

THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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PRICE TWOPENCE

A Fifteen-Hours' Farce.

THE Chinese have tremendously long dramas. They sometimes sit for hours to see a single act, and take the next act the following week. But even in the records of that curious people—such records, that is, as have reached the Westerns—we have never read of a farce which lasted for fifteen hours and was played right through without even an interval for refreshments. We must come nearer home—indeed, *close* home, amidst a people still more curious in many ways than the Chinese—to find such an extravagant performance. After all, it is not so very remarkable when we recollect what used to occur in the northern part of the island of Great Britain. Buckle gives a lively description of what we may call the sermon junkets that took place in Scotland when the kirk was omnipotent and preaching was the only legitimate pastime. Congregations sometimes sat for nine or ten hours at a stretch, and, as the lungs of the most leathery spirit-wrestlers were not equal to such prolonged exertions, they had relays of ministers to keep the ball rolling. The men of God who shouted loudest were the most acceptable, those who perspired the most were accounted the best saints, and those who held out longest were reckoned as favorites of heaven. Thrice happy was he whose voice was stentorian, whose pores worked freely, and whose powers of endurance sustained him for three hours in the pulpit. Whatever peccadillos he might fall into, under the temptation of thirst or concupiscence, he held an unforfeitable ticket for a reserved seat in glory.

"Come now," the reader will say, "leave off your ambages and begin business. When and where was this fifteen-hours' farce enacted, and who were the performers?" Well, we will answer at once. The farce was played on Tuesday, the scene was John Wesley's chapel in the City-road, and the performers were leading Wesleyan Methodist ministers, the star actor being the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes. It began at six o'clock in the morning, and ended at nine o'clock in the evening. "Gracious!" the reader will exclaim, "a farce in a chapel! What farce was it, and how did it happen?" Well, listen and you shall hear.

The Wesleyan Methodist Convention was arranged for Wednesday and Thursday, and Tuesday was devoted to a preliminary prayer-meeting; and in order that God Almighty might have no excuse for not listening, they resolved to batter his ears for fifteen hours without intermission. It was not yet daylight when the congregation assembled. The chapel was bright inside with electric light—a triumph of science which signally contrasted with the superstitious mummery it illuminated. Mr. Hughes opened the proceedings with a short address. He asked all intending supplicants to be brief, and told them that anybody who prayed that morning for more than two minutes would be inspired by the Devil—that is, by the party whom Mr. Hughes has just been dropping out of the Free Church Catechism. Several members of the congregation got up and said a few words to the Lord. Towards the close of the first hour the M.C.—Mr. Hughes to wit—said to the festive company: "Be very brief now, brethren; only one minute now." Probably he wanted as many as possible to get at the Lord in the time. But seven o'clock came, and Mr. Hughes gave place to another M.C., who at eight o'clock gave place to another; and so it went on

all day long, until eight o'clock in the evening, when Mr. Hughes took the lead again and officiated during the last hour of the entertainment.

If the Lord does not answer those five or six hundred prayers, sent up to him in one day from a single spot, it must be concluded that there is no balm left in Gilead. What the Wesleyan Methodists particularly want is the million pounds they are trying to raise as a Twentieth Century Fund. This money may not avail to save any considerable number of souls, or to add to the Methodist members' roll, but it will gladden the hearts of all who are laboring in the Methodist department of the Lord's vineyard, and the Lord ought really to do something for these energetic employees. Whether he has poured down a special supply of wisdom on the Wesleyan Methodist Convention is a minor matter. Wisdom is a good thing in its way, but it is not so handy as hard cash.

We shall see what we do see. Meanwhile we may devote a little space to Mr. Hughes's introductory remarks on prayer. According to the *Westminster Gazette* report, he said that "with regard to prayer, unless they took the trouble diligently to study the Scriptures, they might ask for gifts which they were not intended to have." Now, in saying this, Mr. Hughes sets himself up as wiser than Jesus Christ, who said: "Whatsoever ye ask believing, that ye shall receive." This is infinitely comprehensive. "Whatsoever" includes everything. There is absolutely no reservation. It is arrogance on Mr. Hughes's part, therefore, to qualify the plain declaration of his Savior. But he is bound to hedge and trim in the present condition of things. Prayer is so far discredited that most believers are reluctant to ask for anything tangible, unless it be money, which of course may flow in from the advertisement when they take to supplicating the Lord from the housetops. We seldom hear of the old-time prayers for rain or fine weather now that meteorology is known to be a definite science. Nobody asks the Lord to falsify the announcements of the weather bureau. It is understood that Providence does not interfere when men of science have grasped the laws of the phenomena. Believers only ask the Lord for highly speculative things, which puts him and them both in the right whatever happens. Sometimes they ask for what unbelievers regard as sheer impossibilities. Colonel Ingersoll, for instance, says he heard the chaplain ask God to give Congress wisdom. But that was an official petition, for which the praying machine was duly salaried.

Seriously, however, it seems extraordinary that the Wesleyan Methodists should choose this time for a fifteen-hours' orgie of prayer. While they were attacking Providence in this remarkable fashion a poor sincere Christian was actually doing four months' hard labor for asking the Lord to save the life of his sick child. Of course it is said that he omitted to call in a doctor to help the Lord do it, but that is all humbug. A God who wants medical assistance is no God at all. Altogether, this extra-special Methodist prayer-meeting was dreadfully ill-timed. It would have been better to go to work more modestly and discreetly. They might have waited until Thomas George Senior's sentence had expired and was half forgotten. As it is, they have emphasised the hypocrisy of present-day faith. Freethinkers may point to Thomas George Senior's prison cell, and to the Wesleyan Chapel prayer-meeting, and exclaim: "Behold the fruits of Christianity!"

G. W. FOOTE.

Ten Days at Sea.

It has always been one of the principal pleasures of my life to take a sea-trip, but if all such trips were like the one I have just finished, the briny ocean would have no attraction for me. I have crossed the Atlantic nineteen times, but it was never my misfortune to encounter anything approaching the tempestuous weather that prevailed during seven out of the ten days' voyage just ended.

Shortly after leaving Queenstown a hurricane arose, a head wind set in, and rain commenced to pour in torrents. The *Aurania* is not one of the fastest of the Cunard steamers, but she is a large and comfortable boat, her gross tonnage being 7,268, and her length 740ft.; yet this huge vessel was tossed about for seven days and nights like a piece of cork by waves that rose "mountains high," and then like thunder they would dash against the sides of the steamer, engulfing her in the foaming sea. The whole of these seven days and nights the passengers had no rest, and but little sleep. In order to prevent our ribs from being broken, we lay in our berths at night between two pillows; but even then our bodies were never at rest, and the circulation of the blood was promoted in a most objectionable manner. Not once were we allowed on deck through the entire week. We were thus deprived of all normal exercise, while reading and writing were impossibilities, and it was only left for us to practise all the patience we could command and submit to the inevitable. This I did, holding fast to my seat in the smoke-room. I thought, so far as thinking was possible, whence I came; but as to where I was going I could form no opinion. Fortunately I was not sea-sick once, but more than a dozen times I was sick of the sea, and my resolve was that I would never more cross the Atlantic at this time of the year.

The scene was changed on the last two days of the voyage. It was calm, and the sun shone brightly. It was on these two days only that the steamer did her average runs—420 knots a day. During the storm she varied from 175 to 210 knots in the twenty-four hours. At last we reached New York on Wednesday morning, January 3, at 9.30, three days late, which caused me to break my first engagement, which was to lecture on Sunday, January 1. I received a hearty welcome from my friend, Mr. E. Macdonald, editor of the *Truthseeker*, who had been "looking," to use his own words, "for the *Aurania* for three days; where have you been?" he exclaimed. My reply was, "All at sea," which was literally true.

I am to meet many of the friends this (Friday, January 6) evening, when I give my first lecture at the Liberal Club, New York. Upon this, and other features concerning the object of my visit, I shall have something further to say in my next letter. I may mention here that I very much missed the companionship of my friend and colleague, Mr. Foote. At my previous visit, two years ago, he was with me, which tended to make the trip an exceedingly pleasant one. However, I have this consolation, that his absence caused him to escape the troubles and anxiety which I have had to endure. From my experience he will learn that, when he decides to again visit this continent, he had better cross in October. Mr. Foote will, no doubt, be glad to know that his personal friends whom I have met have not forgotten him, and they are particularly desirous to know when he "is again coming over."

Apart from what I have already written, there are not many incidents of my voyage to mention. There was a gloomy sameness throughout. We had a very few saloon passengers, and most of those preferred their berths to any other part of the steamer. On the evening of Christmas Day, when the social and domestic feelings usually predominate, when families assemble around the same table, and when young and old lay aside worries and share the joys of the festive season, I sat alone in the smoking-room, a victim to the terrible storm then raging. There was not the slightest indication that it was Christmas. Five passengers sat down to dinner, but three of those made a speedy exit. My only enjoyment consisted in thinking of the absent ones. There was no attempt made at any religious service. Neptune commanded supreme attention, and his doings were

deemed of far more importance than those of any God above or Devil below. On the following Sunday the farce of reading the Church service to nine passengers and a portion of the crew was gone through by the Purser. He thanked God for "bringing us safely through the troubled waters." This, I thought, was an insult to the Captain and the principal officials, who did their best to counteract the effects of Providence—that is, if he were, as the Purser stated, "the great commander of the sea."

What a mockery this Christian superstition is! On Board there were a young married couple with a child five years of age, and another expected within two months. On the Sunday before we landed the wife was taken ill and died, the husband became a raving madman, and had to be put under restraint. The dear little child was left practically an orphan. The mother on the Monday was committed to the deep, the young girl crying bitterly as the body was thrown into the sea. The Purser read the funeral service of the Church of England, and he was heartless enough to repeat the words: "We thank Thee, Almighty God, for taking our dear sister," etc. I looked on with amazement at this cruel exhibition of the power of theology over the dictates of humanity.

To all my dear friends on the other side I send my sincere wishes that one and all will find that 1899 is to them a prosperous "New Year."

CHARLES WATTS.

Human Immortality.

(Continued from page 52.)

THE second objection to human immortality discussed by Professor James is this: Granting the existence of a "world-soul," a portion of which becomes individualised by the human organism and perpetuated throughout eternity, the time must eventually arrive when this general consciousness becomes used up, so to speak, completely divided into personal fragments, and the creation of "immortal souls" ceases. This is the form in which the objection is usually met, and the only way of avoiding it is to postulate a re-absorption of the individual into the whole—a method that the lecturer specifically rejects. Professor James, however, does not put the objection in its traditional form, but upon the grounds of the "incredible and intolerable number of beings we must believe to be immortal, if immortality be true.....A modern mind.....hesitates to draw the line even at man. If any creature lives for ever, why not all? Why not the patient brutes? So that a faith in immortality, if we are to indulge it, demands of us nowadays a scale of representation so stupendous that our imagination faints before it.....We give up our own immortality sooner than believe that all the hosts of Hottentots and Australians that have been and shall ever be should share it with us.....Life is a good thing on a reasonably copious scale; but the very heavens themselves, and the cosmic times and spaces, would stand aghast, we think, at the notion of preserving eternally such an ever-swelling plethora and glut of it."

One may well pause a moment to admire the magnanimity of the above passage. For people to surrender their own immortality rather than see "the cosmic spaces" glutted with Hottentots and Australians, or white men sharing the same heaven with "down-south niggers," displays a consideration for the fitness of things and a height of self-surrender truly admirable. It reminds one of Artemus Ward's opinion, that "the earth revolves on its own axle-tree once every twenty-four hours, subject to the constitution of the United States."

"Our Christian ancestors," Professor James points out, "dealt with the problem more easily than we do.Our forefathers felt a certain sort of joy in thinking that their Creator made them as so much mere fuel for the fires of hell. [A capital comment on the humanising tendencies of Christianity.] Our culture has humanised us beyond that point, but we cannot yet conceive them as our comrades in the fields of heaven.....Take, for instance, all the Chinamen. Which of you here, my friends, sees any fitness in their eternal perpetuation

unreduced in numbers? God himself, you think, can have no use for them." To which a Chinaman might retort that it is equally difficult to see what use there can be throughout eternity for millions of Americans; the argument is as valid on one side as on the other.

Although Professor James professes to be meeting objections advanced by "Cerebralistic Materialism," one can hardly understand anyone but a Theist and a believer in immortality advancing an objection in the form of the above quotations. One can scarcely imagine a Materialist facing the subject in any other light than as a simple question of fact, and treating its utility or beauty as a matter of minor importance. There are a great many things in the world that are neither beautiful nor useful, so far as man is concerned; and immortality might conceivably be a fact without its satisfying man's economic and æsthetic requirements. And when, further, the lecturer goes on to point out the "tremendous fallacy" in this objection, and one so obvious that "the only wonder is that all the world should not see through it"—the fallacy of overlooking the simple fact that to every individual his life, be it confined or enlarged, savage or civilised, is still his life, and as such equally valuable to each—one can only marvel at the "tremendous" fatuity of a man like Professor James putting such an objection as the one he is answering into the mouth of a scientific Materialist. I do not know of any Materialist who would dream of arguing that, because *he* fails to see the use of perpetuating "all the Chinamen," or "all the hosts of Australians and Hottentots," that this constitutes an argument against their being perpetuated. It is the Theist who habitually dresses the universe in fabrics woven from his own desires, and decorates it with the tinselled finery of his imagination. The Materialist is content with the more prosaic method of first of all satisfying himself of the evidence for and against a particular belief, and adapting his actions in accordance therewith.

And just as Professor James's final reply to the first objection was to recommend it to future lecturers to deal with, so his final reply to the second is to fall back upon the narcosis of "trust in God." "The Deity that suffers us, we may be sure, can suffer many another queer and wondrous and only half-delightful thing." Well, there is something in that, perhaps. The deity that can "suffer" all the queer and wondrous and half-delightful (what modesty in the "half"!) things that are said about him by his friends may well be credited with a degree of patience and long-suffering almost inconceivable to human beings.

But the weakness of Professor James's arguments is, after all, not so much the fault of the man as it is of the subject. The cleverest logician is bound to fail in defending an illogical position, and, while the lecturer shows much skill in avoiding troublesome questions, it is impossible for him to atone for the lack of positive evidence necessary to justify his position. And in no particular is this avoidance of troublesome questions more noticeable than in the utter absence of anything approaching an evolutionary view of the matter. One would hardly expect a modern psychologist to discuss the question of the belief in a future life without even the most indirect reference to the views of present-day anthropologists on the subject. But America is the land of surprises, and its universities seem to be in line with the national characteristic.

There are really two elements in the belief in immortality. One is the simple desire to live, the other the conception of a spirit inhabiting the body that shall continue to live when the organism has decayed. The first has obviously no direct reference to a future life, and is easily explainable on lines of evolution. In the fierce competition between animals, human and sub-human, and putting on one side differences of strength or skill, the advantage will obviously lie on the side of those who possess the will to live in the greatest and strongest measure. Natural selection must clearly encourage this desire, since the presence of it will be one of the factors that will determine survival. For exactly the same reason that the posture of man grew more erect with the lapse of time, or that the colors of various kinds of insects took on an increasing likeness to their environment because they were conditions that determined superiority, for the same reason the desire to live is one

of the characteristics of man, because without it the human race would long since have ceased to exist.

But this, as I have said, has no clear reference to a life beyond the grave. It is only when it is translated into language derived from the second element that it can be made to do duty as an argument for immortality. And it is at this point that modern science, by a study of the mental characteristics of primitive man, discloses to us the causes of the belief in a future life, and in doing this effectually rules out all the specious pleading of modern apologists. To me it has always been a matter of surprise how anyone who has read only two such works as the first volume of Spencer's *Principles of Sociology* and Tylor's *Primitive Culture* can have any reasonable doubt that in the personification of the objects and journeys of dream-life, aided by the mistaken deductions drawn from the hearing of echoes, or the sight of shadows and reflections of images, we have the origin of the belief in man's dual personality, one part of which spends eternity in a heaven that has always been but a reflection of our own earth. All that we know of savage life, its customs, its mental characteristics, its language, gives support to this conclusion. Where the savage treats an echo as a real voice, a shadow as a real substance, or an epileptic seizure as due to the presence of a spirit taking possession of the body during its owner's absence, we adopt diametrically opposed conclusions. Where the Biblical writer declares "An angel appeared unto him in a dream," a modern would write: "He dreamed an angel appeared unto him." It is by the misunderstanding of such familiar phenomena as these that the idea of a future life was born into the world, and the belief that originated in the dream of primitive man was brought to its most explicit and most brutal expression in the nightmare of mediæval Christianity.

What *proof* has any man to offer another of the existence of a life beyond the grave? None worthy of the name. What proof has any man ever had that cannot be justly put on one side as the result of a distempered imagination, or as the excuses that intelligence manufactures to justify the fancies of bygone generations? Again, none at all. During all the centuries that this question has been discussed no one, neither theologian nor scientist nor philosopher, ever adduced a single reason that could carry conviction to the minds of those who were not already predisposed in its favor. Can we imagine anyone coming to believe in the existence of a life beyond the grave as the outcome of reading such volumes as those of Professor James or other special pleaders? Such apologies have absolutely no value against scientific disbelief. They persuade none, they satisfy none; at most they do but give a slightly longer lease of life to a belief that finds fewer adherents with each generation. The belief is rooted wholly in personal feeling—a feeling which is explained by its history and condemned by its explanation.

Nor can I help regarding this craving for a future life as little better than one of humanity's morbid characteristics—a pretty general one, if you will, but none the less morbid on that account. It is not the man whose veins run red with the torrent of life who most feels the need of a future life; it is the weak, the infirm, the wretched, who dwell most upon its necessity and lament most loudly its disappearance. It is the wretchedness and incapacity and weakness of man that gives the future life such an alluring aspect, and thus superimposes on the primitive savage belief a number of more or less illogical reasons derived from the uncertainty and misery of human life. Professor James admits (p. 11) that, for himself, his own feeling concerning immortality has never been of the keenest order, and one cannot help regarding this admission as the truest note in the lecture. In it we can see the scientific student triumphing over the special apologist of half-obsolete religious beliefs. Literally born of the "stuff that dreams are made of," the belief in a life beyond the grave owes its continued existence to the combined influence of the conservative instinct, largely secured by the merciless weeding-out of the critical, and the operation of vested interests offering financial and social bribes to all who aid in its perpetuation. Upon the canvas of the universe man paints his own passions, his own desires, and endows with reality his own expectations, only to learn later how thoroughly

untrustworthy these primitive fancies are. One by one the world's religious beliefs are criticised, modified, and finally rejected. But gradually is it realised that of a life after death we are as ignorant as of a life before birth. We may conjecture much, we can be certain of nothing; and man's life, if it is to be made worth living, must be based upon the verifiable knowledge of the present, not upon the traditional and unverifiable fancies of the past.

C. COHEN.

The Agapemone; or, Abode of Love.

A STRANGE STORY OF RELIGIOUS LIFE.

THE newspapers that have recently announced the death of Mr. Henry James Prince at Spaxton, near Bridgewater, have afforded some information about that extraordinary gentleman—as, for instance, that he was formerly a clergyman of the Church of England, that he established an Abode of Love in Somersetshire, that he lived in a very luxurious fashion, and that in later years his community benefited by several very handsome windfalls. I see also a paragraph about his attending the Exhibition of 1851 in semi-royal state, with carriage and four, postillions and outriders, and insisting upon being addressed as “My Lord.”

If we wish, however, to know the true history of Brother Prince, who claimed and persuaded many opulent people that he possessed divine powers, and who established an Abode of Love, which is still in existence, and a chapel that cost £20,000 at Clapton, we must refer to Hepworth Dixon's *Spiritual Wives*, in which by far the best account of Prince and his Agapemone appears. The story can hardly be recommended as edifying; some portions of it, indeed, might be regarded as highly objectionable. It has, however, its uses in showing the extent to which religious folly will proceed, especially with those who are called, and perhaps not without some reason in connection with religion, the “weaker sex,” over whom Prince seemed to have exercised a special fascination.

It was in 1868 that Hepworth Dixon visited the Abode of Love at Spaxton. He had been told that it was a family consisting of four apostate clergymen, an engineer, a medical man, an attorney, and two bloodhounds. But he did not find the bloodhounds nor a wall from twelve to fifteen feet high surrounding the estate, as he had been led to expect. Once indeed, he says, such dogs were used for defence against cunning and carnal men, but only for a short time just after an act of violence had occurred, for which the law could give them no redress. The only bit of high wall near the place was that which stood in front of the church, built to prevent the Spaxton clowns from staring through the west window from an adjoining field.

Near the wooded valley of Over Stowy, a place renowned in the poetry of Wordsworth and Coleridge, and near the Quantock hills, Mr. Dixon found a “fanciful and striking group of buildings”—a church to which the spire had not yet been built, a garden cooled by shrubs and trees; a greenhouse thronged with plants; an ample sward of grass cut through by winding walks; a row of picturesque cottages in the road; a second row in the garden; high gates by the church; a tangle of buildings in the front and rear; farms, granaries, stables, all of them crimson with creeping autumnal plants. That group of buildings was the Agapemone, the home of Prince's male and female saints.

Mr. Hepworth Dixon's driver told him, with a shudder, that he had heard it said in the village alehouse that the strange people in the Abode of Love played billiards on a Sunday in the church! For himself he would not mind a game of nine-pins on a Sunday afternoon; but he saw a great difference between poor fellows playing nine-pins in the ale-house yard and gentlefolks hitting ivory balls in a church.

The visitor was received by a dignified cleric, the husband of Agnes Nottridge (heroine of an alehouse comedy) and the First of the Two Anointed Ones to whom had been given power to explain to men the mystery of the Seven Stars, to keep the Seven Golden Candlesticks, and to declare the Man whose name is

the Branch. In the chief room, which was really a church, three ladies were seated near a piano, at which one of them was playing. After a short introduction they simply curtsied and left. One, it afterwards transpired, the daughter of a clergyman of standing in society and high repute, was the second wife of Brother Prince. They never left Mr. Dixon entirely unattended during the whole of his visit; in fact, he felt rather disturbed by the Two Anointed Ones, who would not leave him alone for five minutes.

If he went into the greenhouse, took a turn in the garden, or idled about the stables, either Sister Ellen, Sister Annie, or some other lady, would slip quietly in, and take her share in the talk that was going on.

Sister Ellen told him on one occasion that she had not spoken to a stranger, excepting only a few words to a man who was mending a pane of glass in her room, for nine years! He tried to walk out with the Rev. Samuel Starkey (second of the Anointed Ones), but “Sister Annie came out in her high boots, and with her skirts tucked up, prepared to defy the dirty lanes,” and to go with them.

At last, for an hour, Mr. Dixon was left alone in the church, lounging on a red sofa, near a bright fire, in the colored light of high lancet windows filled with rich stained glass, soft cushions on the floor; a billiard-table on his right, and, above his head, the sacred symbol of the Lamb and Dove, flanked and supported by a rack of billiard cues. Ivory balls lay on the green baize as if the Sisters had been recently at play.

In this room the Great Manifestation had taken place; the mystic, or, as the ungodly would have called it, the libidinous rite through which living flesh was said to have been reconciled to God—the drama in which Brother Prince played the part of hero, and Madonna Paterson the part of heroine.

“Do you work and play on Sundays?” inquired Mr. Dixon of the First Anointed One.

“We have no Sundays,” he replied; “all days with us are Sabbaths, and everything we do is consecrated to the Lord.”

“They like to play games on Sunday as a protest against the bondage of the world.”

Later on, in his narrative, Mr. Dixon describes his meeting with the now lately deceased Mr. Prince, “a gentleman in black, with sweet, grave face, a broad white neckcloth, and shining leather shoes.” He led the way into a luxurious parlor, like a lady's boudoir; the furniture was rich and good, the chairs were cosy, and the place was adorned by many costly ornaments. Prince sat in a semi-circle of his elect, and amongst the ladies were Sister Ellen and Sister Zoe, Sister Annie and Sister Sarah.

The Rev. Samuel Starkey, a tall, stout man of sixty-one years, with mild blue eyes, a little weak and wandering in expression, was prominent in the assembly. He was the first great convert made by Prince—the first disciple who brought him the advantages to be derived from money, education, and a good social position. Curiously enough, the conversion took place whilst Prince was acting as curate to him at Charlinch.

Of the ladies who sat in this half ring, Mr. Dixon thought that two, at least, would have been regarded as comely in any place; one of them was very lovely, most of all so when her face was in repose.

“The first, a lady whom I had heard the Brethren address as Sister Annie, was a very fine model of female beauty in middle life; plump, rosy, ripe; with a pair of laughing eyes, a full red cheek, and ripples of curling dark-brown hair. Some softness of the place lay on her as on all the rest.....The second lady, whom I afterwards came to know as Sister Zoe, was one of those rare feminine creatures who lash poets into song, who drive artists to despair, and cause common mortals to risk their souls for love. You saw, in time, that the woman was young and lithe and dressed in the purest taste; but you could not see all this at once; for when you came, by a quick turn of the passage, into her presence, you saw nothing about her save only the whiteness of her brow, the marble-like composure of her face, the wondrous light of her big blue eyes. She sat there nestling by the side of Prince, in a robe of white stuff with violet tags and drops and —”

But why continue this description, when, after all, the main interest of this narrative rests not so much in how this woman looked with “her folded hands and saintly

brow," as in what she did; the scene that had taken place in the adjoining church, "that daring right, the strangest mystery, perhaps the darkest iniquity of these latter days; through which Prince asserts, and Thomas testifies, that God has reconciled living flesh unto Himself, and introduced His final dispensation on the earth."

That rite, and the descriptive details which brought down showers of undeserved censure upon Mr. Hepworth Dixon's head for the mere offence of narration, may be left to another instalment of this really strange story of religious life.

FRANCIS NEALE.

(To be continued.)

Christ!

How is it that Secularist writers and speakers have got into the slovenly habit of referring to "Christ"? Does it ever occur to them that the unqualified use of the name is a virtual admission of what Christian professors contend for—namely, that Jesus was and is the son of an actual divinity. Christ is, indeed, one of the countless pious frauds of which religious professors of the day are so extensively guilty. For, bearing in mind that all English-speaking Protestants profess to rely upon the Bible (the English "Authorised Version") for everything they assert, it is evident they do not so rely; and it is a fact that fully nine-tenths of what Protestants profess (including the most vital of all their alleged beliefs) cannot be deduced from the plain Bible narrative. Why, then, do Secularists continually admit that the primary teachings of the Christianity of the day can be, and are, justified by the Bible narrative? Such admissions are injudicious as well as inaccurate, and Secularists thereby stultify themselves.

Of course, the self-constituted exponents of current Christianity never stand at anything, accurate or inaccurate. Words and phrases are used by them in equal defiance of accuracy, sense, and meaning. For instances they toss about the words grace, salvation, sin, Satan, and God; and yet no two professed Christians could (without collusion) define in the same terms any one of those words. Their habitual practice is to avoid any definition, their object being to create and sustain a mental phantasmagoria of indefinite superstition, which it is impious to investigate, or to attempt to investigate. They know that every fact tends to tumble down the superstructure of popular belief. Hence their jealous avoidance of every form of candor in controversy, which they regard with horror.

Considering that facts and accuracies are fatal to all religious teaching, there is some excuse for religious teachers when they avoid facts and accuracies. But for Secularists there is no such excuse; so that the use of the word "Christ," which is a palpable inaccuracy, often destroys any value there might otherwise be in Secularist observations. I know that some sticklers for "liberty" may be disposed to retort: "I shall say Christ if I like, for all you." That is suggestive of a too prevalent spirit which I desire to oppose, and which, I submit, all sound Secularists should oppose. From that point of view, it seems to be very much overlooked that throughout the so-called Gospels, with the exception of a few minor passages that are obviously interpolated, the word Christ occurs only where Jesus is asked whether he is the Christ, or where the designation is sneeringly flung at him in derision. And to this all the reply that could be extorted from Jesus was "Thou hast said," certainly more laconic than candid, probably amounting to no more than "So you say." Everywhere else, barring the said interpolations, the personal reference in the various gospel narratives is simply to Jesus. On the contrary, in the headings of the chapters and in the headlines of the pages, the word Christ is systematically substituted, forming a long series of the most transparent and purposely delusive frauds on record. Why should Secularists play into the hands of the transparencies by so often saying Christ as they say, when really alluding only to Jesus—merely one of the many Jesuses of the period—he of Nazareth? The fraudulent or careless dragging in of the word "Christ," so commonly prevalent, is most reprehensible when

referring to the so-called "Sermon on the Mount." Thus we are often told that Christ said "Blessed are the meek," &c. *ad lib.* Whereas the entire account of the sermon never once refers to the preacher as Christ, but invariably as Jesus only. And yet I find in a recent *Truthseeker* no less than thirty-five persons—presumably Secularists—answering without demur the entirely gratuitous question, "Was Christ a Wise Teacher?" when, even according to the so-called Gospels, there never was such a person. It would not matter about the thirty-five persons exhibiting, on an ephemeral occasion, such lack of appreciation of the difference, but I submit that the frequent verbal reference to "Christ" by many leading Secularists, actually including Colonel Ingersoll, is a form of inadvertence or carelessness which amounts to a chronic weakness in Secularist advocacy.

RICHARD RUSSELL

Profane Parables.

XXXVII.—FUNCTIONS.

"I WILL teach the people to reason aright," said Logic. "I will instruct them in their social duties," said Ethics.

"I will explain the meaning of existing things," said Science.

"Yes, yes!" cried Religion. "But where do I come in?"

"That is what *we* want to know," said the others.

XXXVIII.—PRECEDENT.

"Small-pox is a good thing," said the sufferer.

"I deny it!" said the pathologist.

"Then why did Sir Greatman have it? Was he not an excellent politician, a literary genius, a fine reasoner, an unimpeachable moralist? Why did he have it?"

"Why? *Because he caught the infection!*" said the pathologist.

XXXIX.—THEISM.

A certain Theist observed with sorrow the spread of Christian missions.

"They teach the poor heathen a creed I have long outgrown," said he. "I will instruct them in the higher faith."

So he went and unfolded himself before the converted savages.

"Poor man!" said they. "He knows nothing of the saving power of Christ. He only believes, as we did, in the Great Spirit. Let us pray for him!"

XL.—TEACHING.

"He who injures his neighbor injures his race," said the Secularist. "And, most of all, he injures himself."

"Twaddle!" said the sinner.

"Believe in Christ," said the Supernaturalist, "and he will save thee. Thy wickedness shall count as nothing."

"That's not so bad!" remarked the sinner.

XLI.—SUPERSTITION.

"Beware of superstition," said the preacher.

"What *is* superstition?" said the inquirer.

"Er—let us pray!" said the preacher.

But the inquirer pressed his point.

"What is superstition?" said he. "Is it Judaism, Buddhism, Confucianism—?"

"All of 'em!" cried the preacher, waving his hand comprehensively.

"Christianity?"

"No, no!"

"Only the other fellow's religion?" insinuated the inquirer.

But the preacher had fled.

XLII.—OPPORTUNITY.

"That was a most eloquent discourse!" quoth the admirer. "How magnificent was thy impeachment of unbelief! How completely didst thou expose the hollowness of infidel teaching!"

"Yes," said the parson blandly. "I think it was not without some pointedness."

"I did meet an Atheist in my travels," resumed the admirer, "and I informed him candidly thereof. And now rejoice, for I have news to warm thy heart. An' it like thee, thou shalt sound thy trumpet to a purpose; thou shalt split the ears of infidels withal!"

"What!" gasped the parson.

"Yes, thou shalt e'en encounter the unbeliever in his own temple, and defeat him before the eyes of his own people! Behold, the thing is done, for I have seen to 't!"

"Merciful heaven!" groaned the parson.

E. R. W.

A Parable.

A MALAY and a Hottentot
Were fighting on the plains
In most unruly fashion
For the very doubtful gains,
When there came a Christian gentleman
Toward them, through the rains.
The Malay and the Hottentot
Were very, very bare;
For dampness and malaria
They plainly didn't care.
But the well-dressed Christian gentleman
Began to shake and swear.
"I wish you wouldn't fight," said he;
"It's shocking and it's rude;
But since you will, I've brought to you
A basketful of food.
I think the Malay needs it most;
I've brought it for his good."
No thanks the Christian gentleman
From either party drew;
They fought with angry vehemence,
And quite obscured his view.
Said he at last: "Such wickedness
Will never, never do!"
He loaded his revolver,
This good and kindly man,
And shot as straight and fired as fast
As many Christians can;
And then he truly felt himself
A good Samaritan.
"I've killed 'em both," said he, with pride;
"Their pain is hard to see;
But all must suffer when it comes
To such a point with me.
What I have done is all because
Of my humanity."
The dying Hottentot looked up,
The dying Malay too;
The Christian gentleman was just
Departing from their view:
He held what they were fighting for,
And held it tightly too.
"Oh, shameful sight!" they cried aloud.
"What could I do?" he said;
"Someone must take this property,
For soon you will be dead.
I didn't wish to fight," said he;
"Your deeds be on your head."
"This is a noble war," he cried;
"I come to save the weak;
The oppressed are e'er my brethren."
The Malay tried to speak.
"I wish," he said, with emphasis,
"I wish I had your cheek!"

—Boston Evening Transcript.

Toastmaster (of Frying Pan Club)—"Gentlemen, it is my privilege to present as the next speaker a gentleman from Chicago." (Loud cheers.) "Chicago, gentlemen, is the place where the pen—the pig pen—is mightier than the sword." (Immense cheering.) The Gentleman from Chicago (rising)—"Your toastmaster, gentlemen, is right. Our pen is mightier than our sword. Still there is a more powerful weapon"—(Cries of "Name it. What is it? Is it the Chicago river?") The Gentleman from Chicago (with a low bow)—"It is in the possession of my honored friend who has just introduced me so flatteringly." ("Hear, hear.") The Gentleman from Chicago (resuming)—"Concealed beneath the smooth mask of his face, gentlemen, is a weapon (sensation) like that with which Samson slew a thousand men!" (Tremendous cheering.)—Chicago Tribune.

Acid Drops.

MR. W. T. STEAD has found another profitable agitation. He is waging what he calls a war against war. His ostensible object is to get the English people to support the Czar's projected Peace Conference. But as Lord Salisbury has already intimated England's adhesion, it is difficult to see what is really left for Mr. Stead to do. Still, that 'cute gentleman knows what he is up to. For three months he will gain a splendid advertisement, and ministers of religion and even labor leaders (heaven save the mark!) are helping him to gain it. He is addressing meetings all over the country—meetings got up at other people's expense; and at every one of them he seems to be up to his old monkey-trick of piety. Mr. Stead begins the meeting with a prayer. He asks God to take the job in hand, and then discusses how it can be done without him.

We have before us one of the handbills announcing last Sunday's meeting of the "World's Peace Crusade" at the Royal Victoria Hall. The program includes two hymns, a prayer, a doxology, and, of course, a collection. It was not a meeting of citizens, or, if it was, they were victimised by the insufferable vanity of the Christians, who must advertise their faith, even if they make themselves a nuisance to their neighbors.

The latest news about Mr. Stead is that he has had his photograph taken, and a nice feminine face appears in the background. The spookists say this is a spirit. Mr. Stead says he distinguishes four faces besides his own. Let 'em all come. No doubt they are all feminine.

"West Ham Agitated" was the heading of a paragraph in the *Evening News*. It referred to the agitation against the retention of the *Freethinker* in the Public Library there. Alderman Kelly is dissatisfied with the Town Council vote recorded in our last issue, and has placed the following notice on the agenda for the next meeting: "That the newspaper known as the *Freethinker* be no longer accepted or taken in at the public libraries." We shall not know the result in time to chronicle it this week.

Father Ring has been preaching against the *Freethinker* at Silvertown, and denouncing the West Ham councillors for allowing it a place in the Public Library. Father Ring put some extra nonsense in his sermon about "free love." Had he ever read the *Freethinker*, he would know that we are opposed to what is called "free love," and that we believe in marriage, families, and homes as much as he does; perhaps more so, for we keep a family and home of our own, which he doesn't. He isn't supposed to, anyhow.

One would think, to listen to these men of God, that Christianity invented marriage. But it didn't. It never invented anything. Husbands and wives loved each other any number of years before Christianity was thought of. No Christian poet has ever beaten the pictures of domestic affection which were bequeathed to the world by the poets of ancient Greece and Rome.

Father Andrew Dooley, of St. Margaret's, Barking-road, has joined in the West Ham outcry against the *Freethinker*. Being tackled by Mr. Robert Forder, he admits that he had never seen a copy of the journal he denounced. Father Dooley makes frequent use of the word "indecent." He appears to think that "blasphemous" and "indecent" are synonymous words, or at least that they should always go together. One of our last week's "Acid Drops" he calls "grossly indecent," although it simply referred to a recent baptism which took place at a public bath, and hinted that, if Jesus had been baptised in this way, it would have been suitable to our climate, although it might have been unsuitable to the attendant performance of the Holy Ghost. In other words, to put it plainly, the dove which perched on Jesus out of doors might find difficulty in coming through the roof of a public bath. Obviously the "gross indecency" is in the reverend gentleman's imagination.

Father Dooley tells the Catholics of his district, and all other Christians who chance to hear him, that Mr. Foote was imprisoned for "blasphemy and indecency." He says this is what he has "heard." He appears to think this is a sufficient basis for the vilest charge against a Freethinker. And this is the man who talks about the "indecency" of merely hurting his religious susceptibilities!

Mr. Forder has sent Father Dooley a stinging reply, which will probably be printed in the local *Express*. Mr. Forder informs him that Mr. Foote was imprisoned for "blasphemy" only, and that Lord Chief Justice Coleridge rebuked those who insinuated that he was guilty of "indecency." "He is not indecent," Lord Coleridge said, "in the ordinary sense of the word, and you do not find him pandering to the bad passions of mankind." Mr. Forder also offers to lend Father

Dooley a complete set of the *Freethinker*, and challenges him to find anything indecent in any single number.

The daily papers have been filled with discussions concerning what is called Jingoism. This reminds us of a story about Browning, at the time when "We don't want to fight," etc., was very popular, and Browning was dead sick of that doggerel and had composed a version of his own, of which the first verse ran as follows:—

I don't want to fight,
But, by Jingo, if I do,
The man whose head I'd like to punch
Is Beaconsfield, the Jew.

Our readers will not want any more, although we daresay that some surviving members of the Browning Society could supply the rest.

Probably the half-yearly audit of the Idle Word Department prevented Omnipotence from looking after the two-year-old son of a tailor, who was burnt to death at West Kensington last week.

In a not very reverential style, the *London Review* discusses what it calls "The Slump in Curates." Every year since 1877 the number of deacons ordained has decreased. Moreover, the quality of the men ordained has fallen greatly. "Half a century ago the First Class man took Orders as a matter of course. To-day it is quite the exception for a First to think of Orders. Over thirty per cent. of the younger clergy have no degrees at all, and nearly fifty per cent. are not Oxford or Cambridge men. The Cambridge men, moreover, are very poor representatives of their university, for three out of every four have taken a 'poll degree.' In fact, it is impossible to deny that the intellectual qualifications of the average curate are very poor."

The justices of the Spelthorne division of Middlesex held their Court the other week in the sacred precincts of St. Alban's Church, Teddington. Their worships sat near the organ loft on an elevated platform above the heads of the spectators, whither constables and other witnesses had to ascend to give evidence. Does this foreshadow the secular uses to which in future ages many of these conventicles will be put?

How the clergy like to patronise a very eminent Freethinker, especially when he has left off attacking their faith. Here is the Rev. C. A. Berry, of Wolverhampton—the well-known Congregationalist—patting Mr. John Morley on the back, and praising him for his "exalted sentiments, sagacious counsels, and eminently religious reasonings." "Eminently religious" is distinctly good. Why not the Rev. John Morley at once?

Defenders of the good old Design Argument will please note that the wife of Mr. Malton, a plumber, of Scarborough, recently gave birth to triplets, which all died within a very short time of birth.

Says the *Christian Herald*: "The late Charles Bradlaugh, the infidel lecturer, delivered a scathing attack on Christianity, and dared any man to answer him." This we can believe, with a perfect assurance as to the result of the incident.

The chairman, we are told, said: "No one here is likely to try, Mr. Bradlaugh; we are all of your way of thinking." The chairman might have said so, and with truth; but it is not quite the kind of thing we have been accustomed to hear from Secularist chairmen when inviting opposition. What follows is probably a pure invention: A gas-fitter arose, and said he had been a member of the club for five years, and then went on to talk about a city missionary visiting him when no one else would, and how he was led to Jesus. He follows this with an explosion of noisome vapor which only shows that, after all, a gasfitter has a natural leaning to gas, even if it comes from the sewer.

When, however, we read that this gasfitter, as a Freethinker, had previously driven the City missionary away "with curses and threats" from his door, it is only possible to conclude (1) that this so-called Freethinker was no Freethinker at all, or (2) that the story is a pure invention, which, for various reasons, seems the most likely explanation, though it is never really necessary to explain the stories of the *Christian Herald*—they are too transparently absurd.

A Christian weekly gives the following answer to a correspondent:—"George Jacob Holyoake is still living in Brighton. We believe he holds to his Secularist principles, but he has written with great kindness of some Christian leaders, especially Dr. Joseph Parker. In his early days Dr. Parker conducted a three nights' public debate with Mr. Holyoake. Mr. Holyoake was speaking against the doctrine of the providence of God, and said: 'What did the providence of God do for Stephen when he was stoned to death?' The audience were immediately interested, and watchful for the

reply. Dr. Parker felt that the question could hardly be answered in a moment, and, with perfect clearness, lifted up a prayer. When he stood up he said: 'What did God do for Stephen when he was being stoned to death? Did He look on or do nothing? No, he put it into Stephen's heart to pray the prayer: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." When He did this He did more for Stephen, and accomplished a greater miracle, than when He saved his life.'

These stories of smart retorts and telling replies by Christian advocates when debating with "infidel" lecturers are, of course, usually pure inventions. Dr. Parker, in the midst of a debate, lifting up a prayer to God to help him to answer his antagonist must have been indeed an interesting spectacle. The story rather indicates that Dr. Parker had little confidence in himself, and, at the same time, presents Mr. Holyoake in the light of a most formidable controversialist.

Apparently, on this memorable occasion, Mr. Holyoake had to tackle not only Dr. Parker, but God. Without looking this ancient history up, one entertains no doubt as to how Mr. Holyoake came off, even against the combination.

A new form of theological complaint has now arisen. Many of the Methodist churches are suffering, according to a correspondent of the *Christian Budget*, from what may be termed "the Starring Parson." There are some ministers, he says, whose popularity arises not so much from their ability—which we can readily believe. They have a good speech or two, he says, and "it is astonishing how they captivate the class who read very little. And some of these popular parsons get good circuits, and are found out to be not possessed of ordinary talent. And more, they still go out of their circuits, returning with smiles at the guineas they have pocketed." All of which is probably true.

Attention is being called to a Liverpool centenarian, Mrs. Kenmuir, aged 107. She attributes her age "to God." It used to be said that those whom the gods love die young. There have been persons probably quite as pious as Mrs. Kenmuir who have "gone to Jesus" at a comparatively early age. Notwithstanding that "she loves the Bible better than any other book," the Lord seems to be in no hurry to take her unto himself. But the old lady is evidently in her second childhood, and may well be excused this little unctuous garrulity.

How very sad! "A cheap Bible does not always mean a well-read Bible, and the children who possess copies of their own do not always love to read it as much as we could wish." So says the *Sunday School Times*, probably with perfect truth. At the same time, that religious publication should not forget that the less children read certain portions of the Bible, the better. So that this youthful indifference to Holy Writ is, after all, not without its advantages.

The Rev. J. Newcombe Goady, Homerton City Missionary, writes to a Christian periodical: "The present period of the Church's history is one of declension and decay." He adds that there are preachers to-day who not only mourn the fewness, but the general absence, of conversions. Probably so; but then what are the preachers doing? Surely they are paid well enough for much better results.

Mr. Goady concludes his letter with the exclamation, "O Lord, revive thy work!" from which one infers that, in the opinion of Mr. Goady, the Deity has gone to sleep.

A very cynical paragraph appears in the *Sunday School Times*. It says that the Wesleyan Society is raising a fund of a million guineas, the Congregational Union; through Dr. Rogers, is asking for half a million; and the Baptists, through their President, the Rev. Samuel Vincent, is aiming at a quarter of a million. The Church of England will probably try to raise two millions, and so double the fund of the Wesleyans. In the meantime, says the *Sunday School Times*, Christian endeavorers are desiring to raise converts to Christ.

He presided at a meeting for "earnest intercession" on "Nations and their Rulers," and made a speech which was flatly contradictory of his Savior's plainest utterances. He was appropriately followed by Dr. R. Anderson, who commenced with the un-Christian-like utterance, though one quite in accordance with common sense: "A characteristic of our age is the *silence* of God." This does not seem quite to accord with the idea of his having given a special revelation, but Dr. Anderson proceeds: "It is not peculiar to this period; other peoples in other times have experienced it, but then it was felt and deplored, and nations besought God to visit them again; now God is treated with indifference, ignored, and denied."

Poor God! Why did he ever create such ungrateful creatures? How unhappy and indignant he must be! Though omniscient, he must be disagreeably surprised.

An amusing cartoon is published by a religious weekly, which shows at a glance the insincerity of most of the church

and chapel-going of to-day. A new pastor is in the pulpit about to deliver his initiatory sermon. The congregation are depicted with cards in their hands displayed towards the pulpit. The ladies exhibit such admonitions as these: "Don't be disagreeable," "Don't worry us," "Do not criticise fashionable dissipations, or I will take my money to another church." One gentleman displays: "No anti-drink preaching; I derive an income from the liquor traffic that helps to pay your salary." Another gentleman exhibits a placard: "Say nothing about stock gambling; that is the way I get money to help to pay your salary." A fashionable Johnnie holds in his hands a placard: "Do not preach against horse-racing or club life, or I will make it uncomfortable for you." At the back there are many people with placards bearing "Don't do this" and "Don't do that."

It isn't that in church only they are warned against these things; it is that they do not like to be told about them in the church by the pastor whom they provide for—and, being provided for, the pastor usually reserves his diatribes for the commonly-clad people in the back seats.

Major-General H. Noble may have been a very gallant warrior in the field, but when he opened his mouth in Exeter Hall the other day he proved himself a very poor soldier of Christ.

Mr. Joseph Hatton, in the latest batch of his entertaining weekly "Cigarette Papers," discourses on Sunday rest. "Many a working man," he says, "knows the value of a long rest in bed. It's not always because we are too tired to get up," said a carpenter the other day, "but for the reason that there is nothing to do on Sundays." "There's church," I said, "and chapel." "Yes, that's true; but it's dismal business."

"It will be dimmer down below," I suggested, "if the preacher's dictum is correct; so wouldn't it be wise to look after your soul a bit?" He replied: "I don't get drunk, I pay my way, I never beat my wife; when it's fine, I take her and the kids for a walk on Sunday afternoons, and give them tea and cake at the stalls in Regent's Park; other days, when it's wet, as it mostly is, I just lie abed and rest; how's that for looking after my soul?" "I think you are on the right tack," I replied; "but ask the parson." "My parson," he answered, "is one of them who's kicking up a fuss about non-essentials—lights on the altar, Confession and things—and I hate rows."

Professor Falb once more foretells the end of the world, by contact with a comet, on November 13 next. A similar prophecy was made in 1773, again in 1832, and subsequently in 1857. Jesus Christ and his disciples, too, anticipated a speedy dissolution of earthly things in their time, but the end seems now just as far off as ever.

There is to be no more Sunday boating at Matlock. The District Council has vetoed all such profane recreation, whether in hired or private launches and boats. Of course the bigots pretend that they only want a quiet Sunday, but as they cannot stop cycling and driving they might as well cease humbugging, and let the matter alone.

Joseph Smith and President Young taught the Mormons to practise what other Christians profess to believe. Mormons call in the elders to anoint and pray over the sick. Warren Foster states that a doctor friend once said to him: "Utah is the damndest place on earth in which to practise medicine; for, if the patient gets well, prayer cured him; and if he dies, the doctor killed him."

Sergeant Freeman, of the 21st Lancers, lost his nose in the battle of Omdurman. He has been provided with a new nose, not as an answer to prayer, but by the surgeons.

The *Springfield Republican*, a well-known American journal, saith as follows: "After 1,500 years of Christianisation the Anglo-Saxon race continues to be distinguished as a beef-eating, rum-drinking, red-faced, full-bellied, grabbing, fighting people." Well, what can you expect from a Christianised race? The man who is humble in church is sure to have plenty of cheek outside. He who despises the world on Sunday will get as much as he can of it on Monday. He who professes to believe that he ought to turn his right cheek to the man who slaps his left is pretty certain to be a regular fighting-cock in practice.

Providence was too busy counting the hairs of our heads to prevent an old lady at Hammersmith last week from falling down stairs, with fatal results.

"The preacher will continue his preaching," the Rev. Dr. Parker says, "though he have to feed on the crumbs which fall from the rich man's table." Above this beautiful ejaculation is an up-to-date portrait of the pious ejaculator. He doesn't seem to have been fed on fallen crumbs. We fancy

his face—and there is a good deal of it—has always been on the top side of the table.

We see by certain paragraphs in the last number of the New York *Truthseeker* to hand that the sky-pilots continue to give the police and courts of justice plenty of work over there. Evangelist Seymour and his wife are giving each other away in a divorce suit; Rev. Z. T. Eaton, of several places in Missouri, is co-respondent in another case; and the Rev. George Parrish, of Marshalltown, Iowa, is arrested for forgery. There are other illustrations of clerical virtue, but these will do as samples.

A Kansas woman wanted to hide her money from her husband. She concealed it in the family Bible. She lived with that man twenty-two years, and he never found her exchequer.

Roman Catholic Bishop Bilsborrow, preaching at St. James's Church, Pendleton, Manchester, explained how the priests—Catholic ones, of course—have the power of forgiving sins, and of practically fixing people up in heaven or hell for ever. The Queen, he said, delegated to her judges the sovereign right of condemning to death or acquitting her subjects; and the King of Heaven, in the same way, delegated his divine power of forgiving sins to his priests. Now, in the first place, it is not the judge, but the jury, that finds a prisoner innocent or guilty. In the next place, the judge only pronounces sentence according to law. In the third place, judges have nothing to do with pardoning offenders. That is a prerogative of the Queen's, which she exercises through the Home Secretary. Finally, there is only one Home Secretary, but thousands of little priestly God-Almighties, which reduces the forgiveness of sins to sheer anarchy. On the whole, Bishop Bilsborrow had better try another explanation.

Another member of the committee that drew up the new Free Church Catechism, in answer to one of our readers who called his attention to the fact that they had omitted the Devil, says that his black majesty is "implied and involved in the Catechism." By-and-bye these gentlemen may "imply and involve" God too, and end the whole ridiculous business.

Although the Devil is dropped out of the New Free Church Catechism, he turns up in a letter by Coroner Braxton Hicks, who recently ordered a doctor into custody as a perjurer for disagreeing with two other doctors over a post-mortem. Writing to one of the two doctors who agreed against the third, Coroner Hicks refers to the old verdict of "Death by the visitation of God," and says that perhaps, considering the present perils to life, it ought to be "Death by the visitation of the Devil."

Zionism, according to the *Daily News*, will not succeed without a new Moses. Query—was the old one a reality? Moses could hardly have brought the Jews out of Egypt if they were never in it, which seems the only conclusion to be drawn from the Egyptian stone records.

Poor Greece! After all her trouble with Turkey, the party known as "Providence" shakes her up with an earthquake. Several villages are destroyed, and their inhabitants are camping out in the open.

Arthur Reginald Palmer, of Jesus College, Clerk in Holy Orders, was brought before the Cambridge magistrates and charged, on a warrant, with obtaining two gallons of beer and half a gallon of whisky by false pretences. He was remanded for a week on fairly heavy bail. This trouble would not have occurred if he had his Master's power of turning water into a tastier beverage.

Phillip Rogers, a chemist's assistant, committed suicide at Cardiff by taking prussic acid. He held strong High Church views, and had become greatly excited over the anti-Ritualistic crusade. The newspapers give it crudely as a case of religious mania. They might have said spiritual perturbation. It sounds more parliamentary.

Christians are hard to please. Herr Max Klinger, a Vienna artist, has painted an enormous picture called "Christ on Olympus." Jesus is represented as followed by the Christian virtues, and entering Olympus to convert the heathen gods, who are naturally not embarrassed by a superabundance of raiment. Some of the goddesses display their charms with divine abandon, and the clerical papers cry out against the artist for painting Christ amongst a lot of nude women—just as though his frigidity did not render him safe in any company.

Terah Hooley boasted that he could pay twenty shillings in the pound. The Official Receiver says he will pay about four shillings. Hooley's charities total up to a big amount. They include £1,666 for the restoration of Risley Church, and £1,500 for the gold communion plate for St. Paul's Cathedral.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, January 29, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London: 7.30, "Thomas Paine's Work for Humanity."

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.

G. DAWSON BAKER.—Shall appear. Pleased to hear you have distributed a good number of the Peculiar People pamphlet at Lincoln. We should be glad to know what your Methodist friends think of it.

J. SHUFFLEBOTHAM.—Thanks. In our next.

J. PARTRIDGE and C. H. CATTELL.—See the "Special" this week. The Birmingham friends can rely on receiving any assistance that it may be in Mr. Foote's power to render. One of you should write a full and careful account of the whole matter for our next issue.

W. COX.—Pleased to hear that Dr. Nicolson gave another good lecture to a large audience at Liverpool on Sunday. You must persevere there in spite of all difficulties.

JOHN GRAHAM asks us to announce that a meeting of Wigan Freethinkers will be held to-day (Jan. 29), at seven p.m., at the Dog and Partridge Hotel.

J. W. LEADER.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

J. HEADLEY.—See "Sugar Plums."

R. M. BROWNLOW (Birmingham).—Rev. N. M. Hennessy lives in a free country, at least for Christians who are not sincere enough to practise their faith, as the Peculiar People do. We don't at all mind his saying that "belief in war is one of the worst kinds of Atheism." We are used to this sort of Christian charity. Perhaps the reverend gentleman will not mind our telling him that if the Christians were to leave off fighting there would be no need for Peace Conferences.

W. H. SPIVEY.—Glad to hear you are distributing the Peculiar People pamphlet so effectively at Huddersfield. The same should be done in every town in the kingdom. Mr. Foote's health is good, speaking generally; but the strain is telling on him, and he will have to get away for at least a few days shortly. He has been working seven long days a week incessantly since the early part of August.

G. CRUDDAS.—Thanks for the cutting from the *Consett Chronicle*. Such correspondence is bound to do good. Freethought always profits by public ventilation.

MEDICAL STUDENT.—Your letter *re* Dr. Keeling's article shall appear in our next. We should be sorry, however, to have any serious interference with the discussion between Dr. Keeling and Mr. Cohen. It is best to let these two disputants have it out first. They are both able and good tempered.

CHARLES HUGHES.—Many thanks. Sorry we had no one at hand to do a descriptive report, as you suggest, of the West Ham Council meeting. We can hardly believe that the majority will yield to the clamor of a noisy, but perhaps not very large, party of bigots.

BEELZEBUB.—You cannot do better than read the work on *Free Will and Necessity* by Anthony Collins, one of the most powerful Freethinkers of last century. It is advertised on our penultimate page. Mr. Forder will supply you.

R. CHAPMAN.—Mr. Foote will not forget South Shields when coming North. He wishes to put in a week on the Tyneside. You will hear from him by post in a few days.

J. G. BARTRAM.—Certainly it is time that Mr. Foote visited Newcastle again, and he will arrange to do so.

B. J. TRIGGS (Stratford).—If you are the person who is occupied in trying to get the *Freethinker* excluded from the Public Library, we have no room for your letters on Christianity and Secularism. It is no use discussing principles with a persecutor. You think we are mad. We think you are worse.

RECEIVED.—New York *Truthseeker*—West Ham Express—Free Society—Public Opinion—Ethical World—Isle of Man Times—Freidenker—Der Arme Teufel—Torch of Reason—Independent Pulpit—Boston Investigator—Crescent—Open Court—Progressive Thinker—People's Newspaper—Blue Grass Blade—Manchester Evening Chronicle—Oxford Times—Secular Thought—English Mechanic—West Ham Herald.

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.

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 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.

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.

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

Special.

JUST as we are going to press I learn that the Birmingham School Board has been frightened into denying the local Branch of the National Secular Society the use of the Bristol-street Board school for future Sunday lectures. The refusal is to last for twelve months nominally, but it is easy to understand what that means. The local Protestant bigots, backed up by their dearly-beloved Catholic bigots, have lied and slandered wholesale in order to rob the Secularists of the common rights of citizenship. Next week I shall have a good deal to say to the Freethought party about this case and some others, all showing that we must prepare ourselves for a lot of hard fighting. Meanwhile I have promised to go down to Birmingham at once if the local friends can find a decent hall available.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

MR. FOOTE had a capital meeting at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening, when he lectured on "Christianity and War," Mr. Thurlow occupying the chair. This evening (January 29) Mr. Foote will occupy the Athenæum Hall platform again, taking for his subject, "Thomas Paine's Work for Humanity." It happens to be Paine's birthday, and that great man's labors for liberty and progress will constitute an interesting and appropriate topic.

Prior to his lecture this evening (Jan. 29) Mr. Foote will deliver a brief memorial address on the late Charles Bradlaugh. It will be remembered that January 30 is Bradlaugh's death-day, and the 29th is as near to it as possible. Freethinkers from all parts of London will perhaps attend as a mark of respect to the memory of their old leader.

We have just heard from our friend and colleague, Mr. Charles Watts. He appears to have got over the effects of his tempestuous voyage, and is now busy completing, in conjunction with the editor of the New York *Truthseeker*, the arrangements for the remainder of his tour. We hope to receive next week his second public letter, with particulars as to his doings, and especially as to the intentions of Colonel Ingersoll in reference to his visit to this country. We are glad to hear that Mr. Watts is in excellent health.

Mr. Watts's first letter to the *Freethinker* from the other side of the Atlantic appears this week. It is not very long, and it does not carry the reader very far; but of course it was written soon after Mr. Watts's arrival. We expect a second and longer letter from him shortly. He has already left New York, lectured at Philadelphia, and gone on to Toronto, where he stays for two or three weeks.

The New York *Truthseeker* for January 14 contains a brief address from Mr. Charles Watts to its readers; also two commendatory letters from Dr. E. B. Foote and Colonel Ingersoll. The latter describes Mr. Watts as "an excellent speaker, clear, logical, and convincing," and says he "ought to deliver a hundred lectures" in America.

Mr. Foote's Open Letter to Mr. Justice Wills is getting well into circulation. The first edition of ten thousand copies being nearly exhausted, another supply is being printed, and will be ready before this paragraph meets the readers' eyes. Freethinkers all over the country should help to circulate this pamphlet judiciously. They can do so (see advertisement) at a very trifling cost to themselves. When the second supply is exhausted a third will be forthcoming. Mr. Foote, it may be remarked, gives the literary matter of the pamphlet for this purpose to the Secular Society, Limited, whose Directors are issuing it in the present form. He is quite satisfied to forego any pecuniary advantage he might have derived from the sale of the pamphlet. This gives him a right to expect that other Freethinkers will do their best to scatter this Open Letter broadcast. There ought to be fifty thousand put into circulation.

Secular Thought (Toronto) reproduces our editor's article on "The Ascent of France." We hope Editor Ellis's paper has pulled through its worst troubles, and is meeting with the success it deserves.

The *Oxford Times* prints an excellent letter by L. Organ on Mr. Justice Wills's sentence on Thomas George Senior, member of the Peculiar People. The inconsistency of Christians is well pointed out, and this letter will be an eye-opener to some of them in the pious city of Oxford.

The discussions which have been carried on through the Yarmouth local press during the past year are bearing fruit, increased interest being taken in the Freethought movement, and the sale of literature having considerably improved. The meetings of the Freethinkers' Association are well attended, although not advertised, and despite being boycotted by the Press. On Sunday Mr. Smith gave a fine criticism of "The Christian Doctrine of Hell," J. W. de Caux, Esq., J.P., being in the chair. Healthy discussion followed at the close.

Verestchagin, the great Russian painter, interviewed by the *Chronicle*, said: "The priest is losing his hold. Men say to him: 'Ah! my good fellow, what you say is very pretty, but it is not true.'"

The *Kölnische Zeitung* states that a great meeting has been held at Brugge in vindication of the Rev. Dr. Daens, who has been subjected to clerical persecution. From all the towns of the Flemish provinces special representatives attended, and, in spite of the threats of the clerical authorities, Dr. Daens was conducted in a great triumphal procession to the Riding-school in Bing.

Four thousand people attended inside, and two thousand outside. The President said the great assemblage had a special significance as pointing to the union of all the Freethought Associations of Belgium for the smashing up of the clerical government.

Here is Max O'Rell's philosophy of life: "Be cheerful, spend your life in returning thanks that you are alive. Rejoice, be happy, make as many people happy as you can. Live well, and live long. You will never have another chance."

Mr. Foote's new volume, *The Book of God*, is now on sale at his publisher's, Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. Whatever its other merits may be, it contains some very careful writing. Mr. Foote has done his best with it, and it should find its way into the hands of all who care for his productions. The criticism of Dean Farrar's apology for the Bible is very thorough, and Mr. Foote is never at his worst in a dialectical encounter. The volume is well printed, and neatly bound in two styles, paper and cloth, at the prices of one shilling and two shillings respectively.

The Birmingham Secularists may regard the attack upon their propaganda as a compliment, though not in the circumstances a very desirable one. The audiences at the Bristol-street Board schools grew larger and larger and most enthusiastic. At Mr. Foote's evening lectures people had to be turned away from the doors. This phenomenon was sure to excite the anger of the local bigots, who have risen and done their dirty worst in the way of revenge. They have deprived the Secularists of a convenient meeting-place—let us hope only for the present.

The "Schnorrer" and his Dowry.

Mr. Zangwill has been amusing his audiences in America by relating to them many stories of Jewish life in the Ghetto. One was of a "schnorrer," or beggar, who was promised a dowry by a banker, but his daughter died before her marriage. Some time after her death the father called upon the banker and demanded the dowry. The banker exclaimed: "But your daughter is dead." "What," said the schnorrer, "would you profit by her death?"

A Pious Wish.

Professor Wilson, of Edinburgh University, was appointed an honorary physician to Her Majesty the Queen. On the morning of his appointment he wrote on the black-board in the laboratory, "Professor Wilson informs his students that he has this day been appointed honorary physician to the Queen." During his temporary absence from the room one of the students, to the amusement of the class, added: "God save the Queen."

Pickling the Saints.

The saints on the west front of Peterborough Cathedral are to be renovated, and the process through which they will have to pass is called "pickling." A "pickled saint" sounds like a postscript to martyrdom.

Heredity and Progress.

(BY THE LATE J. M. WHEELER.)

(Concluded from page 43.)

Is heredity, with its constant ancestral pull, a bar to progress? Not entirely. The very average type to which the tendency is to revert is not a stationary one. The aptitude for progress, the habit of adaptability to new conditions, and the faculty of invention, are themselves heritable, and with each generation the liability to reversion is slightly diminished. It still remains true that the civilised races supplant savages, and that feebler nations are overcome by stronger ones. The children of a gifted pair are far more likely to be gifted than the children of an average pair. I say pair, for any exceptional quality will be diminished in the first generation unless both parents partake of it. In the case of music we observe stronger evidence of inherited faculty than in other arts, for musicians usually select a partner with at least a love of music. In the Jews we can see that all their art has run in this direction, the plastic arts having been forbidden to them. That many eminent musicians have had Jewish blood in their veins is well known. Great musicians, indeed, almost invariably come of a musical family. It was so with Beethoven, Hadyn, and Mozart. Still more striking is the case of the family which boasted Sebastian Bach as the culminating illustration of its musical genius. Through eight generations it produced multitudes of musicians of high rank, of whom twenty-nine were reckoned eminent. If, in our gardening, we desire to produce larger seeds, a considerable selection will have to be made through successive generations, and, if we wish to improve any valuable human quality, a careful selection of partners might be made and continued for several generations. Of two persons apparently equal, one may be an excellent specimen of a poor stock, the other an average specimen of a better one. Marriage with the latter is preferable, since there is a diminished liability to reversion to a lower type. And the latter case is the more unlikely. The tendency to mediocrity, as we have seen, makes it more frequently the case that an exceptional man is the somewhat exceptional son of mediocre parents than the average son of exceptional parents. The breeder considers "pedigree" even more than form.

Plato long since advocated breeding from the best men only, and in our own times Schopenhauer has hinted that great men should breed from as many as they please. "The life is impossible," said Aristotle of Plato's stud farm, and if the same is said now of the schemes of eugenics, stirpiculture, or man-breeding, it will arise from the same reason. Marriageable persons and their parents will look rather at their own immediate wants than at any ideal improvement of the race. Yet just as selfish trade benefits the world, so does sexual selection, looking only at its own interest on the whole, bring into existence the lives fittest for the environment. Each party usually has some eye to assistance, comfort, and happiness, which are supports in the struggle for existence; and the attraction of "beauty," after all, mainly consists in the requisites for the continuance of the race, including health, intelligence, energy, and amiability. The type before referred to in the composite picture representing health, in the frontispiece of Mr. Galton's book, is that of what ninety-nine women out of a hundred would, other things being equal, consider an "eligible" young man. Moreover, nature's blinder method does act, despite the artificial hindrances of civilisation. It is true weakly lives are preserved that would have perished in barbarous lands, and that both wealth and sentiment interpose shields between the action of natural selection and many of its rightful victims. But, though humanitarianism and medical science may preserve the unfit for a generation, it cannot do so in the end. Mr. Galton carefully analysed the census returns of a thousand factory operatives of Coventry, and of the same number of agriculturalists from the surrounding small rural parishes, and found that the former had but little more than half as many adult grandchildren as the latter. They had fewer offspring, and of these a smaller proportion reached adult life. The offspring of the constitutionally diseased are stamped out in the long run. For the consumptive,

scrofulous, epileptic, or otherwise hopelessly disordered, to have children is as absurd, not to say immoral, as to propagate a race of *cretins*. I say to have children, for, if they would avail themselves of the methods which Neo-Malthusianism places within their reach, I see little objection to their marrying among themselves, but strong objections against their marrying with those who might take better partners. They should be content to let the race be continued by those best fitted to meet its requirements. And here I take occasion to remark how the doctrine of evolution, first suggested to Darwin in connection with Malthus's law of population, tells strongly against the conclusion of Malthus that the prudent should refrain from early marriage. On the contrary, it is the prudent who should marry early. As fecundity diminishes with age, the wisest policy is that which retards the average age of marriage among the feeble and hastens it among the vigorous classes. Mr. Ruskin, in eloquent words, has urged that marriage should be in the nature of a reward to be earned before permitted. If this is somewhat Utopian, at any rate a public sentiment is growing adverse to the placid reproduction of themselves by the criminal and diseased. The type of character which leads to criminality is shown by statistics to be strongly inherited. Dr. R. L. Dugdale, of New York, followed the lines of descent from one Margaret Jukes, whose progeny for six generations, including in all seven hundred and nine persons, turned out thieves, prostitutes, murderers, and idiots.

Whate'er Ezekiel may allege,
When fathers eat of sour grapes
Their children's teeth are set on edge.

The main characteristics demanded in modern man are obvious enough. "Brains, sir," said Opie, when asked what he mixed his colors with. While the civilised man is but a fraction taller than the savage, his cranial capacity is larger by nearly thirty per cent. His brain, too, presents increased diversity in its convolutions. With brains are required larger powers of vitality to direct them, and of self-regulation to use them in conformity with the needs of social life.

Mr. Galton says: "In any scheme of eugenics energy is the most important quality to favor." Of its importance there can be no doubt; yet I venture the proviso that the energy must be of an enduring kind. The stress of civilisation is calculated to develop precocious energy, and to use it up speedily. It is still a question whether a long-lived phlegmatic race may not hold its own against one with a more glowing, but more easily diminished, vitality. Intellect is essential, but it must be backed up by physical vigor. Fineness of nerve is apt to end in fragility. Overbred animals have little stamina, and the race of German professors, which, it is said, has been vastly improved by the custom of marrying daughters of professors, might be bettered by an occasional variation with the daughter of an intelligent farm laborer of good descent. The Greeks were intellectually the superiors of the Romans, yet the latter had the stronger wills and the more vigorous vitality.

Modern progress also depends largely upon adaptability to new conditions. Those races and persons who insist upon retaining the ideas and institutions of the past can no more hope to hold their position against those of greater adaptability than can a person expect to protect himself from modern cannon with mediæval armor. We may rest assured that those who are most open to new ideas, and readiest in adopting new inventions and in setting aside faiths and formulas no longer adapted to progressive humanity, have the future for their own, and their species will, like a dominant organism, supplant and supersede inferior forms.

How to Help Us.

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

Dr. Keeling's Reply to Mr. Cohen.

(Continued from page 61.)

EVOLUTION is fully discussed, in reference to causation, in my first and second chapters. As a display of *modus operandi* it is magnificent; but it does nothing for Mr. Cohen. On the contrary, goes dead against him, as I think, and for me. We both agree that evolution is process only; a way in which causes act, not itself a cause. Nothing can be *e*-volved which is not previously *in*-volved. Physical matter and force can no more evolve intelligence than intelligence can evolve *them*. But, contends Mr. Cohen, they *do* evolve intelligence; witness man. Not a bit of it. They only *do* because they *must*, in order to save an unsound theory.

Pars. 7, 8, 10; (C.); (pages 21 to 24, *Quæro*); *Origin of Life, Chemical Synthesis, &c.* Mr. Cohen questions my statement that "science has decided that life always proceeds from preceding life." Well, I repeat it, but beg that my own context be taken. As a biologic axiom it has once again been fully endorsed by perhaps the greatest living authority, Professor Virchow of Berlin, in his Huxleian Lecture delivered in London three months ago. '*Omnis cellula e cellula*' (the living always from the living) is his dictum. Another eminent biologist, Professor Lionel Beale, places the motto, "Life from Life," on the very title-page of one of his most recent writings (*Vitality*, 1898). On page 47 he says: "Bioplasm, or living matter, invariably proceeds from bioplasm that existed already. Bioplasm cannot, as far as is known, come from the non-living, and there is no gradual change from one state to the other." On page 51 his conclusion is "that the difference between every form of living matter and every form of non-living matter is *absolute*" (italics are his), "and that there is no relation of degree between these two states of matter." Advocates of "spontaneous generation" have again and again exulted over their supposed discovery of living organisms direct from non-living matter, but sharper eyes have invariably detected lurking germs which had been overlooked. Please note that in the objectionable sentence I say life always "proceeds" (present tense), not has always proceeded. I have a profound respect for the memory of Mr. Huxley, but it is of no use quoting him as to what may, or may not, have taken place millions of years ago. It is present days, and all past days in which the record of life can be traced, that we are talking about; for these, he was in accord with the eminent authorities I have quoted. My own opinion has no great weight, but I am inclined to agree with Mr. Huxley in the belief that at some distant epoch in the past, under conditions which have long ceased to exist, non-living matter *did* pass, independently of previous life, into a living state. One only wishes some observer as competent as Professor Huxley had been there, and had told the story. In evidence of an open mind as to future possibilities, I submit to the reader the sentence which, in *Quæro*, concludes the topic: "Science may some day show that parentless organisms can and do spring up in energised matter, and the demonstration will be very welcome; but, until it has been made, we have no right to regard a non-animate energy as the author of life" (K.).

The *synthetic achievements of organic chemistry* (all honor to them) do not bring us one step nearer to the living cell; nor will they, however multiplied, if they remain of the hitherto sort—hydro-carbons of various kinds, ethers, alcohols, sugars, altered starch, urea, albumin, &c. Let the chemist produce even protoplasm—nay, go far beyond it, and present us with some synthetic compound greatly more complex than any which living organisms turn out, he will not thereby have taken a single step towards what is living. I shall admire his skill, but tell him that all his products are without life. Protoplasm, in its chemics and physics, remains protoplasm, even when cooked. Hence Professor Beale's most appropriate name, "bioplasm," for *living* protoplasm as distinguished from dead. Contrast the mass of albuminous matter we call the human brain, as it lies on the anatomist's slab, with the living organ as it was a week ago; or imagine, if you can, the difference between the dead brain (may it not be that for many a happy year to come!) of my gifted assailant, and his present living one. It is *living* protoplasm, or living

anything else, the chemist has to produce. His non-living synthetic compounds are as much like the living cells which, amongst other functions, may possibly excrete them, as chalk is like the little creatures which produce it. Take the most interesting of these synthetic productions—viz., urea. The living kidney excretes urea, the skilled chemist produces it in his laboratory. Has he thereby gained a hair's-breadth in his attempt to produce life? His task, if he would attain this, is to produce, not urea, but an infinite number of microscopic machines (cells) which can grow, choose their own food, pick out refuse (urea), pack it for transport, and can, when they have been doing all this for a certain time, bring forth successors to carry on the work. Of course the true chemist is far too sensible to try so impossible a task, even to oblige my reviewer. Urea may be made by the cart-load, but not a single living kidney-cell, though all chemists, biologists, and physicists in the world join in the attempt. Two minor points in the synthetic work, from which Mr. Cohen expects so much, are worth noting. It is life, past or present, which supplies the very material on which the chemist operates. He uses animal and plant refuse, or coal, grain, starch, tar, and so forth; or he takes a comparatively simple organic compound, and, by his art, renders it more complex. Then is it not just a little singular, with regard to these products, that, whilst intelligence of the keenest order is indispensable *inside* the chemist's laboratory, there is not, according to some, a trace of it *outside*, where similar results are being produced?

Par 8 (C.). Mr. Cohen twits me on a vain search for intelligence in elemental matter, without adding, as in fairness he should have done, that I was showing how vain the search was, if confined to *the elements themselves*. He does not touch my argument for intelligence founded on what happens to these elements (see pp. 17-19 of *Quæro*). Perhaps this was not to be expected from so firm a believer in the all-sufficiency of "atomo-mechanics." I chose an early stage of cosmic history because, in all inquiries, the arch-method of science is to simplify, and exclude non-essentials. But I am quite willing to go to the other end of the scale, and test "atomo-mechanics" at the most advanced point in cosmic development. Ladies will excuse the illustration I am about to use. Accustomed to the excellent pabulum of the *Freethinker*, they are far too enlightened to be scared by a reference to an every-day natural fact.

The most striking and compendious event in evolution I know is the advance, in nine months, of the human egg or ovum to the perfect infant, as born. As a doctor, I have been the first to shake hands with the little beauties scores of times. The human ovum is a single, very simple cell, varying in size, but always so extremely small that from 120 to 240 of them, ranged in a line, would not extend more than an inch. This minute speck of matter, fertilised and suitably placed, develops in forty weeks into a bouncing baby seven pounds in weight. Now, the formation of a baby *may* be a mere problem in "atomo-mechanics"; and that I should regard it otherwise *may* be only another of my "fallacies." But I, for one, am unable to believe that intelligence has had nothing whatever to do with that marvellous outcome, Baby; that it is a mere event in "atomo-mechanics," an outcome solely from inert matter and physical energy, I care not by how many intermediate steps, nor however helped by the legerdemain of evolution. Equally not, supposing intelligence to be foolishly admitted as co-operating in the production of "baby," that it is *protoplasmic* intelligence, such as might be latent in ovum, or active in mother, father, or any number of antecedent progenitors. Not all the protoplasmic intelligence which exists, or ever has existed, could produce a single cell of that magnificent harmony of countless living cells which we call Baby, say one minute old. Moreover, Baby has mind, rudimentary of course, but capable of becoming the psychic-instrument of a Cohen or a me, or even of an awful Editor. Where does it get mind from? Is it from the egg or the mother or father? Well, I might urge difficulties in charging the egg with mind, or in seeing how blood-vessels and nerves—the only communication between mother and embryo—can convey mind. But pass them over, and simply say mind of Baby is inherited, as of course it is, from its parents. These parents inherit

from their parents, and so back through numberless ancestors to primeval man; back from him to brute and lowest animal; ultimately to the primal cell. Where after that? The Materialist says, Along "an unbroken route" which conducts us to crystal, sand, element, nebula, "protyle"—a lifeless, mindless region to which, none the less, life and mind must be traced. For another purpose, Mr. Cohen uses a biologic syllogism which may be thus expressed: Without organic structure, no life; without life, no mind; therefore, without organic structure, no mind. Good; let him apply it here. Try a living finger in the kitchen fire, or note what happens to human protoplasm in the furnace of a crematorium. Where, in an intensely hot nebula, is that organic structure without which there can be neither life nor mind? If it be replied that these are products which appear at a later date, I ask, Products from what? According to my reviewer, we have only physical matter and force to produce from. I contend they do not produce even life, let alone mind. Like produces like, not unlike. Physical and psychic are not in the same category, and cannot produce each other. Many scientists and thinkers have seen the dilemma, and have tried in various ways to escape it. Thus the late Professor Clifford postulated a "mind-stuff" by the side of "matter-stuff." At present a good deal of coquetting with Spiritualism and Buddhism is going on. Professor Haeckel, the brilliant biologist of Jena, former pupil, now rival, of Virchow, has gone over to the Monists, whose curious and convenient fusion of mind and matter into one is utterly destructive of the uncompromising matter-force Materialism of Moleschott and Büchner, of which, if I understand him correctly, Mr. Cohen is a champion.

From the foregoing, it will be clearly seen why I insist on three primary causes—matter, energy, and intelligence—whereas Mr. Cohen admits only the first two. We must have a cause for psychic as well as for physical phenomena. Matter and energy, as defined by science, do not include such cause, and therefore it must be added. The question, so far, is between my three factors and Mr. Cohen's two. It is purely scientific; consequently, much of his argument, directed as it is against an old-fashioned view of Theism, does not reach me. The triple causation I contend for can be perfectly well held by any non-Theist, even by an Atheist. Mr. Cohen could hold it and still remain Materialist, as bitterly opposed to Theism as ever; but he would have to abandon the cast-iron form of Materialism he at present contends for, and seek counsel from the new and rising school.

The way in which Theism stands to the triple causation just indicated is this. The three conceptions of matter, energy, and intelligence—and it must be borne in mind that they are nothing but conceptions—can, as a matter of logic, and in accordance with the law of parcimony, be perfectly well included in the single conception of one supreme and final cause. Such first and final cause is the Deity of Theism as held by many thinkers, and as I hold it. It is a belief only, but quite as tenable as the Materialistic belief that the triplicate of matter, energy, and intelligence is final, or even the bare dualism of Mr. Cohen. To this Theistic simplification of her and my triumvirate, Science says neither yes nor no. It is not her business.

JAMES HURD KEELING.

(To be continued.)

Obituary.

AN old worker in our movement, Alfred Hilditch, passed away on Sunday last in his fifty-ninth year. A few weeks ago he underwent an operation which was supposed to be successful, but he gradually sank into peaceful rest. Old London friends will remember his work at Cleveland and Claremont Halls, and at Clerkenwell-green, in the old fighting times. He was a rough diamond, but those who knew him appreciated his honesty of purpose, his energy, and his aid in all our fields of work. A good husband and father, all friends who knew him will allow me to tender sympathy on their behalf to Mrs. Hilditch and family. I shall say a few words over his grave at Finchley on Saturday, and hope this notice will be seen by his many old friends in time to be present to show respect to the deceased.—ROBERT FORDER.

Book Chat.

THE very much over-rated adventures of Sherlock Holmes had no tinge of clericalism about them. Neither do we think that their author, Dr. Conan Doyle, has much of an ecclesiastical cut about him. Therefore, we sympathise with him when at a dinner party he was electrified by the host saying: "Our friend, Canon Doyle, will say grace."

The monumental *Dictionary of National Biography* has now reached its fifty-seventh volume. The contents of this new volume are more marked by the incidence of talents of the second order, celebrities and notorieties, than by names of the highest repute. Of these the painter Turner, in an article by Cosmo Monkhouse, and Professor Tyndall, by his widow, may be placed by themselves. The other list includes Trelawny, Byron's friend, who cremated Shelley's remains. Among the curiosities of the volume are Madame Tussaud, Tracy Turnerelli, Mrs. Trimmer, Dick Turpin, and Thom, the Kentish Messiah.

At last we are to have an English version of Maupassant's *Boule de Suif*. This will be published by Mr. Heinemann, and will contain sixty illustrations by François Thévenot and an introduction by Mr. Arthur Symons.

As this will be the first appearance of this story in English, a few words about the author may not be inappropriate. Maupassant's first literary attempt was *Boule de Suif*, which appeared in 1873, two years after the war, which made a lasting impression on him. His severe training under Gustave Flaubert was doubtless the cause of the startling and instantaneous success of this his first endeavor. It came out among the *Soirées de Médau*, a collection of stories by Huysman and other friends of Emile Zola, and discussed one by one by the literary club which was wont to meet at Zola's country château at Médau. Maupassant's was recognised universally as the most brilliant of the stories, which included Zola's *Attack on the Mill*; and Maupassant, like Byron, woke up one morning and found himself famous.

Boule de Suif is the nickname given to a little *cocotte* who fills the place in the story, which Maupassant seemed fond of assigning to ladies of this type—a Jeanne d'Arc for the occasion. Again and again in his stories he takes up the character of a woman of this description, and dwelling on the noble qualities and sparks of heroism which might lie dormant, notwithstanding the general degradation, and stand out in bolder relief on that account. The same theme is handled even more powerfully, though in connection with wholly different circumstances, in that other little story, *Mouche*.

Perhaps no event in the literary world has of recent years caused a greater sensation than the lamentable collapse of Maupassant's intellect, followed by his death, after an interval of a year's insanity. Of course, although it would have been offensive and in bad taste to mention the fact during his life, it has been hinted that he was the son of Flaubert. To a certain extent he treats the incident of his birth, and of the revelation of the fact to him by his mother, in what many consider his masterpiece, *Pierre et Jean*.

No French writer of this generation, if of this century, possessed to such an extent good, honest, boisterous humor as Maupassant. It is often very coarse, no doubt, but it is irresistibly funny. It puts one in a good humor with its author, oneself, and all the world. This blazes out most brilliantly in the *Tribunaux Rustiques*. Perhaps the most humorous of his novels is *Mont Oriol*, a most amusing and splendidly-executed description of the exploitation, through a Jewish financier, of a new watering-place. This alone would give Maupassant a very high place among French humorists, and these are but few. When one mentions Daudet, "Gyp," O'Mon Roy, and Catulle Meudes, one has almost exhausted the list, and "Gyp" is, perhaps, more witty than humorous.

Writing of "Gyp" reminds us that a new and cheaper edition of *Ginette's Happiness* has been published by Mr. Fisher Unwin. It is pleasant to find that continental writers of real eminence are appreciated on this side of the Channel.

A complete edition of five volumes of the works of Paul Verlaine, the French poet, is on the eve of publication in Paris. The prose writings are to be included, together with some hitherto unpublished poetry.

A worm of the dust rejoicing in the name of Aitken has published, through the firm of Murray, a volume with the attractive title, *The Five Windows of the Soul*. Our Theosophical friends attempt to persuade us, in pretty little booklets, that we have five souls, more or less. This author tells us the soul has five windows. Like the old lady in the tale,

we agree with all of them; but our readers are, of course, at liberty to make their own choice.

We spoke recently of the boycotting of a book by a large library on account of the profanity of its title. We now hear that Baron Corvo's delightfully blasphemous *Stories Toto Told Me*, published by John Lane, has been boycotted by the reviewers on the same grounds. Although the usual number of copies were sent out for review, the only notices this book received were in the columns of the *Star*, the *Publisher's Circular*, the *Echo*, and, we may add, the *Freethinker*; and one of these was distinctly antagonistic.

Our readers will be pleased to learn that a magnificent portrait of Herbert Spencer, from the brush of Professor Herkomer, R.A., has just been added to the Tate Gallery.

Here is a good story of Zangwill. A lady of fashion, gifted with more curiosity than manners, came to him and flip-pantly asked: "Mr. Zangwill, do you believe in the second coming of Christ?" The novelist gravely bowed as he answered: "Madame, I do not believe in his first coming." Here is one of Zangwill's own yarns: "A certain Schnorrer entertained at a home in the Ghetto was discovered in the act of putting a silver spoon in his boot. He was asked for a justification of the offence, which he supplied in the following manner: 'If I took a spoon, I violated the eighth commandment, which says that "Thou shalt not steal"; but if I did not take the spoon I violated the tenth commandment, which says, "Thou shalt not covet." So having one or the other of the commandments to break, I thought I might as well take the spoon.'

The publishers of the Polychrome Bible in their prospectus say: "It would require many shelves to hold all the books that have been written by those who have devoted their lives to the study of the Bible in the original languages, and whose investigations were directed to ascertain when, where, and by whom the books of the Bible were written. Many of these learned works would not be worth reading now, even if one had the time." Quite true; but it seems very curious to be obliged to say all this in regard to a supposed Divine revelation.

A. Bierce's Hymn of Praise.

WE bless Thee, Lord, that Thou hast struck
At Asia's unbelieving ruck
(Bubonic plague they call the steel
Thou makest their offending feel),
And o'er America displayed
Consumption's less dramatic blade.
We bless Thee for the famine Thou
Hast sent upon Ghargoorygow,
While here we've had the plenty which
The life sustaineth of the rich,
Who also are the good and wise.
Behold, we lift adoring eyes,
For that Thou thoughtfully hast led
The Yellow River from his bed
Across the towns that underhang
The banks of that unsure kiang;
Whereas the streams by which we dwell
Are fatal but to those who smell.
Thanks that it was Thy holy will
Thy servants to permit to spill
Into the sea the blood of Spain
Till all thy lobsters were as vain
As Rome's red princes of their worth,
And swore they had been boiled from birth.
For these and other mercies, Lord,
One day to Thee we did accord;
Then to the Devil, as of yore,
Three hundred days and sixty-four.

—New York Journal.

Profane Jokes.

SHE—"What did you think of the minister's expression of the belief (that the world would soon come to an end)?" He—"I was rather inclined to think it would before he got through with his sermon."—*Boston Courier*.

"What Sunday-school do you attend, little boy?" "I don't know yet. You see the Baptists jest give a orange offer the tree, the Methodists gives a box of candy an' a toy, an' I'm a waitin' ter see what the 'Piscopals is goin' ter give."—*Harper's Bazaar*.

"I must request the congregation to contribute generously this morning," said the Rev. Mr. Slimpay sadly. "My salary is eight months in arrears, and my creditors are pressing. I, of course, work largely for love, and love, equally of course, is tender, but it isn't legal tender."—*Exchange*.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Thomas Paine's Work for Humanity."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): January 28, 8 to 10.30 p.m., Election of Committee by ballot. January 29, 12 to 2.30 and 8 to 10.30, Election of Committee. 8.30, A Concert. February 1, at 8.30, Annual General Meeting of Members.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, "Providence and Progress."

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Bow Vestry Hall, Bow-road, E.): 7, H. Snell, "Mazzini: Patriot and Prophet."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road, S.E.): 11.15, Discussion; 7, Frederic Harrison, "Theism and Humanity."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11, F. W. H. Myers, "Wordsworth."

WEST LONDON SECULAR CLUB (15 Edgware-road): A Parliament every Tuesday at 8. February 2, at 8.30, R. Forder, "The Religion of Old Egypt."

WINCHESTER HALL (33 Peckham High-street): February 1, at 8, S. Hale, "Is Religion Substantially a Good Thing for the Race?"

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, Mr. Fagan.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH (Bristol-street Board School): J. M. Robertson—11, "Patriotism and Ethics"; 3, "The Revival of Catholicism"; 7, "The Indestructibility of Matter."

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, Secular Society Amateur Dramatic Class, A Drama in three acts, "The Dream at Sea."

DERBY BRANCH (Central Hotel, Market-place): 7, A Reading.

GLASGOW (Lecture Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion Class—J. Gilbert; 6.30, Social Meeting, in commemoration of Burns and Paine.

GREAT YARMOUTH FREETHINKERS' ASSOCIATION (Freethinkers' Hall, bottom of Broad-row): 7.30, J. M. Headly, "Some Fruits of Christianity."

Huddersfield (No. 5 room of the Friendly and Trades Hall): January 31, at 7.45, C. Cohen, "Morality without Religion." February 1, at 7.45, C. Cohen, "Religion and Man."

LEICESTER SECULAR CLUB (Humberstone-gate): 6.30, F. Feroza, "Dr. Gall and Phrenology."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, L. Bergmann, B.Sc., "Mind and God."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 7, W. A. Rogerson (Manchester Microscopical Society), "The Pollination of Flowers." Illustrated by lantern views.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Extra Special Musical and other Recitals, to be given gratuitously by a number of talented ladies and gentlemen. Collection for local hospitals. February 1, Soirée and Ball in honor of Thomas Paine. Tea at 5.30.

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

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton.—January 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 29, Chester.

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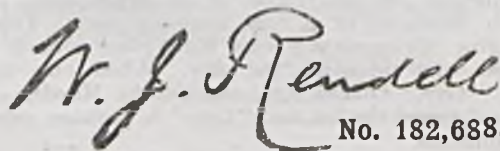
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<p>This is a very quiet part of the year in the Tailoring business. To find some work for our hands we offer two pairs of our ordinary 15s. trousers for 21s. carriage paid.</p> <p>State color and stripe, mixture or check, preferred.</p> <p><i>Measurements required</i> :—</p> <p>Width round waist.....</p> <p>Length inside leg</p> <p>Length outside leg</p> <p>Lined or unlined.....</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Buy now, and you will save Money.</p>	<p>I HAVE to-day, December 19, purchased a Manufacturer's Stock, consisting of 2,000 garments of Lady's New Paddock Mackintoshes, with Bishop Sleeves and Ventilated Saddle. Not one of the garments was made up a month ago, so that the stock is positively new and fresh, and absolutely the latest style in cut. The goods include about twenty different designs and colorings, including brown, fawn, and grey mixtures, checks and diagonals, and the lengths at back vary from 50 to 56 inches. To have bought these in the ordinary way I could not have sold them at less than 21s. each. However, I have bought them at a clearing price, and one that must have been ruinous to the manufacturer, and so I am in for creating a sensation with these goods. I have chopped my own profit down to a mere trifle. I offer them as follows:—One for 10s. 6d., carriage paid, two for 20s. Every customer ordering seven, either separately or altogether, will receive one free of cost as bonus. I here undertake to return 12s. in every case where one fails to give satisfaction in value. In conclusion, to all my best friends I say, try one of these Mackintoshes, and you will be glad.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CONTAINS</p> <p>1 Magnificent Floral Quilt.</p> <p>1 Lady's Dress Skirt (to measure). Give Waist and length measure.</p> <p>1 Good strong hardwearing Trouser length.</p> <p>1 Lady's Fur Necktie (a splendid imitation of real Sable).</p> <p>1 Gent's Umbrella. Cover warranted for twelve months.</p> <p>1 Lady's Umbrella. Cover warranted for twelve months.</p> <p>1 Beautifully-figured Cushion Square.</p> <p>1 Pretty White Apron.</p> <p>1 White Irish Linen Handkerchief.</p> <p>1 lb. Free Clothing Tea.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">All for 21s. Carriage Paid.</p>

To every reader of the *Freethinker* who will send his or her name and address on a post card we will gladly send large sample of our Free Clothing Tea. It is a marvel of cheapness.

£2 2s. will be given by J. W. Gott for the best eight or less lines of verse embodying an advertisement of his Free Clothing TEA. Competitors must send 2s. 4d. for one pound, so that they know what that they are writing about. Competition ends February 28, 1899.

Agents Wanted for New Season Goods. Patterns and full particulars ready in a few days.

J. W. GOTT, 2 & 4 Union Street, Bradford.