despite the rain, which continued the whole of Sunday evening last up to about nine o'clock, Mr. Charles Watts had a very good audience at the Athenæum Hall, the largest he has had there this season. He was in his best form, and his lecture upon "The Doom of the Churches" "caught on." The applause throughout and at the close was most hearty, and testified that the address was appreciated. Mr. A. J. Marriott made an excellent chairman, and delivered a brief but appropriate speech. "If," said he, "we had more forcible speakers like Mr. Watts, the doom of the Churches would be even nearer than it is."

Under the heading of "Good News for Freethinkers," the *Awakener of India* prints the Memorandum of Association of the Secular Society, Limited, which it refers to as "a happy scheme which is free from all difficulties." It hopes "that the Freethinkers of India will lose no time in joining this new Society."

New Zealand is going ahead. It has passed an Old Age Pension Bill, granting £18 a year to persons over sixty-five who have been twenty years in the colony. This would rejoice the heart of Thomas Paine, who was the first to formulate a definite proposal in this direction. It may be found in his *Rights of Man*.

The *Isle of Man Times* draws attention to the lack of amusements during the day at Douglas. "How comes it," our contemporary asks, "that along the whole stretch of that beautiful beach there is not to be seen the jolly face of the grimy nigger, or the shaggy 'Toby' of the Punch and Judy show? Why should the Salvation Army have the place to themselves?"

An excellent and outspoken review of Guyau's *Sketch of Morality* appears over the initials of "A. G. W." in the *Glasgow Weekly Citizen*. The writer quotes a certain critic as saying that Guyau "reasons like a mathematician and writes like a poet," and remarks that "in this criticism is summed up Guyau's whole nature." The critic in question is the editor of the *Freethinker*.

A copy of the *Buddhist* for September reaches us from Colombo, Ceylon. The Christian missionaries and teachers are not allowed to have it all their own way. They have to face a formidable rivalry. There was one Buddhist school earning the Government grant in 1881, and the number was eighty-six in 1897. Buddhism in Ceylon is not of the superstitious type which abounds on the continent of Asia. It is nearer to the primitive type, and is more ethical. We notice that the *Buddhist* quotes a paragraph from the *Freethinker*.

Mr. W. Heaford was busy last Sunday. In the morning he lectured at Camberwell, in the afternoon he faced the holy Hooligans on Peckham Rye, and in the evening he lectured twice, once in the open air at Mile End, and afterwards at Swaby's Coffee Rooms in the neighborhood there—a hard day's work decidedly for one man. At Peckham Rye the Secularists appeared in numbers sufficiently large to overawe the cowards who came there to kill, but remained to howl. The lecture was delivered in spite of the beast-like noises of the low, but religious, ruffians, and was well received by the exceedingly large and attentive audience. An excellent collection was made, and the meeting was in every way characterised by enthusiasm and success.

Hartlepool Secularists who may see this paragraph are requested to note that a meeting will be held at Mr. W. G. Allan's, 19 Mary-street, on Tuesday, October 18, at 7, for the purpose of seeing what can be done to organise and promote Secularism there. Every sympathiser will be welcome.

The Free Press Defence Committee announces a final public meeting before Mr. George Bedborough's trial, which is to take place at the Old Bailey sessions commencing on October 24. This public meeting will be held on Tuesday evening next (Oct. 18) at eight o'clock in St. Martin's Town Hall. Mr. G. W. Foote is advertised to preside, and "many well-known speakers will attend."

Mr. Charles Watts has still a fair supply of his leaflet on "Secular and Theological Forces." This is a good tract for general distribution. Copies can now be obtained at the low price of sixpence per hundred, or post free eightpence. Order of Charles Watts, 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C.

SHILLING MONTH.

FOR THE "FREETHINKER" CIRCULATION FUND.

[Where no figure accompanies the name the amount acknowledged is one shilling.]

Toreador 5s., F. J. Harborne 10s., A. K. T., S. Alward 3s., C. J. Whitwell, R. H. Leake 2s., G. Thwaites 2s. 6d., P. M. 2s. 6d., Mr. and Mrs. Clarke 2s., J. Crookes, S. Leeson 5s., W. Wilber, G. Woodford, T. Hurst, C. Pell, G. Waplington, H. Surham, H. Gunn, S. Woolley, G. H. Hopkins, J. Wheatley, J. Hardy, J. Barrs, Louis Organ, J. G. 2s. 6d., Peter Weston 5s., A. Button, W. Shadwell, Alfred Window and Two Friends 3s., J. Hague 5s., S. Hartmann 10s., C. H. G. 2s. 6d., A. W. Huttey 2s., R. W. 10s., John Clarke 2s., Mrs. C. Jackson 2s. 6d., P. Dye, F. H. 2s., Mrs. D. Baker 5s., J. H. Foster 2s., A. Briggate 2s., Thomas Morgan 2s. 6d., W. Barks 2s. 6d., F. W. Swain, J. Jones 2s. 6d., A. S. Well, W. W. R. 2s., E. Grizzell, G. Grizzell, H. J. Thorp, W. G. Allan. *Per R. Forster*: Avalon 5s., E. Self 2s. 6d., D. Powell 2s. 6d., D. Forrest 2s. *Per Miss Vance*: E. Bater, W. Davey, F. F. 2s. 6d., J. Bawden 2s., T. A., W. Hunt 5s., T. Thornett 2s. 6d., L. Horne, W. C. M. 5s., John and Lizzie Davis 2s.; J. F. 3s., N. B., Unknown, P. Bridger 1s. 6d., C. Sedgwick, A. J. Hooper.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED.

(Company Limited by Guarantee.)

MEMORANDUM OF ASSOCIATION.

- 1.—The name of the Company is The Secular Society, Limited.
- 2.—The registered office of the Company will be situated in England.
- 3.—The objects for which the Company is formed are:—
 - (a) To promote, in such ways as may from time to time be determined, the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action.
 - (b) To promote the utmost freedom of inquiry and the publication of its discoveries.
 - (c) To promote the secularisation of the State, so that religious tests and observances may be banished from the Legislature, the Executive, and the Judiciary.
 - (d) To promote the abolition of all support, patronage, or favor by the State of any particular form or forms of religion.
 - (e) To promote universal Secular Education, without any religious teaching, in public schools maintained in any way by municipal rates or imperial taxation.
 - (f) To promote an alteration in the laws concerning religion, so that all forms of opinion may have the same legal rights of propaganda and endowment.
 - (g) To promote the recognition by the State of marriage as a purely civil contract, leaving its religious sanctions to the judgment and determination of individual citizens.
 - (h) To promote the recognition of Sunday by the State as a purely civil institution for the benefit of the people, and the repeal of all Sabbatarian laws devised and operating in the interest of religious sects, religious observances, or religious ideas.
 - (i) To purchase, lease, rent, or build halls or other premises for the promotion of the above objects.
 - (j) To employ lecturers, writers, organisers, or other servants for the same end.
 - (k) To publish books, pamphlets, or periodicals.
 - (l) To assist, by votes of money or otherwise, other Societies or associated persons or individuals who are specially promoting any of the above objects.
 - (m) To have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.
 - (n) To co-operate or communicate with any kindred society in any part of the world.
 - (o) To do all such other lawful things as are conducive or incidental to the attainment of all or any of the above objects.

CHRISTIANITY AND WAR.

If I had the slightest faith in the efficacy of prayer, I should certainly ask for the petitions of members of the Freethought party to assist me in recovering from the ordeal I have just passed through. Seventy-five columns of newspaper type, recording the doings of the Church Congress at Bradford, have I solemnly and conscientiously waded through. I have been astonished by the historical insight which enabled Mr. Harwood, M.P., to discover that Jesus Christ was the first true democrat that ever lived; mystified by the Bishop of Melanesia saying that in the Solomon Islands "the natives kill their children rather than be bothered with the trouble of bringing them up"—a statement that has left me wondering where on earth the adults come from; pleased that some thirty-year-old commonplaces of Biblical criticism have been put before the Congress as *probably* true; and perfectly flabbergasted at the cuteness of the Rev. Professor Gwatkin, who made the unexpected discovery that unbelief had become very general in these degenerate days. If perfection is only to be gained through suffering, the reading of that seventy-five columns should send me a good distance on my upward career.

It was only to be expected that during the Congress the question of the disarmament of Europe having been fixed upon the public attention by the Czar's recent manifesto, would call forth some notice; and it was quite certain that as the peace movement, so far as the body of the people are concerned, gains strength yearly, we should have the usual unctuous announcement that Christianity is before all things the religion of peace. True, it is the Christian nations of the earth that uphold the largest and most destructive armaments; true, also, that the five principal Christian powers of Europe are spending, in round figures, nearly £200,000,000 annually on war, and could place on the field of battle nearly 13,000,000 men, and that even on a peace footing Christian nations require, for the purpose of watching each other, nearly 4,000,000 soldiers; it is also undeniable that in the early part of the year the clergy of Great Britain and America were shrieking their loudest, in the name of Christianity, to bring about a war between America and Spain, and thus aid in saddling the people of the United States with the same burden that oppresses the peoples of Europe; still "Christianity is a religion of peace," and the fact that there was nearly a free fight when Mr. Kensit appeared on the platform may be taken as fresh evidence of the truth of the statement.

It was very noticeable that none of the speakers who dealt with this subject condescended to point out in what manner Christianity had restrained war in the past, or hoped to restrain war in the future. Certainly the Bishop of Calcutta (Dr. Welldon) pointed out that the British arms in the Soudan were "consecrated" by the ministers of different religious denominations joining hands at Khartoum and thanking God Almighty for the deaths of 10,000 Dervishes; while the Bishop of Hereford agreed with him in thinking that we are "providentially ordained to be the carriers of trade and European influence to every shore, but that it was our duty to use force to compel Mohammedan governments to treat Christians living under their jurisdiction properly." The murder of hundreds of Jews and the outraging of hundreds of Jewesses under the Christian government of Russia, and with its full connivance, doesn't matter; but it is difficult to see much evidence in either of these statements as to the peaceful tendencies of Christianity.

The plain truth is that the Christian clergy are ready to preach either peace or war, as public opinion may demand it; and in that jumble of contradictory teachings, the Bible, they can appeal either to the Lord, "who is a mighty man of war," who "teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight," or to some text promising a time when "nation shall not lift a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more"; and it may be safely prophesied that whether they play on one string or the other will largely depend upon which fills their churches and chapels in the most satisfactory manner.

It would, I imagine, have puzzled even the combined intelligences of the Bishops of Hereford and Calcutta to have shown in what manner Christianity has at any period of its history made for peace rather than war. So far from

its ascendancy having exerted any good influence on the military spirit, the period of its greatest power was precisely the period when wars were most frequent and bloody. For downright lust of fighting and boundless brutality the Christian Dark and Middle Ages far surpassed anything that we know of in the civilised nations of antiquity. Rome was essentially a military nation, and yet Rome failed to provide such scenes of internecine wars with barons and bishops, burning each other's castles, murdering each other's serfs, or such pictures of wholesale butchery as fill page after page of European history from the fifth to the fourteenth century.

The wars of the Dark and Middle Ages were largely religious, and some of them were entirely so. Even the profession of a soldier carried with it an odor of religion. Says Hallam: "Writers of the Middle Ages compare the knightly to the priestly character in an elaborate parallel, and the investiture of the one was supposed analogous to the ordination of the other. The ceremonies upon this occasion were almost wholly religious. The candidate passed nights in prayer among priests in a church; he received the sacraments, he entered into a bath, and was clad with a white robe, in allusion to the supposed purification of his life; his sword was solemnly blessed; everything, in short, was contrived to identify his new condition with the defence of religion."*

The crusades were almost entirely religious in motive and object; and in these wars there is not only evidence of the bloodthirsty instincts deliberately set loose by Christianity, but these wars were conducted with every circumstance of brutality and barbarism of which the age was capable. They were initiated by the wholesale slaughter of Jews and heretics in England, France, and Germany; and, upon "the sacred city" falling into the hands of the Crusaders in 1099, the conquered Mohammedans, then in the enjoyment of a civilisation that must have appeared little short of miraculous to the uncivilised Christian hordes that swarmed into Jerusalem, saw to their horror what soldiers of the Cross were like. "The brains of young children," says Draper, "were dashed out against the walls, infants were thrown over the battlements, every woman that could be seized was violated, men were roasted at fires, some were ripped open to see if they had swallowed gold, the Jews were driven into their synagogue and there burnt, a massacre of nearly seventy thousand took place, and the Pope's legate was seen partaking in the triumph."† I imagine that it would puzzle even his Reverend Lordship of Hereford to deny the purely religious nature of the Crusades, or to indicate the refining influence of Christianity in their conduct.

Although the Crusades may be said to have practically closed the era of purely religious wars, yet in the struggles during the period of the Reformation Christianity played a prominent part, while in Ireland, under the puritan Cromwell, differing Christian views gave an air of divine sanction to brutalities that cannot be read to-day without a shudder. And even when Christian feeling has not prompted an outbreak of war, seldom, if ever, has the weight of Christian belief been thrown upon the side of peace. Sheldon Amos, in his *Remedies for War* (p. 42), remarks that "past experience of professed Christianity certainly shows it to be compatible with every phase of the warlike spirit, and, indeed, to afford the occasion, or the pretext, for the bitterest of all wars." Mr. Lecky, with all his obvious bias to give Christianity credit for so much good as is possible, says:—

"When all.....qualifications have been fully admitted, the broad fact will remain that, with the exception of Mohammedanism, no other religion has done so much to produce war as was done by the religious teachers of Christendom during several centuries. The military fanaticism evoked by the indulgence of the Popes, by the exhortations of the pulpit, by the religious importance attached to the relics at Jerusalem, and the prevailing hatred of misbelievers, has scarcely ever been equalled in its intensity; and it has caused the effusion of oceans of blood, and has been productive of incalculable misery to the world. Religious fanaticism was a main cause of the earlier wars, and an important ingredient in the later ones. The peace principles, that were so common before Constantine, have found scarcely any echo except from Erasmus, the Anabaptists, and the Quakers; and, although some very important pacific

* *Middle Ages*, vol. ii., p. 455.

† *Intellectual Development of Europe*, vol. ii., p. 23.

agencies have arisen out of the industrial progress of modern times, these have been for the most part wholly unconnected with, and have in some cases been directly opposed to, theological interest.*

In every one of the wars that England has been engaged in, big or little, the clergy have, as a body, been on the wrong side. In the infamous Chinese war of 1860, out of twenty-five bishops who registered their votes eighteen were for war; while there is no instance on record of a protest on behalf of peace ever having been made by the clergy of the Established Church. On the contrary, Bishop Ellicott, of Gloucester, and the late Bishop Magee, of Peterborough, both made elaborate protests against the "Peace Party," and even Charles Kingsley once compared "Peace-mongers" with criminals.

In brief, the Christian clergy have just piped whatever tune the nation was anxious to dance to. If peace was in the air, it piped peace; if war was in the ascendant, it pointed to the soldier as an ideal of duty and of excellence; while as to curbing racial, national, or economic hatreds, that is a task which Christianity has failed most miserably to accomplish, even if it ever attempted it. Upon this head Canon Scott Holland may be allowed to speak. In a sermon preached in St. Paul's last June† he said: "The Roman Empire far more nearly succeeded in giving unity of life, culture, government, and intercourse to the entire body of civilised men, European, Asiatic, and African, than we, in our wildest dreams, could ever imagine possible to-day. Ancient Rome got far nearer to realising the fusion of black and white races.....than our empire ever ventures to attempt. Her citizenship embraced with perfect ease every variety of race, from barbaric Scotland to hot Africa.All fell under one policy, under one municipal system, and recognised each other on a legal equality of rights and duties. A Roman citizen might journey from Edinburgh to Babylon, and never cease to find himself perfectly at home amid a circle of familiar scenes and usages and institutions; and the throne of the Cæsars was open to a Slav or Spaniard alike.....A common unity for Christian Europe is infinitely less conceivable now, eighteen hundred years after Christ, than it was for pre-Christian Europe. It is Christian Europe which gives us the spectacle of race divided against race by implacable enmities; it is Christian Europe which has just given us the ironical illustration of its inability to act in concert for any single object under the sun.....Racial differences grow more intense, and let us note it is Christianity itself which tends to sharpen them." Anything that I might say further would only weaken the force of the indictment. C. COHEN.

PREHISTORIC PEEPS.

II.—A QUESTION OF COLOR.

Mislike me not for my complexion,
The shadowed livery of the burnished sun.
—*The Immortal Somebody.*

A CURLY-HEADED, pug-nosed, thick-lipped, ebony-complexioned soul-saver once assured his dusky congregation that he was perfectly certain that Adam was—Angels and ministers of grace, defend us!—*a black man!* Let us (you and I, dear reader) calmly, seriously, and dispassionately think this matter over.

Although the lily and the rose fight for mastery in the lovely complexion of the scribe who writes these lines, he has no wish to reproach those brethren and sistren who have, through no fault of their own, a touch of the tar-brush in their composition.

As to the question of color, it may be that, when our Heavenly Father has piled the Wallsend round me, my delicate skin will be charred beyond recall. But let us return to our "muttons." This suggestion of our colored sky-pilot puts a very different complexion on the whole rib story. It brings an atmosphere of originality into the romance of the first man.

Bearing in mind the well-known weakness of "niggers" for chickens, or, indeed, any private property, it was positively absurd on the part of Mr. J. Hovah to imagine that Massa Adam would respect the fruit of the forbidden tree. I know that Moses condemns Mrs. Adam as a bad lot. He

tells us that it was Eve who listened to the seductive serpent who, with his ribstone pippin, upset the apple-cart of creation. It was also Eve who tempted our sage ancestor; and it seems that the grand old gardener would have always been quite a superior plaster saint if he had had the Plantation of Eden to himself. But Moses always had a pretty little wit of his own. For example, he calmly tells us that Adam "knew" Eve—just as if a man would be likely to be unacquainted with his own wife. This is absolutely the finest *Jew d'esprit* that Holy Moses was ever guilty of, and he wrote a full account of his own funeral. It won't compare with the jokes of Mr. G. L. Mackenzie; but then comparisons, as Mrs. Malaprop tells us, are always "odoriferous."

There was always this excuse for Eve, that, seeing the snake curled round the tree, she may have thought it was the garden-hose which Adam had left whilst he went off to play the banjo in his leisure moments. Besides, she was not to know that snakes do not usually argue. Ladies usually resemble Artemus Ward's friend "who couldn't ratiocinate worth a cent." In the event of a fight, what chance had she with a creature beside which the octopus of our well-advertised explorer, De Rougemont, was but a periwinkle?

Let us take a closer peep at the plantation. Mr. J. Hovah stalks haughtily around and meets his gardener.

"Watered the plants, Adam?"

"Yes, massa."

"Stoves alight in the conservatories?"

"Yes, massa."

"Missis all right?"

"Yes, massa."

"By the way, Adam, is my halo on straight?"

"Quite straight, massa."

Then he unloads the harmless, necessary shekel, tells Adam to get himself some lemonade, bids him good-night, and passes from sight.

Mr. J. Hovah, unlike Detective Sweeney, evidently believes that beauty unadorned is adorned the most. No sooner did he perceive Eve going about her duties arrayed in an apron of fig-leaves than he proceeded to fall into a most tremendous passion. He bullyragged "our general mother" so much that she yelled for her husband, who came rushing up. With one mighty blow from his banjo he felled Mr. J. Hovah to the ground. This was the last indignity of all. The very sun nearly fell out of heaven with fright. From the Dog Star to Alpha Centauri the stars shook with fear. The whole creation groaned, and Adam and Eve, paralysed with fright, turned pale. The frightened pair did not resume their mahogany complexions for many years. During this time of extreme pallor white children were born, all the others being black. This explains satisfactorily the appearance of the white man on the earth. It may not be a strictly scientific explanation; but, as Mr. Engström's energetic expositors continually remind us, science has nothing to do with the writings of the Holy Ghost.

Our prehistoric Othello and his Desdemona had scaled their doom. A board meeting was hastily summoned, and the three Lord Shaftesburys, as Matthew Arnold wittily called the Trinity, made things very warm for our ancestor and his helpmeet. *God does nothing*, said Thomas Carlyle, bitterly; but Mr. and Mrs. Adam would not have agreed with the sage of Chelsea. Mr. J. Hovah cursed like a trooper. Jesus, who called people vipers and whitewashed sepulchres, had a fine command of language, but distinctly inferior to that of his pa. The senior partner cursed the man, and he cursed the woman. His fearful and unquenchable rage was also directed against unborn millions. The other two Lord Shaftesburys silently acquiesced. They didn't evidently keep a dog and bark themselves.

The next day the following advertisement appeared in the *Garden of Eden Gazette*:—

"WANTED, as Gardener and Caretaker, a respectable Man and Wife. Wages, £1 a week and free vegetables. No encumbrances.—J. Hovah, Son, and Co., Florists and Nurserymen, Euphrates-valley."

MIMNERMUS.

The venerable Father Albinger, of Mount Vernon, N.Y., who gained a reputation for sanctity by his sermons against the curse of wealth, died the other day at an advanced age, when it was found that he had saved up more than \$100,000.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

* *History of European Morals*, vol. ii., p. 255.

† Reported in *Christian World Pulpit* of July 6.

BOOK CHAT.

Mr. H. S. SALT published his *Life of James Thomson* ("B.V.") nearly ten years ago. It was an admirable piece of work, characterised by tact as well as ability, and impartiality as well as devotion. It contained all that most admirers of Thomson's genius would want to know about him, and perhaps more than they were entitled to know. We merely say *perhaps*, and not at all as reflecting on Mr. Salt's taste or judgment. It seems a settled thing that every distinguished man must have a biography, and that he must be depicted in his habit as he lived. He must be painted like Cromwell, warts and all. But whether the veil should be drawn aside from the privacies of life, according to the modern fashion, is at least debateable. Has the public really a right to know more about a dead man than it had to know about him when he was living? That is a problem which has yet to be solved. Tennyson, for instance, had his opinion on the subject, and expressed it in his lines "To —, After Reading a Life and Letters"—which the reader, if he does not already know it, may hunt up for himself.

* * *

Mr. Salt has now issued a new and cheaper edition (3s. 6d. nett) of his biography of Thomson through the firm of A. and H. B. Bonner. The appearance of the volume is not exactly perfection. There are no very bad faults to be indicated, and yet the general result is unsatisfactory. Perhaps the characteristic most lacking is elegance. One thing at least may be definitely complained of. Printers have a regulation and stupid way of dealing with the *register* of the page, so that when the book lies open in front of you the margin—to use an apparent Hibernicism—looks all in the middle.

* * *

The portrait of Thomson, which forms the frontispiece, is well executed. It is like Thomson, and yet it is not like him. The features are there, but the character is missing. For this, however, nobody is to blame. The portrait, although directly from a crayon drawing, is probably, after all, from a photograph, and photographs rarely give character. It takes the hand (and brain) of a great painter to give us a counterfeit presentment of the actual man; not one expression—often inane or artificial—but the total impression of his individuality.

* * *

Much of the critical part of the first edition has been cut away, but fresh biographical matter has been added; particularly a long and touching account by Mr. Herbert Clarke of Thomson's final breakdown in the rooms of Philip Marston, the blind poet, whence he was removed to the hospital where he died. Of course the most important thing in this new edition is the hitherto unpublished letter to Mr. Salt from Mr. George Meredith. It was hoped, in 1891, that a popular volume might be published of selections from Thomson's poetry, and that Mr. Meredith might write an Introduction. However, the Master had to be excused—though an Introduction from *him* might have consoled Thomson—if he had not been past consolation—in his grave. "He was a man of big heart," Mr. Meredith wrote, "of such entire sincerity that he wrote directly from the impression carved in him by his desolate experience of life. Nothing is feigned, all is positive. No Inferno could be darker. But the practical effect of a greater part of the Poems is that of a litany of the vaults below. The task of a preface will be to show him pursued and precipitated by his malady in the blood to do this perpetual offence of dark monotonousness which the clear soul of the man would have been far from committing had he not been so driven, as the beautiful 'Om-el-Bonain' may witness. Bright achievement was plucked out of the most tragic life in our literature."

* * *

This ill-fated man of genius has found a sympathetic and competent biographer in Mr. Salt, and we hope this cheaper edition of his labor of love will find a fairly wide circulation. More than this is scarcely to be expected. Thomson's career was not a public one, and it was not exciting. It was only infinitely pathetic. One reads the record with an added sense of the meaning of Heine's terrible phrase of "the Aristophanes of the Universe."

* * *

In response to numerous inquiries from our readers, we may mention that *Stories Told Me*, by Baron Corvo, which we noticed at length last week, is published at the modest sum of one shilling.

* * *

Messrs. Newnes and Co. have just added to their very popular "Story" Series *The Story of Religions*. We took the book up with some expectation; but the work is so obviously a compilation that we cannot do more than make a passing reference to the volume.

A new book has just been published entitled *Ananias*. We have been asked to state that this volume has no reference to the *Atheist Shoemaker*.

ON PRAYING.

I'd like to know, if you can tell,
Is praying any good?
Won't human effort do as well
When rightly understood?
If God is changeless, how can he
Be influenced by prayer?
And if he changes, how can we
Trust in him anywhere?
Since no effect can be produced
On God, who changes not,
How foolish 'tis such time be used
Where good can ne'er be got.
It seems to me 'twould wiser be
To work and never pray;
Our day is brief, then why should we
Be wasting it away?

Chaplain and Patient.

In the *Cornhill Magazine* a writer tells some pleasant stories of the humors of hospital life. A poor little street arab was brought in by the police. He had been run over by an omnibus, and was badly injured. The chaplain was sent for, as it was thought improbable that the boy would live many hours. With little tact the chaplain began the interview thus: "My boy, the doctors think you are very much hurt. Have you been a good little boy?"

Boy (much bored): "You git aout!"
Chaplain (shocked): "But I am afraid you are not a good little boy, and you know you may perhaps be going to die."

Boy (anxious to end the interview): "Well, 'taint none o' your business any'ow. Wot's me death got to do with you? 'Ave you got a pal in the coffin line?"
The boy finally recovered.

Patients' gratitude to the doctor sometimes overflows in speeches like the following remark made by a poor woman after a long illness: "I wouldn't never 'ave got over my lawst illness if it 'adn't a bin for Surgeon-Captain Jones and the Lord."

Mixed.

The pastor of the First Baptist church, Ukiah, Cal., is Mr. Farmer.

The proprietress of a hotel in the same town is Mrs. Smith.

One of the members of the church is Mrs. Southard, and, on the authority of two women who know, Mrs. Southard charged that the pastor and the proprietress remained in a locked room at the hotel several hours on several separate occasions.

By a two-thirds vote the church expelled Mrs. Southard for telling tales out of school, and Mr. Southard has now sued the church for damages for depriving his wife of her usual spiritual consolation. He seems unduly sensitive.—*New York "Truthseeker."*

A Dilemma.

A little girl in Philadelphia posed her papa quite unconsciously, but very neatly. She had put to him the common question, "Can God do anything?" and received the common answer, "Yes." Then, however, she pursued him with an instance: "Papa, can God make a stone bigger than he can lift?" Papa's discomfiture was exquisite to behold. Whichever way he answered it, he saw himself constrained to contradict himself.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Confession in the Church: A Study in Priestcraft and Demoralisation."
CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, R. P. Edwards, "Christianity the Product of Buddhism."
EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Bow Vestry Hall, Bow-road, E.): 7, F. J. Gould, "The Religion of the Hebrew Prophets."
SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road, S.E.): 11.15, Sunday-school; 7, Stanton Coit, "The Crusade Against Ritualism."
WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11, Stanton Coit, "America among the Nations."
WEST LONDON BRANCH (20 Edgware-road): October 20, at 8.30, Mr. Schaller will open a discussion on "Necessitarianism."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "A New Bible." Peckham Rye: 3.15, A. B. Moss, "The Glory of Freethought."
EAST LONDON BRANCH (Mile End Waste): R. P. Edwards—11.30 and 7. October 19, at 8, Stanley Jones.
HAMMERSMITH (near Lyric Theatre): 7.15, Mr. Papernow.
HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, E. White.
LIMEHOUSE (The Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey. October 18, at 8, Stanley Jones.
WESTMINSTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Grosvenor Embankment): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "Christian Doctrines Abandoned."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH (Bristol-street Board-school): H. P. Ward—11, "The Law of Population"; 7, "Why I am an Atheist."
CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, A. E. Rowcroft, "The Uselessness of Strikes."
DERBY (Central Hotel, Market-place): 7, W. Fletcher, "A Few Remarks on the Recent Church Congress."
GATESHEAD (Town Hall): C. Cohen—3, "Substitutes for Religion"; 7, "The Testimony of the Jews to Christianity."
GLASGOW (Lecture Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion Class, Mr. Armour, "Chartism"; 6.30, A. G. Nostik, A lecture with lantern illustrations.
LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): Touzeau Parris—11, "Occultism: Is it Wisdom or Folly?" 6.30, "Theosophy: A Criticism."
LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, J. Ross, "What it is Blasphemy to Deny."
MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): J. M. Robertson—11, "The Financial Basis of Religion"; 3, "Militarism and Social Science"; 6.30, "The New Creed of Miracle."
PRESTON BRANCH: October 20 and 21, C. Cohen.

Lecturers' Engagements.

O COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton—October 16, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 20 and 21, Preston; 23, Sheffield; 26, 27, 28, Derby; 30, Leicester. November 6 and 13, Athenæum Hall, London; 20, Chatham; 27, Manchester. November 30 and December 1, Failsworth. December 4, Manchester.

H. PERCY WARD, 526 Moseley-road, Birmingham.—October 16, Birmingham. November 27, Liverpool. December 18, Birmingham.

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