

The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XVIII.—No. 46.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 1898.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

GIORDANO BRUNO.

WERE not the insular tastes and prejudices of English literature well known, it would be perfectly astonishing that no Life of Bruno has appeared in our language until recently. The Italians, the Germans, and the French have diligently worked in this field. Berti's great biographical work appeared in 1876, Bartholmess's *Jordano Bruno* in 1847, and Wagner's edition of Bruno's Italian writings as far back as 1830. But, until lately, all we have had is a few scattered magazine articles, a few pages in Maurice, and a chapter in Lowes's *Biographical History of Philosophy*. Fortunately, we no longer suffer under the reproach of neglecting one of the most fascinating figures in the history of thought. Bruno was a knight errant of philosophy; his life was an Odyssey, and his death a martyrdom. From amidst the storm and stress of the sixteenth century, where so many champions, named and unnamed, affronted the terrible power of the Church and engaged the wild beast of Superstition, Bruno stands out vividly by reason of his fervid poetical temperament, his exuberant wealth of ideas, his continued sufferings, and his untameable courage. How he appears to a later genius somewhat akin to his own may be seen in Mr. Swinburne's two noble sonnets. To our mind he is the supreme martyr of all time. There is about his whole life, and the whole character of his mind, an air of sovereign greatness. He worked out no system of philosophy like Spinoza; he produced no immortal masterpiece of literature, although he had the endowments of a fine poet; but he devoted his life to truth, finally offering it on the altar of Progress with the superbest heroism. While valor is accounted man's highest virtue (and when it ceases to be so, man will cease to be man) Bruno's will always be a resplendent name in history. Some day or other a man of genius will give us a final study of his life. Meanwhile we may be thankful for the tentative *Life of Giordano Bruno* by I. Frith, who is, we believe, a lady. It is assuredly not, as the *Athenæum* said, worthy to match with Mr. Christie's monumental life of Etienne Dolet. Yet it has conspicuous merits which we cheerfully recognise. The quotations from Bruno's works are made with excellent taste, the translations are skilful, there is much illustrative historical matter gathered from many sources, and a capital bibliography, though, unfortunately, there is no index.

Our praise, however, must now be qualified. First of all we complain of the portrait of Bruno in this volume. The shadows are too deep, spoiling the Apollonian beauty which makes the Wagner portrait a haunting vision of glorious manhood. Next, the style of the book is too grave, and sometimes even dull. It is never enthusiastic, and even in describing the supreme hour of martyrdom it is never for a moment hurried out of its decorous repose. Lastly, we object to the writer's trick of saddling Bruno with her own views. She does this while censuring the partiality of others. After remarking that every man puts something of himself into his hero, as a Jewish punter gives a hook to his hero's nose, she complacently adds: "In works upon Bruno and his philosophy he will be found to appear as a Materialist, an Atheist, a Pantheist, and sometimes in his *real character* as an Idealist." (The italics are ours.) What delicious *naïveté*! We should say it is unmistakably feminine.

George Meredith, in one of those fine epigrams of which he has the secret, says that "Barriers are for those who

cannot fly." A similar idea is expressed by Bruno. "Difficulty," he says, "is ordained to deter mean spirits; rare, heroic, and divine men pass over the road of difficulty, and compel necessity to yield them the palm of immortality." We doubt whether Bruno believed in any other kind of immortality than this, the immortality of fame, a life in the memory of posterity. For the "mob," or rather for their opinion, he had a most profound contempt. But he looked forward to joining "the choir invisible, whose music is the gladness of the world." To realise this, he courted no temporary applause of the multitude; he labored for the future, and made his life a part of the upward life of his age. He was not to be caught by the cheap baits that capture meaner spirits. There was, indeed, something fiery, splendid, and unique about him. Schwegler well said that Bruno, Campanella, and Vanini were "precursors and prophets." Hegel remarked of Bruno, "He is a comet." Bunsen wrote in his Memoirs: "The works of Bartholmess of Strasburg gave me occasion to become more nearly acquainted with that strange, erratic, comet-like spirit, a genius, but a Neapolitan, whose life was but a fiery fragment." Hallam calls him "the meteor of science," and Cousin speaks of the "traces of blood and fire" that marked his path. Tracking the course of such a spirit is surely a grateful task.

Bruno, it is now nearly certain, was born at Nola, near Naples, in 1548, eight years after the death of Copernicus, and thirteen years before the birth of Bacon. He always loved the place of his birth, paying it many high-flown compliments; but his love was not a prejudice, for writing in a foreign land he said that "The true philosopher makes every country his home."

At fifteen Bruno became a novitiate in a Dominican monastery. In his eighteenth year he was sceptical as to the Trinity, and he detested the monks whom he afterwards referred to as "personages very ready to give away places in the kingdom of heaven, but incapable of earning an inch of ground for themselves." One of his accusers at his trial charged him with saying "Let friars live on a scanty portion of broth."

The young monk studied deeply, as his later writings testify. "What vast reading and what varied study," says Bartholmess, "appear on every page! How many authors are praised, blamed, and quoted!" Turning from the ignorance and hypocrisy of those around him, he found solace and delight in the society of the Muses. While in the convent he wrote many sonnets and two pieces called *The Candle Bearer* and *Noah's Ark*. In the latter he celebrates the ass, who is symbolic of stupidity, ignorance, and false piety. In the former work he opens with an invocation of the ass. "I have seen," he says, "the monks of Castello in Genoa hold up the tail of an ass, veiled, for the people to kiss, crying 'Do not handle it; kiss it. This is the sacred relic of that blessed ass which was found worthy to convey our God from the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem. Worship it, kiss it, and make your offerings to it.'" Years later, in his most daring work, *The Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast*, by which he means Superstition, Bruno wrote: "I dare add nothing to the spotless majesty of those two asses which shine in the space of Cancer, because chiefly of these (both by justice and reason) is the kingdom of heaven, as I shall invincibly demonstrate by most powerful reasons some other time, for I dare not now speak of such an important matter."

No wonder that Bruno was twice threatened with trial for heresy. One hundred and thirty counts being drawn

up against him, he fled from Naples in 1575. He cast off his religious habit, and let his hair grow to hide the tonsure. Noli, Rome, and Genoa were his three first halting places. In 1579 he was at Geneva, and frightfully poor. Some Italians gave him a citizen's dress, minus the trunk hose, which he made for himself out of his old garments. He found work in a printing-house as a corrector of proofs, but his peace was soon broken. Although Calvin was dead, his intolerant spirit still lived. Bruno was given to understand that unless he embraced the Calvinistic doctrines he would not be allowed to remain in the city. He was arrested, but liberated after due admonition; and shaking off the dust of his feet against Calvin's castle, he went to Lyons, whence, after a month's stay, he repaired to Toulouse. This city was a stronghold of the Inquisition. Vanini was burnt there in 1619. Its reputation for *autos-da-fe* was so great that Rabelais made Pantagruel decline to visit a place where men were grilled like red herrings. Bruno, however, remained at Toulouse for more than a year, lecturing on Philosophy at the University. He was at Paris in 1581. Henry III. was a profligate like our Charles II., but he also resembled the Merry Monarch in preferring science to theology. He appointed Bruno to the post of lecturer extraordinary at the Sorbonne, which did not involve the necessity of attending Mass. The orthodox pundits, however, were soon scandalised by the new lecturer's heresies. Bruno consequently had to quit Paris. He was at the court of Queen Elizabeth from 1583 to 1585, his home being the French ambassador's house, and his chief society being men like Sir Philip Sidney, Fulke Greville, Dyer, and Hervey. This was the brightest spot in Bruno's life; a peaceful oasis in the midst of a stormy wilderness. Greater mental freedom prevailed than on the Continent; yet when these choice spirits assembled the doors were locked before they began their conversation. The heresies of such men were of a deeper dye than Protestantism itself could tolerate. G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS.

THE First Lord of the Admiralty, Mr. J. G. Goschen, recently stated that "the Church has risen to its duties," and we presume that the recent "Citizens' Sunday" will be cited by a certain class of professed Christians as a proof, to use Mr. Goschen's language again, that "the Church in these later years had taken a new departure, and had seen a new duty which it would be competent and eager to perform. It wished to take, and had taken, a larger share in what he might call social work." But two questions here arise:—(1) Why has the Church been so long, not merely indifferent, but positively opposed to the social wants of the people? (2) In the Middle Ages, when the Church professed its anxiety to do something for the welfare of the masses, what did it accomplish? Simply nothing that raised the poor from the slavish and degraded condition into which they had fallen through obeying the teachings of the clergy. Moreover, the feeble efforts which the Church for a brief period did make were not actuated so much by a desire to elevate the "lower classes" socially, as to make them "contented in that sphere of life in which it had pleased God to place them." Mr. Goschen really admits this, for in assigning a cause for the interest the Church took in the poor he says: "All this was rather with a view to developing the spiritual side of human nature. It was the spiritual improvement of the masses in which the Church was almost exclusively engaged." While we admit that it may "never be too late to mend," we object to attribute to Christian influence the present concern which the various Churches are manifesting for the sons of toil. That improvement, such as it is, has been brought about through Christians becoming conscious that the poorer classes have "found them out," and that, in consequence, the popular faith is losing its hold upon the public mind. To-day it is the schoolmaster, not the priest, who "rules the roast."

The Church has risen to a sense of its duties because it hopes that, in so doing, its existence will be prolonged. If this is denied, let it be explained why, during the many past centuries, Christians of all denominations have ignored the secular requirements of the community. Their present

action in joining the ranks of social reformers is humanitarian, not Christian. Hitherto they have tried to follow the example of Jesus, and have based their conduct upon what they term the "spirituality of man"; but, finding that a failure, they turn to the "humanity of man," where alone are to be found the agencies for, and the inspiration to, all real mundane reform. The remedies prescribed in the New Testament for the evils of the world are:—Love for Christ, poverty of spirit, disregard of the things of the world, taking no anxious thought for the morrow, working principally for the supposed advantages of some unknown life, and an absolute dependence upon an alleged supernatural power. On the other hand, reason and experience teach that the true panaceas for the wrongs which so terribly afflict society are love between man and man, a firm and determined spirit, persistent attention to the needs of the world, an anxious desire to provide for the necessities of the morrow, a striving above aught else to realise the highest advantages of our present existence, and an undivided reliance upon nature and her many and varied potencies. Herein lies the difference between the Secular and the Christian methods of endeavoring to regenerate society. It is not difficult to decide which of the two has proved the better in promoting the social status of the people. When the Christian plan was in force, little or no social progress was achieved; but, in proportion as the secular remedy has been tried, advancement to a more just regulation of affairs has been the result. Practical experience is our great monitor, and that teaches that human evils can only be effectually cured by human means, and that obedience to natural laws is more efficacious as a regenerating force than all the theological nostrums ever administered to self-deluded victims.

The very fact of a "Citizens' Sunday" being necessary at the present time is in itself an impeachment of Christianity as a social factor. It has had nearly two thousand years' trial under (for it) most favorable circumstances, and it is now admitted by many of its warmest adherents to have been a decided failure as a proper and useful social force. What is the logical meaning of such Christian impotency? Why this: either that Christ failed to supply the requirements of social justice, or that his followers have not obeyed his instructions. Whichever position is taken, Christianity stands condemned as a practical remedy for the drawbacks of the community. Personally we believe that there are great defects in both cases. As John Stuart Mill, the late Bishop of Peterborough, and other prominent writers, have stated, other agencies than those found in Christianity are necessary to advance the civilisation of the world. And it would be a novelty indeed to find any nation attempting to regulate its affairs by the teachings of the New Testament. The Kaiser is reported as having recently proclaimed from Mount Zion "Peace on earth," and yet the world was never more warlike than it is at present. Emperor William proceeded to say: "From Jerusalem there came the light in the splendor of which the German nation has become great and glorious; and what the Germanic peoples have become, they became under the banner of the Cross, the emblem of self-sacrificing Christian charity." If this be true, so much the worse for the Cross; for it is evident that in Germany Christianity has done nothing to raise the social condition of the masses, while the worst parts of the faith have influenced "the powers that be" to keep the people in abject submission, and to make them the victims of Christian bigotry and pious persecution.

On "Citizens' Sunday" various preachers dilated upon the present wretched social conditions of the people, but they omitted to show how any effectual improvement could be obtained through complying with the injunctions of the New Testament. The Rev. W. J. Dawson said: "The whole atmosphere of the ancient world was cleansed when Christianity uttered the two magic words, 'Brotherhood' and 'Humanity.' These words needed to be re-uttered with new emphasis and fuller meaning." But those "magic words" had been "uttered" long before the advent of Christianity, which has certainly not been remarkable for enforcing their application. Very little "brotherhood" exists to-day, even within the Churches, as recent events amply prove. And as to "humanity," let the "Citizen" preachers speak for themselves. The Rev. Herbert H. Henson remarked: "Consider how out of the vastness of the scale of modern life, the innumerable multitude of the population, the inextricable complexity of the relationships,

the ubiquitous influence of commerce, there has grown up for us all a rigid despotism of social custom, an iron sway of class conventions, which hem us round on every side, which restrain our liberty, which control our thought, which dull our moral sense, which blur the clear-cut outlines of our duty, and merge, by an unconscious and almost irresistible compulsion, ourselves in our class." The Rev. Monro Gibson, in alluding to the prophet Amos's mission to the rulers of Israel, said: "Amos wrote 750 B.C., and yet at the end of the nineteenth century there was the same shameful extravagance on the one side and the same pinching poverty on the other." The Rev. C. E. Walters pointed out "that at present London was anything but an ideal city. Side by side with the rich and luxurious lived those whose incomes were barely sufficient to keep soul and body together, while in the streets of that neighborhood vice nightly flaunted itself in utter disregard of all the laws of God and man." The Rev. Dr. Lawrence confessed that "Christians have failed in their duty to apply the precepts of the Gospel to international affairs." According to the latest returns, there are at present in London 37,000 people living five in one room; 17,000 living six in one room; 6,000 living seven in one room; 1,800 living eight in one room; 32,000 living eight in two rooms; and 14,000 living nine in two rooms.

Add to this picture of horror and shame the following statement of the Secretary of the London Reform Union, which appeared in the *Church Gazette* of the 29th of last month: "The problems presented by London's huge aggregation of poverty and degradation—the overcrowded and insanitary condition of the dwellings of so many of the working population, the demoralising irregularity of their employment, the horrors of the sweating system, the drawbacks arising from the segregation of the rich and the poor, the lack of healthful recreation, beauty, or rest, in the 'cities of the poor'; the ravages of drink, vice, and crime among the poorly-fed, badly housed, and casually employed denizens of the slums; the special difficulties connected with the transformation of the wife and mother into a wage-earner, and the home into a workshop; above all, the squalor, coarseness, and neglect which are destroying the character and intelligence of so many thousands of London's children—all these, it is felt, are subjects which no religiously-minded citizen dare ignore, but which, amid the pressure of private duties, are apt to be overlooked." Well might the Rev. W. J. Hocking, on reading this, exclaim: "Great God, what problems!"

Yes, they are problems, and for their existence the rev. gentleman's Church must share much of the responsibility. Until recently the clergy had the principal management of societarian affairs; they had under their control the training of the young, and the supplying or withholding the materials for ennobling character among adults. And the present degraded social state of the toiling classes is the result. The Rev. Mr. Dawson tells us that at the inception of Christianity "the whole atmosphere of the ancient world was cleansed." In that case the followers of Christ started with clean surroundings. The question is, How then did the social atmosphere become corrupted side by side with the influence of the Church? The answer is: The Church is destitute of progressive agencies, its clergy are not secular reformers, and its teachings lack the power to initiate and perpetuate social justice.

CHARLES WATTS.

SKY-PILOTS AT SEA.

OUR dear, dull old friend, the *Record*—always in tears over something: the aggressions of Popery, the defection of Protestant bishops, the indifferentism of the world, the spread of unbelief, or what not—has just discovered a new incitement to lamentation. It has found out, with the friendly aid of a northern shipping paper, that there are at the present time "no fewer than 20,000 British merchant ships in which the crews are never assembled for divine worship, at sea or in port, on week days or on Sundays."

No wonder there are so many wrecks. No wonder the papers teem from time to time with accounts of storm-stricken, rock-shattered, ice-bound vessels; of collisions in fogs, of fires, and explosions on board; of maimed, starved, drowning crews; of engulfed cargoes, and other tragedies

and disasters of the deep. What we have to explain is not how it is that some of these 20,000 merchant ships come to grief, but how it is that any of them reach their havens in safety.

Somehow the majority manage to accomplish their voyages with a fair amount of immunity. The *Record* would doubtless ascribe that happy circumstance to the exercise of divine mercy. As to the crews that go down—well, the divine mercy has not been extended to them, or perhaps, in their case, it is divine mercy of another kind. Anyhow, we cannot expect that it will be strained to the extent of covering all and everyone of the 20,000 ships manned by crews who never assemble for divine worship on Sundays, and who—at any rate collectively—pray not, neither do they sing hymns.

The difficulty is to discover the principle on which the selection is made. It is not to be supposed that the crews that are lost are worse than those that are saved. All that we may assume is that it is necessary to make an example of some of the 20,000 for the benefit of the others. How they are picked out must ever be a mystery to the believer, though Freethinkers—without going to first causes—might satisfy themselves with some such natural explanation as bad seamanship, defective construction, mechanical disablement, or such untoward conditions as hurricanes, fogs, or unsuspected rocks.

On our great naval vessels and palatial liners religious services are held not only regularly, but decently and in order. True, they are liable to abrupt termination by sudden squalls or other unexpected disturbances, when officers and men immediately find that they have something better to do. Nevertheless, it is edifying to read the familiar description of a "Sunday Service at Sea." You see in your mind's eye the crew, old and young, drawn up in lines or crowding the rigging, grave and reverent in demeanor, the passengers (if it is a liner) picturesquely posed in their Sunday attire, the Union Jack displaying itself as an altar cloth, the captain with one eye on his hymn-book and the other cast up aloft or roaming round the vessel. Then you take in the "blue infinite expanse of ocean," and the "vast, o'erhanging vault of heaven," and listen to the lapping waves as they beat rhythmic time to the strains of "Aurelia" or the "Old 44th"—all directing one's thoughts on this holy day to so-and-so and so-and-so.

Then it is that you pity, from the bottom of your soul, the 20,000 merchant ships that never have—apparently never think of having, and perhaps don't want—anything of the sort. Their benighted crews do in a measure endeavor to make up for the loss. They have merry jigs on the fore-castle to the stirring strains of fiddles; they sing nautical ballads with roaring choruses, and tell "tall" and wonder-exciting yarns about as true as—certainly not more untrue than—those read from the Scriptures to the solemn crowd on H.M.S. *Octopus* or the great *Palace of Athens*. They also do a little useful tailoring, which adds to the comfort of their bodies, if it does not tend to the salvation of their souls.

All the same, they are without the sanctifying presence and instruction of accredited sky-pilots. And sadder still to say, the heavenly guides, with their ancient charts, seem never to be missed.

Apart from the religious aspect of the matter, the *Record* suggests that the assembling for Sunday services would induce a feeling of "harmony" amongst all on board. The word is unfortunate. It may be a matter of regret or one of indifference, but the "harmonic meeting" which would most commend itself to these toilers of the sea is not exactly that of which the *Record* would approve. If we know anything of Jack Tar, we should say he would infinitely prefer a hornpipe to a hymn, and would sooner fetch up a banjo than the Bible he has carefully stowed away at the very bottom of his locker.

The sky-pilots may think that fixed religious services, conducted by the master-mariners on these small vessels with their heterogeneous crews of all nationalities, of all creeds, and of no creed at all, would tend to general harmony. Other people might think that they would be a perpetual source of discord and discontent. If any of the crew refrained from regarding their skipper as a "psalm-singing, canting hypocrite," it is very likely they would be tempted to become hypocrites themselves. When the preacher is the skipper, who would dare to remain aloof or below? Promotion would be sought by

competitive piety, with ten marks for seamanship and twenty for Scriptural knowledge.

In any case, we may take it that very few of the twenty thousand skippers would willingly add to their duties the herculean task of sky-piloting their crews. More readily could we imagine these rough, bluff old salts thrusting the proposal aside with frowning perturbation, or with an indignant "Belay there!" or maybe with a resounding, hair-lifting oath. Not every crew could find a captain so amiably accommodating as he of the *Bab Ballads*:—

If ever they were dull or sad,
Their captain danced to them like mad,
Or told, to make the time pass by,
Droll legends of his infancy.

And who thus addressed his men:—

"By any reasonable plan
I'll make you happy if I can;
My own convenience count as *nil*,
It is my duty—and I will."

Looking at the nature of the Sunday services proposed, and the log-book that would be brought out, it does not seem that the crews would be rendered any easier or happier in their minds by the pious innovation. Sailors have superstitions enough already. There is no need to urge skippers to enforce upon them a number of others, to which, indeed, they may at the present time give a nominal assent, but with only the vaguest idea of their character or evidential foundation. In no sense have these Christian superstitions become, in the minds of the vast majority of the men, deep-rooted or intelligent beliefs. Interrogate Jack Tar, and it will be found that he is much more willing to swear to the existence of the "Great Sea Serpent" than to tie himself down to any belief in Jonah's whale. He may anticipate the direst consequences from setting sail on a Friday, but is prepared to fearlessly, and even cheerfully, violate the sanctity of the Lord's Day.

Whatever may have been the practice in the sixteenth century, when the commercial voyagers, adventurers, and discoverers of the Tudor reigns assembled their crews to "erve God twice a daie with the ordinaire service usuall ins the Church of England," it would be very surprising in deed if the crews of merchant vessels nowadays would not kick at such an infliction, however mercifully modified to suit the spirit of the age.

The writer in the *Record* refers to the narrow confines of the forecastles of many of the smaller merchant vessels. Therein he says the seaman can find "no provision for kneeling in prayer"—which is very sad indeed—from the *Record's* point of view, and is a difficulty not to be easily overcome. The only suggestion that immediately presents itself is that the captain should give up his cabin for the purpose. A pious skipper, or an indulgent commander like the captain of Mr. Gilbert's creation, ought not to display any hesitation in according the use of his cabin to an A.B. who desired to pray in privacy, say for favorable winds, a prosperous voyage, or a pot of money. We know that many ships have been saved, many lives preserved, after prayers in the midst of the perils of the sea. We also know that a great many ships have gone down in spite of piteous appeals to Providence from men, women, and children; from husbands and wives locked in each other's arms; from frantic mothers with helpless infants clinging to their breasts. Who can read unmoved Miranda's pathetic description of the wreck in the *Tempest*, and her exclamation:—

O I have suffer'd
With those that I saw suffer! A brave vessel
Who had, no doubt, some noble creatures in her,
Dash'd all to pieces. O the cry did knock
Against my very heart! Poor souls! they perish'd.
Had I been any God of power, I would
Have sunk the sea within the earth, or e'er
It should the good ship so have swallow'd and
The fraughting souls within her.

In such hours of peril a man at the pumps is worth a dozen sky-pilots at prayers. A ship-load of parsons is no more likely, indeed is less likely, to be saved than a ship-load of pirates; notwithstanding the prayers of the former, and the imprecations of the latter. In emergencies such as these there is revealed at once, as by the flash of a search-light, the heroism of Jack Tar, the helplessness of the sky-pilot, and, over all, the absolute indifference of Heaven.

FRANCIS NEALE.

THE SOUL OF A PEOPLE.

The Crowd. By G. Le Bon. (Fisher Unwin.) 3s. 6d.
The Psychology of Peoples. By the same. 6s.

TWENTY years have passed since George Henry Lawes pointed out that "the distinguishing mark of human psychology is that the three great factors—organism, external medium, and heredity—which it has in common with animal psychology, it adds a fourth—namely, relation to a social medium, with its product, the general mind." Since the above sentence was written, although a number of writers, both in England and on the continent, have shown more or less recognition of the truth of the principle there laid down, psychological studies are still mainly conducted on individualistic lines. The individual is still studied too much apart from his fellows, is too sharply differentiated from that social medium which has so largely fashioned his moral and intellectual nature, and, as a result, is continually being either half understood or misunderstood altogether. Society, though made up of individuals, yet exerts so powerful an influence upon each of its members that to neglect this factor in the study of an individual is like neglecting to notice the atmosphere in discussing the structure of birds. Indeed, just as the structure of the lower animals is moulded to the conditions of their physical environment, so man's nature is in turn moulded to the conditions of the social medium that surrounds him. The individual as he exists to-day is the result of countless generations of social effort and evolution. Each new generation is born into a network of customs, habits, and beliefs, and adapts itself, to some extent, to the social environment as a condition of existence; and consequently our ultimate explanation of man's nature must be a reference to the social structure of which the individual is so largely an expression.

The study of what may be called, for want of a better term, social psychology is, therefore, essential to a right understanding of human nature as at present constituted; and in this direction one of the most suggestive writers with whom I am acquainted is M. Gustave Le Bon, author of a number of books dealing with this aspect of human evolution, two of which, *The Crowd* and *The Psychology of Peoples*, are now in their English dress before the public. In these two works M. Le Bon discusses the characteristics of crowds, of races of people, and the effect of their racial traits on their evolution and destiny; and although both works are marred by certain economic prepossessions, still one is apt to get more good out of a disagreement with him than comes from full agreement with a writer of only average ability.

The conception of collective action as laid down in these volumes differs widely from that entertained by Mr. Herbert Spencer. According to the latter, collective action is only the summing up of individual instincts and desires; you add them together, and in the result obtain nothing but the addition. M. Le Bon holds, on the contrary, that just as in chemistry certain elements, when brought into combination, form a new body which is not the simple summing-up of the properties of its component parts, so a crowd of people acting together may, under certain circumstances, exhibit characteristics either higher or lower than those of its individual members. To give one illustration from our author: "Taken separately, the men of the Convention were enlightened citizens of peaceful habits. United in a crowd, they did not hesitate to give their adhesion to the most savage proposals, to guillotine individuals most clearly innocent, and, contrary to their interests, to renounce their inviolability, and decimate themselves." And, on the other hand, the actions of a crowd may be superior to the conduct of any individual taken singly. "The renunciation of all its privileges which the nobility voted in a moment of enthusiasm during the celebrated night of August 4, 1789, would certainly never have been consented to by any of its members taken singly. The howling, swarming, ragged crowd which invaded the Tuilleries during the revolution of 1848 did not lay hands on any of the objects that excited its astonishment, any one of which would have meant bread for many days." The history of trade unionism in our own country would doubtless furnish many instances of a similar nature.

In dealing with the psychological characteristics of different races of people, M. Le Bon lays down certain principles or laws which are doubtless true enough as far as

they go, but which, to my mind, require a more careful appraisal of their respective values than he is inclined to give. According to M. Le Bon, there are three factors which determine the nature of the individual and direct his conduct. First, and by far the most powerful in our author's opinion, is the influence of one's ancestors. It is the past that speaks most clearly and most powerfully in the present. "The dead, besides being infinitely more numerous than the living, are infinitely more powerful. They reign over the vast domain of the unconscious, that invisible domain which exerts its sway over all the manifestations of the intelligence and of character. A people is guided far more by its dead than by its living members. Century after century our departed ancestors have fashioned our ideas and sentiments, and, in consequence, all the motives of our conduct. The generations that have passed away do not bequeath us their physical constitution merely; they also bequeath us their thoughts. The dead are the only undisputed masters of the living. We bear the burdens of their mistakes, we reap the reward of their virtues."

Second in order of importance comes the influence of our immediate parents; and, third, "commonly supposed to be the most powerful, but nevertheless the weakest," is the influence of environment, including in its scope moral and educational influences. Of these three influences it is the first that is responsible for the production of racial or national characteristics. It is the possession in common of a few mental and moral characteristics, induced by generations of social life under substantially similar conditions, which constitute a racial or national character. "A thousand Frenchmen, Englishmen, or Chinamen chosen at hazard offer notable differences; but nevertheless, owing to racial heredity, they possess common characteristics which allow of the determining of an ideal type of the Frenchman, Englishman, or Chinaman analogous to the ideal type which the naturalist presents when he describes in a general manner the dog or the horse." And because the destiny of a people is decided by the character accompanying an inherited physical structure, which admits but of gradual modification, progress is necessarily a plant of slow growth. Educational influences only become really effective as they are assimilated to the character of a nation; endless reiteration is required before this is effected, and even then the idea frequently becomes profoundly modified before it is an active force with the mass of the people.

With this view of the case we can all, I think, agree. Indeed, it is only the principle laid down by Mr. Spencer in 1850 in his *Social Statics*.^{*} But, like Mr. Spencer, M. Le Bon has fallen into the same neglect of the all-important circumstance that, while the principles governing the modification of a nation's character remain always the same, the *rate* at which that modification may be effected varies with man's own knowledge of the nature of the forces governing such modifications. We may quite agree that, "however intelligent and gifted a people be supposed to be, its capacity for absorbing a new element of civilisation is always very restricted. The brain cells do not assimilate in a day what it has taken centuries to create," and yet question very strongly a forecast as to the rate of progress based upon a supposed identity of conditions in the past and the future. For the important consideration is, that the present—and it will be still more true of the future—differs from the past in the fact that man grows steadily more conscious of the nature of the forces that hasten or retard his development, and takes steps to counteract or intensify their action. The conscious recognition and manipulation of natural forces by man in the interests of man plays a larger part in the life of each generation, and, therefore, when M. Le Bon points to "the dead weight of the entire past" as rendering transformation more difficult, the counterbalancing force of human

intelligence is completely lost sight of. It appears to me to be a proposition easy to establish, that the rate of a people's progress increases in proportion to the momentum it receives from preceding generations in the shape of literature, scientific generalisations, and the like. Our own century is a striking illustration of this much; while in savage races the power of heredity certainly is much stronger than it is with civilised mankind. So that, if heredity gives us, the longer the race exists, a greater burden to bear, it is not all a drag; we inherit the wisdom of our ancestors along with their follies, and one may well serve as an antidote to the other.

In brief, the power of the past over the present, while necessarily always great, yet becomes relatively weaker as increasing knowledge places in man's hands means and instruments enabling him to negative the operation of forces here, as he has negated them elsewhere. Evolution, unconscious in the past, is becoming conscious in the present, and the introduction of this new factor must produce profound and far-reaching results in the growth of humanity. Indeed, the author under review is an argument in favor of this position; for what is *The Psychology of Peoples* but a recognition of the forces ruling social life and, by implication, the possibility of their control? And this much would simply be on all fours with evolution in general, and particularly with the rise of cultivated species of plants and animals. It is the control of natural forces by human intelligence that has produced a Ribstone Pippin from a crab apple, a greyhound from the wild dog, or the hundreds of varieties of roses from the wild plant. In each of these cases the same principles of growth are constantly at work; man simply by his knowledge intensifies the power of certain forces and minimises the power of others, and thus produces in the course of a few generations changes that in the non-human condition of affairs would have required enormous periods of time to accomplish. Why, then, should man not do for his own species what he has already done for other species of animals? The problem is the same, although the factors may be more complex. Still, the complexity of a problem is no reason for dismissing it as insoluble—it should simply act as a spur for further investigation; while experience would suggest, as I have said, that a more complete knowledge of the forces governing the development of society may enable us to materially modify the course of human evolution in a required direction. In which case the final formula would read, not that the destiny of a people is decided by its character, as M. Le Bon has it, but "the destiny of a people is ultimately determined by its knowledge of the forces moulding character, and its ability to control such forces in the interest of society at large."

But M. Le Bon's work raises a wider question still—namely, whether progress is effected principally by conscious or unconscious agencies? and that is a question into which, at present, I have neither time nor space to enter. As I have already said, the author's statement as to the nature of the forces governing the destiny of a people is sound; it is a more careful estimate of their value that is required. Above all, one must never lose sight of the fact that forces of great value at one stage of evolution are of little value at another, and *vice versa*. It is always true that life can exist only in virtue of adaptation to its environment; but it is also true that the environment of man is with each generation more and more composed of the art, literature, and science—in a word, the conscious productions—of preceding generations. It is the neglect of this principle that forms the principal blot on two books which I can heartily recommend to all my readers as containing most suggestive and valuable information on a most important and fascinating subject. C. COHEN.

POPE JOAN.

(BY THE LATE J. M. WHEELER.)

MOST readers are more or less familiar with the tale of a female Pope; but of the many who, sitting at the card-table, can tell of the origin of the name "Pope Joan," few indeed have any idea of the grounds for believing or disbelieving the story.

It is said that, towards the middle of the ninth century, a young woman, of English extraction, but born at Mayence,

* "The social state at any time existing is the resultant of all the ambitions, self-interests, fears, reverences, etc., of ancestral citizens or existing citizens. The ideas current in this social state must, on the average, be congruous with the feelings of citizens, and therefore, on the average, with the social state these feelings have produced. Ideas wholly foreign to this state cannot be evolved, and if introduced from without cannot get accepted, or if accepted die out when the temporary phase of feeling which caused their acceptance ends. Hence, though advanced ideas, when once accepted, act upon society and aid its further advance, yet the establishment of such ideas depends upon the fitness of society for receiving them. Practically the popular character and the social state determine what ideas shall be current, instead of *vice versa*."

fell in love with a young Benedictine monk. She assumed the dress of his order, and entered the convent, of which he was a member, in Fulda. Thence they travelled together to Athens (Boccaccio, with more *vraisemblance*, says England), where she had made great progress in the sciences. She found her way in the same attire to Rome, where she obtained high celebrity for her learning and talents. Her success was such that, upon the death of Leo IV. (July 11 or 17, 853 or 855), she was chosen his successor. But her discretion did not equal her theology, for, after a short reign, while going in procession from the Vatican to the Lateran, she was delivered of a child, and expired between the Colosseum and the Church of St. Clement. It is further said that a statue was erected on the spot, which from that time the Papal processions would not pass, and that, to avoid a like mischance for the future, it was decreed that none should be consecrated Pope without being first examined in the *sella stercoraria*, or perforated chair.

Many would at once reject such a story as in itself incredible. Not so Gibbon, whose knowledge of the circumstances of the time has never been surpassed. In Jortin's *Remarks on Ecclesiastical History* is found, under the very date assigned to Pope Joan, a narrative of a scandalous affair which took place at Constantinople, which, intrinsically, is almost as incredible. There are many historic instances of women having passed in the guise of men. Eugenie, the daughter of Philip, Governor of Alexandria, under the Emperor Gallien, disguised herself as a monk, and, by her acquirements and close application, became abbot of the monastery she had entered. The story, into the particulars of which it is well not to enter, is narrated by Alcemis Avitus, Archbishop of Vienna, in the sixth century. Theodora of Alexandria, who lived near the time of the Emperor Leo I., having in her youth committed a grave fault, took the dress of a man, and became renowned for piety and learning. In the twelfth century St. Hildegund assumed the attire of a man, took the name of Joseph, and passed her life in the odor of sanctity in a monastery of Cistercian monks.

The story claims to rest on written authority and monuments of art. Of the numerous chronicles in which Joan is mentioned, the most important one is that of Anastasius, the librarian of the Vatican, who was contemporary with the alleged events. But the passage is termed by Gibbon "a most palpable forgery, foisted into some MSS. and editions." In the only edition I have seen, that of Mayence,* the reference at the end of the life of Leo IV. has all the appearance of being a note by another hand. The question, however, remains, Why were such passages inserted by Roman Catholic editors?

Professor Kist, of Leyden, has pointed out that, in two Milan Codices of the *Liber Pontificalis*, the texts of the lives of Leo IV., Benedict XI., and Nicholas differ very much from the printed text, and that "the design of preventing the possibility of making a female Pope appears to have had an influence in part on the printed text of these lives."†

The next in importance, though much later in date, is Marianus Scotus, a monk of Fulda, who died at Mayence, 1086. He was a strong partisan of the Papacy, in the time of Hildebrand, and his place and education make his testimony of value. But it also is challenged as a forgery by Catholics; and Dr. Dollinger, while allowing the tale to have been current in the thirteenth century, even doubts if it existed in the genuine writings of Martin Polaccus, the confessor to Pope John XXII. and Nicholas III., whose lives of the Popes was long considered the standard work, although it appears in all known editions; and Pope John XX. is allowed to have styled himself John XXI. on account of his alleged predecessor being styled Johannes.

There is also alleged, in favor of the story, the existence of a statue at Rome, with an enigmatic inscription; the perforated porphyry chair, used only at the Pope's installation; and a statue of Joan at Bologna, alleged to have been that of Pope Nicholas, but asserted by Dr. Brunet, who saw it, to have been distinctly that of a woman. Gibbon says: "Till the Reformation the tale was repeated and believed without offence; and Joan's female statue

long occupied her place among the popes in the cathedral of Sienna."

Dr. Dollinger adds:—

"The Church of Sienna, in the time that followed, gave three Popes to the Roman see—Pius II., Pius III., and Marcellus II. Not one of them ever thought of having the scandal removed. It was not till two centuries later that, at the pressing demand of Pope Clement VIII., Joan was metamorphosed into Pope Zacharias. When Huss, at the Council of Constance, supported his doctrine by appealing to the case of Agnes, who became Pope Joan, he met with no contradiction from either side. Even the Chancellor Gerson himself availed himself of the circumstances of the woman Pope as a proof that the Church could err in matters of fact."

Fully as astonishing, the story was related in the *Mirabilia urbis Romæ*, a sort of guide-book for pilgrims visiting Rome, editions of which were constantly reprinted for a period of eighty years down to 1550.

(To be concluded.)

ACID DROPS.

GUN metal has been used for various purposes. The lamp-posts on London Bridge are made of the metal of French guns taken in the Peninsular war. Captured French cannon also supplied the material for the Achilles statue in Hyde Park, the Wellington statue at Aldershot, and the Wellington Memorial in Phoenix Park, Dublin. But it was reserved to Emperor William to put gun metal to the most pious uses. He has sanctioned the casting of captured French guns into church bells. Every time these bells ring out they will probably be understood to mean, "Damn, damn, damn, damn, damn, damn the French."

Emperor William's absence from Germany in the Holy Land does not prevent his reputation from being carefully guarded at home. A young female clerk named Dyk has just been sentenced to two months' imprisonment for *lèse-majesté* at Breslau. Her actual crime was a disrespectful remark about a photograph of the Emperor in a shop window. Any man alive, whether prince or peasant, ought to be ashamed of sending a girl to prison for not being in love with his picture. But there appears to be no limit to the vanity of kings—particularly of pious kings like William of Germany.

Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, speaking at Bolton, declared that the Methodists were now a happy family. They were all united to fight the Devil! And a lot, we dare say, he cares for them! If God Almighty can't settle the Devil, it isn't likely that the Methodists will do the business.

One thing that Mr. Price Hughes said was quite true—namely, that the majority of the people of England were outside all the Churches; and that they are so proves the absurdity of Christian pretensions.

A writer on Sharks in the *National Review* puts in an incidental plea for the story of Jonah and the whale. He says that the cachalot, or sperm whale, could easily swallow Jonah and all his companions on that ship which had such a bad passage to Tarshish. But how about Jonah's three days' retreat in the monster's intestines? Could he breathe where there was no air, except perhaps the gases of indigestion? Could he resist the gastric juice of his hospitable entertainer? Really, when you are in for a miracle, it is just as well to go the whole hog. If the prophet *lived* inside the whale by a series of miracles, he might also have been *got* inside by a miracle. And the narrower the gullet the better the story.

There is a public service at half-past one in the North-West Chapel of St. Paul's Cathedral. The seats are on either side in two ranges, one labelled "men" and the other "women." It appears that the poor shy men generally keep to their own side, but the women sit just where they please, and quite right too. Of course the men of God are supposed to stand between the males and females, so that all the three sexes are in their proper places—men, women, and clergymen.

Lord Chief Justice Russell administered a much-needed rebuke to the magistrates who are interpreting the new Vaccination Act. He tells them that *their* opinions and *their* consciences have nothing to do with the matter. The conscientiousness of the applicant's objection is all they are concerned with.

* *Historie de Vitis Romanorum Pontificum. Moguntia, 1602, p. 293 (see note, p. 306, margin).*

† Gieseler, *Text-book of Christian History*, vol. ii., p. 30, note.

According to the *Aberystwyth Observer*, there has been a dreadful rumpus at the Alexandra Hall of Residence, which is the Welsh University counterpart of Girton or Newnham. One of the "fair girl graduates," with or without golden curls, was actually seen speaking to a young man from her window. She was also charged with having walked out with a young man, and even to have sung a comic song at one of the College meetings. For these horrid offences she was practically expelled, her mother being sent for to fetch her away immediately. Our contemporary says that the chairman of the official meeting which punished the poor girl in this rigorous way was Professor Augus, the son of a famous Baptist minister. Perhaps he thinks that he acted in the spirit of Paul's great panegyric on charity, but few other persons will share his opinion.

There is a goody-goody paper called *On and Off Duty*, conducted for the spiritual welfare of policemen, in a recent number of which we notice what is doubtless a cock-and-bull story of Mr. Frank Smith, the London County Councillor, going up to "a stand of infidel orators" in Hyde Park, and inducing the meeting to give three cheers for Jesus Christ. Perhaps some of our Hyde Park friends will tell us whether the oldest inhabitant, so to speak, has any recollection of Mr. Frank Smith's having spoken under any circumstances from the Freethought platform there.

Here is a sample of the "poetry" this precious journal ladles out for policemen:—

All unseen, the Master walketh
By the toiling servant's side;
Comfortable words He talketh,
While His hands uphold and guide.

Why does the policeman, when on duty, require the Master's hands to uphold him? Is it because of whiskey or four-half?

Talmage has been working a fresh vein. "Jesus," he said, "had a gentle face; Jesus had an expressive face; Jesus had a pleading face; Jesus had a sympathetic face; Jesus had a suffering face." And now for the thrilling climax: "Jesus had a tremendous face." Talmage must have been thinking of his own photograph. He has face enough for anything.

We clip the following from *Secular Thought* (Toronto): "LYONS, Oct. 3.—The Rev. Charles R. Hamblin, pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church at Butler Centre, has been committed to Willard Asylum because of insanity. He imagines that he is Samson; has pursued his wife, believing her to be Delilah, and alleges that she has made various onslaughts on him with a pair of shears to rob him of his locks. Again, he has seized his brother, calling him a lion, and has endeavored to pry his jaws open. The unfortunate man is thirty-two years of age, and is a son of the Rev. Mr. Hamblin, deceased, former Methodist Episcopal minister." Evidently the poor fellow has been over-studying the Bible.

Roughs and Religion is the title of a pamphlet issued by the Church Printing Company, comprising a series of articles that have appeared in *Truth* and the *Sun*. The writer professes to have interviewed some of the "Gideonites," who are enrolled for the protection of the Kensite Protestants on public occasions. Here is a pretty little confession by one of these soldiers of Christ: "We have had some delightful goes at the 'Cawtholics.' One night, at a hall in High-street, Kensington, I pinned a fellow's arms behind his back while my brother gave him about twenty or thirty blows over the heart. I then let go his arms, and, getting his head under my left arm, gave him about thirty more in the mug. When I let go he dropped senseless to the floor."

This is a lovely exhibition of Christian brotherhood. It recalls the good old times when the Roman historian said that the Christians loved each other like wild beasts.

Mr. Hall Caine, the author of that flashy novel entitled *The Christian*, which has brought him in more money than Jesus Christ and the twelve Apostles ever saw in their lives, is now in America, where he is piloting the stage version of his book. Mr. William Winter, the famous critic, did not see anything to admire in the play, and he said so; adding that "a religious enthusiast who has not got beyond carnal temptation has not travelled very far." Thereupon the novelist said that this was an attack on the morality of his drama, and called his critic a liar. Mr. Winter replied with caustic irony, referring to "Mr. Hall Caine's exquisite felicity in the choice of language—a felicity which seems to be associated with great sweetness of temper, lovely refinement of style, and a most urbane and benevolent tolerance."

The Rev. H. Wright, vicar of St. Silas, Sheffield, was found dead at the foot of Scarborough Castle Hill, which is three hundred feet high. He is reported to have fallen off

accidentally, but it is also stated that he had been suffering from mental depression.

Rev. Samuel Walton Kay, vicar of Butler's Marston, Warwickshire, has been arrested on a charge of feloniously putting off, knowing the same to be forged, a promissory note for the payment of £500, with intent to defraud the Metropolitan Bank of England and Wales.

"If I were really to obey the teaching of Jesus Christ," said the late Laurence Oliphant, "I should take my coat off before I had gone a few steps along Piccadilly, and give it to the first poor fellow who wanted it." Of course the Bishops know that as well as he did, and perhaps that is the reason why they are seldom seen in the streets.

The Christian Scientist who left everything to the Lord brought along a legal assistant at the inquest in order that she might have "fair play."

The minister of a certain parish in Kincardineshire has caused a dreadful scandal in the Kirk. At a meeting of the Church Committee he pleaded guilty to having written a number of ungodly letters to a lady, in which he spoke of tasting nectar from "his Minnie's" lips, besides using a number of other expressions, suggested, perhaps, by the Song of Solomon. The man of God threw himself on the mercy of the Committee, but they resolved that the matter must go before the Presbytery; and we suppose he will be cut off as an unprofitable member.

The *Aberdeen Free Press* breaks through the reserve of other journals and gives a long report of this case. The man of God's name is the Rev. John Reith, and he is parish minister of Rickarton, near Stonehaven. The young lady has got married since the most effusive letters were written, and her husband is naturally interested in the minister's correspondence with his wife. In addition to the "nectar of your lips" we note that the reverend gentleman anticipated "a warm thrilling embrace." Whether he had it or not does not appear.

Rev. Dr. Parkhurst, the famous New York purity crusader, seems to have come to the conclusion that the gospel of Jesus Christ is not calculated to save the world. The following is an extract from a sermon he preached on October 9: "Read the gospels as admiringly as you please, eulogise their blessed contents as glowingly as you will, it is not in them unaidedly to save the world, or even to move the world. For three years and a half the disciples had gospel, and only gospel, in the person of Jesus Christ; yet at the end of that period they were only as so many wooden images and limp rags so far as ability to stir the world was concerned. There never was a finer lot of poltroons than the eleven disciples on the day of their Lord's death, and yet they had been fed on gospel, its beauty and truth, for forty-two months."

Freethinkers in England should bear in mind that the leading Catholic journals in France have been the worst enemies of justice to Dreyfus, and the most reckless insulters of every man who stood up for fair play. Drumont, the Anti-Semite leader, is not a priest, but he is a devout Catholic. M. Brunetière, who has kept out all articles setting forth the case for Dreyfus from the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, is the man who invented the phrase of "the bankruptcy of science." Zola and Clemenceau, on the other side, are Atheists; and we hear that the heroic Colonel Picquart is a Freethinker.

According to the *Chronicle*, a diabolical plot exists in Paris to assassinate some of the most distinguished Frenchmen who have opposed the intrigues of the Army chiefs. "The people who head the list," our contemporary says, "include an ex-Minister of Justice, a widely-respected journalist, a well-known advanced politician, several leading French men of letters, journalists, and ex-politicians." They have all been warned by the police, and advised not to go about unarmed.

The editor of the *South London Mail* thinks any lie good enough to print about Freethinkers. He permits a pseudonymous scoundrel, signing himself "Enquirer," to ask whether Mr. Foote will return any money collected for the defence of George Bedborough. Mr. Foote has not collected any money for this purpose. All he did was to state that subscriptions could be sent to the honorary secretary or treasurer of the Free Press Defence Committee, whose names and addresses were always given. Any question by a subscriber will doubtless be answered by those officials. Questions by non-subscribing busybodies will probably be treated with silent contempt.

What is the matter with the staid and sober *Westminster Gazette*? A few days ago it printed the following brief paragraph:—"The new Mayor of Jarrow is a Salvationist."

Hallelujah!" Such profanity is quite shocking. People might just as well read the *Freethinker*.

Mr. Joseph N. Good, London City Missionary, has issued a pamphlet entitled "Is there a Dearth of Conversions?" He admits that there is, and he attributes it to the fact that religion has entered into competition with other agencies for the public amusement. But what is poor old religion to do? It must keep pace with the times somehow. If it doesn't, it will die out all the sooner.

The Medway Guardians have had to consider the question of the chaplaincy of their Union. The Rev. G. S. Hitchcock, having given up the doctrine of the Atonement, was inhibited by the Bishop of Rochester from officiating as a Church clergyman in any part of the diocese. This inhibition was printed in the newspapers before it was sent to Mr. Hitchcock, who was very naturally offended. In a strongly-worded letter to the Bishop he said: "Permit me to point out that your lordship did not inhibit a clergyman who was intemperate.....I have known a clergyman who ruined a young woman, clergymen notorious for drunkenness, clergymen who made lying a fine art; and these were not inhibited by their bishops." Moral: the only real sin is heresy.

The *Britishman*, which is apparently an organ of empire and religion, falls foul of *Humanity*, the organ of the Humanitarian League, principally because of its objection to the torture of geese for the sake of their deceased livers. The *Britishman* says it is not at all interested in the sufferings of geese—which is rather peculiar; moreover, it loathes and despises Humanitarians, and would like to grant a divorce to every woman who is married to one. The editor, however, had better look after his own womenkind first. They may want it.

The Rev. Dr. A. J. Harrison, lecturing on "Scepticism and Faith" at Sheffield, is reported in the local *Daily Telegraph* to have spoken as follows: "It seemed to be the case in Sheffield, as he had found in other parts of England, that the Secularists were under an admonition to keep away from his lectures. He was told in Portsmouth that that was literally the case. They might gather how much Freethinking there was in obedience to the order. (Laughter.) He would say to them, as he did in Newcastle, that if a man came who called them scoundrels, and abused them like pickpockets, they would come in hundreds; but if he treated them like gentlemen they stayed away. In adopting that course, he said they were morally encouraging and putting a premium on the very worst form of controversy."

We have always respected Dr. Harrison as a gentleman, and we are sorry to hear him talking in this way. Will he kindly explain *by whom* the Secularists are "told" not to attend his lectures? For our part, we have again and again begged Secularists not to help make meetings for scurrilous scoundrels on the Christian Evidence side, such as the fellow who is now in gaol for abusing girls, and another fellow who shall be nameless. Dr. Harrison has been lecturing for a great many years, and it may be that Secularists do not find much novelty in his discourses, however interesting they might be to those who have not heard him before.

Mr. J. A. Fleming, of Middlesborough, used to be a zealous Secularist. Some time ago, however, he was placed in a lunatic asylum. When he was released he came to London and tried to convince us that he was perfectly sane, but the more he talked the greater were our suspicions. We now see from the local *Evening Telegraph* that he offers to prove that he is Shiloh, prophesied of in the Old Testament, and the Son of Man, prophesied of in the New.

Judge French, at the Shoreditch County Court, was told by the plaintiff in a certain case that the defendant was a Scripture reader and told lies. "He's a what?" asked his honor. "He reads the Holy Bible and tells lies like that," said the defendant. Whereupon his honor remarked: "If he is telling lies and reads the Holy Bible as well, he is not the only one, I'm sure."

At the annual conference of the British section of the Evangelical Alliance, held at Brighton, the Rev. Dr. Gritton had to make a painful confession as to the persecuting spirit of the Protestants in Germany. We quote from the *Daily News*: "In Bavaria the singing of hymns in public, or the distribution of tracts, was forbidden, unless specially permitted by the police. In Finland it was the Protestant element, the Lutheran Church, which persecuted and oppressed all who dissented from the State Church. In Saxony, so far as he knew, Roman Catholics did not persecute; but, oh! the untold persecution by the Lutheran Church there towards those fellow Christians who differed

from it. The friends of the Evangelical Alliance must in kindness offer some strong words of remonstrance and counsel to Protestant, as well as Catholic, persecutors on the Continent. After referring to the official oppression of the Baptists in the kingdom of Saxony, he said that, in a recent letter proclaiming the liberties there enjoyed, the Lutheran Minister of Worship at Dresden wrote: 'The worship of the Baptists is not the worship of Almighty God, their meetings are not for pious purposes, and therefore no clause as to liberty in Saxony has anything to do with them.' The fact was that in Saxony the Baptists had no legal rights. Dr. Baedeker had himself taken part recently in two meetings of the same congregations, and the fines for these two meetings amounted to no less than 18,000 marks, furniture being seized for the payment of that sum. The Lutheran Brethren held the truth in the main, but they held it imperfectly in the matter of granting liberty to fellow-believers of other denominations."

A conference of representative clergy and laity held at the Guildhall, Worcester, has solemnly condemned the Rev. Mr. Beeby's book, *Creed and Life*, as containing "deadly error." Mr. Beeby declares it is a logical absurdity to say that Jesus is God, and a contradiction to say that he was born, and also born of a virgin. He also says that the grounds commonly set forth for the belief in Christ's resurrection are "absolutely worthless." We do not know whether Mr. Beeby will be turned out of the Church or not. His book is a sign of the spread of Freethought even in clerical circles.

Four hundred years ago Spain conquered America, which has returned the compliment by conquering Spain. Many results follow this victory, but perhaps the most curious is the extension of missionary enterprise. Red-hot missionary meetings have been held in New York, at which many thousands of pounds have been raised, presumably to Protestantise Porto Rico, Cuba, and perhaps the Philippines. The men of God rush in wherever they see a chance of business; and the poor laymen are bled twice, first to pay for the soldiers who fight for territory, and secondly for sky-pilots who go and fight the devil there.

The Philippines, in especial, ought to yield a rich harvest to the Yankee missionary societies. From seven to ten millions of mere half Catholics are going to hell there as fast as they can gallop. Uncle Sam will gladly shell out a mountain of dollars to save their souls from destruction. And the missionaries will spend the dollars.

The Last Twilight.

Nor shall we murmur at, nor much regret,
The years that gently bend us to the ground,
And gradually incline our face; that we
Leisurely stooping, and with each slow step,
May curiously inspect our lasting home.
But we shall sit with luminous holy smiles,
Endeared by many griefs, by many a jest,
And custom sweet of living side by side;
And full of memories not unkindly glance
Upon each other. Last, we shall descend
Into the natural ground—not without tears—
One must go first, ah God! one must go first;
After so long one blow for both were good;
Still like old friends, glad to have met, and leave
Behind a wholesome memory on the earth.

—From "Marpessa."

STEPHEN PHILLIPS.

How to Help Us.

- (1) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.
- (2) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
- (3) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.
- (4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Fordor will send them on application.
- (5) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.

Rough work, Iconoclasm—but the only way to get at truth.—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*
Camels and Christians receive their burdens kneeling.—*Ambrose Bierce.*

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, November 13, Corn Exchange, Chester: 10.45, "What is the Bible?"; 2.45, "The Czar's Appeal to Europe"; 7.30, "The Meaning of Death."

November 20, Camberwell.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—November 13, Camberwell Hall, S.E.; 20, Hall of Science, Sheffield; 27, Birmingham. December 4, Glasgow; 11, Liverpool.—All communications for Mr. Charles Watts should be sent to him at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

W. FRENCH.—The *Zoophilist* is the monthly organ (3d.) of the National Anti-Vivisection Society, 20 Victoria-street, London, S.W. Mr. Stephen Coleridge appears to be the editor.

SOUTH LONDONER.—Thanks for copy of the *Mail*. Woffendale is really amusing. We do not ask him to follow his own advice about "trying to be a gentleman." He is too old to achieve any success in that direction.

FAIRPLAY.—Thanks for a copy of the correspondence in your local press. Your letters are sure to do good. We wish Freethinkers all over the country would try to ventilate Freethought questions in the newspapers.

J. FISH.—It was an awkward blunder: we hope it has been corrected.

WHEELER MEMORIAL FUND.—Unknown, 10s.; Dr. Laing, £1.

W. A. FINCKEN.—Many thanks. Too many do nothing and give nothing.

X RAYS.—Would have been better if more satirical and less savage. The second verse spoils the effect of the other two.

W. COX.—Thanks for the address. Mr. Foote will write you on the other matter.

T. WILMOT.—We wish the Camberwell Branch all success in its gallant fight.

R. EDWARDS.—Go ahead. The Christians must not be allowed to break up Secular meetings on Peckham Rye, or elsewhere.

J. GRAHAM.—Pleased to hear that Mr. Watts's visit to Wigan was so successful. We note that the next Branch meeting will be held this evening (November 13) at 6, at the Dog and Partridge Hotel.

MINNIE MANN.—We thank you both. There might (as you say) have well been a larger list of subscriptions. What we have received, however, will be used to the best advantage.

E. R. WOODWARD.—We are obliged for the extracts.

THEOMACHOS and M. LOAFER.—See "Sugar Plums."

WILLIE DYSON.—Thanks; see paragraph.

B. STEVENS.—Will look through it and decide.

JAMES NEATE.—Always glad to receive such cuttings.

A READER OF "REYNOLDS'."—The Free Press Defence Committee is issuing a manifesto, giving a detailed statement of the Bedborough fiasco, of its own action before the trial, and of the money subscribed and its disposition. The last item will be rather unpleasant for some persons.

C. COHEN advises us that the 5s. each acknowledged from Messrs. Garvon and Tait as for Shilling Month should have been for the Treasurer's Scheme. There is nothing further to rectify, as the money was paid by Mr. Cohen to Miss Vance, the N. S. S. secretary.

W. H. DEAKIN.—We are obliged. See paragraph.

H. LEES SUMNER, subscribing to our Circulation Fund, praises the *Freethinker* as a weekly tonic, and expresses his wonder that some wealthy Freethinker does not invest enough money in it to double its circulation, which might be done easily.

H. THORP.—No doubt such lectures as the one you so appreciated are a very agreeable change.

J. UNSWORTH.—You will be proposed in due course as a member of the Secular Society, Limited.

T. LANGFORD.—Thanks.

S. HUDSON.—Thanks for your good wishes and the practical token of them.

W. W.—Your cuttings are welcome.

"FREETHINKER" CIRCULATION FUND.—A. and F. Webster (per Miss Vance), 6s.; Unknown, 10s.; Dr. Laing, 10s.; W. W., 2s.; L. A., 2s.; A. F., 2s.; W. F., 2s.; R. F., 1s.; H. B., 1s.; W. Mann, 2s. 6d.; Minnie Mann, 2s. 6d.; H. Lees Sumner, 4s.; H. Thorp, 2s.; S. Hudson, 10s.; J. Payne, 3s.; A. S. Vickers, 1s.

RECEIVED.—New Century—Christian Million—Two Worlds—On and Off Duty—Ethical World—Progressive Thinker—Secular Thought—Zoophilist—Boston Investigator—Public Opinion—Sydney Bulletin—Isle of Man Times—Liberator—The Witness—Aberdeen Free Press—New York Truthseeker—New Orleans Times-Democrat—Torch of Reason—South London Mail—Free Society—Glasgow Weekly Citizen—Freidenker—Awakener of India—Hackney Gazette—Manchester Evening News.

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

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.

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

THE 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.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE delivered three lectures in the Secular Hall, Manchester, on Sunday. The morning and afternoon audiences were good, and the hall was crowded almost to suffocation in the evening. During the day a record collection was made for the N. S. S. General Fund. The Branch committee express themselves as delighted with the day's proceedings. They say it was "like old times."

Mr. Foote started a Branch of the N. S. S. at Chester some years ago, when the Bishop of that city publicly libelled Secularists as ill-users of little children. Mr. Cohen and other lecturers have visited Chester since, and now Mr. Foote is going to deliver three Sunday lectures there, by way of starting a vigorous winter campaign on the part of the Branch. His lectures to-day (Nov. 13) will be delivered in the Corn Exchange.

Last Sunday Mr. Charles Watts delivered two lectures in the Public Hall at Wigan. The audiences were exceedingly good at both meetings, about four hundred attentive listeners being present on each occasion. There was very little opposition, but a number of questions were put. Friends from the surrounding districts mustered in good force, and gave Mr. Watts a hearty reception. He had many pressing invitations to again visit Wigan, where there are many Freethinkers, who should at once organise for practical Secular work.

This evening, Sunday, November 13, Mr. Watts lectures in the Secular Hall, New Church-road, Camberwell, taking for his subject "The Doom of the Churches."

Mr. Cohen had a capital audience at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening, and his lecture on "Christianity and the Jews" was highly appreciated. He occupies the same platform again this evening (Nov. 13).

The Camberwell Branch held its annual meeting on Sunday morning, and a most encouraging report was presented to the members. We regret to hear that Mr. S. Hartmann had to resign the presidency in consequence of age and ill health. He has served the Branch with great devotion, and his loss will be much felt. Fortunately, the new president, Mr. Victor Roger, is in the prime of life, and his zeal in the cause of Freethought is as well known as his ability—at least, in South London. Mr. Sabine, another good worker, is vice-president, Mr. Wilmot secretary, and Mr. Martin financial secretary. The new committee is a strong one.

The East London Branch's special open-air meeting at Salmon's-lane, Limehouse, on Sunday, was a great success. Messrs. Cohen, Pack, and Ramsey addressed a large audience, and although the Christian Evidence Brigade made an ugly rush for the platform they were driven back disastrously, and the meeting broke up in good order after a collection realising £1 for the Poplar Hospital. Another meeting will be held to-day (Nov. 13), several prominent Freethinkers will speak, and we hope local "saints" will attend in force to support the platform.

We are pleased to hear that Mr. Joseph McCabe had fine audiences on Sunday at Birmingham, and an enthusiastic reception. Perhaps we shall receive further particulars from the Branch secretary.

Members of the Secular Society, Limited, who have been duly proposed, seconded, and admitted at the last Directors' Meeting, have had formal notices sent to them of the First General (Members') Meeting to be held at the Manchester Hotel, Aldersgate-street, on Friday, November 18, at eight o'clock in the evening. Of course there are some applicants who have not been admitted in time for this meeting. Proxy forms are sent out with the notices to members. Those who wish Mr. Foote, or anyone else, to vote for them if necessary on any disputed matter, will please fill in

their proxy forms and forward them to London at once. A penny postage stamp is necessary to make the form valid, and the space is marked for it under the signature, which must be attested by a witness.

Mr. Cohen's article on "The Responsibilities of Unbelief" is reproduced from our columns in the *Boston Investigator*.

The last number of Mr. Joseph Symes's *Liberator* to hand from Melbourne reproduces one of Mr. Mackenzie's poems and several paragraphs from the *Freethinker*. Mr. Symes's own pen is as bright and lively as ever.

The *Freethinker* is not a political journal; that is to say, it does not concern itself with the game of party politics. Nevertheless there are political questions and political questions, and some of them are so big and far-reaching that whoever has no interest in them is not a citizen of the world. One of these is what may be briefly called the Fashoda question. Ever since the Sirdar found Major Marchand at Fashoda, and treated him (by the way) with consummate tact and politeness, a certain section of journalists, self-appointed and irresponsible, have done their best to fan this trumpety dispute into an open rupture between France and England. War is always a bad business, but a war between France and England, especially over such a petty affair as that of Fashoda, would be a scandal to statesmanship and civilisation. We are heartily glad that the French fever has passed its crisis here in England, and we hope the two most Liberal nations of Europe will soon settle down to an amicable understanding with each other.

France has passed through a very bad time lately, but it is good to see how that great nation is, after all, righting herself in the eyes of the world. She was grossly misled and abused over the Dreyfus affair, but now she is learning the truth she is coming round slowly but surely to the side of reason and justice. Yes, the head and heart of France are still sound. Those who called her decadent mistook a passing aberration for a chronic perversion. The France of Montaigne, of Rabelais, of Voltaire, of Courier, of Hugo, still pulses with a grand vitality.

Zola must feel his heart swelling with a proud joy. He appealed to the real France—not the France of the sabre and the cassock—and he said that he knew he should not appeal in vain. "Justice marches!" he cried, as he left France after his second trial. Since then it has marched, and Zola is vindicated. He will return to Paris with a heightened reputation. Frenchmen will see in him something more than the writer; they will see the brave man, the hero—one who fought a gallant battle for his country's self-respect.

Rev. Hugh Miller, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Oregon, has resigned his pastorate. He declares that he no longer believes in the Creation story except as an allegory; or in the special inspiration of the Bible, which is in some respects inferior to the Koran; or in the doctrine of the Trinity—Jesus Christ being only a great religious reformer; or in miracles or the external efficacy of prayer; or in vicarious atonement or a literal hell of fire and brimstone. Baptist churches demand that these doctrines shall be preached, and as Mr. Miller cannot do that honestly he comes out of his church like a man, and tells the public the reasons for his resignation.

Mr. Stephen H. Allison, presumably the gentleman who used to lecture occasionally on the Freethought platform in England, has been elected President for the year of the Stenographers' Association, New Orleans. The local *Times-Democrat* describes him as "a young gentleman of considerable literary ability," and says that "under his capable leadership the coming year promises to be the most successful the circle has ever had."

The Holy Hooligans on Peckham Rye were taught a stern lesson, and for a time they were quiet; but on Sunday afternoon they made another rush for the Secular platform, and created a scene of considerable disorder. Freethinkers in the locality should rally round the platform strongly this afternoon (Nov. 13). We hear that several members of the West London Branch are going to Limehouse first and to Peckham Rye afterwards, in order to assist any policemen who may happen to turn up in keeping the peace.

Is it not true that Truth gets well if she is run over by a locomotive, while Error dies of lockjaw if she scratches her finger? I never heard of a mathematician being alarmed for the safety of a demonstrated proposition, and I think that the dread of discussion generally implies feebleness of inward conviction.—*Oliver Wendell Holmes*.

Every philosopher is cousin to an Atheist.—*A. de Musset*.

SUPERSTITION.

EXTRACTS FROM COLONEL INGERSOLL'S NEW LECTURE.

IN nearly every brain is found some cloud of superstition.

A woman drops a cloth with which she is washing dishes, and she exclaims: "That means company."

Most people will admit that there is no possible connection between dropping the cloth and the coming of visitors. The falling cloth could not have put the visit desire in the minds of people not present, and how could the cloth produce the desire to visit the particular person who dropped it? There is no possible connection between the dropping of the cloth and the anticipated effects.

A man catches a glimpse of the new moon over his left shoulder, and he says: "This is bad luck."

To see the moon over the right or left shoulder, or not to see it, could not by any possibility affect the moon; neither could it change the effect or influence of the moon on any earthly thing. Certainly the left-shoulder glance could in no way affect the nature of things. All the facts in nature would remain the same as though the glance had been over the right shoulder. We see no connection between the left-shoulder glance and any possible evil effects upon the one who saw the moon in this way.

A girl counts the leaves of a flower, and she says: "One, he comes; two, he tarries; three, he courts; four, he marries; five, he goes away."

Of course the flower did not grow, and the number of its leaves was not determined, with reference to the courtship or marriage of this girl, neither could there have been any intelligence that guided her hand when she selected that particular flower. So, counting seeds in an apple cannot in any way determine whether the future of an individual is to be happy or miserable.

UNLUCKY NUMBERS, TIMES, AND SIGNS.

Thousands of persons believe in lucky and unlucky days, numbers, signs, and jewels.

Many people regard Friday as an unlucky day—as a bad day to commence a journey, to marry, to make any investment. The only reason given is that Friday is an unlucky day.

Starting across the sea on Friday could have no possible effect upon the winds, or waves, or tides, any more than starting on any other day; and the only possible reason for thinking Friday unlucky is the assertion that it is so.

So it is thought by many that it is dangerous for thirteen people to dine together. Now, if thirteen is a dangerous number, twenty-six ought to be twice as dangerous, and fifty-two four times as terrible.

It is said that one of the thirteen will die in a year. Now there is no possible relation between the number and digestion of each, between the number and the individual diseases. If fourteen dine together, there is greater probability, if we take into account only the number, of a death within the year than there would be if only thirteen were at the table.

IDIOTIC SUPERSTITIONS.

Overturning the salt is very unlucky, but spilling the vinegar makes no difference.

Why salt should be revengeful and vinegar forgiving has never been told.

If the first person who enters a theatre is cross-eyed, the audience will be small, and the "run" a failure.

How the peculiarity of the eyes of the first one who enters changes the intention of a community, or how the intentions of a community cause the cross-eyed man to go early, has never been satisfactorily explained. Between this so-called cause and the so-called effect there is, so far as we can see, no possible relation.

To wear an opal is bad luck, but rubies bring health. How these stones affect the future, how they destroy causes and defeat effects, no one pretends to know.

So there are thousands of lucky and unlucky things, warnings, omens, and prophecies; but all sensible, sane, and reasoning human beings know that every one is an absurd and idiotic superstition.

NATURAL PHENOMENA.

Let us take another step.

For many centuries it was believed that eclipses of the sun and moon were prophetic of pestilence or famine, and that comets foretold the death of kings, or the destruction

of nations, the coming of war, or plague. All strange appearances in the heavens—the Northern Lights, circles about the moon, sun-dogs, falling stars—filled our intelligent ancestors with terror. They fell upon their knees—did their best with sacrifice and prayer to avoid the threatened disaster. Their faces were ashen with fear as they closed their eyes and cried to the heavens for help. The clergy, who were as familiar with God then as the orthodox preachers are now, knew exactly the meaning of eclipses and sun-dogs and Northern Lights; knew that God's patience was nearly exhausted, that he was then whetting the sword of his wrath, and that the people could save themselves only by obeying the priests, by counting their beads and doubling their subscriptions.

Earthquakes and cyclones filled the coffers of the Church. In the midst of disasters the miser, with trembling hands, opened his purse. In the gloom of eclipses thieves and robbers divided their booty with God, and poor, honest, ignorant girls, remembering that they had forgotten to say a prayer, gave their little earnings to soften the heart of God.

Now we know that all these signs and wonders in the heavens have nothing to do with the fate of kings, nations, or individuals; that they had no more reference to human beings than to colonies of ants, hives of bees, or the eggs of insects. We now know that the signs and eclipses, the comets, and the falling stars would have been just the same if not a human being had been upon the earth. We know now that eclipses come at certain times, and that their coming can be exactly foretold.

RELICS OF SAINTS.

A little while ago the belief was general that there were certain healing virtues in inanimate things, in the bones of holy men and women, in the rags that had been torn from the foul clothing of still fouler saints, in hairs from martyrs, in bits of wood and rusty nails from the true Cross, in the teeth and finger nails of pious men, and in a thousand other sacred things.

The diseased were cured by kissing a box in which was kept some bone, or rag, or bit of wood, some holy hairs, provided the kiss was preceded or followed by a gift—a something for the Church.

In some mysterious way the virtue in the bone, or rag, or piece of wood, crept or flowed from the box, took possession of the sick who had the necessary faith, and in the name of God drove out the devils who were the real disease.

Intelligent people now know that the bone of a saint has in it no greater virtue than the bone of any animal; that a rag from a wandering beggar is just as good as one from a saint, and that the hair of a horse will cure disease just as quickly and surely as the hair of a martyr. We now know that all the sacred relics are religious rubbish; that those who use them are for the most part dishonest, and that those who rely on them are almost idiotic.

In our ancestors' days the priests were fishers for money, and they used these relics for bait.

MIRACLES.

What is a miracle? An act performed by a master of nature without reference to the facts in nature. This is the only honest definition of a miracle.

If a man could make a perfect circle, the diameter of which was exactly one-half the circumference, that would be a miracle in geometry. If a man could make twice four nine, that would be a miracle in mathematics. If a man could make a stone, falling in the air, pass through a space of ten feet the first second, twenty-five feet the second second, and five feet the third second, that would be a miracle in physics. If a man could put together hydrogen, oxygen, and nitrogen, and produce pure gold, that would be a miracle in chemistry. If a minister were to prove his creed, that would be a theological miracle.

Miracles are not simply impossible, but they are unthinkable by any man capable of thinking.

Now, an intelligent man cannot believe that a miracle ever was, or ever will be, performed.

Ignorance is the soil in which belief in miracles grows.

GOOD AND EVIL SPIRITS.

Let us take another step.

While our ancestors filled the darkness with evil spirits, enemies of mankind, they also believed in the existence of

good spirits. These good spirits sustained the same relation to God that the evil ones did to the Devil. These good spirits protected the faithful from the temptations and snares of the Evil One.

These angels watched over infants who had been baptized, over persons who had made holy vows, over priests and nuns and wandering beggars who believed.

These spirits were of various kinds. Some had once been men or women, some had never lived in this world, and some had been angels from the commencement. Nobody pretended to know exactly what they were, or exactly how they looked, or in what way they went from place to place, or how they affected or controlled the minds of men.

Our fathers believed that they could by prayer, by sacrifice, by fasting, by performing certain ceremonies, gain the assistance of this God and of these good spirits. They were not quite logical. They did not believe that the Devil was the author of all evil.

The man of sense knows the history of this belief, and he knows also that for many centuries its truth was established by the Holy Bible. He knows that the Old Testament is filled with allusions to the Devil, to evil spirits, and that the New Testament is the same. He knows that Christ himself was a believer in the Devil, in evil spirits, and that his principal business was casting out devils from the bodies of men and women. He knows that Christ himself, according to the New Testament, was not only tempted by the Devil, but was carried by his Satanic Highness to the top of the temple. If the New Testament is the inspired word of God, then I admit that these devils, these imps, do actually exist, and that they do take possession of human beings.

(To be continued.)

GOD—WITH DISCUSSION.

THERE is something very suggestive about the title of an article by Dr. Paul Carus in the current number of the *Monist*: "God—With Discussion." God, without discussion, would be a distinct anomaly. There is probably no other human conception that has been productive of so much dispute as the God idea. Many of us have fondly hoped that all this worry was at an end, that the God-idea had found its natural way to the limbo of exploded error, and that, to the rational mind at least, theological discussion was a thing of the past.

Unfortunately, we are altogether mistaken. From the midst of the philosophers of science, from the very heart of our own camp, there has arisen a prophet who is proclaiming aloud the existence of God—not the God of Revelation, not the God of the Argument from Design, and not the God of Conscience, but the God of Science, the God that can be demonstrated to exist as easily and surely as we demonstrate the law of gravitation. We can imagine the jubilation of the apologists when they hear their arch-enemy science announcing that Atheism is a mistake, and Agnosticism a creed of intellectual laziness. Dr. Carus is a Prodigal Son of science; he has, during his intellectual career, tasted the miseries of a Godless existence, and eaten of the husks of science; now he returns within the Theistic fold, and will be welcomed with open arms by the Fathers of the Church. Nevertheless, his God is a God—with discussion.

The Atheist rises from a perusal of Dr. Carus's article with a feeling of bewilderment. There is much in the article with which he is inclined to agree, much that he doubts to be true, and a great deal upon which he would be glad to have fuller and more definite information. Dr. Carus's position, however, may be stated in a few words. He claims that his God-idea is the natural descendant of the God-ideas of the past, purified, exalted, and rendered acceptable to the scientific mind. Regarding the universe as "one consistent body of uniformities" revealed to us by scientific study, he conceives God as the source of these uniformities, their "formative omnipresence." To use his own words:—

"All the attributes which have, and rightly, been predicated of God are here combined in the Divinity that shapes the ends of the cosmos as a whole as well as in its details, where we are confronted with immuta-

bility, omnipresence, eternality, universality, omnipotence, omniscience, justice, omnibenevolence, and an all-embracing love, long-suffering, and mercy."

Now, the whole difference between Dr. Carus and the Atheist lies in the fact that, while both recognise that "things act on account of the inherent qualities which constitute them," and that "things consist of motor impulses, shaped by previous conditions, and, according to present conditions, taking a definite course," the Atheist leaves his world-conception so; but Dr. Carus wants us to regard the unity and universality of these intrinsically necessary uniformities as direct evidence of the existence of God.

This omnipresent and eternal "Allhood of existence" is Dr. Carus's God. Now for the discussion.

First of all, it is curious to note how near Dr. Carus has come to the God-idea of those Agnostics of the Spencerian school, against whom he directs some rather undignified criticism. Spencer goes further than Dr. Carus; he defines God, while Dr. Carus does little more than describe his characteristics. Spencer says: "There exists a Power to which no limit in time or space is conceivable, of which all phenomena, as presented in consciousness, are manifestations, but which we can know only through these manifestations." Dr. Carus differs from the Spencerian in proceeding to catalogue the attributes of Deity, which the Spencerian considers as unknowable. The Atheist is likely to find both conceptions untenable.

Dr. Carus's God-idea may be criticised from three points of view: 1. That the word *God* is not justly employed; 2. That his "God" does not satisfy the human longings which the orthodox God satisfies; and 3. That the characteristics of his God are not implied in the world-conception which he accepts.

In the April number of the *Monist* Dr. Carus defends himself upon the first point. He asks why we should "regard the definition of a word as unalterable in the face of the fact that all our fundamental notions, such terms as life, matter, force, have all undergone similar changes." But Dr. Carus forgets that such conceptions as those of life, matter, and force belong to quite a different category from the conception of God. They belong to the category of phenomena. Men continue to talk of life as life, whatever theory of vitalism they may hold, simply because the phenomena of life can be observed and described apart from any theory of their nature. God cannot be studied in the same way, not being an obvious natural phenomenon. It may be that, as Dr. Carus thinks, the idea of God "will not lose by being freed of its materialistic accretions"; but it is nevertheless true that these accretions are typical of the God-idea of the great mass of the civilised world. If philosophers like Dr. Carus insist upon retaining the word God as representing their idea of the formative unity of the universe, they must be prepared to be constantly misinterpreted by both friends and opponents.

Regarding Dr. Carus's God-idea from the second critical point of view, we may recall Guyau's remark, that man looks to God as his surety for immortality in Heaven, and that he has really no other use for Him. There is a great deal of truth in this, and it prompts the reflection that Dr. Carus's God fulfils *not a single one* of the pious hopes of the modern Christian. Heaven and Hell vanish; immortality becomes a figure of speech, representing merely the immortality of personal influence; prayer becomes useless, at least from the objective point of view; sacrifice nor supplication can alter one hair's-breadth the course of inexorable necessity; the moral law has no Creator's sanction; the Bible has no more sanctity than the Vedas; Christ takes rank along with Buddha and the other religious sages of the world; everything disappears but the consciousness of the existence of a super-personal, super-real, eternal, etc., etc., guarantee of the inevitability and orderliness of the course of nature.

We are not at all surprised to hear from Dr. Carus that several clergymen have accepted his views, and have yet seen fit to remain in their clerical positions. The elasticity of Christian dogma has been convincingly shown in the changes which followed the establishment of the doctrine of evolution. It is easy enough to emasculate or attenuate the old familiar terms so as to adjust them to the advance of science. But it is equally difficult to prevent people from reverting, consciously or unconsciously, to the older meaning of the terms retained. Thus Dr. Carus and his followers, in their endeavors to preserve the continuity of

thought by retaining the old expressions, may prove to be reactionaries of a very insidious and dangerous type.

The third point of criticism can hardly be dealt with cursorily. But it may be noted that many scientific men have come to a world-conception similar to Dr. Carus's, but which they regard as quite complete and satisfactory without the Deistic implications which Dr. Carus regards as necessary. In fact, they would be strongly inclined to combat several of these implications—particularly those which have to do with ethical and emotional matters. When Dr. Carus talks of the "all-embracing love, long-suffering, and mercy" of the Divinity, he raises against him the host of arguments which have been used to disprove the validity of the idea of God as the God of Love. If everything in the world occurs according to intrinsic necessity, where lies the province of "all-embracing love, long-suffering, and mercy"? Mercy from an inexorable Fate? Long-suffering from the Spirit of Necessity? All-embracing love from He who inspires disease, disaster, and deeds of cruelty, as well as health, prosperity, and kindness? Here we seem to lose Dr. Carus the philosopher in Dr. Carus the theologian.

Incidentally, we may remark that Dr. Carus's God, although super-personal and super-real, is still a "he." Speaking of the Fatherhood of God, he says that it would be difficult to give a more beautiful and more impressive simile for God's intimate relation to every one of us. We recommend him to alter the sex of this super-personal and super-real Divinity, and, according to the suggestion of Mr. F. J. Gould, preach the allegory of the Motherhood of God.

Finally, we take the melancholy pleasure of flatly contradicting one of Dr. Carus's statements. At the conclusion of his article he says: "Unless we feel his [God's] presence, we shall find no peace in the restlessness of the world. Unless we sanctify our lives by the purport which his existence imparts to all life, we can find no comfort in our afflictions. Unless we recognise that our soul is an actualisation of his eternal thoughts, we shall not learn to fight the right way in the struggle for existence. Unless we listen to the still small voice that teaches us our duties, we shall not obtain that blissful assurance which the childhood of God alone can afford." This is as verbose and as absurd as the ordinary orthodox sermon. It jars on the ear of the reader who is accustomed to Dr. Carus's more rational efforts, and encourages us in the conviction that every man who gets under the spell of the God-idea loses a little of his mental stability.

Dr. Carus hints that his idea of God is not likely to impress the multitude, as they are not sufficiently trained in exact thinking to appreciate the significance of abstract ideas. This may be so, and it suggests the unpleasant inference that our lack of agreement with Dr. Carus is due to some intellectual deficiency on our part. We devoutly hope not, and we are supported in the hope by the recollection of the feelings which were produced in us when, in early youth, we were condemned to listen to the orthodox sermons of a very non-scientific clergyman. We heartily agreed with the earnest old gentleman so long as he kept to the discussion of right and wrong; but as soon as he became theological, we gave him up and suspended our judgment until we could dare to think for ourselves. When we did so, we found that our lack of appreciation was fully justified. We have much the same feelings now towards the God homily of Dr. Carus as we had then to the Jehovah homily of the orthodox minister. And we have more than a lurking suspicion that increase of knowledge and brain power on our part would not be productive of any very different final result. Dr. Carus, as a philosopher, holds a very eminent place in the estimation of many clear-headed men; but as an apologist *pro Deo* we fear that he has failed to prove convincing.

A. G. W.

A laborer out of employment applied for outdoor relief for himself and his wife at the North Dublin Union. "Well, my good fellow, we must have evidence that you are legally married," said the chairman of the Relief Committee. "Begor, sir, I've the best proof in the wuruld," said the applicant, and, bending his head, he displayed a scar on his skull. "Does yer honner, think," he added, "I'd be after takin' that abuse from anywan but a wife?"

PREHISTORIC PEEPS.

V.—THE YARN OF AN ANCIENT MARINER.

Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

Water, water everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink.

—COLERIDGE.

NOAH had greatness thrust upon him after he had celebrated his six hundredth birthday. Most men have a marble sarcophagus thrust upon them long before that age. Our prehistoric Nelson was, however, in the prime of life. Mrs. Noah had shortly before presented him with the infants Shem, Ham, and Japhet. To have triplets in one's household at so advanced a period of life was trying enough to have upset our old friend Job, that pragmatist paragon of patience.

Owing to a very sound constitution, Noah survived this unkind blow from Providence. Acting on information received from the divine meteorological office, Noah commenced business as a shipbuilder. The first intimation the outside world had of this proceeding was an advertisement from Messrs. Noah and Sons in the daily papers inviting tenders for gopher wood and pitch. This excited the curiosity of Noah's neighbors. They knew Noah as "a just man and perfect"; one who was used to—

drinking homilies and gin,
And chewing pork and adulation,
And looking backwards upon sin,
And looking forwards to Salvation.

But Noah was unused to business. He had, it was well known, "walked with God," but that merely intimated that he was a man about town; and, in addition, he had a weakness for "vilest, vitriol gin."

All this, his neighbors argued, must spell ruin. So they laughed, and waited for the time when Noah should be compelled to accept the hospitality of the ratepayers. Some advised Noah to treat the prehistoric Baxter with contempt. Others felt indignant, and like Lord Byron's Cain, wished to—

punch the Almighty tyrant on
His everlasting nose, and tell him that
His evil was not good.

But the one thing Noah would not take was his neighbors' advice, and the shipbuilding and the animal collecting went on apace.

The vessel was not handsome. It was shaped like a pantechinon, was three stories high, and had only one door and one window.

Our old friend, Mr. J. Hovah, was in constant attendance. Regular visitors to the shipbuilding yards might have seen him, day after day, superintending the labors of Noah and his three sons.

As the vessel approached completion his pleasure was manifest, and he was frequently seen to resort to a peculiar habit of washing his hands with invisible soap and in imperceptible water.

The excitement was tremendous when the long-expected animals commenced to arrive. Crowds assembled at every coign of vantage. The scene near the vessel was very brilliant, amongst the crowd being a large sprinkling of ladies.

A space was reserved close to the landing stage, and here were assembled Mr. J. Hovah, Mr. J. Christ, and Mr. H. Ghost, all resplendent in new gilt halos. The band, composed of Messrs. Ham and Japhet, played popular airs on the harp and cornet. Fine clear weather favored the event.

The circus arrived punctually at 2.35. As the first pair of ostriches crossed the gangway there was an almost deafening outburst. Hats were flung into the air, sticks and umbrellas were waved, and scenes of the greatest enthusiasm prevailed. Unfortunately, the barriers broke under the strain, and swept the police aside as if they were children. The unfortunate animals had not proceeded far when the rush took place and carried them off their feet. The horrified police dashed forward to protect the Trinity. They were too late. The blue blanket worn by Mr. J. Christ was torn off, and his halo knocked over his eyes. Mr. J. Hovah was also sadly mauled, and carried

off his feet. At last Noah and his family rushed to the rescue, and amidst blows, shouts, screams, and fainting women, and swearing men, the three partners were conveyed safely to the vessel.

A few hours later Mr. J. Hovah shut the door with a bang like a railway guard, and blew his almighty whistle, and the *Ark* started on her memorable and never-to-be-forgotten voyage.

MIMNERMUS.

(To be continued.)

CORRESPONDENCE.

FLAGELLOMANIA.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—It is a fact well known to pathologists, and deserving of more general attention, that the "flogging craze," of which so much has lately been heard in the press, is part of a morbid sentiment which, in its grosser forms, finds expression in certain most disreputable practices. I would recommend those who believe in the efficacy of the rod as the salvation of society to study two recent cases. One is the discovery lately made at Kovno, in Russian Poland, that priests had actually stripped naked and flogged several women in a vault of the church, where the police found various instruments of flagellation, such as rods and birches. The other is the "massage" scandal exposed in the Marylebone Police-court on October 15 last. Note the following sentence from the cross-examination of one of the "nurses": "What do you know about massage?—Nothing. What is the 'discipline' you give?—Well, it is a treatment. Yes, but what is it? Is it the birch?—Yes, it is flagellation, of course. (Sensation.)" It is thus placed beyond dispute that a disease exists which may be truly termed "flagellomania"; and I submit that the advocates of an extenuation of the flogging system would do well to consider whether it is not their own condition rather than that of their humanitarian opponents that is a sickly and morbid one.

JOSEPH COLLINSON.

PROFANE JOKES.

MUDGE—"Did you ever get back that umbrella you lent to Tompkins?" BUDGE—"You bet." MUDGE—"How did you manage it?" BUDGE—"That's easy. I saw him leave it in the church porch, and got out first."

Mrs. Pious—"I'm afraid your poor husband suffers very greatly from the heat?" Mrs. True—"I am afraid he does, but I cannot help him now." Mrs. Pious—"Why don't you take him to a cooler place?" Mrs. True—"I can't reach him. He died a month ago."

Rev. Thirdly—"My boy, do you know if you go fishing on Sunday you will lose your immortal soul?" Mugsey McGuire—"Say, mister, does yer know dat if yer stan' dere a talkin' at me, you'll scare away de only bite I've had to-day?"

"Lawd! Lawd!" exclaimed a pious colored brother, "but ain't de Bible comin' true ev'y day! Ain't we got a Sampson fightin' fer us! En ain't de word come clear 'cross de ocean dat de Nunited States flag waves over de Philistines?"—*Atlanta Constitution*.

"I have been requested," said the good pastor, beaming over the pulpit, "to offer prayers for rain, but the superintendent informs me that the Sunday-school picnic is arranged for Tuesday."—*Rockland Tribune*.

Little John (after casting his penny into the fund for the Bamalan Islanders)—"I wish I was a heathen." Sabbath School Teacher—"Oh, Johnny! Why do you wish such an awful thing as that?" Little John—"The heathen don't never have to give nothin'—they are always gettin' somethin'."—*Harper's Bazaar*.

Papa—"Did you ask God to give you your daily bread this morning?" Bobby—"No, papa. I looked in the pantry last night, and saw that there was enough to last for three days."—*Harper Bazaar*.

Remarking upon the equalising nature of death, a clergyman lately observed in his sermon that "when we die we all come to a lead devil." His congregation knew that he meant a dead level.

A Cleveland preacher was bemoaning to the Rev. Dr. Sprecher, of Cleveland, the other day, the indifference of the people to the Church, complaining bitterly of lack of attendance at nearly all the churches in the city. "I venture to say," he concluded, "if I were to advertise that two monkeys would perform in my pulpit next Sunday evening, the church would be crowded." "Yes," replied Dr. Sprecher, reflectively, "two would be better than one."—*Argonaut*.

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 C. Cohen, "The Search for God."
BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 8.30, The Bohemian Comedy Co. in "The Arabian Nights."
CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, C. Watts, "The Doom of the Churches."
EAST LONDON BRANCH (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road): 8, W. C. Lyons.
EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Bow Vestry Hall, Bow-road, E.): 7, Dr. Coit, "Bismarck."
SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road, S.E.): 11.15, Sunday-school; 7, J. M. Robertson, "The Two-fold Basis of Morals."
WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11, Stanton Coit, "The Influence of Good and Bad Example."
WEST LONDON BRANCH (20 Edgware-road): November 17, at 8.30, Mr. Claremont, "Our Railways: What they Are, and what they Might Be."
WESTMINSTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Grosvenor Arms, Page-street): 7.30, E. White, "Are the Teachings of Jesus Practical, Moral, and Elevating?"

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Peckham Rye): 3.15, R. P. Edwards, "What must I Do to be Saved?"
HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, Mr. Davis.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH (Bristol-street Board-school): Mrs. H. Bradlaugh Bonner—11, "Providence and Progress"; 7, "Parliament: As it has been, is, and should be."
BLACKBURN (Venetian Hall, Darwen-street): November 15, at 7.30, Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, "Parliament: As it has been, is, and ought to be." November 16, at 7.30, Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, "Providence and Progress."
CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, G. Ives, "The Treatment of Crime." November 17, at 8, Stanton Coit, "Evolution and Effort."
DERBY (Central Hotel, Market-place): 7, W. Whitney, "Three Philanthropists."
GLASGOW (Lecture Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion Class, D. Black; 8.30, A. Holm, "Individual Freedom and State Interference."
HULL (Friendly Societies' Hall): 7, Seth Ackroyd, "An Hour with Nansen in the Polar Seas."
LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Joseph McCabe, "Life in Other Planets."
LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, A. Crompton, "Positivism."
MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 7, Mark L. Sykes, "Pond Life: Fauna." Illustrated by specimens and lantern views.
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Willie Dyson, "Christian Want of Evidence. A Reply to A. J. Harrison, B.D."
SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7, A. Reading.

Lecturers' Engagements.

O COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton—November 13, The Athenæum Hall, London; 20, Chatham; 27, Manchester. November 30 and December 1, Failsforth. December 4, Manchester.

H. PERCY WARD, 5, Alexandra-road, Edgbaston, Birmingham.—November 27, Liverpool. December 4, Leicester. 18, Birmingham.

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To Mr. J. W. Gott.

Nelson.
W. A. HOLROYD.

DEAR MR. GOTT,—

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Your Lot 11 to hand this morning. We beg to thank you for same; better value cannot be had anywhere. My wife and I are both pleased, and we will not forget to recommend your goods to all our friends. Wishing success to both you and the *Truth Seeker*.—Yours truly,

M. A. DAVIES.

DEAR MR. GOTT,—

2 Morningside, Lancaster.

I take the first opportunity to acknowledge receipt of the two 10s. 6d. parcels, which both parties concerned declare to be honestly worth 25s. each.—Fraternally,

H. BARRON.

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To Mr. J. W. Gott.

A. SMITH.

MR. GOTT,

Stratford.

SIR,—I received the 10s. 6d. parcel quite safely last Tuesday, and am very pleased with it. It is very cheap indeed. I have had several lots from you, and have been well satisfied with them all.—Yours faithfully,

J. E. ABLARD.

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Bowness.

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MRS. MCKAY.

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Blackburn.

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G. WRIGHT.

To J. W. Gott.

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