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PRICE TWOPENCE.

PECULIAR PEOPLE.

AN OPEN LETTER
TO
Mr. Justice Wills.

II.—CONCLUSION.

BUT if you avoided this discussion when passing sentence on Thomas George Senior, you were somewhat less discreet on the occasion of his trial. You asked one of the witnesses, a female member of the Peculiar People, what she thought of the text, "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." She promptly replied that the sickness referred to was sin; it was not bodily, but spiritual; and Jesus Christ was the only physician who could cure it. Her reply was a sound one, as may easily be seen by a reference to the New Testament. The story in which these words of Jesus Christ occur is related in the ninth of Matthew, the second of Mark, and the fifth of Luke. Let us take it as it is told in the first Gospel:—

"And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples.

"And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?

"But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.

"But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

The word physician is here used metaphorically. It was not a collection of cripples, lepers, and dyspeptics, who were sitting down with Jesus; but tax gatherers, who were looked upon as renegades, and other persons whose lives were regarded as disorderly. Moreover, the final antithesis is absolutely decisive. Jesus represented himself as a physician to sinners. When he cured people of their bodily ailments, as we read that he frequently did, he never used material remedies. He gave them no physic, he prescribed no hygienic observances. He healed them by his supernatural power, which he imparted to his disciples, who also healed the sick in the same fashion. "Go and sin no more" was what he said to those he restored to health; the very words implying that disease is a divine infliction for sin, and only curable by divine agency.

It is perfectly idle to cite this metaphorical use of the word physician against the plain commandments of Jesus which the Peculiar People cite in justification of their practices.

Let me call your attention, sir, to the fact that disease and death are represented throughout the Bible as punishments. You have of course read Milton, and you may remember the terrible catalogue of maladies which Michael revealed to Adam as the future consequences of his fall. You may also remember that the only palliative that is mentioned by the great Christian poet, through the mouth of the archangel, is temperance in eating and drinking, and in every other pleasure. There is no allusion to doctors and medicine, for Milton knew they were out of harmony with the whole spirit of the Bible.

Let me call your attention to another fact. The Bible contains many pointed sneers at physicians. We read in the first book of Kings (xv. 14) that King Asa's "heart was perfect with the Lord all his days." But in the priestly book of Chronicles (ii., xvi. 12) we find a

large qualification. Not only is he accused of cruelty to Hanani the seer for reproving him, but when his feet were diseased it is mentioned to his discredit that he "sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians." And this is immediately followed by the significant words, "And Asa slept with his fathers." Still stronger is the case of the woman whom Jesus cured of an issue of blood, for the language of the narrative is positively satirical upon the medical profession. The woman had been afflicted for twelve years,

"And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse" (Mark v. 26).

Here the physicians are treated as marrers instead of menders. The poor woman "suffered" their treatment. They took all her money, and never gave her health. She had to wait for that until she met the Great Physician, who never made up a bottle of medicine or wrote out a prescription. His curative power was personal. She touched his garment, and "virtue" went "out of him." In the same way were cures performed by his disciples. Peter's shadow fell upon the sick and healed them. Paul imparted his virtue to handkerchiefs and aprons, which were conveyed to distant sick persons, and "the diseases departed from them." It is also said that "the evil spirits went out of them." This text indicates the true Bible theory of physical and mental afflictions; the same theory which is held by savages all over the world. Both kinds of affliction are one at bottom, being the work of spiritual agents, acting by divine order or by divine permission, either as messengers of God or as demoniac imitators of his prerogatives. When the mother-in-law of Simon Peter was to be cured of her illness (Luke iv. 38, 39) Jesus stood over her "and rebuked the fever; and it left her." Which clearly implies that the fever was the work of one of these spiritual powers. Indeed, on its leaving her there was no interval of convalescence. She arose "immediately," and attended to her household duties.

It is my duty now, sir, to draw your attention, as a presumably Christian judge in a professedly Christian country, to the clear and emphatic language of Jesus Christ himself. After his resurrection, according to the last chapter of Mark, he delivered a final address to his apostles, immediately before ascending into heaven; and this is what he is reported to have said:—

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

"He that believeth, and is baptised, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

"And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

"They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

These were the last words of Jesus Christ on earth, which ought to be of the highest importance. All other words that were ever spoken should, by a Christian, be regarded as less solemn and authoritative. Yet according to Lord Chief Justice Russell, according to the five judges who sat beside him, and according to your own judgment and sentence upon Thomas George Senior, these last words of Jesus Christ are mere nonsense, which only fools would ever think of following. And what is this, I ask, but saying that Jesus Christ was a fool too?

Perhaps it will be argued that Jesus Christ only gave these instructions, and made these promises, to his own

apostles. But this is against the plain language of his address. The signs spoken of were not merely to follow *them*, but to follow all who believed the gospel, at least until "all the world" had heard the gospel preached—a missionary work which is not yet completed. This view of the matter is corroborated by the words of St. James, who is reputed to have been "the Lord's brother," and therefore most intimate with his teaching. This is what he said in the fifth chapter of his Epistle:—

"Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the Church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

"And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up."

Not the Lord "may" raise him up, but the Lord "shall" raise him up. There is no room for dubiety. Nor is there any distinction of persons. Children are included as well as adults. To deny this, or even to question it, is as reasonable as to argue that "him" only refers to the male sex, and consequently that the direction does not apply to females.

The Peculiar People are faithful to the whole spirit of the Bible; they believe that Jesus Christ meant what he said; they follow the detailed prescription of his inspired apostle and brother, St. James; and for doing this you send one of them to prison like a felon. Yet I suppose you call yourself a Christian, and England calls itself a Christian country.

If these honest people are misled, they are misled by the New Testament. If their practice is illegal, the New Testament is responsible for the illegality. Yet the jury who found Thomas George Senior guilty of manslaughter were sworn in upon this New Testament. You also were sworn in upon it as a judge; Lord Russell was sworn in upon it; the other five judges were all sworn in upon it. The oath was taken in the sight of God; the book was kissed as the word of God. But it was a mere make-believe, an empty formalism, a hypocritical farce. The moment you find a man simple enough to believe sincerely, and to prove it by acting upon his belief, you lecture him as an imbecile and imprison him as criminal.

It is idle to pretend that prayer must be accompanied by medicine, that God must be supplemented by a doctor. This is paltering with the Christian faith. It is discountenanced by the clear language of Scripture. It is a shocking blasphemy. From the very nature of the case, if prayer is not to be trusted absolutely, it is not to be trusted at all. If Jesus Christ made false promises with respect to prayer in cases of sickness, of what value are his promises in any other respect? I declare, sir, that the Peculiar People are the only real Christians, and they are persecuted by the mere pretenders to that title. To be honest as Christians goes to be one man picked out of ten thousand.

Let us endeavor to be logical. Let us try to be honest. Let us clear all the prayers out of the Prayer Book. Let us, at any rate, eliminate the form of prayer in a time of sickness. Let the prayers of no more congregations in our State churches be asked for absent members lying upon their sick beds. Let us have no more foolish petitions for the health and longevity of royal personages. Let no more thanksgiving services be held for the recovery of a Prince of Wales from gastric fever. Let us recognise that medical attendance, and not the help of God, is "the one thing necessary." For all this, and much more, is the logical consequence of the imprisonment of Thomas George Senior for seeking to the Lord instead of to the physicians on behalf of his sick child.

Do not misunderstand me. I am not writing as a Christian, but as a Freethinker, and still more as a citizen. I protest against the tragi-comedy of faith in England. I am shocked at the pretence of Christianity on the part of clergymen, judges, jurymen, and legislators—a pretence which is emphasised by the cruel torture of honest believers. For the rest, however, I feel that, as a Freethinker, I owe you a certain measure of gratitude. You have branded practical Christianity as criminal. You have solemnly warned the people of this country against the danger of obeying the Bible. You have held the New Testament up to public scorn and derision. You have proclaimed Jesus Christ himself as a teacher of folly. And for this I tender you my sincere thanks.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Tyranny of Speech.

ALL who reflect upon the causes of the frames of mind around them must have been struck by the weakness of language in expressing new ideas, and its corresponding power in retarding the growth of accurate knowledge. Important as language is as a factor in the development of the race, it has these compensating disadvantages, and they are realised most vividly by those whose studies carry them into fresh fields of investigation. Like the coster who, when his favorite "moke" died, turned to an acknowledged leader in the use of "cuss-words" and said brokenly, "Swear for me, Bill; I ain't eka! to it," we are none of us quite equal to the task of using language that shall exactly express our ideas and be quite free from misleading connotations. One has only to take a dozen individuals, and note the different shades of meaning attached by each to the same sentence, to discover how much of our disagreement is due to this cause alone, and to realise that our quarrels are not only largely about words, but necessarily so, and that the most effective way of settling disputes in general would be to see that words were always used in precisely the same sense by different individuals.

To use Wendell Holmes's phrase, we are all victims of "polarised words." Our verbal currency consists of a stock of words, each with definite associations, grave or gay, sacred or profane—associations that frequently hinder far more than they help. It is not difficult to find illustrations of the power of mere words in determining the rejection or acceptance of a given proposition. To a Christian brought up from childhood with the name of Jesus held before him as the ideal of all that is excellent, the mere mention of the name rouses so much unreasoning emotion, and appeals to so many sentimental circumstances of life, as to preclude the possibility of an impartial consideration of the subject. Before this can be done it is necessary to take the word out of its fictitious setting, to separate it from its artificial associations, and study it free from the disturbing elements of prejudice or religious education. Again, in social life, both at home and abroad, one is struck by the ease with which foolish and sometimes criminal enterprises may gain acceptance and support provided they are tricked out by such magnetic phrases as "Love of country," "Patriotism," "Human freedom," etc., etc. In each case we must demagnetise the words used, and place the ideas in a new framework of language, before we can properly estimate its value in the world of thought.

It is impossible to altogether destroy this quality of speech; for it lies in the very nature of the human mind that it should exert this power over thought. Mental force, like all other force, follows the line of least resistance, and is liberated along definite nerve channels by appropriate stimulation. The force which expresses itself in admiration of a painting, condemnation of an illogical proposition, or indignation at an existing injustice, is fundamentally the same, and only differentiates itself in response to special stimuli along well-worn nerve tracks. And the more this liberation of nervous force along a special line takes place, the more difficult it is to set up new channels, or to give vent to ideas fundamentally different to those we have been accustomed to. For, to borrow an illustration from the physical world, just as a stream commences its existence by carving a passage through the softer material of a hill side, and thus initiates the construction of a channel which finally imprisons the water as a result of its own efforts, so we may conceive mental energy working along certain lines with ever-increasing ease until it becomes a matter of extreme difficulty to express itself in other directions.

It is upon this principle that beyond a certain period radical alterations of opinion are so seldom met with. When a man and woman have reached a certain age they may go on developing the ideas they already possess, but it is rare indeed to find them adopting new ones of an entirely different character. The grooves of thought are too deeply and clearly indented for new channels to be easily formed. Radical alterations of opinion may be made when young, while the brain is still plastic and habits less deeply rooted than in after life, but they become increasingly difficult with advancing years. Youth may not be a period for the deliverance of sage counsel or grave admonition, but it is to youth that we

must look, frequently for the inception, always for the dissemination, of those ideas, far-reaching and revolutionary, that have transformed the life of peoples and made history what it is.

However natural and easily explainable the phenomenon under consideration may be, it is a most awkward one for the creator and promulgator of new ideas. Every reformer is handicapped by his inability to rouse that amount of sympathy which the user of well-known phrases has always at his command. Only those who are constantly engaged in propagandist work can fully appreciate the disadvantage this is. A plentiful sprinkling of well-known names in a political address, or the liberal use of such phrases as "Jesus only" in a Christian sermon, fully atones, to the audience, for the speaker's lack of common sense or ordinary information. On the other hand, the advocate of new ideas is, practically, speaking in a new tongue, and has to accustom the ears of his audience to the *sound* of the words before he can get them to adopt their meaning. His words lack standing; they can appeal neither to custom nor prejudice for support; and, in addition, there is all the personal inconvenience of a complete mental rearrangement on the part of those who accept them. It is a recognition of this fact that makes constant repetition so necessary if a message is to be understood and accepted by the mass of the people. Repetition, Repetition, and again Repetition must be the rule of all who seek to wean people from old prejudices, and to induce them to adopt rational ideas in their place.

And, finally, it may be noted that as the meanings of the words we use have been fixed by preceding generations, and in accordance with their knowledge, it is almost a matter of impossibility to retain the language of the past without arousing by its use some portion of the ideas we have learned to discard. It is thus that language, properly the servant of thought, becomes its master, rules its course, and vitiates its results. This Frankenstein of language, once called into existence, cannot easily be laid; it sits enthroned directing human energies, often in the interests of the past rather than those of the present or future. It is with language as Bagehot noted was the case with society: just as in social evolution the first difficulty is to break men in to submit to social regulations, and the second to prevent their being slavishly chained by them, so the first difficulty here is to create a vehicle for the expression of thought, and next to free thought from the fetters of speech.

It is easy to find illustrations of the power of words in inducing or perpetuating inaccurate thinking in every region of inquiry. In science such words as "cause" and "law" are responsible for a whole batch of misunderstandings and illogical beliefs. Despite repeated proofs that "cause" is merely a name for the sum-total of the conditions which constitute a given result, and law the generalised statement of the invariability of such phenomena, the conceptions of cause as something occult, and of law as the expression of a regulative intelligence external to nature, are still used to bolster up much of the theistic philosophising around us. In both cases the influence of language over thought is clearly discernible. Our conception of cause is derived from the fetishistic notion of one event *producing* or compelling another—the word itself in ordinary usage has some such connotation; and, although some allowance has to be made for the persistence of fetishism in the mind, apart from language, still the word is not without a powerful influence. Only by repeated exposition is it possible to convince one here and there that cause and effect are not two distinct things, one of which calls the other into being, but the same thing under different conditions. Water is not something different to oxygen and hydrogen, but the form assumed by oxygen and hydrogen in combination. The cause of a phenomenon is the parts of that phenomenon in a free state; the effect is the parts in combination.

In the case of "law" this influence is much more pronounced. Here the confusion is obviously due to our habitually using the term in two distinct senses. In its social sense "law" clearly implies some regulative or intelligent origin, since there is a distinct command to perform or refrain from certain classes of actions. In this connection it is perfectly legitimate to speak of "law implying a law-giver"; but when, because the same *word* is used, the same meaning is carried into the

department of natural science, its use becomes a hindrance rather than a help. For in no single instance does the scientific sense of "law" coincide with the social meaning of the term. A natural law contains neither a prohibition nor a command; it simply describes a certain invariable succession of phenomena, nothing more. To say it is a law of nature that wood should float in water, or that warm air should rise to the top, is simply *describing* the universal experience of mankind. In this case the law is descriptive, in the social sense it is regulative; and it would therefore be more accurate to speak of the uniformities of nature than the law of nature, since all that is meant is a uniformity of experience in the succession of natural occurrences.

Historically the scientific term grew out of the social one, and it was inevitable that the same meaning should cling to it. Social laws were framed and obeyed long before natural laws were consciously recognised; and, as the apparent chaos of nature was reduced to something like order, it was only natural that in the infancy of science, with the human mind still dominated by its fetishistic fancies, there should be figured the same kind of regulative intelligence at work in the universe at large as was known to rule in human society. But as science extended its area of operation and perfected its method of investigation, it was seen that the great distinction between human society and nature is that the former is consciously regulated to a given end—the welfare of its members, while the latter is without any conscious aim in the production of its phenomena. The forces of nature combine and re-combine, careless alike of individual and species.

In the play of cosmic forces a genius is of no more value than an idiot, a philanthropist no greater object of solicitude than a burglar. One is crushed out as ruthlessly as the other; frequently the better goes and the worse remains. The inevitable development of scientific thought has resulted in the complete destruction of the analogy between human contrivance and natural processes, an analogy upon which all forms of theistic belief finally rest. But, unfortunately, while the ideas have been destroyed, the old terminology is still retained, and its power is manifested in the pseudo-scientific writing that to-day finds a ready market as the champion of a set of beliefs doomed to disappear before the advance of thought.

In a succeeding article I purpose tracing the influence of language in ethical and religious thought.

C. COHEN.

(To be continued.)

Morality and Christianity.

WE place morality before Christianity because it is of greater importance in the regulation of human conduct. Even if the pretensions which are urged on behalf of the latter were true, it could be dispensed with in mundane affairs. It is no active factor in daily life. On the other hand, morality is indispensable in all worldly transactions. Ethical considerations cannot be ignored without impairing the very foundation of societary welfare. The two—morality and Christianity—are widely different both in their nature and object. Morality is based upon knowledge, reason, and experience, while Christianity rests upon speculation, emotion, and faith. The object of ethical culture is the improvement of the mind, the physical discipline of the body, and the increase of the happiness of the world in which we live; but the object of Christianity is to worship God, to consider the welfare of what is termed the soul, and to prepare for some future existence. There is no comparison between the two, so far as our daily actions are concerned.

It is equally true that we are not dependent upon Christianity in any way for morality, for it was taught, and its power fully realised, long prior to the dawn of the Christian faith. Socrates taught that "morality and virtue will be found by all to be the only true path to happiness. The most happy is he who is sound in health, moderate in fortune, and cultivated in understanding." It has been said: "Socrates brought philosophy down to earth, to man. He was a true moralist,

and both taught and exemplified human virtue. If the life of Socrates was a true philosopher's life, his death was worthy of the career it closed, and has ever been regarded as a noble martyrdom submitted to in the cause of truth and loyalty." Here we have, apart from Christianity, utility in life and heroism at death. In speaking of Plato, J. Toulin Smith writes: "We need not hesitate to assert that few men have had their names recorded in the book of history whose lives and character can afford, in the perusal, more deep gratification to the benevolent and virtuous inquirer—few more worthy of our admiration and our imitation." Many more instances could be adduced showing the high moral status existing ere Christianity appeared. Take, for instance, the Stoics, who flourished three hundred years before Christ. Where in the New Testament can anything be found to excel in ethical potency what Zeno and his followers both taught and practised? Here are a few samples of the sublimity of their moral teachings: "Let us come to something stronger than mere belief; only that by which *character* is made better is good." "Let private interests yield to public; that which is not good for the swarm is not good for the bee." "Usefulness to the community is the aim of life." "Knowledge is barren without love for all men, and trust in our common brotherhood." "If you would live for yourself, live for others." "Humanity is an arch which falls unless each part sustains the rest."

Now the point to be noticed here is that the highest possible teachings were known and acted upon for centuries before the Christian era. And if pure and noble lives could adorn those ages, where is the necessity for Christianity? If, as we contend, virtue and true happiness constitute the highest good, the world had both without Christ. What more is required? Even the moral teachings in the New Testament have been borrowed from men who were not Christians. But, unfortunately, the original efficacy of those teachings has been largely marred through mixing them up with theological doctrines, and surrounding them with foolish injunctions which cannot be regarded as essential to any moral code. If we speak an idle word, it is to be given an account of at the day of judgment; to call one's brother a fool is threatened with hell-fire; and many acts which are harmless are denounced as sins, and are placed on a level with great moral offences. Christian theology deprives morality of its inherent vitality; it is a chimera, to obey whose dictates is to lose one's path in the fogs of mystery.

The contention of theologians is that true morality must be based upon Christianity. We may place ethics higher than prudence, but they place it still higher, as they suppose, and make it spiritual, and then it becomes what they term holiness of heart and life. The thoughts and acts of professed Christians are said to be guided by the flame kindled within their souls by the Holy Ghost. Hence it will be found on examination that their conduct towards each other and to society has a relation to their fear of God or the Devil, or to the hope of heaven and dread of hell. Christian morality may be defined as the obedience of the believers to what they regard as being the will of God. The selfishness of orthodox Christians differs from that of others, inasmuch as it is based upon the desire for everlasting bliss in a future existence. This is strikingly evidenced in the declaration of St. Paul when he said: "If in this life only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable." His mind appeared to be blank as to the existence of natural human virtue, and the benefits arising from right-doing. If this life was all, he could see no good but that sought for by the glutton and the wine-bibber; hence he exclaims: "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." This was his only alternative. But what of those who do not concern themselves about another life? Have they no incentive to be good? It is quite possible for those who have no desire for "mansions in the skies" to be anything but miserable. It is a mere assumption that we need the theological telescope of faith to reveal the future before we can discover what is best for the life that now is.

We have already intimated that Christianity was not the origin of morality, and we have shown that rules of life pre-dated the very name Christian. The terms love to God and to man are found in the Jewish Scriptures. But love to man has had but little real application

among Christians. It was left to Comte, of this century, to formulate the doctrine: "Love our basis, Order our law, Progress our end." The fact is, what we call the moral law has been the growth of ages and the result of general experience. Trials and experiments furnish materials for the principles which guide the conduct of life. Ethical sanctions arise naturally out of the conditions of existence. We hold that it is as true that man is a moral as that he is a sentient being. He is also a social being, and that fact leads him to be concerned about others, and to study how they should be treated. Man learns by experience that he is dependent to a large extent upon others, that he must trust them and seek their co-operation. Simple as this may appear, it lies at the foundation of all social life. Confidence and trust are absolutely necessary to the stability of society; without them even the commercial world would be paralysed.

When we point to guarantees of morality in human nature some Christians appear to estimate their fellows as though they belonged to a lower order of existence, without nerves to feel or brains to think. Happily there are many of our kind who have a natural love for the true and useful, and in whom the desire to promote the welfare of others is as strongly implanted as is the instinct that impels them to extend their species. As their wisdom grows they see that even their own interests are wrapped up in the well-being of their fellow-creatures. As their intellects develop they perceive that thought, speech, and action must agree, and that any disunity will imperil the existence of moral and social life. They learn that falsehood and deception are destructive of all possible concerted action, and that truth and justice are the foundation of social order and mutual happiness. Hence the motive for right-doing is obvious; it grows out of our relation to the human family. The appeal to men to properly discharge their duties to the State is not based merely upon prudence, convenience, or expediency; it is essential to national life. If some people perform their moral duties through fear of God and a future judgment, that may be well; but not so well as if they acted through the feeling of honor, the love of truth, and the fervent desire to aid individual and general progress.

We have thus shown that Christianity is not the only force in existence upon which depends that development of integrity and rectitude which is so desirable in maintaining a healthy moral state of society.

CHARLES WATTS.

The Saint of Tooley-Street.

IN one of the hundred novels of the *Decameron* Boccaccio tells the story of the rascally lawyer, Master Chappellet, and how he took enthusiastic delight in lying, cheating, stealing, gluttony, drunkenness, dice, and murder. On his death-bed he made confession to a pious Grey-friar, and related his many sins: how he had taken excessive pleasure in drinking water, and was greedy after lettuce, and angry with tipplers, and once expectorated in church, and the like. That a man should have an uneasy conscience for such trifling misdemeanors was held to be a token of remarkable godliness, and the villainous lawyer was popularly canonised, and the tomb of Saint Chappellet was visited by many pilgrims. By such quaint methods do scamps evolve into saints.

Now all men know that there is a thoroughfare in London named Tooley-street. But not all men know that the word Tooley is a corruption of "Saint Olaf," to whose blessed memory several churches are still dedicated in London. This Olaf, the saint of Tooley-street in Southwark, was not so bad a man as lawyer Chappellet, but he was of sufficiently doubtful character to make one wonder how he ever got admitted to the saints' calendar. I will briefly narrate his career.

Olaf was the son of King Harold Grænске of Norway, and was born in the land of mountains and fiords at the end of the tenth century. At the age of twelve he served his apprenticeship as pirate, and gaily worried the folk who lived on the shores of Denmark, Sweden, and France. He was a stout, agile lad, a great swimmer, and as handy at the smith's forge as at manipulating bow and spear. When the men of Goth-

land were gathering in the harvest, Olaf threatened to burn their sheaves and stacks, and the terrified rustics ransomed themselves with an offering of money. Next year his course along the Baltic coast was marked by many a flaming homestead and many a corpse. From these works of charity he turned his attention to England. At this time (it was the year 1014) the helpless Ethelred was in mortal dread of King Sweyn and his Danes. The Danes had a fortress at the spot where now the Tower of London rears its head. On the opposite bank of the Thames they held a strong camp, and they had erected massive barricades on London Bridge. Olaf and his Northmen offered their services to Ethelred, and, the King having received them with joy, proceeded to make assault upon the well-guarded bridge. They were repulsed by a shower of stones. Then Olaf tied ropes from his ships to the wooden piles of the bridge; his men rowed hard down stream, the cables became taut, the piles broke, the bridge tumbled in, and the Danes surrendered. As an old poet described it:—

London Bridge is broken down,
Gold is won and bright renown.

Among many other battles Olaf fought a naval engagement with the Danes at New Romney, and received from the King of England the bonus of thirty thousand golden pounds. He robbed on an extensive scale in Normandy, and, laden with spoil, his ships set out for Norway in 1017. Olaf claimed the crown, but was opposed by the valiant earl Swend. They met on the sea. Olaf's men had white shields, with crosses gilded over the white, to signify their reliance on Jesus Christ; for Olaf was a Christian by baptism and by conviction. The priest said mass; the two fleets approached each other; earl Swend fled before the gilded crosses and Olaf's battle-axe, and all Norway submitted.

Olaf had an illegitimate son (the child of a slave girl). He was also (the *also* may sound a little incongruous!) scrupulous in the observance of the Sabbath day. One Sunday, sitting at the dinner-table, the king whiled away the time by chopping bits off a lump of fir-wood. He forgot the hallowed character of the day, until one of the attendants politely reminded him by saying, "To-morrow, sir, is Monday."

To-morrow is Monday! In the twinkling of an eye Olaf saw his sin. He ordered the chips he had hacked off the log to be set alight, and he held the burning pieces in his royal palm by way of penance. He was just as particular in his prayers as he was in thieving the corn of poor Normans and Swedes; and he rose early every morning, washed his hands, and went to hear mattins. His zeal for true religion was evinced in a yet more striking manner. Finding that many of the country people adhered to their old pagan customs, King Olaf took their education in hand in right princely fashion. He drove some out of the country, mutilated others of hands and feet, gouged out eyes, hanged many, and slew some with the sword. One admires the variety of his pious ministrations. Also his thoroughness; for, having put the people through a conscientious course of mutilation and hanging, etc., etc., he introduced teachers who should instruct the remaining pagans in the principles of Christianity. Five of the heathen chieftains revolted, and Saint Olaf captured them, cut out the tongue of one, knocked out the eyes of a second, and sent the rest into exile.

Olaf's soul was much grieved at hearing that the dwellers in Drontheim kept up the old pagan festivals of early winter, mid-winter (at Christmas time), and spring (Easter). In the name of God and the Redeemer, Olaf took five hundred men in five ships and sailed to Drontheim. The Easter feast was turned into a banquet of blood and terror. Olaf journeyed on through the remoter dales, hunting up heathens. Once he met a large crowd of yeomen, who appeared to be too many to attack. So the king argued instead. He stood up before the pagan farmers (the rain was descending heavily) and begged them to believe in the true God. They were fairly well satisfied with their own god, they said. Their God was an image of Thor, the thunder-god, with a hammer in his fist. Every day they gave Thor five cakes, and he ate them, and in return attended to the wants of his worshippers. The conference was adjourned for a day. At the second meeting the image of Thor was brought out. One of Olaf's fellows hit the idol

hard with a cudgel; the wooden figure collapsed, and from its interior there sprang out dozens of rats and mice. King Olaf seized the psychological moment. "I offer you two conditions," he exclaimed to the unconverted mob; "either accept Christianity or fight this very day, and may the victory be to them to whom the God we worship gives it." The pagans gave in, and were baptised, and the Christian Evidence Society might profitably work the incident into a chapter of its forthcoming *History of the Triumphs of Christianity*. After that Saint Olaf visited the Valdres Lake district on a missionary tour, burned the houses of the heathen, and then baptised the happy and roofless inhabitants.

Ungrateful Norway rebelled, and the Christian King Olaf fled to Russia for a season. He returned, and gathered a force of three thousand men. Much shocked at finding some nine hundred of them were unbaptised, he ordered them to undergo the rite before they could be permitted to kill their enemies. At Sticklastad he met the rebels. He spent the night before the battle in prayer. His men raised the war cry, "Forward, forward, Christ-man! cross-man! king's man!" Olaf fought with his two-handed sword. In the horrid medley he was smitten down, with a spear through his abdomen. Most of his followers lay slain around him. Saint Olaf died on July 29, 1030, and he lies buried in Drontheim Cathedral.

It is difficult to say which was the better Christian—Master Chappellet or the Saint of Tooley-street.

F. J. GOULD.

Christian Man Slaying.

"Thou shalt not kill."—*Holy Bible*.

THE Christian nations, like their blood-shedding ancestors of old, still continue to find incredible satisfaction in killing each other; and, although we have reached the last quarter of the nineteenth century, vast numbers of European Christians regard that stupendous crime called war as one of the "resources of civilisation." Notwithstanding the advent of Christmas, the so-called era of "peace and goodwill," all European countries are preparing themselves for war—cruel, brutal, abominable, diabolical war! Not one Christian nation will trust another Christian nation, for all are doing their best to resuscitate the hatreds of the past. After nearly nineteen hundred years of Christian teaching, Europe is now one vast camp containing upwards of 20,000,000 Christian soldiers eagerly awaiting the signal to recommence the work of mutual destruction. In order to propagate this spirit of homicidal fanaticism, our shop windows are filled with brilliantly-painted pictures of the battlefields of past times, wherein Christian soldiers are represented slaughtering each other with all the ferocity of wild beasts. To such a pitch has this bloodthirsty war mania reached that immense sums have been expended by our Government to furnish our troops with the deadliest man-slaying machinery; and, worse than all, our magnificently-disciplined man-slayers are sent forth to conquer peoples whose only crime is that they fight in defence of their own. A British general is despatched to conquer the Soudanese, and is slain. To avenge his death 15,000 brave men are massacred by the combined armies of Egypt and England; and a great and glorious victory is declared to be achieved. Following this red catastrophe, innumerable placards were posted in all our cities headed, "Great Victory! Immense Slaughter! Magnificent Heroism of the Egyptians! Magnificent Heroism of the British! Magnificent Heroism of the Dervishes!" To further commemorate this needless sacrifice of human life, salvoes of artillery were fired, bells were rung, prayers were offered up to the God of battles in all our State churches, and multitudes of our people, chiefly of the jingo class, assembled in our cities to cheer themselves hoarse, whilst gazing with idiotic wonder at a piece of earth called the Sirdar, who was made the recipient of a more than Roman ovation. And all these vociferous demonstrations of patriotic bombast were made in order to justify and glorify our blood-shedding enormities in a distant land, over a brave and comparatively defenceless people, whose heroism has been described by eye-witnesses as "magnificent."

In all our wars of conquest that have desolated so many parts of the world, the carnage of the rank and file, and the ruin of peaceful homes have been overlooked in praise of the victors and pride of their glory. When war is undertaken in self-defence against unscrupulous enemies who seek to wrest from us by force and fraud our homes and liberties, then war is justifiable: under no other circumstances. Man has no right to kill his brother man. War is a brutal trade at best, and it is none the less brutal when it is applauded by many devout Christians as one of the "resources of civilisation."

W. H. HARRIS.

Swallowing Jesus.

EVERY student of the pamphlets in commendation of rival quack remedies, which the cheapness of the post enables to add day by day to our library or to our waste-paper basket, must be familiar with the formula: "After my case had been given up as incurable by several eminent physicians, and after I had wasted large sums of money upon advertising quacks, I was induced by a friend to take a bottle of your —. In the course of two or three days I was freed from the ailment which had made my life an agony for many bitter years." We defy any proprietor of a medical panacea, however, to beat the testimonials on behalf of a new universal cure, as simple as it is cheap, which is recommended to the faithful Roman Catholics of Austria-Hungary in the December number of a clerical monthly magazine, No. 10 of the *Korrespondenz des Priester vereins*, December 4, 1898. The number contains a series of well-authenticated cases, in which little children have been saved from death or delivered from severe pains by the peculiar remedy of swallowing little pictures of the child Jesus. The first in the amazing catalogue may be taken as a fair specimen of the rest:—

"On March 2 of the present year a little boy lay at Innsbruck sick unto death; the physician left his bedside declaring that nothing more could be done for the patient, and that the dear child must soon breath his last. Hereupon a devout nurse made her resort 'to the dear Little Jesus of Prague' (*zurn Lieben Prage Jesulein*). She took a little picture of the 'Jesulein,' and gave it to the dying child, telling him to swallow it! He did so, whereupon it pleased the Heavenly Father to rescue the child out of the jaws of death. He is now (December, 1898) perfectly strong and well."

The news of his healing, and of the simple instrumentality by which it was effected, spread like wildfire. It was soon discovered that the swallowing of a "Jesulein" was an effectual remedy for a baby's broken rib, for fevers, measles, sleeplessness, and many an infantile ailment which makes sad the heart of a tender mother. We need not cite the other instances in detail. We find not only simple nuns and the Superioress of an Orphan House, but even "a Præmonstratensian Father, who is not less eminent for his learning than he is for his piety," joining in the ecstatic commendation of the "miraculous healings wrought by these *Schluckbildchen*." The news is not unseasonable, for it suggests a novel use of old Christmas cards. Instead of being pasted in the nursery album, or laid aside to be posted to friends next Christmas-tide, those of them that are appropriately decorated may be preserved in the nursery medicine chest. When the fractious Tommy or Polly refuse to take castor oil, they may be induced to chew a picture; and we have the solemn asseveration of the Innsbruck "Society of Priests" that the swallowing of a "Jesulein-Schluckbildchen," if administered with the right intention, is likely to prove a better remedy than worldly doctors can provide.

—Daily News.

The Tolstoi of Germany.

The Tolstoi of Germany, Lieutenant-Colonel von Egidy, died early last week, at Potsdam, from heart disease. Moritz von Egidy was born in 1847, and gave up a military career, which he had followed with success, to devote himself to the promulgation of his ethical and religious views as contained in his book, *Serious Thoughts*. At the time of its publication this work, coming from an active officer, created immense excitement in Germany. It advocated the necessity of religion free from dogma and the reanimation of religious life on a humanistic basis; and the intense earnestness of the author, which was apparent in every line, had a great effect on a large number of persons. An Egidy school was formed (says a *Mail* telegram), but the age was not ready for such advanced ideas, and gradually he lost the influence he had attained. His death is deplored as the loss to the country of a noble life.

The religion of the future, I venture to say, will be no religion at all. —Joseph Symes.

Acid Drops.

THE Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, as this year's President of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference, has issued an address to his Church, winding up thusly: "Let us, like Wesley, incessantly study the Bible, and bring every doctrine of man, in every aspect and relation of life—ecclesiastical, social, political, and commercial—to the final and decisive test of 'Thus saith the Lord.'" Well, the Peculiar People have done this exactly. The result is that one of them is suffering four months' hard labor in prison, and the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes hasn't uttered a protest as loud as the squeal of a mouse. What he advises he dare not practise himself. When others practise it, and get into trouble for so doing, he virtually says: "Serve you right!"

"Sick Of It" is a clergyman who consults the editor of *Tit-Bits* as to how he should clear out of the Church, and what he should do afterwards. We fancy a good many other clergymen are in the same predicament. The trouble is to get a living in a new walk of life. A Church parson once told us that he was an Atheist, and would soon throw off his cloth if he had not an elderly wife and four marriageable daughters. We pitied the man, and felt he was in a bad hole, hard to be in, and harder to get out of.

London Scotsmen started the practice of meeting in St. Paul's Churchyard on New Year's Eve, and singing "Auld Lang Syne." This annual gathering, however, has become a scene of rowdiness. Professed Christians come from all parts, and watch the old year out and the new year in. They push each other about, sing comic songs, and make fine business for the neighboring public-houses. From our point of view, of course, Christians are Christians, and churches are churches; nevertheless, we are sorry to hear of such disgraceful antics in front of Wren's noble architecture. That magnificent building, with its great dome lifted up into the solemn midnight sky, ought to make even the average Christian feel a little serious. But when a man thinks that nearly everybody is going to hell except himself, it is wonderful with what abandon he indulges in vulgar jollification.

That ridiculous person, the Rev. Samuel Kinns, vicar of Holy Trinity, Minorities, has accepted a retiring pension, and will devote himself entirely to his "special work" of proving the "historical accuracy of the Bible narratives," including that of Balaam's talking jackass.

The Sultan of Turkey keeps a Court Astrologer. This gentleman studies the heavens, and finds out what their phenomena portend to human beings. Abdul's birthday fell upon a Thursday this year, but there was an eclipse of the moon on the Wednesday, and that made the next day unpropitious, so Abdul's birthday was kept on the Friday. As the Sultan is still living, the Court Astrologer has improved in reputation.

The *Morning Leader*, referring to a certain medicine "taken in consequence of the results of high living, and carelessness in eating and drinking," says that personal testimonials to its efficacy are given by two canons of the Church of England, a Baptist minister, a Congregationalist ditto, a naval chaplain, a Yorkshire rector, and an Oxford vicar. What would Jesus Christ say, we wonder, if he could see these reverend gentlemen puffing the value of a remedy for gorging? He himself was prone to prayer and fasting, and didn't need pills for repletion, though he may have wanted a long drink of soda-water after a marriage-feast.

More "Providence." The population of the Bemini Islands, a small sub-division of the Bahamas, is threatened with extinction. Recent severe storms have destroyed the crops, wrecked the storehouses, and killed many people. Numbers have since perished of starvation, and assistance has had to be sent post-haste from Nassau.

The Holborn Board of Guardians has resolved to pay £40 a year to a Roman Catholic sky-pilot for attending at the Archway-road Infirmary. The Church parson is paid already, and the Nonconformists are looking forward to a bit, judging by the remarks of the Rev. J. E. Wakerley, of St. John's-square Wesleyan Chapel. Let 'em all come.

Marylebone, London, has no longer a church rate. Hitherto the Vestry has supported five churches and two chapels at a cost of about £3,000 a year. Dissatisfaction with this bit of ecclesiastical plunder became alarming, and the Church party got up a neat little scheme of commutation, which they carried out successfully by the aid of their friends in the Tory House of Commons. The yearly payment has been commuted for the sum of £82,700, in addition to which the churches remain vested in their vicars. All the parish gets is the churchyards as open spaces, which will of course add to the value and attraction of the churches. Trust the parsons for striking a good bargain—for themselves!

Schneider, who murdered the baker's man and cremated him in the oven, was duly executed at Newgate on Tuesday morning. He pretended to be silly until he learnt that he would not be respited; then he woke up and became deeply affected. He was attended by a minister of the Lutheran German Church, and we understand that he died with the usual sure and certain hope, although the poor fellow he murdered has probably gone from the baker's oven to the Devil's furnace. Brethren, let us sing, "God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform."

"And the Lord have mercy on your soul!" The *Law Times*, writing on death sentences, recalls a letter written by Chief Baron Pollock commending Lord Bramwell for not pronouncing this formula when the death sentence was morally certain not to be carried out. He considered it irreverent to do so.

Many people, though the *Law Times* does not say so, are of opinion that this formula might be abolished in all cases. If it means anything, it means: "We don't propose to have any mercy on your body, but the Lord may do as he pleases with your soul," which looks like first of all usurping a portion of the jurisdiction of the Almighty, and then very graciously according him permission to avail himself of the remainder.

Much has been made of the "wear and tear" of the itinerancy of the Wesleyan Methodist body. The ministers, however, seem to thrive upon it, and in respect of longevity compare favorably with the clergy of the Church of England. Out of a total of more than 2,000 ministers there have only been thirty deaths in the home work during the year, and amongst these are those of seven septuagenarians and of five octogenarians, two of the latter being only just short of ninety years.

The world moves, and even the religious world moves with it. Here is the *Christian World* poking fun at the "Declaration of Faith and Order" in the Congregational Year-Book, which it calls old-fashioned and obsolete, and advises the editor to turn it into Latin—evidently on the principle that a dead language suits a dead creed.

The Birmingham *Owl*, in what is probably a bogus answer to a correspondent styled "Secularist," writes as follows:—"If you had any pride at all in you, you would be above being beholden to the Christian citizens of Birmingham, who provide schools in which you may attack them and what they hold most dear. Get a hall of your own, and shut up until you do." The logic of this passage is on a par with the elegance of its closing expression. As a matter of fact, Christians do not build Board schools as Christians. They do so as citizens, or ratepayers; and Jewish, Secularist, and Agnostic ratepayers have to contribute to the cost and maintenance of these establishments. To claim them as the property of Christians is simply a piece of impudence.

The owl has been used as the symbol of wisdom. It looks a very wise bird, but it is really very stupid. Perhaps our Birmingham contemporary may be able to hammer out a moral from these facts.

Is it not astounding to notice the amount of money spent annually on missionary work—on providing the heathen with new idols and chimeras little better than those which they already have? Take, for instance, the income of the London Missionary Society. Last year it was £140,000. In 1896, which was a record year, the sum raised by this Society was no less than £190,000. The Committee announce that they expect in the ensuing year to exceed that figure.

There seems, indeed, no limit to the amount of money that pious people will spend on the quite unnecessary work of sprinkling the universe with the mummy-dust of theological dogma. Perhaps these lavish donors think they are making a friend in Influential Quarters—as Oliver Wendell Holmes put it.

The Salvation Army Building Association, which went into liquidation after supplying "General" Booth with many thousands of pounds for the purpose of building fortresses, citadels, and barracks, has now made arrangements to refund to the shareholders the full amount of their shares, with a small dividend.

The shareholders ought not to be very anxious about this return. They expect, of course, to be repaid by the Lord a hundredfold in the next world, if not in this, and upon that expectation they might have gracefully waived their claim to the final instalment announced. It would have looked more religious.

Seymour Kelly, for nearly twenty-five years lay vicar of Chichester Cathedral choral, must have profited largely by the ministrations of the bishop and clergy of his diocese. At

any rate, he endeavored to profit by the Cathedral Vestry funds, for he pleaded guilty to a charge of stealing 1s. 6d. therefrom, and it was stated that he had been watched in consequence of the loss of several small sums from the Vestry. A fine of £4 was imposed.

The *Standard* says that the days have gone by when "dulness was sacred in a sound divine." Have they, indeed! There is still a great deal of dulness in sound divinity, whether sacred or not, as people know to their utter weariness of spirit when they are obliged to be listeners.

The Bible again as a bullet-proof pad. This time the Rev. Mr. Potter, of New York, who lives at Ninth-street, Long Island, says that he was lying crosswise on the bed reading his Bible, when four shots were fired through the window, and stopped by his copy of the Word of God. The shots lodged in the book half-way through. This particular Bible was a favorite of his during his student days. No doubt he will prize it still more henceforth. Nevertheless a copy of Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason* might have served the reverend gentleman as well, if sufficiently strong in its cover, and if this thing ever happened at all.

The Right Rev. Leighton Coleman, Bishop of Delaware, has been amusing himself on a holiday in the mountains of West Virginia by tramping about mending clocks, dismantled umbrellas, and pans and kettles. He might have done worse. Some bishops who could be mentioned are not, at any time, half as usefully employed.

Newspaper report of a Broken Hill Salvation Army meeting: "In making an announcement the Commandant referred to 'Adjutant' Winter as 'Staff-Captain' Winter. Then he turned to 'Adjutant' Winter, and said: 'I beg your pardon—not a staff-captain yet?' 'Adjutant' Winter: 'No, sir.' The Commandant: 'Never mind; it's coming.' 'Adjutant' Winter: 'When, sir?' (Laughter.) The Commandant: 'Well, if you want to know, it has come now. It was one of the things I had up my sleeve; but I wanted to see how you behaved.' A tremendous outburst of applause and 'Hallelujahs' at once arose, and two of 'Staff-Captain' Winter's comrades seized him, and after some struggling up-ended him, and stood him on his head on the platform. The performance plainly astounded many of the audience, and the Commandant remarked: 'You must excuse them; it's a way we have in the Army. When an officer is promoted the promotion is not considered properly done till he has been stood on his head.'" By the way, there are female officers in the Army.—*Sydney Bulletin*.

Rev. C. A. Dixon, of Hanson-place Baptist Church, Brooklyn, speaking in a recent sermon of the Chicago University, said that "the president of the board of trustees is an infidel." Well, we are glad to hear it, and hope it is true. Mr. Dixon also declared that "the secretary of the Board is an infidel," and that "the man who gave 300,000 dollars some years ago to purchase a telescope is an infidel." He seems to think this is a shocking state of things. Perhaps he would like to see the donations of "infidels" rejected. Why doesn't he say straight out that the lenses of a telescope bought with "infidels' " money are sure to crack!

President McKinley's thanksgiving nonsense about God Almighty helping the Americans in the war with Spain is too much for the stomach of some of the ordinary newspapers. The *Chicago Times-Herald* points out that "the Spaniards are human beings and Christians like ourselves," and asks whether, if the Americans had been defeated, they would have allowed "that the Spaniards are God's chosen people." The *Springfield Republican* says that "God's hand is nowhere visible, either in Cuba, Porto Rico, or the Philippines, save in so far as it is hidden behind the vigorous combatant, the superior marksman."

"A man's mind may often be so preoccupied that he becomes oblivious of his present surroundings, but no one should allow things temporal to make him negligent of salvation (Hebrews ii. 3)." This is the pious, moralising observation of a Christian weekly on the fact that Colonel John O'Byrne, a clever lawyer and orator of San Francisco, was so absent-minded as to chew-up his railway-ticket, and had again to pay his fare. The moral is, that if he had "chewed the cud" over Hebrews ii. 3, he would not have chewed his ticket—an odd combination of saving and salvation.

A well-timed rebuke is offered to certain of the clergy of the Church of England who desire to import Roman Catholic customs into the Establishment. It is administered in an address issued by Prebendary Webb-Peploe and others, and contains the following sentence: "We cannot refrain from offering a word of caution to our brethren as to hearing confession in their ministerial capacity other than that special confession which alone is authorised by our Church in the

office for the Visitation of the Sick." The growing practice of confession is a clerical scandal of the greatest magnitude.

Upwards of 1,500 clergy of the Church of England are practising and teaching auricular confession, wearing Mass vestments, burning altar lights, and otherwise endeavoring to secure a return to papistical practices.

Mr. Kensit asserts that images are set up in Anglican Churches to be worshipped. His objection to "idolatry," however rightful in itself, would not, we hope, go to the length taken by the father of Miss Sarah Robinson, whose "Life Record" has recently been published by Nisbet and Co.

John James Robinson, it seems, was a terribly stern, unbending man, and a strict Calvinist. He noticed the fondness of his daughter for kittens, and, fearing "idolatry," would say to her: "Now don't get too fond of that creature, my dear; you know it will have to be shot." And he would shoot one after another of the litter for the sake of God and the fear of idolatry. What a sweet spirit of kindness piety engenders!

Miss Robinson, who later in life preached the Prince of Peace to the military at Aldershot, tells of her conversion, or, as she calls it, "new birth." It came unsought and unexpected, and from hearing a stray text. She was led by it to burn her Byron. What a noble sacrifice! The same spirit of bigotry on the part of the "unco guid" used to lead to the burning not simply of books, but of their writers.

A not at all unnecessary request is the following editorial item which appears in the *Christian Herald*: "The prayers of the readers of this journal are requested for the blessing of God upon those who conduct it, and also upon those whose sermons, or other labors for Christ, are printed in it."

This is how Dr. Sherman, on his way to India, writes to the Bethshan Divine Healing Mission at Drayton-park in regard to his "miraculous" recovery from illness: "I did what the Word of the Lord directs me to do. I believed there was recuperating power in Christ, and I called for the elders of the Church, and they came and prayed over me, and anointed me with oil in the name of the Lord, and I was healed. Oh, I do delight to magnify the name of my Savior!" Dr. Sherman is at least consistent.

A Greenwich man of God—the Rev. Joseph Jarvis, of Blackheath-road—has been summoned by his wife, who sought a maintenance order. She said he struck her on the mouth with his fist, and she left him in consequence. The case was adjourned to enable the parties to come to an agreement.

A Sunday-school teacher of the tender sex, whose vagaries at St. Alban's, Acton, were recently the occasion of complaint, was summoned for sending a threatening letter to the vicar of St. Andrew's, West Kensington. She had to find a surety, which seems a very prosaic way of settling a theological quarrel.

"The vicar of St. Alban's," says the *Echo*, "praying that the Bishop of London may be brought to a better frame of mind, is just the criminal caught in the act praying for the policeman. There are two courses open to the vicar—either to obey, or to go to Rome. Praying, we imagine, in this matter, will not avail."

Judge David Murphy, of the Criminal Court, has been telling a representative of the *St. Louis Republic* about the wounded and dying soldiers in Cuba. "That's all bosh," he said, "about men raving about mother, home, and heaven. All the men I have seen die, or near death, were quiet and perfectly rational. They made no fuss." Some of them smoked, some of them tried to read a treasured letter. Thoughts went backward rather than forward to the old home on earth rather than the new one in the beautiful land above.

We regret to hear that the co-operative glass factory at Albi, in France, is a failure. It was founded during the Carmaux strike, under the patronage of Rochefort and Jaurès, who were then friends. It started with a capital of £6,000, £4,000 of which was furnished by an old lady out of her savings. "The operatives complain," the *Daily News* correspondent says, "that the Committee of Management are the hardest taskmasters they ever had to deal with." And we can well believe it. The egoism of a committee is as the square of its number, and its sense of moral responsibility as the square root of its number. It is the element of personality, after all, that makes discipline bearable.

Prince George of Greece did not cut a very magnificent figure in the war with Turkey. He was always well to the front in strategic movements to the rear. By good fortune, however, and the favor of England, France, Russia, and Italy, he is now Governor of Crete; and his first difficulty is

with the Christians, many of whom don't understand why they must not rob and oppress the Mohammedans. "I shall turn the whole island into a barracks, if necessary," Prince George said to a *Standard* correspondent; "but justice will have to be done." This language is creditable, but of course the eyes of Europe are upon him, and he knows he must be careful.

King Humbert has done a sensible thing in liberating 3,000 prisoners concerned in the May disturbances. It is always best to bury domestic discontents as soon as possible. We hope, however, that King Humbert will bear in mind that his real enemy is not Radicalism, or even Socialism, but the Catholic Church.

The Free Churches of England and Wales have drawn up a new Catechism, which will shortly be published. The greatest difficulty was found in stating the doctrine of the resurrection of the body in terms on which all could agree, and which, at the same time, excluded no orthodox opinion. This precious document is the work of men of God, and 80,000,000 laymen are expected to swear by it, though some of them perhaps will swear at it. We shall criticise it in the *Freethinker* as soon as possible.

American churches interested in missionary work asked the President and Congress to purchase the Caroline, Ladrona, and Pelu islands, and place them under the protection of the United States. The petitioners pointed out that these islands afforded a splendid field for the propagation of the Gospel, and would also be valuable for strategic purposes. Who shall say, after this, that the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light? It would be hard to beat this mixture of missionary and military reasons for acquiring fresh territory.

We venture to suggest, however, that the American churches, before spreading the Gospel any further in foreign parts, should try to recover their lost ground at home. It was said the other day by a distinguished American clergyman that Colonel Ingersoll had at least a million followers in the United States. Why not try to save *them*? They are all going to hell, according to the doctrines of the Churches; and surely there would be more joy in heaven over one American Ingersollite who repented than over ninety and nine South Sea Islanders who—not having yet rejected the Gospel—need no repentance. But perhaps it is impossible to save the Ingersollites without answering Ingersoll, and to do that would require a miracle several sizes larger than the Resurrection.

According to the St. Petersburg correspondent of the *Times*, there are 15,000 native Christians in India who are going to join the Russian Orthodox Church. Is this a first move in the much-talked-of "conquest of India"? If so, it is wonderfully characteristic of Christian statesmanship.

Mr. W. J. Stillman is a competent authority, and it is gratifying to note his statement that the antagonism of the Catholic Church to the secular government in Italy is producing "a slow but constant alienation of the Italian people from the Church."

The habitual drunkard is the subject of fresh legislation. Henceforth he (or she) will be sent to a reformatory for curative and reformatory treatment. The Home Secretary has issued the code for these new establishments. "Chapel" is included daily at 8.15 a.m. Evidently it is expected that the habitual drunkard will generally belong to the Christian persuasion.

According to the *British Weekly*, a strange pastor was preaching in a suburban church lately. He announced that, to enliven the proceedings, two anthems would be sung—one before the sermon and one after. "Ye shall go out with joy," was the first. Then came a long and weary discourse, followed by "Now it is high time to awake out of sleep."

Mr. Richard Henry Jones, a retired school inspector at Monmouth, was found head first, drowned, in a water-barrel. The jury found that he had only tried to cool his head. There are many hot disputants in the Church of England who might try the same remedy.

No more fish from Lowestoft on Sunday. The Great Eastern Railway has decided to knock off the Sunday fish train to London. Stale fish, or no fish, is better than Sabbath desecration. Let us pray.

Queen Victoria is reported to have said to ex-Empress Eugénie: "If war must break out between England and France, I pray God that he will let me die first." This is very creditable to the Queen's heart, but from an intellectual point of view it looks like confusion. If God took the trouble to intervene at all, he might just as well do it thoroughly, and prevent the war altogether.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

January 15, 22, and 29, Athenæum Hall, London.

To Correspondents.

- DURING Mr. Charles Watts's absence from England his address will be, *c/o Truthseeker* office, 28 Lafayette-place, New York City, U.S.A.
- J. S. FRAMPTON.—One of the best books on Public Speaking was that of the late Sergeant Cox. It was beautifully written, and was marked by great common sense and occasional depth of philosophic reflection. We do not think it is now in print.
- "FREETHINKER" CIRCULATION FUND.—Horace Parsons, 10s. *Per R. Forder*.—Dr. Keeling, £2 2s.; Horace Seal, 10s.; J. G. Finlay (West Australia), 10s.
- J. R. HOLMES likes the first part of our Open Letter to Mr. Justice Wills.
- W. P. BALL.—Thanks for your valued weekly batch of cuttings.
- E. STAPLES.—Glad to hear you are "extremely pleased" with our article on the Peculiar People. Mr. Foote has written to you in reply to your letter asking him to join a deputation to the Home Secretary.
- J. F. HAINES.—We do not care to reproduce the letter from the *Echo*. What we are opposed to is Compulsory Vaccination. Personally, we do not believe in vaccination at all; but the *Freethinker* is hardly the medium for its discussion from a merely medical point of view.
- J. PARTRIDGE (Birmingham Branch) reports that four new members were enrolled at Mr. Foote's lectures on Sunday. This makes a total of twenty-six new members since the first of September. "We hope to double this," Mr. Partridge says, "by the end of the present session."
- H. C. STUART.—Curtailed and inserted in "Sugar Plums."
- JOSEPH MALING.—A special certificate is being prepared, and will be forwarded to members when ready. The alteration of date you refer to is of no importance. The secretary will forward you an official receipt for your second year's subscription, which is not due, however, until the expiration of twelve months after your joining. We are glad to hear that you are quite satisfied with our replies to the critics of the Secular Society, Limited.
- W. J. RAMSEY.—We cannot find room for obituary notices on Tuesday evening. Next week.
- CHARLES HUGHES.—Thanks for the cuttings. Mr. Foote wishes he could continue to write "at least one literary article in every issue" of the *Freethinker*. It is good of you to say that you never found his literary judgment at fault, although you have tested it by reading all the books he has reviewed in these columns. Perhaps his real merit is that he reads the books he writes about, instead of cutting the leaves and smelling the paper knife, and tries to achieve an impartial appreciation.
- W. SIMONS.—We have already inserted similar announcements. Repetition only lays the cause open to misunderstanding. Thanks for the balance-sheet of the Ball's Pond Secular Sick and Tontine Society, which is, as usual, a modest but healthy document.
- J. ROBERTS.—The paper you refer to is no great legal authority. We will look into the matter if possible. What is stated as to the Queen's powers is ridiculous. She cannot act without the advice of her Ministers.
- JAMES FOGG.—We have spoken to Mr. Forder, who will write you.
- M. BLISS.—It was certainly funny to send a hearse through the Glasgow streets, advertising the text, "Flee from the wrath to come." Anybody who wanted to flee would like a swifter conveyance.
- W. COX.—Mr. Foote has sent a brief letter to the editor of the *Liverpool Review*. With regard to another visit, Mr. Foote thought it was to be contingent on your finding a hall on the old basis. Do you give up this idea?
- ESS JAY BEE.—Pleased to hear you like the *Freethinker* in its new dress; also that your contributions, under another name, find their way into other journals of good standing. Versifiers are reputed to be a jealous tribe. We have pleasure, therefore, in quoting your postscript, which is not at all jealous, but generous:—"Our good old friend G. L. M. has started well with the new year. His poem on the Kaiser is splendid." Thanks for enclosure.
- S. HARTMANN, N. S. S. treasurer, acknowledges receipt of £5 from E. Lawson, Aberdeen.
- J. K. SYKES (Southend) reports having attended a meeting of the Peculiar People at Southend last week, at the close of which he spoke a few words and handed up a copy of the *Freethinker*. Mr. Foote's words on behalf of justice were read out and fully appreciated.
- N. S. S. TREASURER'S SCHEME.—Horace Parsons sends us cheque for £5 in redemption of his promise for the first year.
- HORACE PARSONS applies for membership in the Secular Society, Limited. We shall be glad to hear from other applicants early in the new year.
- N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—We have received:—Horace Parsons, 10s.
- IT being contrary to Post-Office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription expires, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription is due.

RECEIVED.—Freethought Ideal—Ethical World—People's Newspaper—Birmingham Owl—Public Opinion—Sydney Bulletin—Blue Grass Blade—Liverpool Review—New York Truthseeker—Progressive Thinker—Liverpool Mercury—Morning Leader—Freidenker—Lucifer—Torch of Reason—Two Worlds—Isle of Man Times—Cork Constitution—Yorkshire Evening Post—Crescent—Bradford Truthseeker.

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.

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 us to call 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.

IN spite of the unfavorable weather, Mr. Foote had fine meetings at the Bristol-street Board School, Birmingham, on Sunday. The packed crowd in the evening was worth seeing. Every inch of standing room was occupied, the passage was choked with people, and many went away unable to gain any sort of admission. Had the place been twice as large, it would probably have been well filled. Mr. Foote's reception at each meeting was remarkably enthusiastic. The audiences were evidently giving vent to pent-up feelings. Perhaps they felt that, amongst all the sins attributed to the President of the National Secular Society, running away was not included; and that, if hard fighting came again, he would probably be found somewhere in the front. Anyhow, the audience were in the highest good spirits, and as Mr. Foote was in his best form everyone seemed to be enjoying himself—or herself, for there were many ladies present, especially at the evening meeting.

Mr. Cattell, who presided in the morning, and Mr. Ridgway, whose veteran figure graced the chair in the evening, represented the younger and older divisions of the Freethought army. There was no suspicion of braggadocio about either of them, but they were full of fight, and it was perfectly evident that Birmingham Secularism was not going to be snuffed out by the orthodox bigots who were trying to induce the School Board to deny it the use of a public building for its Sunday meetings. At present the matter stands thus. The Branch has engaged the school, and paid for it, up to the end of January, and during the month lectures are to be given by Messrs. Percy Ward, H. W. Dyson, Joseph McCabe, and J. M. Robertson. A little over a week hence a Branch deputation will wait upon the School Board committee, after which the final decision will be arrived at. Meanwhile the committee prohibits the sale of literature at the meetings. This, of course, is not very logical; in fact, it looks petty. The Branch, however, has no alternative but to observe the condition, although its bookstall, under the care of assiduous Mr. Partridge, has been a good source of revenue.

As no literature could be sold inside, and it would have been a trick to sell it outside, Mr. Foote sent down a large parcel of *Freethinkers* to be given away at his own expense; Mr. Partridge placing inside every copy a list of local newsagents, of whom future copies could be purchased. This idea was thought so good that the Branch has opened a temporary Literature Fund, to pay for further supplies of the *Freethinker* and other publications for similar distribution. We hope this Literature Fund will be well supported. Perhaps some Secularists beyond Birmingham will feel inclined to render this gallant Branch a little assistance. If so, they can send to Mr. Partridge, the secretary, 65 Cato-street, Birmingham. Mr. H. Parsons gave five shillings on Sunday towards paying for Mr. Foote's parcel, and another gentleman two shillings without his name.

We did not catch the name either of the gentleman who took the chair in the afternoon. He made a very good chairman, although it was his first attempt in that direction; and his appeal—not a fruitless one—for fresh members was pointed by the statement that he had only recently joined himself, considering it his duty to give what help he could when it was obviously wanted. We trust that many others will be animated by the same spirit.

The following is a list of some Birmingham newsagents who supply the *Freethinker*; others will be included, if possible, next week:—Preston, Dale-end, John Bright-street; Andrews, Coleshill-street; Houghton, High-street, Bordesley; Lane, Great King-street, Wickham, Lickfold-road; Phillpot, Longman-street.

We must not conclude these Birmingham notes without recording our pleasure at seeing Miss Baker at the morning meeting. This lady is the daughter of the late Daniel Baker, whose memory is treasured by the Birmingham Secularists, as it is by many Secularists in other parts of the country. Mrs. Baker is still living, aged and feeble, but happily without pain. Twenty years ago it was always a delight to see her fine intelligent face at our meetings. Few ladies came then, and her presence was like a ray of sunshine.

Our friend and colleague, Mr. Charles Watts, is presumably shaking hands with lots of Freethinkers on the other side of the Atlantic. We fear he had a dreadfully bad voyage across the ocean. Liners arriving at Liverpool and Southampton from New York report that they have seldom experienced such tempestuous weather. We hope to receive some American Notes from Mr. Watts shortly.

London Freethinkers should note—this is the last time we can tell them—that their Annual Dinner, under the auspices of the N. S. S. Executive, takes place on Monday evening (January 9) at the Holborn Restaurant. Mr. Foote, who presides, will take the chair punctually at 7.30. The tickets (4s. each) can be obtained from Miss Vance, N. S. S. office, 376-7 Strand, London, W.C. No doubt there will be some tickets obtainable on Monday evening, but those who wait till then must take the risk of a disappointment.

Secretaries of Branches having Dinner tickets for sale are particularly requested to inform Miss Vance of the number sold at the earliest possible moment. Seats will then be reserved, otherwise she cannot be responsible.

Mr. Cohen lectured at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening and had a good audience, in spite of the wretched weather. He occupies the same platform again this evening (January 8).

Mr. J. Roberts contributes an excellent letter to the *Liverpool Review* in reply to absurd attacks on the local Secularists, whose Sunday meetings are being interfered with by the police—not directly, of course, for they know they cannot frighten the Secularists, but by intimidating the lessee of the hall in which they assemble. It is very curious that the police, who have nothing to do with the law except to enforce some of its provisions, should elect to set themselves up as judges of it, and that in direct opposition to the decision of Mr. Justice Collins in the Court of Queen's Bench. These servants of the public are always attempting to become its masters.

Mr. Foote has also sent a brief letter to the *Liverpool Review* in answer to its "Wandering Scribe"—most happy title! This scribe quotes two "self-contradictions" in the *Freethinker*. The first instance is no contradiction at all to any person with the slightest sense of humor. The other is adequately explained in Mr. Foote's letter.

Colonel Ingersoll is active again in the lecture field after the Christmas holidays. His list of engagements in the New York *Truthseeker* shows he is occupied nearly every evening. There is a great run on his new lecture, "Superstition."

The *People's Newspaper*, Rockhampton, edited, we believe, by Mr. Wallace Nelson, quotes a paragraph on Madame Dreyfus from a late number of the *Freethinker*, and adds: "This is a noble tribute to a noble woman, and it does honor both to the head and the heart of the man who penned it."

The Edinburgh Secular Society now meets at the Moulders Hall, 105 High-street, and its secretary is Mr. J. G. R. Macwaters, 14 William-street. Branch secretaries and others interested should make a note of this in their copies of the *Secular Almanack*.

The West London Secular Club held a very successful Watch-Night Tea and Concert last Saturday. At nine o'clock a good gathering sat down to a substantial tea, at the close of which occasion was taken to present a testimonial to Messrs. R. Edwards and E. Pack, subscribed by their numerous friends as a slight recognition of their plucky and persevering labors on Peckham Rye and elsewhere. The secret had been well kept, and, in returning thanks, Mr. Edwards and Mr. Pack expressed their pleased surprise and hearty thanks.

The *West Ham Herald* laughs at the gentleman we referred to last week who wants to exclude the *Freethinker* from the public library. Our contemporary disclaims any love for this journal, but says it "represents the views of a large number of people" who have full rights of citizenship. The bigot in question is described as an emigrant from "the Middle Ages." There is a capital letter in the *Herald* from the pen of Mr. Charles Hughes, who contends that, while no one is compelled to read what he doesn't like, the "only safe rule in a public institution is fair play to all and favor to none."

Profane Parables.

XIX.—EXPERIENCES.

BEHOLD, many were gathered together in a room. And they spake one unto the other of their several experiences, how their prayers had been answered, and how they had been born twice, and many other wonderful things.

And presently arose a wild-eyed stranger of disordered mien. And he related how that an angel had appeared to him riding upon a unicorn, and had exhorted him to save sinners by piercing their foreheads with an awl, so that the Devil might escape from them. And the stranger straightway brought from an inner pocket a pointed instrument of steel.

But they led him forcibly away to a small chamber, the walls whereof were set with cushions. And they encompassed him with a garment of unseemly sort.

Yet do I count him the greatest seer of them all.

XX.—GODS.

"Take my wealth, my life, my all!" cried the believer in his anguish; "but take not my gods from me, lest I perish utterly!"

But they took his gods from him while he slept. And, lo, when he awoke, he marvelled that his anguish had departed from him.

XXI.—HAPPINESS.

A certain prince was very wealthy, and surrounded by all the fruits of affluence. Yet he was not happy. So he hied him to a seer of his realm, and asked how happiness might be attained.

"Before thou canst be happy," said the seer, "thou must e'en find another who is happy; and thou must discover his religion, and follow it."

So the prince journeyed in far-distant lands. And many said they were happy; but, when the prince prayed to their gods, no answer was vouchsafed to him. And many prayers did he offer up to the deities of kings, nobles, statesmen, merchants, and soldiers; but still he was unsatisfied. Until, at length, he met a husbandman, singing as he labored.

"Thou seemest happy, friend," said the prince.

"Yes," said the man. "I envy no one."

"Prithee tell me thy religion."

"Religion!" laughed the husbandman; "what's that?"

XXII.—NECESSITY.

An honest Christian heard an orator abuse unbelievers with a zeal that seemed immoderate.

"Thy pardon, friend," said he. "I admire thine eloquence, thy facile tongue. As a purveyor of ringing expletives thou art superb; but would it not be better to use *argument*?"

"Sir," said the orator, "hast thou ever encountered an Atheist in argument?"

"N—no!" blushed the other.

"Then don't presume to advise *me*," retorted the orator.

XXIII.—SIN.

The Devil appeared to a bishop in a dream.

"Avaunt!" cried the bishop. "I know thee not."

"Aha!" said the Devil. "Since thou would disclaim me, thou canst haply do without mine aid. As my soul liveth, I will tempt mankind no longer!"

And the bishop cried loudly thereat, so that he awoke. And he rejoiced to find it was a dream.

XXIV.—TOLERATION.

"Liberty! Liberty!" cried the poor, oppressed prophet. "Let us worship as we will. Let us be tolerant one to another. For freedom is the sign of a mighty people, and tolerance the mark of a great ruler."

So they permitted him to worship even as he listed.

And the new sect grew and grew till it became a great power in the land, and threatened heretics with death.

And the heretics, appealing to the prophet, said: "Didst thou not plead for tolerance when thou wast weak?"

"True—when I was weak!" said the prophet.

"And didst thou not advocate liberty for thy creed?"

"Yes—for my creed!" said the prophet.

E. R. W.

Religious Inventions.

THE halcyon days of Christian invention seem now to be quite over. The fertile imaginations that supplied us with the New Testament narratives and various pious frauds appear not to have any worthy prototypes in the present day. Christian invention is going to the dogs. Its efforts, which are mainly directed to misrepresenting and maligning Freethinkers, are poor indeed. They scarcely deceive anyone, so that it is often a waste of time to treat them seriously, or with anything more than mere passing pitying notice. Truly, in regard to most of them, the silence of contempt is the most fitting reply. Several instances have presented themselves of late illustrating the poverty and ineffectiveness of Christian invention.

The Rev. Dr. Watson, in his just published *Idylls*, is endeavoring to point morals whilst he writes tales about death-bed repentances, indulging also in a great deal of other pious nonsense which must, though presented in the guise of fiction, be repugnant to the generality of readers as being quite out of date. And there are always the motley crowd of Christian inventors who, forgetful of their own Holy Book, seem never to tire of associating Freethought with obscenity and immorality. Their efforts are flat, stale, and unprofitable even with their own followers, and serve only to invite crushing replies when anyone chooses to notice them.

It must be to Freethinkers a matter of surprise, if it is not of any special gratification, to find a Christian invention which has the merit of novelty. The other day there was presented to me in the Strand a new publication by the Religious Tract Society, which may, in some measure, lay claim to be distinguished from the bulk. Its title is *The Struggle is Now Over*, and there is an illustration on the front page depicting a patient in a hospital bed with a prayerful-eyed cleric bending over him. So far there is nothing new. Tracts on this subject, and with similar illustrations, are common enough. The new feature is that the story does not end in the triumph of the cleric and of Christ crucified. There is a wonderful self-abnegation about this. Evidently the Religious Tract Society have tried, as a variation, the kind of disappointing ending for which, among latter-day novelists, Mr. George Gissing has, I think, come in for about as much censure as anybody.

This particular story is about a Freethinker who was not converted, but died as a Freethinker, in spite of all the arguments of the man of God. Quite a departure for the Religious Tract Society. Obviously the next step for that zealous institution, if it wants to get right up-to-date, will be to represent the Freethinker as converting the cleric. The scene in the present story is in one of the London Hospitals. A young man lay there when a Christian minister, whose duties called him to visit, entered the ward and went from bed to bed, talking to the patients of Jesus, and we may be sure not at all about the injunction and promise of St. James in regard to the sick. The sideway glances of this sick man at the visitor, together with a peculiar restlessness of his eyes, indicated, we are told, an uneasiness at the approach of the minister. I have seen the same uneasiness myself at the approach of the chaplain, whose pious importunities were not at all appreciated or desired. In turn, however, this man was spoken to. The patient had just been reading. "You are fond of reading, I see," said the visitor. "Yes, I am rather; reading of a particular class, that is. For instance, these are the writings of Freethinkers, men you would not think much of because they hit men of your cloth rather hard sometimes."

Thus commenced a conversation which, if good enough for a Religious Society's Tract, would be a tedious production here. Suffice it to say, the man of God wanted to know what were the patient's views on the truth or untruth of the Christian religion. To which the patient very properly replied: "I don't know, sir, that you have any right in an institution of this character to put a question like that to me." The man of God shelved that point by saying that he simply asked as a friend and brother.

"Your views and mine," observed the patient, "on these subjects won't agree—time past they might have done, but not now."

"You have, then, believed as I do?"

"Yes, I daresay I have, but not now."

"And we are quite at variance on all Bible subjects? You still believe, I hope, in the existence of an eternal, self-existent Being whom we call God, who is the Maker of all things?"

"I have broken away from superstition, and have no desire to go back to antiquated notions."

Then ensued a controversial bout—a sort of conflict specially suited to a hospital ward, where mental exertion and strain of long-talking is, of course, exactly the thing the medical staff would approve—the man of God being at the time in good health, and the patient possibly either recovering from or approaching the verge of death.

The reasoning of this cleric as set forth in the story is, in its lucidity and cogency, quite worthy of the Religious Tract Society. In a profound argument on natural laws, he says he had always regarded laws as originated and appointed by an intelligent law-maker, which might be very well if it were not that the term "law" was evidently used by the patient simply as describing observed sequence of cause and effect.

With sublime audacity, the clerical visitor said the Bible account of the origin of creation commends itself to one's judgment. It runs one into no absurdities and no contradictions. It is simple, natural, and easy to understand. "In the beginning God created the heaven and earth." This with complete indifference to the question, Who made God? and if God can be eternal, why may not the universe?

At length the patient, probably exhausted, and preferring to go to sleep, observed that he had no desire to enter into the subject. It was with him a thing of the past. The struggle was over. He had satisfied himself. What he had read had quite freed him from the thralldom of theology. "I have no misgivings about my new creed; if you think so, you were never more deceived. I don't say that I have not had formerly, but, as I said just now, the struggle in that direction is over."

The cleric pursued the subject, but without avail, and eventually the Freethinker—who, it will be perceived, presents himself even in this tract in a sturdy, self-respecting, intelligent way—was left to die or recover in peace. "The patient seemed as religiously dead as a piece of marble, and he said he was so, either to the fear of hell, or to any hope of heaven." So the discomfited man of God retires without the laurels of victory, and consoles himself with reflecting that the patient's state of mind must have been brought about by persistent wrong-doing or determined efforts to disbelieve—a charitable surmise, and quite of the kind that the Religious Tract Society customarily lavishes its funds in publishing.

FRANCIS NEALE.

A Californian's Prayer for Rain.

O Lord of Storms, be good anon,
 And vindicate our trust;
 Send down thy saving rains upon
 The just and the unjust.
 Alike they pray—upon their knees
 Those, and upon their neighbors these.
 Behold, thine earth is very dry
 (And similar thy bard)—
 We've naught to make it lighter lie,
 Our very cider's hard.
 Our fields so long have moisture lacked
 They gape. Our preachers, too, are cracked.
 They tell us that of righteous men
 The prayers avail, but lo!
 They take not their umbrellas when
 To pray for rain they go.
 But, Lord, in the resulting show'rs
 Thy saints are sometimes seen with ours.
 We've set apart with sweet accord
 A day of gratitude.
 (The Spaniard and the turkey, Lord,
 Are dissident and rude)—
 Our pious hearts are full, but pray
 Take soundings in our wells to-day!
 For next year's harvest fit our lands—
 For grain and grape and peach;
 This season's crops are off our hands—
 Sold, and beyond thy reach.
 Lord, from thy creatures turn this woe,
 And let it fall on Mexico.

—San Francisco Examiner.

Christianity and After.

(Concluded from page 12.)

BUT is there anything better than hope of a future? We think the word "hope" should be confined to its true meaning—the expectancy of a realisable object. We regard the present life as certain, and its social state as progressive; the collective life of humanity admitting of improvement. Herein is ground for hope not deferred—here and now. Whether a future is or is not, will or will not be, it is not under our control; while the present life of man in society is under collective control to some extent. By establishing intelligence, freedom, and truth among men, by teaching the laws of nature and acting in conformity therewith, some amount of civilisation becomes possible, the reign of justice approaches.

Hope, based on these considerations, may be in some sense realised, and the service of man may be substituted for any devotion to things pertaining to the celestial regions. Devotion to the general good here and now may bear fruit, and will certainly benefit society much more than occupying our thoughts and energies with things supernatural. Good thoughts spoken, good acts done, may prove beneficial here and now, while the service of God and the hope of heaven can have value only in some unknown world at some unknown time.

The offer of heaven to those who suffer injustice patiently, as recompense for injustice, is, at best, only problematical, and partakes of the nature of a cheat—it is deferring payment of what is due. In the true interests of society, what is due here should be paid here; justice should be demanded in this world, whether there be another or not. This world is the only object of present interest to man and available for the exercise of all his powers; then why abandon, for any consideration, the search for present good? The fact is, Christianity devoutly believed induces no hope of making this temporal, fleeting life pleasant, of filling up the brief span of life with human interest, with refinement and beauty, with joy and gladness.

All such ideas are totally foreign to the genius of Christianity and the practice of its believers, except those who adopt the name without the thing. Of course there may be seen everywhere a multitude of people living in comfort, wealth, and all the luxuries earth can afford, calling themselves Christians, but as far from being such as the Poles are asunder. Christianity uniformly teaches men to subdue their natural instincts, to love not the world or the things of the world, but to prepare for death and the destruction of all created things. Enough for to-day is the evil thereof.

Instead of concerning ourselves with the approaching dissolution, we advise the study of the order of the present existence, it being of greater import, of living and hourly interest—it being the obvious task of to-day, and for which man's faculties are fitted. Instead of accepting blind faith or unexamined belief, we lay down as the foundation universal liberty, unrestricted inquiry and discussion, and ask for concerted action based on the results—that is, action on the conclusions arrived at after the fullest, freest, and fairest discussion.

This view of things admits all men to aid in the changes of the world as the work of our time; it admits of new knowledge, and new applications of it. Christianity admits of no change, of no new knowledge, of no new revelation by the wisest born since Jesus spoke. The lowest condition of man is to continue till time is no more; poverty is to be always with us, never to cease out of the land. On the contrary, we maintain that change, innovation, progress, activity incessant, are all essential, and quite natural, to man. No one can place a limit to the possible extension of the arts which promote the intellectual and social well-being of man. The results of science have already changed the appearance of what is now known as the civilised globe.

The finest intellect and the warmest heart may find pleasure and profit in well-directed efforts for human improvement. The increase of knowledge day by day is the object of great minds, and the power it gives enables us to see that society is a growth, a creation of man. Instead of concentrating attention on things above, we

urge the expenditure of genius, skill, and labour in the formation of mutual trust, mutual aid, and the discovery of the path to human felicity. Whatever reward may result from the efforts of the intelligent and independent to make man the master of himself, it will obtain in this world, where Christians no more expect any than a labourer expects his wages at noon. Observation of men imbued with thoughts and feelings that find pleasure in the service of others affords evidence that conduct is higher than belief, enlightened views better than assent to creeds, and service to man in this world nobler than belief in another life. It would be better for social progress if the wealth of the Church were devoted to the spread of ideas that will bear fruit in this world, in the embellishment of this life, its preachers becoming teachers of nobler ideas of life and duty.

By changing their methods for those of science, preachers would lead their hearers to form more rational views of theology, and of their duties towards mankind in general, instead of to only those of the household of faith. Bigotry and enmity would be no longer the feelings manifested to antagonists, and the vilification of them and of their honest opinions would cease.

Hardly a month passes without some Christian announcing new views, or the issue of some book expressing some modification of the old theology. There are also changes advancing by insensible degrees, and such will continue till all is transformed. The genius of man is being transformed into practical power, and the growth of new ideas must in the nature of things change all Christian beliefs and institutions. The progress of thought will prove irresistible, and kings, priests, creeds, and churches must accommodate themselves to its mighty power or be swept away.

Men may still pray for rain, but the law of storms makes prayer ineffectual, and as impotent as an attempt to prevent the formation of the well-known phenomenon—a rainbow. The love of Christ may still prevail, but the love of truth will prevail where that does not; it will cover a wider area, and stimulate human endeavor to realise the aspirations of progressive minds. A society of the friends of progress will embrace more members of the human family than the Society of Jesus. The belief in gods, devils, heavens, and hells is very ancient, and has varied in different ages, as it will continue to do; but it has lost much of its power to prevent new ideas being taught, or to burn the teachers. No doubt it is sustained by the belief that it is necessary to secure good citizenship—obedience to the laws. But we know it does not secure this desired object, for offenders abound in all our large cities, and the most notorious of criminals are led to the scaffold proclaiming their belief. Believers constitute nine-tenths of our bad citizens. What, then, is a better security? The belief in goodness, truth, honor, veracity, is the foundation of social order, not Christian beliefs or creeds. The tranquil condition of society does not require professions of faith in the unseen, but a knowledge of right action, and the application of justice to the affairs of human life, regardless of speculative views.

CHARLES CATTELL.

Resurrection and Immortality.

The idea of Resurrection arose from and is closely bound up with the practice of burial, the second and simpler mode of disposing of the remains of the dead. The idea of immortality arose from, and is closely bound up with, the practice of burning, a later and better innovation, invented at the third stage of human culture. During the early historical period all the most advanced and cultivated nations burnt their dead, and, in consequence, accepted the more ideal and refined notion of Immortality. But modern European nations bury their dead, and, in consequence, accept, nominally at least, the cruder and grosser notion of Resurrection. Nominally, I say, because, in spite of creeds and formularies, the influence of Plato and other ancient thinkers, as well as of surviving ancestral ideas, has made most educated Europeans really believe in Immortality, even when they imagine themselves to be believing in Resurrection. Nevertheless, the belief in Resurrection is the avowed and authoritative belief of the Christian world, which thus proclaims itself as on a lower level in this respect than the civilised peoples of antiquity.—GRANT ALLEN, *Evolution of the Idea of God*, p. 54.

Book Chat.

THERE is a slashing review of Ian Maclaren's *New Idylls* in the *Echo*, which is not likely to be very agreeable reading for that author. It says his volume "recks of tedious religiosity," and that, when a writer treats London and Liverpool from the standpoint of the Sunday-school teacher, it is high time for the judicious to cry "Halt!"

The reviewer further chaffs the Rev. Dr. Watson on his repentant death-bed scenes, and his "ragged army of Kail-yard evangelists."

A biography of the late Mr. Henry Drummond, by George Adam Smith, is published by Hodder and Stoughton. It was always difficult to find anything really novel—certainly there was never anything convincing—in *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*.

The *St. James's Gazette* now says that Mr. Smith, in his biography, "appears to err on the side of enthusiasm," and that, as regards Mr. Drummond's work, "both the science and theology of it are felt to be over-estimated."

Holywell-street, off the Strand—or Booksellers'-row, as the literary treasure-hunter prefers to call it—is now doomed to destruction. Soon this quaint bit of old London will be no more. The narrow street has lost much of its picturesque-ness during the last three decades. New buildings out of harmony with their neighbors have been erected in the place of houses two or three centuries old, to the advantage of the light, as the upper parts used to project over the shops, but to the detriment of the street's aspect from the artistic standpoint. The modernising hand of the County Council will soon efface this link with the past, and the book-lover will look in vain for the narrow turning with its treasure-trove of bookstalls.

The ever-moving crowd that passes through Booksellers'-row is leisurely and cosmopolitan. Men of all races saunter down the solely-pedestrian thoroughfare. Literary enthusiasm levels all classes, so that the statesman rubs shoulders with the poor student in scanning the contents of the shopmen's shelves. The booksellers, sooner or later, see nearly every man of note interested in literature pass through this narrow thoroughfare. Celebrities fairly jostle one another, happy in the pursuit of a common object.

On the south side one of the last of the once common sign-boards of a fast-vanishing London still shows itself amidst incongruous surroundings. Hardly a day passes now without seeing some artist sketching with facile pencil some fragment of a London that will very shortly be but a memory.

The blunders of booksellers are often amusing. The other day we saw a volume displayed with the striking label: "Tom Paine's *Poetical works*, 2s. 6d." A closer examination revealed our very old friend, *The Rights of Man*.

A most notable addition to Messrs. Macmillan & Co.'s Foreign Statesmen Series is Mr. P. F. Willert's monograph on *Mirabeau* (published at 2s. 6d.). Mirabeau's life is a fascinating subject, and Mr. Willert has done his work exceedingly well; and, although Mr. Willert ventures to differ from Carlyle, we do not think the reader will quarrel with the more recent writer on that account. What a forty years of strenuous fighting, fume, fury, and worry was Mirabeau's life! Of a truth, he positively consumed himself; the sword wore out the scabbard. He was eaten up by the fire of energy that burnt within his master-mind. He lived on the summit of a smouldering volcano, the volcano of the French Revolution, the most gigantic upheaval to be found in the whole record of human history. Had Mirabeau lived, could he have controlled or modified these mighty forces? The Sage of Chelsea thought yes—that the terrible eruption would not have occurred; Mr. Willert the contrary; and the reader will, in all probability, agree with Mr. Willert. What power Mirabeau had over his fellows! He died young, only forty years of age; but a nation mourned his loss, if possible, shaken even more by grief than in either the case of a Gladstone or a Bismarck, for, though both were giants, they were aged. They had outrun the usual term of man's years; their work was finished. Mr. Willert has helped us to understand the character of this remarkable man, who, absolutely unprincipled, yet wielded such immense power. Truly, genius is a strange thing.

The new issue of the *Catholic Year Book* will positively frighten some timid Protestants, and, it may be, some Rationalists. The statistics are stupendous. In looking through its pages the lay reader will think that so many arch-bishops, bishops, and priests, making a grand total of thousands, looks as if England was going over to what Carlyle

calls "the great lying Church." The band of ecclesiastics dream if they think they can bring back the dominion of Rome. We look abroad upon the world, and wherever Catholicism is powerful we see that the nation is weak; that wherever the nation is at its strongest, the Church is at its weakest. Spain and Italy are grand examples, and in France the priests are in league against justice with the braggarts who talk of "the honor of the army." It is not worth while to argue about the matter. If ever the need should rise, Englishmen may be relied upon to strangle the many-headed beast of Priestcraft. But it is not likely to rise in our day, and the passage of the years will render it less and less possible

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"Most people have no more definite idea of liberty than that it consists in being compelled by law to do as they like."

"The Psalmist never saw the seed of the righteous begging bread. In our day they sometimes request pennies for keeping the street corners in order."

"It is wicked to cheat on Sunday. The law recognises this truth, and shuts up the shops."

"If a jackass were to describe the deity, he would represent him with long ears and a tail. Man's ideal is the higher and truer one; he pictures him as somewhat resembling a man."

"Camels and Christians receive their burdens kneeling."

Profane Jokes.

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"Boys," said a teacher in a Sunday-school, "can any of you quote a verse from Scripture to prove that it is wrong for a man to have two wives?" He paused, and, after a moment or two, a bright boy raised his hand. "Well, Thomas," said the teacher encouragingly. Thomas stood up and said: "No man can serve two masters."—*Ram's Horn*.

Minister (to irate colored woman who has been complaining that her husband neglected and abused her)—"Have you tried 'coals of fire' on his head?" "No, massa, but I've tried hot water outen de kettle."

"Tis all wrong," said Mr. Dooley. "They're only three books in th' worruld worth readin'—Shakspere, th' Bible, and Mike Ahearn's histhry iv Chicago. I have Shakspere on thrust, Father Kelly r-reads th' Bible f'r me, an' I didn't buy Mike Ahearn's histhry because I seen more thin he cud put into it. Whin I was growin' up half th' congregation heard mass with their pr-rayer books tur-rned upside down, and they were as pious as anny. Th' Apostles' Creed niver was as convincin' to me ather I larned to r-read it as it was whin I cudden't read it, but believed it."—*Peter Dunne*.

"How many wives does the Church of England allow a man?" "Sixteen. Four better, four worse, four richer, four poorer."

"Was Adam high or low church?" "He did not know, but he thought Eve angelical."

Finite and Infinite.

Imagine a man who, with balances a thousand cubits high, should wish to weigh the sand of the sea. When he had filled his two scales they would overflow, and his work would be no further advanced than at the beginning. All the philosophers are at that point. They may say if they please, "Still there is a weight, there is a certain figure which we should know, let us try," the scales are magnified, the rope breaks, and always, always so!—*Gustave Flaubert*.

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, "Morality without Religion."

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, A. B. Moss, "Science and Superstition."

EAST LONDON BRANCH (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road, E.): 8, W. Heaford, "Is Religion Necessary?"

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Bow Vestry Hall, Bow-road, E.): 7, F. J. Gould, "Religion of Charles Darwin."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road, S.E.): 11.15, Discussion; 7, J. M. Robertson, "The Ethics of Patriotism."

WEST LONDON SECULAR CLUB (15 Edgware-road): Every evening 7 to 10.50. The resort of Freethinkers in the district. Visitors invited. Debating class every Tuesday. Lectures every Thursday. January 12, at 8.15, Mr. Sharman, "John Stuart Mill."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11, J. H. Muirhead, "Is it a Sin to Save?"

WESTMINSTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Grosvenor Arms, Page-street): 7.30, Chilperic Edwards, "Prehistoric Man." Collection of stone implements on exhibit.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH (Bristol-street Board School): H. P. Ward—11, "The Story of G. W. Foote's Trial and Imprisonment for Blasphemy"; 7, "Man's Reason and God's Revelation."

BRADFORD (Oddfellows' Hall, Thornton-road): 7, W. F. Barnard, "Sexual Freedom."

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, H. Snell, "Brutus: Philosopher and Republican." A Shakespearean character study, with recitals.

DERBY BRANCH (Central Hotel, Market-place): 7, Half-yearly meeting and election of officers.

LEICESTER SECULAR CLUB (Humberstone-gate): Touzeau Parris—11, "Sacramental Superstition"; 5.30, "The Mystery of the Birth of God Unveiled."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, L. Bergmann, "Physics and Theism."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 7, "Comic Adventures of Jonah and the Whale." Illustrated by lantern views.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, R. Law, F.G.S.—3, "Some Remarkable Examples of Denudation of Strata: Their Cause and Effect"; 7, "Matter and Motion." Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7, Business Meeting; 7.30, A Reading.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton.—January 8, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road; 15, Camberwell; 19 and 20, Derby; 22, Sheffield; 24 and 25, Preston; 29, Bradford Labor Church; 31, Huddersfield. February 1, Huddersfield; 5, Glasgow; 7, Carlisle; 8, Wishaw; 9 and 10, Motherwell; 12, Dundee; 26, Liverpool. March 5, Liverpool; 12, Birmingham.

H. PERCY WARD, 5 Alexandra-road, Edgbaston, Birmingham.—January 8, Birmingham; 15 and 22, Manchester; 29, Chester.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, S.E.—January 8, Camberwell; 22, Newington Reform Club.

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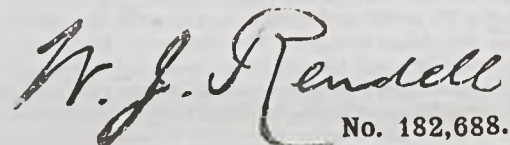
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