

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

A FREETHOUGHT NOVEL.

A Celibate's Wife. By Herbert Flowerdew. (London: John Lane.)

NOVELS with a purpose are a mistake in art. They may, or may not, serve an immediate turn, but they can hardly outlive it. Those who withstand this view sometimes point to *Don Quixote*. They say that the object of Cervantes was to laugh down the ridiculous chivalry of Spain, that he succeeded in this, and that his great book has nevertheless achieved immortality. But they forget that Cervantes has been credited with several different objects. Heine even sees in *Don Quixote* and *Sancho Panza* the everlasting antithesis between imagination and common sense; the latter always being dragged at the former's heels, as honest *Sancho* danced after the adventurous *Don*, although he pretty well knew in his heart that it was all midsummer madness. Twenty critics, too, will give twenty different theories about *Hamlet*. But our supreme poet was too great an artist to tell us what he meant. Like a god, he manifested himself in his creations.

Novelists with a purpose are liable to two great dangers. If they advocate certain opinions, and make their personages argue, they are apt to put all the strength of reason on one side and all the weakness on the other. They set out with a foregone conclusion, and betray it in the very first chapter. And if they seek to promote one cause, and damage another, by types of character, they are apt to put all the good people on one side, and all the wicked people on the other. Of course this is untrue to nature. It is also perilous. For all an opponent has to do is to reverse the characters, and your thesis is disproved.

Still, this is an age of novels with a purpose, and the Christians are the chief practitioners in this line. They employ fiction—quite mistakenly, as we think—to bolster up their tottering faith. This may be taken as an excuse for Freethinkers meeting them on their own ground. Mr. Flowerdew, the author of the novel before us, seems to work in that spirit. His chief characters are three—a High Church clergyman, a literary Infidel, and a charming woman. Canon Presyllett marries the handsome and enthusiastic *Angela* for clerical reasons. They live in the same house, but as celibates, for he looks upon sexual intercourse as unspiritual, if not actually sinful. *Angela* tries to convert *Gabriel Lyne*, the Infidel, who is infinitely superior in every way to her nominal husband. But the Infidel converts her, and they fall in love with each other. Then the beast is aroused in Canon Presyllett. He desires the woman he may lose. Finally, after she leaves him, with a view to obtaining a divorce, he abducts and outrages her, which he regards as quite proper in the sight of God. The poor girl feels her pollution and commits suicide, and the Infidel kills the Canon as a murderer in the sight of Humanity. We extract this scene to show Mr. Flowerdew's power of writing:—

"Canon Presyllett looked up, with panic on his gaunt face, as the figure of *Gabriel* entered silently. He had justified himself to God, with the complete assurance that his victim's defender was too weak and ill to interfere with that settlement of the question; and with fear and surprise he remained on his knees, unable to move a muscle or close the loose-lipped mouth that had been open in invocation.

"*Gabriel* had put down the lamp and locked the door without uttering a word. He was standing with his back against it now, tearing the bandages off his injured

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arm. The flesh showed all red and scarred beneath, and he moved his exposed fingers as if trying their strength.

"There was a fiercer exultation in his heart than that which had stirred the pulses of the man of God, when he found himself alone with his prey. But even now the Infidel's dread of any unthought emotion made him curb himself, trying to look upon his action from the broad point of view from which he examined everything.

"To the trembling Canon the silence became unbearable.

"May I ask why you have forced yourself into my house?" he asked, trying to give his voice the strength of angry indignation.

"I came to tell you that your crime is finished," said *Gabriel* quietly. "The woman you have wronged has poisoned herself. You are a murderer, Canon Presyllett."

"The clergyman rose to his feet, the new fear and horror forcing back the old. For a moment he felt convicted of the crime of which he was accused.

"But it was only for a moment. The next he had put away the idea of his own responsibility as ridiculous. The sin lay with the wicked woman herself, who had so far forgotten the laws of her God that she dared to enter his presence uncalled, and with the man who by his wicked blasphemies had robbed her of the faith which would have held her back.

"The completeness with which his conscience absolved him gave him courage, and he drew himself erect, with something of his old pulpit manner.

"My wife a suicide!" he said. "And so this is the end of your horrible work. You have shattered her faith, you have blinded her to the bindingness of the holy marriage tie, and your teaching has ended in this, a suicide's terrible death."

"But *Gabriel* held himself back no longer. The emotion in him could find no more useful expression than in the thing he meant to do. His decision was a just one, if any decision is just by which society puts an end to an existence which menaces the safety of all its members. His instinct was as worthy as any which makes us wipe the venomous reptile from our path without scruple."

The actual killing of the Canon is told with relentless realism. *Gabriel Lyne* defends his action on the ground that the law provided no redress. He scorns to escape, gives himself up to the police, and presumably is executed. He had been admired and respected before, in spite of his infidelity, but public opinion swung round in favor of the man of God after his death.

"*Windlehurst* was frantic with excitement over the twin tragedy, and shook its head sagely over the result of a non-Christian belief. The Infidel of *Windlehurst* had acted more respectably than they expected as a general rule, but his cloven hoof was sure to show sooner or later. There was nothing like the good old faith to keep a man respectable. People who had begun to admit openly that there might be certain things in the Christian creed about which a man may honestly hold two opinions ceased to make public a theory so dangerous, and fought against its existence in their minds, for fear that it might ultimately lead them to the gallows. That an opinion which by any possibility can lead one to the gallows must be irreligious was an unquestionable axiom, the precedent of *Jesus* notwithstanding."

We must not conclude without saying that Mr. Flowerdew's novel contains some excellent descriptive writing, and some really good studies amongst the minor characters. Perhaps the strongest part of the book is the account of the rising of the beast in Canon Presyllett.

G. W. FOOTE.

THE CHURCHES' DILEMMA.

AN important object lesson is to be learned from a careful perusal of the reports of the proceedings at the late Church Congress at Bradford, and at the Baptist's meetings at Nottingham. That lesson is, that the whole of the Churches are in a dilemma, the escape from which it is difficult to foresee. We can quite understand the anxiety of the Archbishop of Canterbury when he stated last week at his first "Visitation": "There is much uneasiness in the Church just now.....there are angry disputes, some of great importance.....causing very serious consequences." Equally significant was the statement of the Rev. R. J. Campbell, of Brighton, made at the Session of the Baptist Union at Nottingham, when he said: "There was in the present day a certain hesitation of utterance in regard to the doctrine of the Atonement. These preachers were puzzled to know what to say. They did not know where to place emphasis. They were puzzled to find an adequate re-statement of the Atonement that would satisfy the aspirations and the tendencies of the twentieth century." The difficulty is not based simply upon minor differences, as some Christians frequently urge, for the Rev. R. C. Fillingham, Vicar of Hexton, writes thus upon this point: "The Catholic Church, say they, hath three branches—the Roman, the Greek, the Anglican. They all agree in essentials; they all represent antiquity; they are all part of the same universal body. Now, to the plain man it would appear that no wilder theory, no theory more opposed to fact, ever entered into the brain of man. It would seem as if a special conclave of theologians had been selected out of Bedlam to invent this strange faith. The Greek, the Anglican, the Roman Churches all one! But the Roman Church anathematizes and curses the Greek under the name of 'the Photian Schism'; the Greek Church holds the English Church to be heretical in her version of the Nicene Creed; the English Church denounces the Roman Church as having been sunk in idolatry for 800 years; the Roman Church denies that we have valid Orders, denies that the Church of England is a Church at all—but they are all one, all branches of the same infallible teaching body! If that be so, surely nothing can ever be different from anything else. Surely, my brothers, this is the creed of Colney Hatch! Surely they who for some purpose assert it *cannot* be such fools as to believe it!" (*Christian World*, Sept. 29).

One feature of the present dilemma of the Churches is that, as Dr. Watson said at the Nottingham meeting, "the old religions had served their day, and they were passing away." This fact is corroborated by history, which clearly shows that religions rise, flourish for a time, and then decay. As J. Cotter Morison aptly put it: "There seems to be no exception to the rule that the older religions grow, the more infirm do they become, the less hold do they keep on the minds of well-informed and thoughtful minds." This is certainly true of Christianity, as its record testifies. At first, we are told, it was readily accepted and enthusiastically professed. Then doubts arose as to the accuracy of its claims, which were severely criticised. This was followed by internal divisions and open rejection of many of its tenets. At the present time we see unmistakable proofs of its approaching decay. It is no longer an active factor in our national affairs; it has ceased to be a monitor in daily life, and it stands self-condemned as a united teacher. It may be said of Christianity in the words of the Bible: "Destruction cometh, and they [its adherents] shall seek peace, and there shall be none. Mischief shall come upon mischief, and rumor shall be upon rumor; then shall they seek a vision of the prophet; but the law shall perish from the priest, and counsel from the ancients. One built up a wall, and lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar."

This appears to us to be a fair description of the Churches to-day. Destruction has come upon them, and they seek for peace and can find none. Even the Bishop of Ripon avows that "Our internal divisions are perhaps our greatest foe." He fears "the unguarded temper, the intolerant spirit [among Christians] which seeks to damage a brother's character.....It summons to its aid bigotry armed with ignorance; reckless, it heeds not what it destroys." The Archbishop of York deplors that "another Gospel is being preached which is not the Gospel of revelation." Mr. Justice Grantham admitted at the Church Con-

gress that "with some clergymen a layman might go to the devil before the clergy would abate their opinions..... Churchmen would not allow themselves to be dragged at the heels of noisy demagogues, or itinerant street brawlers [their brothers in Christ], nightly pouring out their venom into the ears of the Church's most pronounced enemies; they exposed the cloven hoof of self-interest as the motive power of their action." Writing before the Church Congress, the *Church Gazette* observed: "There will have been a good deal of heated party strife [at the Congress]. High Churchmen will have been horrified at Low Churchmen, and the latter will have returned the feeling with usury; and Broad Churchmen will have horrified everyone..... The dangers which menace our Church have arisen from the backward or reactionary tendencies of its clergy" (Oct. 1, 1898). The *Church Review* designates Nonconformists as "dissenting hordes." The *Church Gazette* says the one thing proved at the late Church Congress was "the impotency of the Church," and the officials of the "Christian Fellowship Society" alludes to "the much wrangling and ill-feeling, not only between different sects, but between members of the same denomination, and even of the same congregation" (*Church Gazette*, October 15, 1898). Add to these ebullitions of bad feeling the bitter conflict which is constantly going on between Roman Catholics and Protestants, and the Kensit crusade against the Bishops, and then it will be seen what a "happy family" these professing Christians are. Surely the "Prince of Peace" was not far wrong when he said: "Think not that I am come to send peace."

And yet, in the face of this record, Christians taunt Freethinkers with lack of agreement. Whatever differences may exist among Secularists upon methods of organisation, none obtain as to our fundamental principles; whereas, in the Churches, the divergency pertains to the very essentials of their faith. No uniformity of opinion exists among the various theological schools as to the nature and character of the God they worship, the divinity and functions of Christ, the personality of the devil, the kind and duration of future punishments, the inspiration of the Bible, and the true meaning of its contradictory teachings. We are told in the New Testament that "A house divided against itself cannot stand." That serious divisions now exist within the Churches is an admitted fact. Their adherents are, therefore, in this dilemma: either the Gospels state what is not true, or the Churches are doomed to destruction.

It appears to us that ample evidence is at hand to justify the opinion that unless the Churches give up the faith which, we are told, "was once delivered unto the saints," and arouse from their lethargy, they will speedily lose, much more than they have done already, their hold upon the people. In speaking of his own Church Dean Farrar frankly said: "The great work of the Church was to be an intense effort always for the amelioration of the world. Many incidents in our own day, and in the past history of the Church, went to show that work was, and had been, slackly and imperfectly done. Take the slave trade and its heroes, Thomas Clarkson, Zachary, Macaulay, Granville, Sharp, and William Wilberforce. What was the attitude of the Church towards these men? As a matter of plain, historic fact, the ordinary attitude was one of sullen indifference, and, in some quarters, of actual hostility. In America, on the same question, how did the Church deal with one of its noblest sons? As one of the great orators had said: 'The Church loomed over him like a dark and sullen cloud.' This I will say, if the Church be false to its great duty.....she is in danger" (*Church Gazette*, Oct. 8, 1898). The present lamentable social condition of the poorer classes of this country is a standing proof of the incapacity of the Churches either to initiate or to carry on any practical reform that will confer upon the masses any real mundane advantages. No wonder the Bishop of Derry deplored at the Church Congress "the lapse of tens of thousands of baptised souls from all worship of God, all consciousness of a Father's benediction."

The true remedy for the unfortunate evils which afflict society is to turn the Churches into institutions for the moral, social, and scientific instruction of the people, and to substitute practical reformers for the priests, who live, not for, but upon, the general masses. Morality is indispensable to the individual and national welfare, while religion, even if it were true, is not an absolute necessity to human progress. Let us study earth more, and trouble

about heaven less. Our home is here, and the loved ones should claim our attention and command our efforts to enhance their happiness. The evils and wrongs of life are not to be removed by purely emotional ideals, theological absurdities, or Church agencies. These have been "tried and found wanting." What we now require is secular effort, allied with intellectual activity and moral stability. Upon these factors of progress rest our hopes for the regeneration of the human race.

CHARLES WATTS.

JOYLESS UNBELIEF?

BROWN, Jones, and Robinson, in their dealings with unbelief, represent three very common types of Christians; and each in his way throws considerable light upon the workings of the religious mind.

Brown belongs to the mildly incredulous type. He finds it impossible to understand how anyone who has once examined the stupendous evidences of Christianity can possibly put them on one side as being worthless. A man is an unbeliever simply because he has not examined carefully enough, or perhaps has not examined at all; and, therefore, an unbeliever in the sense of one who knows all that can be said on behalf of Christianity, and deliberately rejects that religion, is an utter impossibility. What so many generations of people have believed must be true; and even when that argument breaks down, it is easy to prove the truth of the Resurrection by a reference to the number of hospitals Christians have built, and it is equally simple to demonstrate the accuracy of the Genesiac story of creation by pointing to the charitable institutions erected by believers in Christ for diminishing a little of the volume of misery that other believers in Christ have helped to create.

Jones belongs to the fiercely intolerant type. To him all unbelief is in the nature of a criminal offence against God and man, to be put down as speedily as possible, and by whatever means society finds readiest to hand. Like Louis XI., he believes the only way to argue with heretics is to plunge a sword into their stomachs; and one may readily admit that it is about the only method by which Christianity could really settle unbelief. True, the sword is not advocated nowadays; it is the policeman and the prison, or, failing these, social ostracism; but the method is the same at bottom, and appeals to the same class of people for support. The unbeliever is a plague spot, a centre of disease, that society must exterminate if it would remain pure; and, to speak frankly, I am inclined to regard this view of the matter as being more Christian at bottom than any other. If Christianity is true, the unbeliever is a centre of contamination. He is not only bent upon going to hell himself, but is resolved to take as many with him for company's sake as he can possibly secure. If Christianity is true, persecution is a duty, and every step that the Christian makes towards the toleration of heretical opinions is a fresh admission that after all he may be wrong.

Robinson belongs to a much commoner species nowadays, and one that hardly carries with it such presumptive proofs of sincerity as the foregoing. He is of the sweetly sympathetic type. His soul is much concerned for his "poor erring brother," and he is usually a nuisance in his efforts to bring the lost sheep back into the fold, and perfectly nauseating in the sympathy extended to those who have rejected the comforting doctrines of Christianity, and are now treading the cold and cheerless paths of unbelief. Of course, it would be very difficult for the believer to say why the unbeliever's existence must be a joyless one. Certainly it cannot be because he misses any of the good things of this life; for one of the charges urged against him is that, instead of mortifying his affections as a preparation for what lies beyond the grave, he surrenders himself to purely earthly joys, and at last terminates his existence without even the knowledge that there is a hell for him to go to.

Nor could it be shown that, so far as this life is concerned, the unbeliever, in rejecting Christianity, throws on one side anything of real value. So far as can be seen, he mourns with the sorrow and laughs with the joy of all around him; the friendship of men and women, the love and affection of the home circle, are as dear to him as to others; the organic relations of man to society lose none

of their reality or importance with the rejection of religion; rather do the joys and comforts of earth become all the more valuable as those of heaven are dissipated into thin air by the criticism of advanced thought. And, curiously enough, while the unbelievers are pictured, for preaching purposes, as leading a miserable existence, one of the commonest accusations brought against them is that they are always laughing at religion. How a man who is always laughing at something he doesn't possess can be miserable for want of it is a problem not easy to solve.

Strange, too, that the only people who talk about the miseries of unbelief are the believers themselves. The unbeliever never complains. I have never met one who felt less comfortable as a Secularist than he did as a Christian, while I have met thousands the reverse. The lives of prominent unbelievers, such as Mill, Darwin, Huxley, or Spencer, do not present pictures of any preponderating sorrow; while George Eliot has left it on record that the pleasure she felt in surrendering Christianity was "akin to laughter." And I imagine that not even the most rabid believer would argue that Mark Twain's unbelief has had any demoralising effect upon his sense of humor.

Nor would it be difficult to show, from the lives of believers of all classes, that Christianity frequently brings anything but joyousness in its train. One would not seriously argue that such beliefs as eternal damnation, or the conviction that the devil lies hidden in all pleasures for the purpose of entrapping the souls of men, had any cheerful effect upon the minds of those who entertained them. As a matter of fact, the lives of the most eminent saints in Christian history present us with brief periods of hysterical rapture alternating with periods of complete despair and mortification. With rare exceptions leaders of religion have been men who avoided what they were pleased to term "worldly pleasures," preferring constant mortification to the most innocent enjoyment. The figure-head of Christianity is the "man of sorrows"; our present Sunday, with its combination of alcohol and orthodoxy, toned down as it is by modern scepticism, is a standing evidence of how much Christianity did to destroy the pleasures of life and give even a sharper edge to its sorrows. Altogether one thinks of the Christian's idea of a joyous creed as just upon all fours with that of the woman who declared after a visit to the theatre: "Really I never enjoyed myself so much in all my life. *I cried right through the piece.*"

That the unbeliever no longer finds comfort in the same set of beliefs as the Christian is undeniable; but it by no means follows that the beliefs rejected are not replaced by others quite as valuable and quite as cheerful to those that hold them. Indeed, if a comparison of beliefs were instituted, one might show that not only has the unbeliever a far more helpful set of beliefs than the believer, but that they are far more cheering in their general view of human nature. The unbeliever is at least free from that paralysing dread of intellectual development which fears lest every new discovery should destroy the whole fabric of religion. To him knowledge is really power; and every fresh discovery, every invention, is a new lever by which to raise the world to a higher level of existence. The world may be imperfect, human nature may be faulty, but we are not weighed down by the conviction that the world is suffering from God's curse, and are cheered in our efforts to improve life by the thought that human ills are removable, given time, knowledge, and industry. And there is surely something in the feeling that the world is ours to have and to enjoy, that the materials for making it better are well within our reach, and that human welfare is ultimately dependent upon the acquisition and application of natural knowledge rather than the acceptance of barbaric records as true that are condemned as false by the best knowledge of our times.

The mistake made by the believer, however, is a curious, although not an uncommon, one. He imagines himself in the position of the unbeliever, still retaining his old feelings, and finding nothing in his new condition to satisfy them. Obviously this is a blunder. Whatever a man's opinions may be, his feelings sooner or later accommodate themselves to them. The emotions of a Christian, a Buddhist, a Mohammedan, or an Atheist are all modified, and correspond in the main to the intellectual convictions entertained by each; and any change in opinion necessarily involves a change in the feelings or emotions previously existing. It is this process of gradual development that is

lost sight of by the ordinary believer. He fails to realise that, step by step with the acquisition of fresh knowledge, there goes a profound modification of feeling; until by the time that his old opinions have been destroyed by the dissolving agency of inquiry, and he steps out into the new world of Freethought, he no more needs the childish consolation that religion offers than he needs the wooden horses and toy guns of the nursery.

And what, after all, does the Christian know of the sense of freedom and happiness accompanying unbelief? What does he realise of the feeling of liberty arising from an absence of priestly or theological terrors; of the sense of responsibility springing from the consciousness that, by our actions and our thoughts, be they great or small, we are each of us moulding for good or ill the lives of all around us, or the incentive to renewed exertion acquired by a knowledge of the age-long story of human progress, or the conviction that, as the past has created the present, so the present has it in its power to build up a brighter and nobler future for those who follow in our steps? He is in the position of a man who has never left the slums of a city, moralising upon the dangerous effects of a breath of mountain air, or the evil of being shut-off from the fetid odors that he has by long residence become habituated to. Like a slave hugging his chains, he caresses the fetters that bind him. To him unbelief is unattractive because it is unknown. But to those who have broken down the barriers of hereditary intolerance, and who know what the real position of an unbeliever is, the beliefs that seem cold and dead are pulsating with life and instinct, with promises of hope and happiness; while the possibilities of a life honestly and courageously lived in the "Service of Man" far outweighs any devoted to the service of a God known by none, and believed in only by a vanishing number of intelligent men and women.

C. COHEN.

RELIGION AND MORALITY.

[Translated by G. W. Foote from Letourneau's *L'Evolution de la Morale.*]

JEWISH morality is less comprehensive; it was produced among a small people, and has no regard for animal life, nor even for humanity. It has, however, certain aspects of relative elevation, which I have already indicated; but those aspects belong simply to the stage of mental development to which Israel had attained. With respect to clericalism, Jehovahism was as absurd as Brahminism.

The Bible is sown with atrocious or unreasonable prescriptions. For Jehovah, the inexpiable crimes are idolatry and blasphemy. The Jews were always to stone whoever incited them to idolatry, whether son, daughter, brother, or wife. They were to exterminate the inhabitants and the animals, and destroy the belongings, of idolatrous cities where Hebrews had been attracted and converted.

The blasphemer was to be stoned, and so was the sorcerer. Death was decreed against those who resorted to wizards. This is justice after the fashion of the negroes of Central Africa. Jehovah was also like certain idols on the banks of the Niger in his pronounced taste for the odor of burning fat. To eat of that holy fat was to the Jew a capital crime. The same punishment was awarded to those who should eat of the blood.

Against the enemy Jehovah commanded a savage cruelty. All the males of cities carried by assault were to be put to the edge of the sword. In other cities, which Jehovah gave as a heritage to his people, the whole population was to be massacred.

Elsewhere it is said that every girl who marries without being a virgin should be stoned. The wife is also an impure being. To touch her, or any object which has been in contact with her during her menstrual period, is to become impure until the evening. She is further impure during seven days, if she gives birth to a son; and during fourteen days after the birth of a daughter.

The most singular prescriptions are solemnly formulated. It is forbidden to shave or cut the hair round. Quadrupeds may be eaten if they ruminant and are cloven-footed, but no one must eat the hare nor the cony, *which of course ruminant*, but do not divide the hoof. It is also necessary to abstain carefully from certain fantastic animals, having at the same time four feet and wings, etc., etc.

If the commandments of Jehovah are sometimes singular,

the methods of appeasing him, and of effacing sins, are not more rational. The almighty Lord is, above all, hungry for victims. Formerly, as we have seen, he devoured the first-born children; later he is contented with animals. He pardons, for a calf, a sin committed in ignorance; a broken oath for a lamb or a goat; a fraud or a falsehood far a ram without spot. For an emissary he-goat the sins of all Israel are remitted.

The Koran, which was born of the Bible, is not more sensible. It orders abstinence from the blood and flesh of the pig, and of animals suffocated, stunned, killed by a fall, or slain by a wild beast. For Allah, as for Jehovah, the greatest virtue is belief. No infidel must be loved, be it a father, a son, a brother, or an ally. The believer is rewarded in this life by rich booty from the infidels, and in paradise by dwelling in delicious gardens, peopled with black-eyed houris, etc. Reprobates, on the other hand, will drink boiling water like molten metal, and liquid feculence.

Essentially all anthropomorphic religions resemble each other, whether monotheistic, like Judaism and Islamism, or polytheistic, like the religions of Greece and Rome. From the theological point of view the great moral question is how to please the supernatural being or beings who are feared and adored, and above all how not to displease them.

Yet the gods of Greece and Rome cared less for the current morality than those of Persia, India, and Judæa. They were not the authors of the moral law; they were its guardians. Certain crimes were chiefly regarded as direct offences against the deities, and it was in that light they were expiated. Mommsen affirms that, at least in the primitive ages of antiquity, capital sentences were regarded as the effect of the malediction of offended gods. Stealing fruit by night, for example, was to commit a theft on Ceres, etc.

The great reward after death consisted in conserving an interest in the life of posterity, in being able to protect and assist them. It was this terrestrial life, above all, about which the practical good sense of the ancients was solicitous. In the belief of Hesiod the shades of the men of the Golden Age had become good genii, wandering over the earth, and dispensing riches and repressing injustice; while the spirits of the wicked were tormented, and tormented men, in the form of spectres and lemures. These beliefs were generally prevalent, but there were no obligatory dogmas, nor was there any official preaching.

There was no theocratic code; nothing analogous to the amazing and often ferocious despotism of the great Asiatic religions; above all, no asceticism, and no doctrine of renunciation, except that which was preached by the Stoics, and which Christianity assimilated with such alacrity.

In sum, the morality of Greece and Rome, with its qualities and its defects, was laic and, above all, civil. Christianity came, and completely changed the direction of ethics. From that time this earthly life was considered as a pilgrimage, an exile; the heavenly Jerusalem was the destination. To arrive thither it was necessary to obey the orders that were reputed divine, whatever might be the result in this world. The great duty was to love and obey God; the great rock of danger was sin; and this, according to St. Augustine, could only be avoided, if it pleased the divinity, by the assistance of grace.

For the old philosophers death was a hard necessity, the effect of a law; for the Catholics it became a consequence of sin and an object of terror; for, after it, the soul had a thousand chances of being engulfed in the billows of infernal fire. Reprobates would burn there eternally, and, according to St. Gregory, the spectacle of their tortures would rejoice the elect.

This terror of infernal torment was, as we know, the great means by which Christianity inculcated its morality. None is more efficacious with believers, but it is certainly not the noblest.

It has been observed with reason that the antique virtues were masculine; they were courage, magnanimity, and, above all, patriotism. The whole influence of Christianity tended, on the contrary, to effeminate the character in addressing itself no longer to reason, but to emotion, in glorifying humility, meekness, love of God, continence, and faith. Faith above all; blind faith became the first of duties; *Credo quia absurdum.*

The ancient ideal was chiefly civil and patriotic; the

Christian ideal was ascetic. For the sectary of Jesus the earthly country was little, and the Christian conscripts sometimes refused military service, even at the cost of martyrdom.

Abstinence, renunciation, and maceration were *par excellence* the means of attaining to sanctity. One should, if possible, be a monk; at the very least conform his life to the monastic ideal, lead a mechanical existence, and not think.....The body was profoundly despised and neglected, and dirtiness became agreeable to God. St. Anthony never washed his feet; St. Ammon never saw himself naked; Sylvia, a beautiful virgin of sixteen, never washed more than her fingers; Paula and Melania, whose consciences were directed by St. Jerome, believed that "baths were defiling."

The ascetic detachment of the Hindoos was imitated, and far surpassed. St. Melania, having lost her husband and her two sons, knelt down and thanked the Lord that she could henceforth serve him more fully. It was good to forget one's mother, and to abandon one's children in order to consecrate one's self to the ascetic life. Evagrius burnt the letters of his parents from whom he had been long absent. St. Gregory relates that a young monk, being unable to repress his filial affection, went secretly by night to visit his parents, and God punished him with sudden death.

But the virtue of virtues was chastity. All that related to the union of the sexes was regarded as horrible. Woman was the great enemy; she should blush for her sex, for her beauty, and for her apparel. Marriage was only tolerated. "It is better to marry than to burn," said St. Paul. St. Jerome, for his part, saw but one good thing in marriage; it produced virgins.....By the unanimous testimony of Fathers and Councils all sexual intercourse outside marriage was criminal. From the moment Christianity triumphed under Constantine, the Mosaic penalties against sexual offences were adopted and aggravated; adultery became a capital crime, and sodomists were drowned, decapitated, burnt, or ingeniously tortured.

The Christian desire for the extinction of the human species should have maintained suicide in honor, as it had been in antiquity. But in the eyes of the Christians it was murder. It killed the soul. Yet one form of suicide was ardently sought by the fanatics—namely, martyrdom..... Nevertheless, with respect to suicide, Christianity wrought a kind of revolution, both moral and, indeed, beneficent. It was the same with respect to abortion and infanticide. To which antiquity attached no great importance. Christianity, on the contrary, condemned and repressed them, not through humanity, but because the death of the unbaptized fœtus or child entailed the terrible consequence of eternal damnation.

Christianity did some good also in relation to slavery. Not that its doctrine condemned slavery in itself. On the contrary, St. Paul advised Christian slaves to be the most docile; he even declared that the slave was the only property the Christians might keep, and taxed with vanity and stupidity those who thought otherwise. Indeed, in Europe the ecclesiastics were the last possessors of slaves. In the Christian doctrine equality was not for this world, and the servile virtues were glorified; yet the clergy carried on an active propaganda in favor of the enfranchisement of slaves.....Charity was also enjoyed as producing, above all, if displayed to monks, abundant spiritual benefits..... Christianity also opposed the bloody sports of the amphitheatre. In 329, after the Council of Nice, an edict of Constantine condemned the games of the circus, and the last combat of gladiators took place at Rome in 404.

These are real services; but, to say nothing of its anti-human and anti-social doctrines, they should not make us forget the frightful tyranny with which the religion of Jesus has burdened both spirit and body. The ancient world—above all, the Roman Empire, with its incongruous Pantheon—practised religious toleration until the day when Christianity came to sap the political constitution itself. The Christians had then their martyrs, and those martyrs were worthy of admiration. Nothing is finer than self-sacrifice for what is believed to be the truth. But the persecuted were scarcely in power before they surpassed their persecutors in cruelty. The rites of Pagan worship became high treason, which the Theodosian code unhesitatingly visited with capital punishment; the temples, even the finest, were demolished, and the idols destroyed. The Church haughtily arrogated the right of persecution, and

used it largely from Constantine and Theodosius to the threshold of contemporary history.....

Here I end my exposition. As usual, I have let the facts speak for themselves. They are eloquent, and tell us loudly enough the good and the evil that religions have done to morality. Doubtless they have contributed to tame man's evil passions, by adding to the curb of laws that of religious cruelty; but their special share consists above all, as we are coming to see, in a deviation of the moral sense. Religious morality does not test the value of actions according to their social utility, but according to priestly fancy or the apprehension of a beyond. In its eyes, to eat forbidden food is as grave, if not more so, as to commit a murder; asceticism is, in certain religions, the supreme virtue. Lastly, when morality becomes divine, not only is it regarded as immutable and beyond improvement, but a right is claimed to impose it, if necessary, by fire and sword.

In this last respect the palm belongs beyond question to Christianity. Without doubt she has had her martyrs, but she has made many more; glorifying her own, vilifying others, and thus habituating men to the idea that they should be ready to give their life for her faith. The teaching has its value, but not that of the seas of blood it has cost.....To resume, what arises above all from our inquiry is that we should not ask religious conceptions to regulate conduct. Amongst the gods of the great religions those of Epicurus have alone been wise. Their great business was to relish their nectar; they ignored the human animalculæ. But the other gods have been pesterers and despots; they have meddled at random with our affairs; and in the interest of social progress we should remind them that their kingdom is not of this world, and exclude them from it.

PREHISTORIC PEEPS.

III.—THE ORIGINAL DE ROUGEMONT.

CAIN is a curious commentary on the teachings of the estimable folk who tell us that there can be no truly great man who does not practise the virtues of the domestic circle, for he was not only great, but the greatest of his time. Yet there never lived one with less principle. Not a scintilla was in his composition. Not a trace can be found from his boyhood to his death. The major premises of morality were to him simply non-existent.

Cain's was, indeed, an extraordinary life, and to see it thoroughly we must examine the lion's lair in which he was dragged up. The wonder is, not that he became a ferocious man, but that he did not develop into a human panther.

Cain was *the first baby*. Both of his parents, who were the original progenitors of mankind, commenced their careers at full age. He was the first of the countless millions of the human race who started life as a bundle of flesh, one end somewhat resembling a fourpenny meat pudding. Babies do not differ much in temper, size, or disposition. Consequently we know that the infant Cain was violent, about the size of a pillow, and covetous. I have seen a baby with a corkscrew, a pair of tongs, a hand bell, and a boot brush, and not even the sight of Detective Sweeney could have induced it to part with any of these.

Whilst the ex-gardener was out hunting, Eve used to amuse herself with feeding little Cain. If she had lived in our own day and moved in the upper circles, she would have passed the hours by putting on tight dresses, haunting drapers' shops, and learnt her little one's name, if she found time after visiting her numerous friends.

Little Cain amused himself by playing horses with Adam's bow and arrow, by dragging his pa's garden tools from one place to another. A good deal of his time he spent on the door-mat, making unpleasant sounds like a railway whistle with a cold in its head.

Adam did not carry the baby about, because he said it was dangerous and would bite. It was a single man who said that little children are the odor of violets in the garden of life.

For very many centuries Cain has been execrated as one of the vilest of the human race. The whole vocabulary of ecclesiastical Billingsgate has been poured on his devoted head, until it is now taken for granted that nothing can possibly be said in his favor.

Yet he was undeniably a very clever man. After that

unfortunate case of assault and battery on his brother Abel, which led to his collision with the police, his name suddenly became Walker. It is a curious coincidence that while the first row took place over an apple—or was it a banana?—the second disturbance was in connection with some vegetables, the names of which are unfortunately not mentioned. Cain's subsequent career merits our close attention. The astounding events connected with his name prove conclusively that he was a lovely liar, or else a great explorer. In either case he deserves something more than the brief obituary notice of Mr. Moses. Had he lived in our own time, his name would be everywhere, his announcements on every wall and in every journal. His portrait would be in every shop window and on every table. Even the editor of the *Chronicle*, wishing to increase the circulation of his paper, might have gone for him with a coke-hammer.

Unlike De Rougemont, Cain did not grow corn in a compost of blood and sand, nor did he live on a sandspit for a year or so. Neither did he start a distillery with an old kettle, nor save a schooner from complete wreck with a single oar. Cain did not start with a good, healthy lie, just feed it up more and more, till one day the buttons burst, so to speak. At least, I do not hold Cain responsible, whatever Mr. Fitzgerald Moses may have done in the Munchausen line.

I have already referred to Cain's trouble with the authorities. The policeman who arrested him was none other than Mr. J. Hovah, his father's old employer, now evidently in reduced circumstances. There were no prisons, so this prehistoric Sweeney branded Cain on the forehead. Surely, if any man needed a front of brass, it was Cain. Moreover, he must have had a forehead like Bill Shakespeare's to have allowed the inscription, "J. Hovah X his mark" (the first sign of the Cross), being displayed properly.

Cain became a traveller, and eastward of "the Garden" (not Covent Garden, but his pa's old place of business) he discovered the Land of Nod. So far, nothing out of the way had occurred. Moses has the audacity to say right here that Cain took unto himself a wife. This alleged fact is hard of digestion. Cain and his pa and ma comprised the total population. The coroner had sat on Abel (deceased), and his parents had drawn his club money. This exhausted the human beings, so what in thunder did he fall in love with? Presumably one of the primates (I don't mean archbishops), some fair ape, some sprightly chimpanzee, some lovely baboon, some bewitching orang-outang, some fascinating gorilla. Maybe it was one or the other, but which we shall never find out until that Great Day when all hearts shall be opened and all secrets known. Meanwhile we must possess our souls in patience.

Cain "buildd a city." Wonderfully gifted man! Must have made use of his wife's relations, otherwise that city was a one-horse show! Beside such a feat as this, the achievements of De Rougemont pale into insignificance. Adam heard of this part of his son's life in the columns of the *Garden of Eden Gazette*, under the heading of "Fashionable Marriage": "The marriage took place yesterday afternoon, at the City of Nod Cathedral, of Fitzroy Yellowplush Cain, only son of Charles James Adam, Esq., of the Garden of Eden, and the Hon. Gladys Blanche Orang-Outang, eldest daughter of Baron Orang-Outang, of this city. There were eight bridesmaids, and the service was choral. The bride wore a smile of great archness, and her fig-leaf apron was ornamented with orange blossoms. The reception held by Lady Orang-Outang at the family town residence was largely attended."

The broken-hearted father never recovered. Paralysis supervened, and death followed in a few days. When Cain reached home his father was no more. In the neighboring cemetery was a very fine tombstone, with the following inscription:—

In Loving Memory of
ADAM,
for a few centuries a
gardener in the employ of
Messrs. J. Hovah, Son, and Co.,
who departed this life
Aged 930 years.

"Those whom the gods love die young."

Eve did not press Mr. and Mrs. Cain and family to stay long. The half-caste brats were too much for the old lady. As she told a neighbor whilst leaning over the fence, she had had enough of "all Cain's Christians."

MIMNERMUS.

ACID DROPS.

How religion makes humbugs of men! When the American fleet knocked the Spanish fleet to pieces off Santiago, and hundreds of Spaniards were shot to death or roasted alive in their ships, a Yankee man of God traced the Almighty's hand in what he was pleased to call "a bloodless victory." Now we have President McKinley himself, who is, we believe, a Methodist, talking in a similar fashion. "The faith of a Christian nation," he said at Cedar Rapids, "recognises the hand of Almighty God in the ordeal we have passed through. The divine favor seemed manifest everywhere." President McKinley forgets that Spain is a Christian nation too, and far more so than the United States, whose Constitution does not recognise any religious establishment. He also forgets that it was a comparatively easy job to lick the Spaniards, and that it would have taken a great deal more of the hand of Almighty God to enable America to lick a first-class naval power.

Is it not really a very poor compliment to the United States, with its seventy millions of people, and its vast resources, that it wasn't quite sure of licking poor Spain without supernatural assistance? When it is put in that way, every American will regard the compliment as an insult. We have the highest respect and affection for our American cousins, and we don't like to see them belittled by their own pious politicians.

The Austrian Government has introduced a Bill for the abolition of all taxes on clerical funds. This will mean a present of half a million florins (£50,000) a year to the bishops, convents, and livings. What a hungry lot these clericals are. "Give, give, give!" is their constant cry, and they can never have enough.

The Dundee Presbytery of the Church of Scotland has declined, by seventeen votes to seven, to pass a motion recording satisfaction with the Czar's peace manifesto. One man of God argued that the promotion of peace was outside the clergy's province, while another declared that the conscription was wanted rather than disarmament. No doubt he felt safe in recommending this. As a sky-pilot, he expects to stop at home while the fighting is on, to show the women and children the way to heaven.

Dr. Felkin, an English missionary in Uganda, thinks there will be a good field for white soul-savers in the new territory opened up by General Kitchener. "But I do hope," he says, "that the representatives of different religions will be kept to different districts." Such is the harmony and charity prevailing amongst the various Christian sects! They must be kept apart from each other, or the natives will be disgusted at their discord, and decline to be converted.

Rev. Alexander Young, a parish minister in Aberdeenshire, is a very peppery individual. He took a gun and fired at a young man who came courting his servant. Fortunately he only shot the amorous swain in the leg; and, instead of being tried for manslaughter, the irascible man of God was only fined £4, or fifteen days' imprisonment in default.

There's life in the old boy yet. The vicar of Nafferton, near Dullfield—the Rev. James Davidson—aged eighty-four, has just got married. His bride is a widow of seventy-nine summers, "possessing ample means." Perhaps that explains the phenomenon.

"Owe no man anything," the Bible says; but the Rev. Marmaduke Hare, of the Rectory, Bow, got in debt to the famous and rapacious money-lender, Mr. Isaac Gordon. He is now in the bankruptcy court. Perhaps the "Marmaduke" was the cause of the mischief. A man with a name like that is heavily handicapped. How could a "Marmaduke" ride in a penny 'bus and eat fried fish for supper?

William Wilson, aged 52, late of 129 High-road, Leytonstone, and now of heaven or somewhere, attended divine service at St. Alban's Mission Church. After the service a Bible class was held, during which he fell from his seat and expired. Such an occurrence at a Secular meeting would be reckoned a "judgment." Happening at a Christian meeting, it has no significance.

Mohammedans do as Christians used to do: they take all that comes as the will of God. According to a Bombay telegram, the Mohammedans at Trichinopoly have burnt down the plague camp, as they object to these foreign preventive measures.

Reviewing Dr. W. T. Davison's new book on *The Christian Interpretation of Life*, the *Daily News* remarks that "Dr. Davison shrinks, as most men do in the present day, from

admitting the possibility that evil and suffering shall be eternal." Most men, that is to say, are more humane than Jesus Christ was when he talked of the worm which never dieth and the fire which is never quenched.

There is plenty of rain in the world, but "Providence" distributes it badly. A water famine is threatened in South Lancashire, while an unprecedented deluge occurs in county Kerry, inundating the county for miles and wrecking the railway. Couldn't the clergy get this matter adjusted? It would be much more useful than quarrelling over Ritualism.

"A Business Man," who doesn't seem over busy, writes to the *Rock* about the drought. He says there is "very little acknowledgment of God in the literature of the day," and that the Almighty has perhaps kept back the rain to remind us of our religious duties. What should be done is this: the Bishops of "the afflicted dioceses," which presumably contain the most negligent sinners, should publicly call upon the people to pray for rain, and then God might send it. Well, it has come already; so this gentleman's "tip" may stand over till the next dry season.

The Canadian General Methodist Conference has rejected a motion to admit women to church courts and enable them to hold offices. Religion is mostly based upon women's soft hearts and soft heads, but the men run it for all it is worth. When it comes to profit and distinction man claims a monopoly, and tells woman to go on collecting subscriptions and working slippers.

The Congregational Union, at its recent Congress, passed a resolution that all elementary schools receiving assistance from public funds should be put under efficient local control, and that teachers should be appointed without reference to Church or creed. We quite agree with this, but the Congregationalists do not mean it. They only mean that Churchmen should have no advantage over Dissenters. They are quite satisfied that Churchmen and Dissenters should have an advantage over Secularists, Atheists, Agnostics, Jews, and all other non-Christians. One speaker complained that in twelve thousand schools in this country Nonconformist teachers had no hope of becoming the headmaster. Well, there are many more thousands of schools in which no Freethought teacher can hope to occupy that position. If he honestly objects to teaching Christianity from the Bible, he may as well abandon the scholastic profession at once, for he has no chance whatever of preferment.

Mr. Lloyd George, the Welsh parliamentary leader, addressing a large meeting of "young people" in connection with the Congregational Congress, declared that the only remedy for the ecclesiastical troubles was "perfect religious equality." We quite agree with him. The State Church should be disestablished. But that will not bring about perfect religious equality. To do this religion must be banished from parliament, from the courts of law, and from the public schools. We hope Mr. Lloyd George is prepared for this. If not, he is not prepared for perfect religious equality.

The Bishop of Chester, distributing the prizes to the boys on the reformatory ship *Akbar*, took occasion to celebrate the virtues of flogging—not for officers, of course, but for common sailors. "Perhaps they would forgive him," he said, "if he remarked that he was glad to see that corporal punishment was not entirely abolished on that ship. He believed it would be a dark day for education when corporal punishment was completely banished, although he knew it was of rare occurrence. He said this from a deep conviction, and he rejoiced to know that there was an instrument known as the birch to be found on the ship, although it was very rarely used." How pathetic are those expressions—"rare occurrence" and "very rarely used"! Sadness creeps over the episcopal mind at the thought that flogging is so infrequent. Still he is consoled by reflecting that it has not disappeared altogether, and while there is birch there is hope.

The Rev. Theodore N. Flintoff, rector of Doverdale, Droitwich, goes one better than the Bishop of Chester. Indeed, he plays right up to the first half of his surname. Writing to the *School Guardian*, he protests against the Act of 1893 "which enables juvenile offenders to be sent to a reformatory without previous imprisonment." "The proper place for young criminals," he says, "is the prison." Even those that are imprisoned get "very foolish and inadequate sentences." The reverend gentleman wants it laid on thick. Tenderness to young offenders is folly. What they want is plenty of severity. The Bishop of Chester would give them a flogging, and Parson Flintoff would give them a strong dose of imprisonment. And such men as these are spiritual guides of the English people!

An advertiser in the *Surrey Comet*—possibly a man,

probably a woman, or even a clergyman—wants one or two board-lodgers, to live "a life of faith and worship," and help pay the rent. "Earnest profession of Christian creed" is "essential." And so, we dare say, is a weekly settlement.

The editor of the *South London Mail* should be a proud man. Most of the persons who write against Secularism in his paper hail from North London. The Surrey side remains calm under his incitations, with the exception of the holy young Hooligans who like a sensational Sunday afternoon, and fancy (quite mistakenly) that they can now get it on Peckham Rye at the expense of "the infidels." Yes, it is North London that is moved; or rather, to be accurate, that part of North London which is represented by a little gang of "anti-infidels" who have long been ignominiously beaten at their game of disturbing Freethought meetings. In their own locality they are regarded as beneath contempt, and we do not intend to notice their illiterate compositions—furnished up by friendly hands—which find shelter in the hospitable columns of the *South London Mail*. On the top of these, however, comes a real live minister, a duly certificated man of God. We refer to the Rev. Z. B. Woffendale. From the salubrious region of Dartmouth Park, where the air is so much sweeter than that of Somers Town (where his church is), the noble Woffendale sends his apostolic benediction to the editor of the *Mail*, who prints it in leaded type, with a full consciousness of its tremendous value.

The noble Woffendale first congratulates the *Mail* on its splendid "victory" over the Secularists. But he does not condescend to say in what the victory consists. The *Mail* called on the mob, and then on the County Council, to stop the Freethought meetings on Peckham Rye. Disorder and violence have been resorted to, but the meetings have been held every Sunday in spite of all and every kind of opposition. Where then does the "victory" come in? Is it not rather on the side of the Secularists?

Mr. Foote is referred to as remaining "prudently in the rear," but this is only the noble Woffendale's harmless little joke, which imposes on nobody. Mr. Foote went to Peckham Rye and spoke there when the *Mail* began its attacks, and he will go there again whenever his presence is necessary. Keeping in the rear was never one of Mr. Foote's failings. It seems to be one of Mr. Woffendale's. For years he has been gasing about his readiness to meet Mr. Foote in public debate, and every time he has been cornered on the subject he has covered himself with trumpery excuses. Now he puts himself outside the pale of discussion, for he deliberately calls upon the police to throw his opponents into prison. The man who does that is a skunk. He is also an impostor, for he poses all the time as a lover of "liberty, free speech, and open controversy"—whereas he is a professional religionist who wants his business protected by the suppression of his rivals. "Clear them away," is what he substantially says, "and let me have the crowd to myself."

Nothing could be worse, on the part of any sort of a public man, than the jargon in which the noble Woffendale indulges. "Every person," he says, "has a right to rational thought, to utter decent speech, to print moral literature, and to engage in any proper progressive inquiry." What is rational, decent, moral, and proper is to be decided, of course, by the noble Woffendale and his friends. Anyhow, no person has a right to propagate "execrable and destructive opinions." But who is to decide what is execrable and destructive? Why the noble Woffendale, of course. He knows, he knows!

What is a destructive opinion? Why, an opinion that destroys the noble Woffendale's opinion. That is what he really means. All the rest is hypocritical vorbiage.

We do not suppose the police, or the County Council, or any other "authority," will spring forward to do this bigot's dirty work. The disreputable old law to which he appeals gives him the right, if he has the courage, to prosecute any assailant of Christianity he chooses to single out for "blasphemy." Let him do his dirty work himself.

This sweet apostle of the religion of charity which thinketh no evil tells an infamous lie about the late Mr. S. P. Putnam and Miss May Collins. It is so filthy, as well as false, that we will not stain our pages with it. Then he says that "in this country, a few months ago, a Secularist secretary was convicted and sent to prison for horrible practices." Now the case referred to happened years ago, not months ago; the culprit was not at the time a Secularist secretary; and his "horrible practices" consisted in the seduction of his wife's sister. And because of that one black sheep the noble Woffendale clamors for the suppression of Secularism. He does not stop to think what would become of Christianity on the same method of procedure. It has produced more than one black sheep. Its delinquents number thousands. Does the noble Woffendale, does the editor of the *Mail*, want a list of Christian ministers—yes,

Christian ministers—who have been sent to prison of late years for abominable offences? If he does, we are ready to oblige him. And when he has dealt with it there will be plenty of time left to talk about “the rattlesnakes of infidelity.”

Before leaving the noble Woffendale we may remark that he need not go so wide afield for persons who have been convicted and sent to prison. He could easily find some nearer home—and they might not be Secularists.

In August last the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children received no fewer than 2,283 complaints, of which 1,690 were attributed to neglect and starvation, and 384 to ill-treatment and assault. As we are the greatest gamblers and the hardest drinkers in the world, so also we have the horrid distinction of being the most brutal nation towards our offspring. And this in spite of the fact that we pay the Established Church some £10,000,000 a year to look after the morals of the people.—*Reynolds's*.

There must be a lot of piety and stupidity to the square yard in St. Pancras, where the ratepayers have just decided, by a majority of 8,278 to 4,849, not to have a Free Public Library. There were actually no less than 4,058 spoilt papers. Evidently the parish wants a Free Library or something very badly.

The Topeka (Kansas) Federation of Women's Clubs has excluded the “Woman's Bible” from its library on the ground that it is “written in a flippant, coarse, and inelegant style,” and attacks what they all regard as sacred. Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who has largely contributed to the boycotted book, hits out at the lady bigots in the following fashion: “The commentators have done the best they could, considering the character of the text. Many passages relating to woman in the Pentateuch were found too coarse and obscene even for mention, and if those referred to in the ‘Woman's Bible’ are coarse and inelegant, the text is responsible; also, if the ‘Woman's Bible’ is to be abolished from the woman's library and schools of Topeka, the Jewish mythology should go also. I recommend these elegant, fastidious bigots to read the thirty-first chapter of Numbers to see the fate of the women and the child-women of the Midianites.”

Even the *Christian World*, which is generally fair, condescends to refer to the “Woman's Bible” as the production of “a group of loose-thinking, rather than free-thinking, women.” Our contemporary might have been more choice in selecting its words of condemnation. “Loose” is a very awkward word to use in connection with a group of women. It is likely to suggest to many readers what the *Christian World* does not, and could not, mean.

This story is told (the New York *Truthseeker* says) about a Maine man who recently experienced religion, and who now goes about the State preaching for the reformation of sinners. The other day he was announced to deliver a sermon in a school-house in the town of Wayne, the home of the gun-making Maxims. When he got to the school-house there was only one man in the building. After waiting a while for the crowd to appear, the evangelist declared to the audience of one that he should go on and preach just the same as if the room were crowded. So he did preach for about an hour and a half, and at the close he asked the lone listener to lead in prayer. The man looked puzzled, and then, fishing out a little slate, wrote: “I am deaf and dumb, and haven't heard a damned word you said.”

Egypt is threatened with a new plague in the form of a Prayer Union, which is being organised by a young lady at Wimbledon. Why doesn't she start a Prayer Union—if there is any good in it—nearer home? There are some horrible slums, for instance, almost within the shadow of Westminster Abbey, where she might make a start. But working there is not so romantic as converting the heathen abroad. Besides, it doesn't lend itself to pleasant trips, all for the glory of God.

“Someone had blundered,” says Tennyson of the order which sent the devoted Light Brigade against the belching Russian guns. That was a tragic mistake. But a still more tragic mistake was made by the framers of the new Irish Local Government Act, which fixed January 15 as the date of the first elections. Now, that date is a Sunday, and if the elections took place then the whole nation would be involved in the guilt of Sabbath-breaking, and Sabbath-breaking, as the clergy assure us, leads straight to hell. It is said that this terrible catastrophe will be averted by an order from the Privy Council, authorising the holding of the elections on January 16. Good! But it was a narrow escape.

According to the Newcastle *Evening Chronicle*, the Rev. A. B. Moleyns, rector of Chester-le-Street, has been warning England against the evils of education, which we have no

doubt he sincerely deploras. “The people,” the reverend gentleman said, “were being very much over-educated—educated, indeed, above their rank, and more than their intellect could carry. That, together with the lack of religious instruction, was educating a generation of atheists, and very clever atheists.” Ay, there's the rub! The wretches are *clever*—clever enough to see through parsons and all the tricks of their trade.

“I'll never trust parsons alone,” says Dr. John Clifford; “I like to see the laymen close by them.” Probably the parsons prefer the contiguity of the laywomen.

M. Yves Guyot, the French publicist, has addressed the Maccabean Club in London on the Dreyfus case. A long report of his speech appeared in the *Daily News*, and the following extract will interest many of our readers: “The part taken by Anti-Semitism in this affair is a terrible one. But remember clearly that it is the revenge of the Jesuits for the enlightened march of the Freethinkers, the Jews, and the Protestants—it is the Revenge for the 16th of May. Ever since 1886 I have become absolutely convinced of their malignant activity in every trouble, in every crisis, in France. A Jesuit organisation, very elaborate, exists in our Army and our Navy, powerful and subtle in its methods of persecuting those who are not of it. Its program is well known, it hopes by its persecutions to hound Jews out of the army and equally to exclude Protestants, and when the army is entirely of its own color, to capture it, and, with and through it, France. The plan is infantile, but so it is.”

Christians are Jew-hunting in East Galicia. One Jew's house was set on fire, and he and his wife and two young children were burnt in the flames. The Christian mob drove them back when they tried to escape, and jeered at their agony. Another Jew was thrown out of a window and killed on the spot. Some were stoned or beaten to death. Even women and children took part in the massacre. Their priests had taught them that all Jews were devils.

Stands Scotland where it did? We hardly think so. It seems drifting away towards paganism. At a meeting of the Established Synod of Glasgow and Ayr a Sabbath Observance report was agreed to, in which the statement occurred that “It was hopeless to expect that men would be induced to spend the whole day in public and private exercises of worship.” What a change from the old days, when pulpits were occupied for many hours with relays of preachers, and godly men went prying into every house in the parish to see that nobody shirked the duty of listening to the sermons—sermons something like God's mercy, which endureth for ever. The Synod agreed that even Scotsmen will have a little relaxation on the Lord's Day, although it deplored the increased running of cars and omnibuses, and even the opening of shops, where children buy unholy toffee, and men buy milk to mix with their pocket-pistols of whiskey.

Perhaps the finest compliment ever paid to woman was coined by Richard Steele. Referring to a certain lady—he meant his own wife, the “Dear Prue” of all those short notes of his—he said that “To love her was a liberal education.” Dick got drunk too often, he liked good living too well, he lost money at cards, he was a sad sinner in various ways—but *he said that*. And only a man with an essentially fine nature could have said it. It is simply perfect.

“I can go further,” the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes alleges to an interviewer, “and say of my wife that she has been a means of grace to me.” Going further is not always a real progress. Mr. Price Hughes hasn't improved on Richard Steele. He has simply changed a splendid compliment into a piece of cant.

Bournemouth was in darkness on Sunday evening through a failure in the gas supply. Divine worship had to be terminated in the churches. One or two preachers tried to go on in the obscurity, but their congregations skeddaddled. A somewhat similar accident happened on a much smaller scale at Newark. The gas was lowered, as usual, at St. Leonard's Church, during the sermon, and when it had to be raised it was accidentally turned out. When the mistake was remedied, and the light restored, the minister gave out the hymn, which happened to be “Hail, gladdening light!” There must have been many broad faces in that congregation.

Parson (to youth riding on Sunday)—“Young man, do you know that you are following the path that leads to perdition?” Bicyclist—“That may be; but it's the only decent bicycle path in this neighborhood.”—*Philadelphia North American*.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, October 23, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, at 7.30, "Emperor William at Jerusalem."

October 30, Athenæum Hall.

November 6, Manchester.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—November 6, Wigan; 20, Athenæum Hall, London; 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.

WILL our American exchanges please note that our address is, and long has been, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.? Some of them still direct to an old address of ours, and the post office naturally kicks against constant re-addressing.

W. P. BALL.—Thanks once more for your weekly batch of cuttings, always welcome and useful.

J. G. CROZIER.—See acknowledgments. Thanks. Yes, Mr. Foote is in very good health.

T. ROBERTSON.—See "Acid Drops."

J. FISH (Chester) writes: "I am sure the response to your appeal would be greater if each Branch secretary would only make it his business to see the members and friends. There must be hundreds who would give if they were only asked to personally, who would never think of writing for the sake of sending a shilling—perhaps forgetting that each shilling is something towards a pound. I sincerely trust you will get £500. Where are the wealthy Secularists? I have not seen any large donations. Perhaps they will send at the last. I hope so."

J. N. LEEDS.—Cuttings always welcome.

W. COX (Liverpool) sends three fresh names for membership in the Secular Society, Limited:—J. Hammond, R. Towers, and P. Torr.

W. H. MORRISH.—Glad to hear from a veteran like yourself, and pleased to know you hope our appeal "will get a liberal response." Thanks for your good wishes. We have conveyed your remembrance to the Wattses.

J. PARTRIDGE.—Our thanks to the Birmingham friends. See acknowledgments.

"JIM" writes from Dundee: "I often hear Freethinkers complaining of persecution. If they only realised that security lies in the strength of numbers, I am sure you would get all you require by the end of the month."

A. G. LEVETT.—We have made only one comment. See "Acid Drops." Thanks.

J. R. MAAGAARD.—We advise you to investigate that "young Atheist." He may turn out to have the ancient and fish-like smell of orthodoxy in his composition. He must be a very romantic liar, anyhow.

JAMES HOOPER (Devonport) says that he and his wife enjoy reading the *Freethinker* weekly, and would be very sorry to lose that pleasure.

W. BRADBURN.—We had already written on the subject. Thanks all the same.

A. B. MOSS.—Thanks for the paper. See paragraphs.

J. R. WHITELL.—The complete edition of James Thomson's poems is published by B. Dobell, Charing Cross-road, London, W.C., in two volumes at 12s. Twenty-five per cent. discount brings the cash price to 9s.

W. JARVIS.—Westermarck's *History of Human Marriage*, published by Macmillan, with a Preface by Dr. Alfred R. Wallace, is perhaps the best repository of information on this complicated and fascinating subject. McLennan's studies are published in several expensive volumes. They are very valuable.

JAMES LONDON.—There are too many churches already, are there not? Why add to the number by setting up an "Atheist Church"? No doubt there is something respectable in the name, and it might catch a certain class of people; but are they the sort we really want? Pleased to hear you admired Mr. Percy Ward's lecture. We like to encourage the young lecturers, and to see them encouraged. We shall have to drop off some day, and the better and more numerous the lecturers we leave behind are, the more comfortably we shall die.

J. UNSWORTH.—Glad to hear you intend to join the Secular Society, Limited.

E. BATER, one of the N. S. S. vice-presidents, and a loyal hard-worker for the cause, joins the Secular Society, Limited.

A. RUSHTON.—Mr. Foote takes all possible care of himself. Work hard he must, and sometimes too hard; but one thing helps him still, as it always did—he is able to throw all worries and preoccupations off his mind when he finds a recreative hour, or when he lies down to sleep. A late supper may keep him awake; trouble, never. He slept like a top the night (for instance) before he stood in the Old Bailey dock. Probably this is the result of a good constitution, fortified by no end of exercise and fresh air in youth.

J. C. JORDAN.—Thanks for your kind letter. Glad to know you so highly appreciate the work of the *Freethinker* against superstition.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Progressive Thinker—Torch of Reason—Two Worlds—Crescent—Birmingham Daily Mail—Ethical World—Boston Investigator—Weekly Star—People's Newspaper—South

London Mail—Yarmouth Mercury—Open Court—Freethought Magazine—Liberator—Public Opinion—Sydney Bulletin—Isle of Man Times—Secular Thought—Der Arme Teufel.

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.

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 *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.

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.

I DO not want to worry my readers, but many of them have overlooked the fact that I am making a special appeal this month on behalf of "The *Freethinker* Circulation Fund." A journal like this really ought to have capital behind it. I have often been surprised that some wealthy Freethinker did not come along and put one or two thousand pounds into the enterprise. He would certainly get a good return on his investment, and do me and the party a benefit at the same time. However, in the absence of this capitalist, I have to do the best I can. It is something—all who have tried it have found that—to make a Freethought paper pay its way. I have done that, and I now want to push the circulation by judicious advertising, which will introduce the *Freethinker* to many potential subscribers, who are at present scarcely aware of its existence. This advertising would be through Liberal, Radical, and Socialist newspapers, and even one or two Christian journals, if they do not object; through special posters and handbills, and an extensive placarding of the weekly contents sheet; and through visits to newsagents who might give the *Freethinker* a chance with their customers, if it were properly brought before their notice. That is what I want to do. Will my friends enable me to do it? A thousand of them could easily send me something if they would.

G. W. FOOTE.

SUGAR PLUMS.

A LARGE audience assembled at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "Confession in the Church." Mr. Victor Roger occupied the chair, and said they were all glad to see "the President" lecturing in London again. Mr. Foote speaks at the same hall again this evening (Oct. 23), taking for his subject "Emperor William at Jerusalem"—which at least gives room for a very interesting address. Freethinkers should try to bring some of their more orthodox friends along to this lecture.

The *Secular Almanack* for 1899, issued under the auspices of the National Secular Society, is in the printer's hands, and will be published shortly—probably the first week in November. Branch secretaries who have not already forwarded particulars for insertion, in response to Miss Vance's circular, are requested to do so as quickly as possible. Mr. Wheeler is no longer here to look after the Almanack, as he used to do, and the editorial labor at present falls entirely upon Mr. Foote.

Special articles have been written for the Almanack by Messrs. Foote, Watts, Cohen, Gould, Moss, and Heaford. The Calendar has been revised and added to, and other improvements have been attempted.

We are always glad to receive the *Liberator*, edited by our old friend Joseph Symes at Melbourne. We hope it is doing better than it was some time ago during the hard times. In the latest number to hand Mr. Symes refers to the smashing of the Khalifa, and says: "We have got the empire, and must keep it." He hopes there will be no concessions to France in East Africa; at the same time he wishes that the Latin nations could unite, get rid of the

priests and their poisonous ways, and form "a healthy counterpoise to the Teutonic and other elements of Europe."

Mr. A. B. Moss lectured at Peckham Rye on Sunday, and had a good audience in spite of the downpour of rain. The holy Hooligans, who represent the *South London Mail*, were present, but their interruptions were answered with good temper, and the presence of a dozen County Council policemen helped to keep them under restraint. The season is drawing to a close, and the Secularists have not been driven from Peckham Rye. They are not easy to drive.

South Place Institute has arranged a course of free Sunday afternoon lectures on "Our Cities and their Municipalities" by competent and representative speakers, including two provincial mayors.

The *Yarmouth Mercury* prints an excellent letter from "F. F. J." on Christianity, in which a local defender of the faith is very smartly answered. There is another good letter from "A Father" on the same side, and a capital letter on Sabbatarianism by J. W. de Caux. A. H. Smith also writes well in defence of Secularism, and J. M. Headley joins gallantly in the fray. Correspondence of this kind in the newspaper does much good. We wish Freethinkers recognised the fact more widely.

Editor Green's *Freethought Magazine* for October reaches us from Chicago. The frontispiece is a portrait of the late Parker Pillsbury, abolitionist and freethinker. This is followed by William Lloyd Garrison's discourse at his funeral, which concludes thus:—"Sleep in peace, friend of the oppressed, champion of women, defender of religious freedom. All the opprobrium of the past is now transformed into the glory of the future, for you have unselfishly served mankind." Elizabeth Cady Stanton, whose outspoken heresy has so alarmed the Woman Suffragists, adds her tribute of praise. Editor Green's magazine contains other interesting items, including a letter from Colonel Ingersoll on "Holy Smoke." We hope this publication has the wide circulation it merits.

J. C. Williamson thinks that the most interesting project he ever had on foot was one which he nearly brought to a head some years ago when Henry Ward Beecher was alive. It was to import both Colonel Ingersoll and Beecher at the same time, and let them orate alternately—a night with "Colonel Bob" and the "Mistakes of Moses," followed by a night of Beecher and eloquent orthodoxy. Beecher rather liked the idea, but Ingersoll's immense practice as a lawyer did not permit of his making engagements out of America. As a matter of fact, the heterodox Colonel has not yet been heard even in England on the lecturing platform, though he has promised to come over next year.—*Sydney Bulletin*.

The United States Government has issued some interesting statistics as to the rapid advances which American women have made in all fields of employment during the last eight-and-twenty years. Since 1870 the female architects have increased from 1 to 53; the dentists from 24 to 417; the lawyers from 5 to 417; the physicians and surgeons from 527 to 6,888; and the "clergywomen" from 67 to 1,522.

The *Independent Pulpit*, edited by J. D. Shaw, at Waco, Texas, reproduces the late J. M. Wheeler's article on "Christianity and Buddhism" from our columns. We have more than once reproduced a good article from our ever-welcome contemporary.

SHILLING MONTH.

FOR THE "FREETHINKER" CIRCULATION FUND.

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

A. C. Brown, J. Proctor £1, J. Proctor, junr., 2s. 6d., J. G. Crozier 2s. 6d., W. Stewart, C. Bowman 5s., J. Smith 2s., J. Fish 2s., W. Todd, M. Roberts, D. Sutherland, A. Rushton 5s., W. H. Morrish 5s., J. H. Ridgway, W. H. Wood, T. Pitt, R. Taylor, G. Fathers, J. P., J. K. 4s., Jim 2s. 6d., J. Unsworth 2s. 6d., James Hooper 5s., Mrs. Firth 2s., H. Smith 2s., J. C. Jordan 2s.

A Jewish gentleman, the owner of a large store, had for ten years kept it heavily insured without during that time experiencing a fire. He decided that insurance did not pay, and cancelled his policy. The following day the store burned to the ground. The Jew, in despair, knelt before the ruins and cried out: "O God, strike me dead, strike me dead!" A brick coming loose from the ruins fell, striking the Jew an awful blow on the back. Amazed, as well as injured, he raised his hands towards heaven, and cried pitifully: "My God, can't you take a little joke?"

AFTER THE WAR.

As I understand it, the United States went into this war against Spain in the cause of freedom. For three years Spain had been endeavoring to conquer these people. The means employed were savage. Hundreds of thousands were starved. Yet the Cubans, with great heroism, were continuing the struggle.

In spite of their burned homes, their wasted fields, their dead comrades, the Cubans were not conquered, and still waged war. Under those circumstances, we said to Spain: "You must withdraw from the western world. The Cubans have a right to be free."

It was understood and declared at the time that we were not waging war for the sake of territory, that we were not trying to annex Cuba, but that we were moved by compassion—a compassion that became as stern as justice. I did not think at the time that there would be war. I supposed that the Spanish people had some sense, that they knew their own condition, and the condition of this Republic.

But the improbable happened, and now, after the successes we have had, the end of the war appears to be in sight, and the question arises: "What shall we do with the Spanish islands that have been taken already, or that we may take before peace comes?"

Of course we could not, without stultifying ourselves and committing the greatest of crimes, hand back Cuba to Spain. But to do that would be no more criminal, no more infamous, than to hand back the Philippines. In those islands there are from 8,000,000 to 10,000,000 of people, and they have been robbed and enslaved by Spanish officers and soldiers. Undoubtedly they were savages when first found, and undoubtedly they are worse now than when discovered—more barbarous.

They wouldn't make very good citizens of the United States; they are probably incapable of self-government; but no people can be ignorant enough to be justly robbed, or savage enough to be rightly enslaved. I think that we should keep the islands, not for our own sake, but for the sake of those people.

As far as the Philippines are concerned, I think we should try to civilise them, and to do this we should send teachers, not preachers. We should not endeavor to give them our superstition in place of Spanish superstition. They have had superstition enough. They don't need churches; they need schools. We should teach them our arts; how to cultivate the soil, how to manufacture the things they need. In other words, we should deal honestly with them, and try our best to make them a self-supporting and a self-governing people.

The eagle should spread its wings over those islands for that and no other purpose. We cannot afford to give them to other nations, or to throw fragments of them to the wild beasts of Europe. We cannot say to Russia, "You may have a part"; and to Germany, "You may have a share"; and to France, "You take something"; and so divide out these people as thieves divide plunder. That we will never do.

There is, moreover, a little sentiment mixed with this matter in my mind. Manila Bay has been filled with American glory. There was won one of our greatest triumphs, one of the greatest naval victories of the world—won by American courage and genius. We cannot allow any other nation to become the owner of the stage on which this American drama was played. I know that we can be of great assistance to the inhabitants of the Philippines. I know that we can be an unmixed blessing to them, and that is the only ambition I have in regard to those islands. I would no more think of handing them back to Spain than I would of butchering the entire population in cold blood. Spain is unfit to govern.

Spain has always been a robber. She has never made an effort to civilise a human being. The history of Spain, I think, is the darkest page in the history of the world.

At the same time I have a kind of pity for the Spanish people. I feel that they have been victims—victims of superstition. Their blood has been sucked, their energies have been wasted and misdirected, and they excite my sympathies. Of course, there are many good Spaniards, good men, good women. Cervera appears to be a civilised man, a gentleman, and I feel obliged to him for his treatment of Hobson.

The great mass of the Spaniards, however, must be exceedingly ignorant, and as passionate as they are ignorant. Their so-called leaders dare not tell them the truth about the progress of this war. They seem to be afraid to state the facts. They always commence with a lie, then change it a little, then change it a little more, and maybe at last tell the truth.

They never seem to dare to tell the truth at first, if the truth is bad. They put me in mind of the story of a man telegraphing to a wife about the condition of her husband. The first despatch was: "Your husband is well, never better." The second was: "Your husband is sick, but not very." The third was: "Your husband is much worse, but we still have hope." The fourth was: "You may as well know the truth—we buried your husband yesterday." This is about the way the Spanish people get their war news.

That is why it may be incorrect to assume that peace is coming quickly. If the Spaniards were a normal people, who acted as other folks do, we might prophesy a speedy peace; but nobody has prophetic vision enough to tell what such a people will do. In spite of all appearances, and all our successes, and of all sense, the war may drag on. But I hope not, not only for our sake, but for the sake of the Spaniards themselves.

I can't help thinking of the poor peasants who will be killed; neither can I help thinking of the poor peasants who will have to toil for many years on the melancholy fields of Spain to pay the costs of this war. I am sorry for them, and I am sorry also for the widows and orphans, and no one will be more delighted when peace comes.

The argument has been advanced in the national senate and elsewhere, that the Federal Constitution makes no provision for the holding of colonies or dependencies, such as the Philippines would be; that we can only acquire them as territories, and eventually must take them in as states, with their population of mixed and inferior races. That is hardly an effective argument.

When this country was an infant, still in its cradle, George Washington gave the child some very good advice; told him to beware of entangling alliances, to stay at home and attend to his own business. Under the circumstances, this was all very good. But the infant has been growing, and the Republic is now one of the most powerful nations in the world, and yet, from its infant days until now, good conservative people have been repeating the advice of Washington.

It was repeated again and again when we were talking about purchasing Louisiana, and many senators and congressmen became hysterical, and predicted the fall of the Republic if that was done. The same thing took place when we purchased Florida, and again when we got 1,900,000 square miles from Mexico, and still again when we bought Alaska.

These ideas about violating the Constitution and wrecking the Republic were promulgated by our great and wise statesmen on all these previous occasions; but, after all, the Constitution seems to have borne the strain. There seems to be as much liberty now as there was then, and, in fact, a great deal more. Our territories have given us no trouble, while they have greatly added to our population, and vastly increased our wealth.

Yet, when we came to talk about annexing the Hawaiian Islands, the advice of George Washington was again repeated, and the older the senator, the fonder he was of this advice. These senators had the idea that the Constitution, having nothing in favor of it, must contain something, at least in spirit, against it. Of course, our fathers had no idea of the growth of the Republic. We have, because with us it is a matter of experience.

I don't see that Alaska has imperilled any of the liberties of New York. We need not admit Alaska as a state unless it has a population entitling it to admission, and we are not bound to take in the Sandwich Islands until the people are civilized, until they are fit companions of free men and free women. It may be that a good many of our citizens will go to the Sandwich Islands, and that in a short time the people there will be ready to be admitted as a state. All this the Constitution can stand, and in it there is no danger of imperialism.

I believe in national growth. As a rule, the prosperous farmer wants to buy the land that adjoins him, and I think a prosperous nation has the ambition of growth.

It is better to expand than to shrivel; and if our Con-

stitution is too narrow to spread over the territory that we have the courage to acquire, why we can make a broader one. It is a very easy matter to make a constitution, and no human happiness, no prosperity, no progress, should be sacrificed for the sake of a piece of paper with writing on it; because there is plenty of paper, and plenty of men to do the writing, and plenty of people to say what the writing should be.

I take more interest in people than I do in constitutions. I regard constitutions as secondary; they are means to an end; but the dear, old conservative gentlemen seem to regard constitutions as ends in themselves.

I have read what ex-President Cleveland had to say on this important subject, and I am happy to say that I entirely disagree with him. So, too, I disagree with Senator Edmunds, with Mr. Bryan, with Senator Hoar, and with all the other gentlemen who wish to stop the growth of the Republic.

I want it to grow. Sometimes I have thought that there was only air enough on this hemisphere to float one flag, and in time that dream may come true.

As to the final destiny of the island possessions won from Spain, my idea is that the Philippine Islands will finally be free, protected, it may be, for a long time by the United States. I think Cuba will come to us for protection, naturally; so far as I am concerned, I want Cuba only when Cuba wants us.

I think that Porto Rico and some of those islands will belong permanently to the United States, and I believe Cuba will finally become a part of our Republic.

When the opponents of progress found that they couldn't make the American people take the back track by holding up their hands over the Constitution, they dragged in the Monroe doctrine. When we concluded not to allow Spain any longer to enslave her colonists, or the people who had been her colonists, in the new world, that was a very humane and a very wise resolve, and it was strictly in accord with the Monroe doctrine.

For the purpose of conquering Spain, we attacked her fleet in Manila Bay and destroyed it. I cannot conceive how that action of ours can be twisted into a violation of the Monroe doctrine. The most that can be said is, that it is an extension of that doctrine, and that we are now saying to Spain:—You shall not enslave, you shall not rob, anywhere that we have the power to prevent it.

Having taken the Philippines, the same humanity that dictated the declaration of what is called the Monroe doctrine will force us to act there in accordance with the spirit of that doctrine. The other day I saw in the paper an extract—I think from Goldwin Smith—in which he says that if we were to bombard Cadiz we would give up the Monroe doctrine.

I do not see the application. We are at war with Spain, and we have a right to invade that country; and the invasion would have nothing whatever to do with the Monroe doctrine. War being declared, we have the right to do anything consistent with civilized warfare to gain victory.

The bombardment of Cadiz would have no more to do with the Monroe doctrine than with the attraction of gravitation.

If by the Monroe doctrine is meant that we have agreed to stay in this hemisphere, and to prevent other nations from interfering with any people on this hemisphere, and if it is said that growing out of this is another doctrine—namely, that we are pledged not to interfere with any people living on the other hemisphere, then it might be called a violation of the Monroe doctrine for us to bombard Cadiz.

But such is not the Monroe doctrine. If, we being at war with England, she should bombard the city of New York, or we should bombard some city of England, would anybody say that either nation had violated the Monroe doctrine? I do not see how that doctrine is involved, whether we fight at sea or on the territory of the enemy.

This is the first war, so far as I know, in the history of the world that has been waged absolutely in the interest of humanity—the only war born of pity, of sympathy; and for that reason I have taken a deep interest in it, and I must say that I was greatly astonished by the victory of Admiral Dewey in Manila Bay.

I think it one of the most wonderful in the history of the world, and I think all that Dewey has done shows clearly that he is a man of thought, of courage, and of

genius. So, too, the victory over the fleet of Cervera by Commodore Schley is one of the most marvellous and the most brilliant in all the annals of the world.

The marksmanship, the courage, the absolute precision with which everything was done is, to my mind, astonishing. Neither should we forget Wainwright's heroic exploit, as commander of the *Gloucester*, by which he demonstrated that torpedo destroyers have no terrors for a yacht manned by American pluck. Manila Bay and Santiago both are surpassingly wonderful. There are no words with which to describe such deeds—deeds that leap like flames above the clouds and glorify the whole heavens.

The Spanish have shown in this contest that they possess courage, and they have displayed what you might call the heroism of desperation; but the Anglo-Saxon has courage and coolness—courage not blinded by passion, courage that is the absolute servant of intelligence.

The Anglo-Saxon has a fixedness of purpose that is never interfered with by feeling; he does not become enraged—he becomes firm, unyielding; his mind is absolutely made up, clasped, locked, and he carries out his will. With the Spaniard it is excitement, nervousness; he becomes frantic.

I think this war has shown the superiority, not simply of our ships, or our armor, or our guns, but the superiority of our men, of our officers, of our gunners. The courage of our army about Santiago was splendid; the steadiness and bravery of the volunteers magnificent. I think that what has already been done has given us the admiration of the civilised world.

I know, of course, that some countries hate us. Germany is filled with malice, and has been just on the crumbling edge of meanness for months, wishing, but not daring, to interfere; hateful, hostile, but keeping just within the overt act.

We could teach Germany a lesson, and her ships would go down before ours, just the same as the Spanish ships have done. Sometimes I have almost wished that a hostile German shot might be fired. But I think we will get even with Germany and with France—at least, I hope so.

And there is another thing I hope—that the good feeling now existing between England and the United States may be eternal. In other words, I hope it will be to the interests of both to be friends.

I think the English-speaking peoples are to rule this world. They are the kings of invention, of manufactures, of commerce, of administration, and they have a higher conception of human liberty than any other people.

Of course they are not entirely free; they still have some of the rags and tatters and ravellings of superstition; but they are tatters, and they are rags, and they are ravellings, and the people know it. And, besides all this, the English language holds the greatest literature of the world.

R. G. INGERSOLL.

—Boston "Sunday Globe."

CHRISTIANITY AND TORTURE.

(BY THE LATE J. M. WHEELER.)

HISTORY being what it is, the record of man's development from savagery contains many passages not to be read by any sensitive nature without a shudder. Perhaps the most horrible item is that of torture inflicted in the name of justice. The student of history finds it everywhere in the annals of ecclesiasticism, nor can he judge of many questions without having it before his mind. Did the Jews make a practice of crucifying Christian children at their Paschal feast? Did thousands of women fly through the air, and have commerce with Satan? The testimony to the reality of such things is overwhelming. Its worthlessness as evidence is only recognised when we remember that it was given under torture, which was well described by La Bruyere as a device to destroy the weak innocent and save the robust guilty.

Among both Greeks and Romans the deceitful and dangerous experiment of the criminal *question*, as the use of torture for the interrogation of criminals was termed, was admitted rather than approved. Torture was reserved only for slaves. Gibbon says: "The annals of tyranny from the reign of Tiberius to Domitian circumstantially relate the executions of many innocent victims; but, as long as the

faintest remembrance was kept alive of the national freedom and honor, the last hours of a Roman were secure from the danger of ignominious torture."*

Constantine, the brutal establisher of Christianity, introduced torture to Roman citizens for crimes of State. Although he abolished crucifixion of slaves, he employed such remedies as pouring boiling lead down the throat as the proper treatment of those who stole virgins. As the Christian theories of the depravity of human nature, the vileness of the body, the sin of unbelief, and the doom of everlasting torments upon unbelievers became predominant, and the clergy acquired power, the employment of torture spread. No treatment was considered too severe for those for whom God reserved perpetual torture. It is a damning fact that the barbarian nations who were subdued to Christianity were more merciful in their punishments before the introduction of that divine religion. In France and Germany torture was never applied to free men until ecclesiastical tribunals replaced the earlier heathen justice. In Italy and Spain, the chief seats of religion, were invented the most horrible instruments of torture.

In 1252, when Pope Innocent IV. issued his bull, *De Extirpando*, with its elaborate instructions for the guidance of the Inquisition, he ordered the civil magistrates of Italy to exhort from all heretics by torture, not merely a confession of their own guilt, but an accusation of all others who might share their heresy. The system of the Inquisition was such as to render resort to torture inevitable. Its proceedings were secret. No advocate might appear before the tribunal. No witness was confronted with the accused, who was carefully kept in ignorance of the exact charges against him, and of the evidence upon which they were based. He was presumed to be guilty, and his judges bent all their energies to force him to confess. In the words of Dean Milman: "No falsehood was too false, no craft too crafty, no trick too base, for this calm, systematic, moral torture, which was to wring further confession against himself, denunciation against others."† From this to the rack and estrapade the step was easily taken, and was not long delayed. In 1301 we find even Philip the Fair protesting against the cruelty of the Inquisition, and interfering to protect his subjects from the refinements of torture to which, on simple suspicion of heresy, they were exposed. Yet when, soon after, the same monarch, in conjunction with Pope Clement V., resolved on the destruction of the Templars, he made the Inquisition his facile instrument for drawing forth the confessions which warranted him in seizing their property. In England, at the same time, the Archbishop of York proposed to Edward II. to torture the unfortunate Templars. Although Sir John Fortescue, Chief Justice of Henry VI.'s Court of King's Bench, in his book in praise of English laws, warmly denounces the law of torture as alien to the spirit of English law, it was nevertheless often resorted to for State and religious offences. Henry VIII. and Mary both used the rack vigorously. So did Elizabeth.

Dr. Lingard, in a note to his *History of England*, thus describes the rack:—

"The rack was a large open frame of oak, raised three feet from the ground. The prisoner was laid under it, on his back, on the floor; his wrists and ankles were attached by cords to two rollers at the ends of the frame; these were moved by levers in opposite directions till the body rose to a level with the frame. Questions were then put; and, if the answers did not prove satisfactory, the sufferer was stretched more and more till the bones started from their sockets."‡

In theory there was a general prescription that no permanent injury was to be done to the victim. In practice this was little heeded. The meek Jesuit, Del Rio, in his instructions to Inquisitors, quietly observes that the flesh should not be wounded, nor the bones broken, but that torture could scarcely be properly administered without more or less dislocation of the joints.§

In 1628, in the case of Felton, who assassinated the Duke of Buckingham, Laud, then Bishop of London, suggested the employment of torture, whereupon Felton boldly observed that he did not know but that in his agony he might name his lordship as an accomplice. The judges

* *Decline and Fall*, chap. xvii.

† *History of Latin Christianity*, vol. vi., p. 312.

‡ Vol. vi., p. 688; 1849.

§ H. C. Lea, *Superstition and Force*, p. 364.

in that case unanimously agreed that torture could not be employed to elicit confession; and the last instance of its employment for that purpose in this country was in 1640, when John Archer, a glover, was suspected of being concerned in a riotous attack on Archbishop Laud's palace at Lambeth. The Long Parliament abated this, with other nuisances; but in their treatment of James Naylor for the crime of blasphemy they showed that it was not Christianity that had mitigated their barbarity. The *peine forte et dure*, by which weights of iron could be piled upon a prisoner who refused to plead, until he was crushed to death, was not abolished till the reign of George III.

Against the cruelty which distinguished judicial procedure and punishment during the time when the Church was predominant no protests were heard from the Christian camp. It was in Christian communities, where the truths of the blessed gospel were received with unquestioned veneration, that the administration of torture was systematised with a cold-blooded ferocity unknown to the legislation of heathen nations. It was the sceptics, Montaigne and Beccaria, who first attacked the judicial use of torture, and to Voltaire, more than to any other man, it is owing that the barbarity fell into universal disrepute.

BOOTH'S OBEDIAH.

THE Salvation Army Federal Band, numbering twenty-five performers, took possession of the local barracks on Thursday evening, September 1, and gave a miscellaneous entertainment to a very good audience at 2s. and 1s. per head. The band is finely balanced, and the music it renders under its capable conductor exceptionally good. But in the matter of inside entertainments the conductor makes a serious mistake. He should remember that such pieces as marches, etc., however admirable they may be in the open air, become simply awful when played inside a hall—especially when the hall happens to be a small one. But, apart from this drawback, the entertainment on Thursday night went off with great acceptance. Among the members of the band is an individual named "Obediah." Obediah explains that as many as half-a-dozen hangmen are in rapid pursuit of his parents for having started him out in life with this soulful name. However this may be, Obediah, besides doing all manner of funny things, at present plays the elephant trombone, and is emphatically far and away the brightest hard-case ornament of the band. Obediah has the face of one who, for a long time, looked with loving approval upon the wine when it was red, and when you see him working at his instrument you can quite understand that he must have been all he says he was—a contortionist, a kangaroo shooter, a dancer, a brumbee stealer, a snake charmer, a Tory politician, a comedian, a musician, a poet, and a mesmerist—and so on, and so forth, etc., etc., etc. When he blows his trombone with his mighty pair of lungs (or bellows) the audience simply forget the music of the band to watch his face. For, when Obediah gets going, the smoke of excitement seems to rise in clouds out of his hairless head; he threatens every moment to jump clean over his waistcoat; and the bewildered spectators each instant expect to see him come right through his instrument in musical notes. So, in Obediah, the Army band possesses a wonder, and, upon the band's return, all Rockhampton should see him and be thrilled by his manifold charms.

—*People's Newspaper.*

He Wanted to Change.

A young matron on North Nevada Avenue was putting her five-year-old son to bed the other night during a terrific wind storm. When she was about to leave him he objected vociferously against staying alone while the storm raged. "But, dear," said the mother, "you must not mind the storm. Remember God is here, and protects you even while you sleep." This assurance quieted him for a time, but presently a terrific gust of wind struck the house and made it rock on its foundations. There was a pit-pat on the stairs, and the little fellow appeared at the door, his face white with fear. The mother took him back, and again comforted him with the assurance of God's presence; but she had hardly gained the sitting room before the wind struck the house another terrific blow. As it passed on a wee voice came from the head of the stairs: "Mamma, mamma, if you come up here and stay with God, I'll come down with papa."—*Colorado Spring Facts.*

CORRESPONDENCE.

FREETHOUGHT IN SPAIN.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In my article on "Freethought in Spain" in your issue of last week I quoted the words of my informant at Bilbao to the effect that he did not know of any Freethought societies being in existence in the country. Since that article was written I have received from Madrid a copy of *Las Dominicales del Libre Pensamiento*, already mentioned as the organ of Freethinkers in Spain. In this I observe an article headed "Rules for Freethought Societies," in which the editor in an introduction says: "As we are constantly being asked for models of rules for Freethought societies such as are now being formed in various parts of this country, we think it will be of service to reprint here the rules of the society at Vigo, which have been found to work satisfactorily."

Then follow the rules, ten in number. The first three run as follows:—

"1. The object of this Society is to promote the emancipation of consciences and secularise life. With this object it will do all in its power to disseminate instruction, to 'secularise' schools and to 'popularise' the adoption as civil acts of marriage and burial, etc.

"2. Persons of both sexes over eighteen years of age are eligible as members; the children of the members may attend its debates and meetings. Young people over eighteen years, but less than twenty-three, who may wish to join the Society must produce evidence of the consent of their parents or guardians, or prove that they are independent of them.

"3. Members should cultivate between themselves relations of confraternity and equality; should inspire themselves with the spirit of ample tolerance; practise love for their neighbors, charity and mutual respect; avoid pride, envy, and all evil passions. To aid women, children, the poor, and the weak should be considered the aim of all members of this society."

The other rules refer to election of council, subscriptions, etc., usual in all societies.

The formation of the Society dates from 1891. The most remarkable point of all is a decree by the Governor of the Province to the effect that, the rules having been submitted to him, he declares the Society to be duly and legally constituted under the Law of June 30, 1887. Therefore, in the land of the Inquisition it appears that Freethought societies have more liberty than in this enlightened country of England!

JOHN SAMSON.

AGNOSTICISM A DISQUALIFICATION FOR A MAYORALTY.

SOME surprise has been created at Rochester (writes our correspondent) at the action of the Corporation in passing over a town councillor who, according to precedent, should by reason of his seniority have received an invitation to become mayor of that ancient city. The councillor referred to, although not obtrusive in his views on the subject of religion, does not conceal the fact that his attitude in theology inclines to Agnosticism, and he made it known to his colleagues that he could only accept the mayoralty upon the understanding that he would not personally observe the resuscitated custom of attending service at the Cathedral with the Corporation, in civic state, on the first Sunday after Mayor's Day. He, however, expressed his willingness to attend the Cathedral on the other municipal Sunday, not as an act of religious relief, but because it was associated with the local hospital. The upshot of the councillor's refusal to attend the Cathedral was the election by the Corporation of another member as Mayor-elect—Councillor L. A. Goldie, who will be the fourth solicitor in succession who has filled the Chief Magistrate's chair at Rochester. A few years since a Nonconformist Mayor declined to attend the Cathedral officially for conscientious objections to a State religion.

—*Daily News.*

A tedious preacher had preached the assize sermon before Lord Yelverton. He came down smiling to his lordship after the service, and, expecting congratulations on his effort, asked: "Well, my lord, how did you like the sermon?" "Oh, most wonderful," replied Yelverton; "it was like the peace of God, it passed all understanding, and, like his mercy, I thought it would have endured forever."

A few days ago Magistrate Cornell, of this city, fined two young men \$3 each for selling "extras" upon the street on Sunday. Did somebody make the proposition that we should establish religious liberty in Cuba, Porto Rico, and the Philippines?—*Truthseeker* (New York).

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, "Emperor William at Jerusalem."
BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 8.30, A concert.
CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, John M. Robertson, "The Indestructibility of Freethought."
EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Bow Vestry Hall, Bow-road, E.): 7, W. Sanders, "Francis Place the Chartist."
SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road, S.E.): 11.15, Sunday-school; 7, Stanton Coit, "America among the Nations."
WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11, Stanton Coit, "Bismarck."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, Stanley Jones; Peckham Rye: 8.15, Stanley Jones.
EAST LONDON BRANCH (Mile End Waste): 11.80, W. Heaford; 7, R. P. Edwards. October 26, at 8, S. Jones.
HAMMERSMITH (near Lyric Theatre): 7.15, Mr. Hunter. October 27, Mr. Kraupa, "Clairvoyance."
HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, Mr. Hunter.
LIMEHOUSE (The Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, R. P. Edwards. October 26, at 8, S. Jones.
WESTMINSTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Grosvenor Embankment): 11.30, Chilperic Edwards, "The Bible and the Monuments."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH (Bristol-street Board-school): 11, Members' Annual Meeting; 7, A Concert by members of the Social Bohemian Choir.
CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, W. Heaford, "Freethought at the Church Congress."
DERBY (Central Hotel, Market-place): 7, J. Wright, "Freewill, Predestination, and Fatalism."
GLASGOW (Lecture Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion Class, Mr. Cochran, "Six Months in a Steamboat Stoke-hole"; 8.30, J. Scott-Smith, "The Logical Outcome of Freethought and Free Speech—Free Action."
LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mrs. Hypatia Bradlaugh Bonner, "Parliament: As it Has Been, Is, and Should Be."
LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, J. Hammond, "Mental Slavery."
MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 7, W. Simpson, "Where Atheism Fails."
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): C. Cohen—11, "Some Present-day Problems"; 3, "After Christianity, What?" 7, "The Jew as Christian Evidence." Tea at 5.
SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7, Readings, etc.

Lecturers' Engagements.

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

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

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