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Zola's Triumph.

We are nearing the end of the Dreyfus drama. And what a drama it has been! Played, not on a French stage, but on the stage of France—its actors, not mumming, but palpitating with real passion—its audience the entire civilised world—and its central interest the honor, the very self-respect, of a great nation. The potent, grave, and reverend judges of the Court of Cassation have pronounced their decision. Representing the sovereign forces of law and justice, they declare that Dreyfus was wrongly condemned, they quash his conviction, and they order a new trial by court-martial, in terms which preclude the possibility of his being found guilty on any evidence which is at present extant. Dreyfus himself is on his way home; he will soon fold to his heart the noble wife who has lent her sex a new dignity; he will shed happy tears over the dear children who are freed from a legacy of infamy; he will hold his head up in the sight of all honest and sensible men as a loyal son of France. Nor is this all. It is not even the chief thing. France herself, the land of the Revolution, the light-bearer to Europe, is restored to sanity of heart and head. She has learnt the truth, and accepted it; she has purged herself of the evil which was infused into her by traitors who masqueraded as her saviors; she admits that she was misled, that she sinned, and she is ready to make atonement. Those who knew her felt that she was sure to come right eventually. She is gallant and just and clear-thoughted above most nations. She has too much chivalry and logic to remain perpetually in the wrong. Again we behold her true self:—

The brilliant eyes to kindle bliss,
The shrewd quick lips to laugh and kiss,
Breasts that a sighing world inspire,
And laughter-dimpled countenance
Where soul and senses caught desire!

Dull heads in England and elsewhere have been shaken over "the decadence of France." They saw only the black cloud, and forgot the eternal sunshine behind it. There is the France of Henry and Esterhazy, and the General Staff, and the timid, conniving ministers, and the gutter journals of reckless pandering to vile passions, and the stealthy, calculating Jesuits, and the ambitious, scheming priesthood of the Roman Catholic Church, burning to avenge the "outrage" of 1870 and to restore the temporal power of the Pope. But there is also the France of Picquart—the hero without fear or reproach; the France of Zola—the man of letters, like Voltaire, who became a man of action to champion truth and justice in their supreme hour of trial; the France of Clemenceau, of Reinach, of Guyot, of Jaurès, of Pressensé, and scores of other publicists, who drew their bright, keen swords under the banner of reason and humanity, and fought their way through unparalleled obstacles to a splendid victory. It has been a battle of magnificent brains as well as magnificent courage; and the end of it fills one with fresh hope for France, and for the world.

Hate is strong, but love is stronger. Injustice is strong, but equity is stronger. Interest is strong, but principle is stronger. When the clear appeal to the higher nature is made, it is rarely made in vain. There may be weary waiting for the answer, and weak hearts are years in the march of human progress? Sometimes, indeed, the response is immediate, as when the great-hearted Garibaldi formed his army of red-shirts, by crying

to the young men of his beloved land: "Follow me! I offer you nothing but hunger, and wounds, and death—for Italy." And they sprang to him smiling, ready for any sacrifice.

Even at the worst the French people should not be censured too peremptorily. The mistake they made over the Dreyfus affair was so natural. It was easier to think that one man was guilty than to think that the trusted chiefs of the Army, with the connivance of well-known statesmen, had engaged in a huge and terrible conspiracy to ruin an innocent officer. Dreyfus had been tried by a court-martial, and, although soldiers are not so skilled in evidence as judges and lawyers, it was hard to believe that a flagrant injustice had been deliberately committed. What the people did not see was the secret and governing factor of the case. Dreyfus had been selected as an easy scapegoat because he was a Jew. It was a skilful move on the part of the real culprits, who perhaps were not all of the minor rank of Henry and Esterhazy. They calculated that a Jew would have no friends, that he might be condemned and put away, and that the "leakage" would be forgotten. Non-Catholics had been weeded out of the General Staff, and the Army chiefs were all in the hands of father confessors, who were delighted to behold a Jew ruined and disgraced. After the crime was committed the organs of the Catholic Church were always insisting on the guilt of Dreyfus; and they were powerfully assisted, not only by the organs of the Army, but by the organs of Monarchy and Imperialism, and by journalistic adventurers like Drumont and Rochefort. The combination was extraordinarily powerful. It included all the enemies of the Republic, who are still very numerous and influential. No wonder, then, that the mind of France was abused, and that it has been so long and difficult a task to bring about a recognition of the truth.

The part that Zola has played in this struggle will ensure his name being handed down as something more than that of a great man of letters—as that of a hero. At the very moment—it was just after the mock trial of Esterhazy by his brother conspirators—when the one thing needed was a man of sufficient distinction to step forward and slap the criminals and their abettors in the face, and to do it openly and publicly so that it could not be ignored, Zola rose to the height of the occasion, and risked his position, his living, his liberty, and almost his life, to bring the Dreyfus affair to a crisis and open the way to a public revelation of the facts in a court of justice. When he left France for England—the land of exiles, and may she ever remain so!—he was not seeking personal safety in flight. Revision of the Dreyfus case was what he desired, and his own presence in France would have meant a diversion from the issue he was seeking to force. Now that revision is an accomplished fact he is back in Paris, and quietly attending to his own business, after intimating to the authorities that he is ready, if they are, to go on with his suspended trial. "Even," he says, "as I remained quiet abroad, so shall I resume my seat at the national hearth like a peaceful citizen who desires to disturb none, but would simply take up his usual work without giving people any occasion to occupy themselves further about him." He has proved, and is still proving, the simple accuracy of his own words: "I have had but one passion in my life, the love of truth, for whose cause I have fought on every battlefield."

Zola looks forward to seeing and pressing the hand of the man he has helped to extricate from a living

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entombment. "That moment," he says, "will suffice to repay me for all my troubles." He desires appeasement and reconciliation in France, but he also believes that penal measures are necessary. "If some awe-inspiring example be not made," he adds, "if justice do not strike some of the high-placed guilty ones, never will the masses, the *petit peuple*, believe in the immensity of the crime. A pillory must be raised in order that the multitude may at last know the truth. But I leave to Nemesis the task of completing her avenging work—I shall not aid her."

We cannot refrain from quoting a few more lines from Zola's letter in *L'Aurore* :—

"The crop we shall have sown will not be one of hatred, but one of kindness, equity, and experience. It is necessary for it to grow and yield its harvest. Can one now foresee how rich that harvest may be? All former political parties have collapsed, and there now remain but two camps—the reactionary forces of the past on the one hand, and the men bent on inquiry, truth, and upright-ness, who are marching towards the future, on the other. This order of battle alone is logical; we must retain it in order that to-morrow may be ours. To work, then! By pen, by speech, and by action! To work for progress and deliverance! 'Twill be the completion of the task of 1789, a pacific revolution in mind and in heart, the democracy welded together, freed from evil passions, based at last on the law of labor which will permit an equitable apportionment of wealth. Thenceforward France, a free country, France a dispenser of justice, the harbinger of the just society of the coming century, will once more find herself a sovereign among the nations."

Zola's triumph is complete. It is great and splendid. He has acted with wisdom and patience as well as the loftiest courage. And mark you this, good Christians, he is a Freethinker. He is animated by no religious motive, in your sense of the words, but by the principles of reason and humanity. Recollect, too, that nearly all the men who have fought beside him for the triumph of justice are likewise Freethinkers. And recollect that the organised forces of Christianity in France have been arrayed on the opposite side.

G. W. FOOTE.

Naturalism and Ethics.

THEORIES of ethics may be conveniently classified under two heads—Natural and Supernatural. There are many subsections, but the above classification represents the only clear line of division between the religious and non-religious world, and at the same time indicates the only two headings under which all Rationalists on the one side and all Supernaturalists on the other would find themselves in agreement; for, taking a broad view of conflicting moral theories, the latter class is characterised by the assumption that a belief in God and in a future life is absolutely necessary if moral precepts are to have a binding or authoritative character; while the former class is emphatic in the belief that a rational basis of morals is to be found in the conditions of human existence, and that, rightly considered, ethical principles command the same assent, and, consequently, impose upon such as subscribe to their validity the same obligation to carry them out in practice as is the case with ordinary scientific generalisations.

Of course there are many who cannot perceive the binding character of a naturalistic system of morals, just as there are many who fail to recognise the truth of a scientific proposition which to a better-informed person would be indisputable. A man may say: "I do not see that moral precepts can have any authoritative character once we divorce them from the idea of God and a future life"; just as another may refuse to believe in the globular shape of the earth, or that it is, in round figures, 240,000 miles from the moon. And as in the latter case the obvious reply would be that if there existed a clear conception of the data upon which belief in the sphericity of the earth or the moon's distance is based, assent would be a matter of intellectual necessity, so in the former instance it is non-apprehension or misapprehension of the data upon which naturalistic ethics rest that is responsible for the objection urged. Once the facts upon which such a system is built are properly understood, and the conclusion drawn therefrom agreed to,

there is the same imperative character attaching to a purely scientific morality as to any other system. Exception may be taken, reasonably enough, to the estimated of a *particular* line of conduct; but the obligatory character of moral precepts does not depend upon what is regarded as the sanctioning power, whether that is held to be the will of God or the welfare of society, but follows from an assent given either tacitly or avowedly to an intellectual proposition. It is this position that I aim at making plain in what is to follow.

In attempting this, however, I am fully aware of the contrary opinions that might be cited from prominent writers on ethics, many of whom are strongly opposed to the supernatural in morals. Yet it appears to me certain that, unless it is possible to establish a logical connection between reason and conduct, the supernaturalist has a tolerably clear field before him. The task of effecting this reconciliation is doubtless a difficult one, and this would appear to be the chief reason why most prominent opponents of naturalism in ethics, particularly such writers as Mr. Balfour and Mr. Kidd, have made it the object of their assault. Once resolved to guide our lives by strict reason, it has been said, and there is nothing to prevent the principle of "each for himself, and the devil take the hindmost" ruling. Either that, or we are reduced to the necessity of preaching pure sentimentalism, vamping about the "moral law" as though it were an Act of Parliament to be consulted when necessary, and end by putting a deity in the place of the one dethroned. Neither position is desirable. We do not want a reign of ethical sentimentalism, any more than a reign of religious sentimentalism. Conduct, if it is to assume a scientific form, must, in ultimate analysis, find a reasonable justification in the normal conditions of existence, or all is confusion.

The problem for discussion, then, is this. Each individual, we say, should act so as to promote the general welfare. So far, Naturalist and Supernaturalist may be in agreement; and, so long as one's inclinations run in harmony with this counsel, no difficulty presents itself. But suppose a man's inclinations do not run in that direction; suppose, as is often the case, that he is willing to gratify his desires at all costs, and cry, with the richest Baptist on earth, "Damn the public welfare"—what then? "You tell him," says the Supernaturalist, "that he ought to act differently; to which he replies: 'My happiness must consist in what I regard as such, not in other people's conception of it. and I feel no desire to promote the general welfare. You point out that his present behavior will produce injurious results later on; to which he replies: 'I am willing to take the risk.' What, then, is to be done with him? Can naturalism produce any evidence condemnatory of the nature of man or of society that will produce such conduct as unreasonable—unreasonable, that is, in the sense of being in conflict with what can be clearly shown to be his own interests, thus making such behavior amenable to a better understanding of the conditions of existence."

Now, I think it is worth while pointing out that, whatever strength there may be in the above criticism when urged against naturalistic ethics, it must be at least of equal strength when urged against a supernatural system. We have only to vary the terms to see this clearly. You tell a man to act in such and such a manner "in the name of God." He replies, "I do not believe in God," and your injunction falls to the ground. Or, if he does, and you threaten him with punishment in an after life, he may reply: "I am quite willing to risk a probable punishment hereafter for a certain pleasure here"; or, like the youngster, when told that indigestion would follow a further helping of pudding, he may say: "It's worth it." And it is certain that, theory aside, many are content to risk the future if they can get their purpose served now. And, in a case such as this, the Supernaturalist is compelled to adopt precisely the same method as the Naturalist—that is, first of all gain an assent to a particular proposition, such as "God exists, and a belief in his existence creates an obligation to act in accordance with what is believed to be his will," and then show that such an assent establishes a presumption in favor of one class of actions against others. There still remains the problem of how to bring one's inclinations into line with one's opinions.

power is rapidly breaking down the moral verdicts that were based upon class or creed, on country or race, and by insisting upon fundamental ethical facts has brought about a far more uniform moral judgment than has ever before existed. Consequently, while Mr. Stephen would be correct in saying that *in the present state of knowledge* it is impossible to demonstrate that immoral conduct is unreasonable, in the same sense as it would be unreasonable to refuse assent to a scientific proposition, he is not correct in assuming such a condition of things to be permanent. If a scientific system of ethics consists in formulating rules for the profitable guidance of life, not only does the formulation of such rules presuppose a certain constancy in the laws of human nature and of the world in general, but it involves the assumption that some day it may be possible to give moral laws the same air of precision that now accompanies physiological laws, and to label departure from them as "unreasonable" in the truest and most scientific sense of the word.

C. COHEN.

(To be continued.)

Bible Biography.

(Continued from page 356.)

MOSES is among the prominent characters in Bible biography. He may, in fact, be termed God's "Prime Minister," as he was an ever-ready tool in the hands of the Christian Deity to carry out any scheme, regardless of the principles of justice and humanity. It is, however, only fair to observe that, according to the Bible, God is responsible for some of the most striking features in the character of Moses. For instance, nearly the whole of his doings are prefaced by the phrase: "And the Lord spake unto Moses saying." And the performance of these deeds is followed by the words, "as the Lord commanded Moses." Then, again, take the episode of the Egyptian bondage. Moses is commanded by his God to bring the children of Israel out of Egypt, where they were being sorely oppressed. His mission was to go unto Pharaoh, and to induce him to allow the people to depart. But from the first God placed serious obstacles in the way of Moses achieving this object. For we read that the Lord said unto Moses: "I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand. I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go. I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, that I might show these my signs before him. The Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart so that he would not let the children of Israel go" (Exodus iii. 19; iv. 21; x. 1, 20). This was strange conduct upon the part of the Deity. He sent Moses to accomplish what he (God) had rendered quite impossible to be achieved until desolation had been wrought and thousand of lives sacrificed.

God then sent a series of plagues upon the innocent people of Egypt, torturing young and old, man and beast, and at the same time again hardening Pharaoh's heart so that he may not relent and grant Moses his request. The record of God's doings towards the Egyptians is a narrative not only of cruelty and injustice, but of the greatest possible folly, as a glance at the story of the ten plagues will show. They may be briefly described thus:—

1. *The waters were all turned to blood.* There is no mistake here; all the water in the land was thus changed. But it is said the magicians did the same. It would be interesting to know what water they turned into blood, since there was none left. Before the rise of the Nile the water has a greenish appearance, and is not fit to drink. About the end of June it becomes yellow, and, gradually, red. This color was long supposed to be due to red earth brought down the stream. It is now known to be due to the presence of infusorial animalculæ, which gives it the appearance of blood. But the record says it was *turned into blood*. The Nile is the only river in Egypt, and all water is obtained from it. The fish, even to the crocodiles, were destroyed.

2. *The Plague of Frogs.* The frog was a sacred animal with the Egyptians, hence the fitness of the story as a myth. Whence came all these frogs? The river could not have brought them forth, for had there been any

but at present it is sufficient to note that all ethical precepts whatsoever owe their authoritative character to an intellectual assent, implied or expressed. The precise form in which this intellectual proposition is a matter of secondary importance. In one case it is the existence of God, in another a particular view of human nature; but, in either case, the authoritative character of moral precepts exists for all who assent to some other. In brief, in my view, all moral rules should be phrased thus: "If such and such a belief is held, then we ought to act in such and such a manner." The belief which moral rules take for granted is not expressed, but it is implied nevertheless. So far, then, I may have succeeded in making it clear that the complaint that Rationalistic ethics presents is of an obligatory character is either a begging question or is absurd. Such a statement in the mouth of a Christian is only one way of saying that he is not far from that view of human nature which the Rationalist takes for granted in all his reasonings on the subject. But to deny that, therefore, a scientific system of ethics cannot be binding upon anyone is simply ridiculous. One might as reasonably bring the same charge against any or every system, and with equal falsity. A statement concerning any system of morals is true of those who cannot accept the beliefs upon which it is based, but must always be false concerning those who can and do.

Naturalistic ethics, then, assumes that a proper understanding of the conditions of existence would, in the generally constituted mind, create an obligation to act in a particular manner; that, while all non-reasonable conduct is not immoral, rightly considered, all immoral conduct is non-reasonable; and there is the further assumption that at bottom individual welfare and general welfare are not contradictory or mere co-existences, but two aspects of the same thing.

Concerning the first part of this position Mr. Leslie Stephen (*Science of Ethics*, p. 437) warns us that every attempt "so to state the ethical principle that disobedience may be 'unreasonable,' in the same sense as refusal to believe in a mathematical demonstration..... is doomed to failure in a world which is not made up of working organisms"; and for the latter part two writers of much superior calibre join in the belief that "It is difficult to offer any consideration fitted to convince the individual that it is reasonable for him to seek the happiness of the community rather than his own";* "the interests of the individual and those of the organism are not either identical or capable of being reconciled, as has been necessarily assumed in all the systems of ethics which have sought to establish a naturalistic basis of conduct. The two are fundamentally and inherently irreconcilable, and a large proportion of the existing individuals at any time have no personal interest whatever in the progress of the race, or in the social development we are undergoing."

I have already said that, however difficult it may be to determine the precise relation between reason and conduct, such a relationship is necessarily presupposed by a system of scientific ethics. Any such system must rest upon the causal relations between actions and their effects, and of necessity the refusal to regulate life in accordance therewith argues either the absence of such knowledge, or the existence of an abnormal structure rendering it incapable of appreciating or applying the information it would be to call immoral conduct unreasonable as it would be to apply the same epithet to one who refused to assent to the statement that all the radii of a circle are equal.

I imagine that, given a definite number of normally constituted individuals, each possessing the same knowledge of the results of certain actions, and allowing for differences of temperament—a point I shall have to deal with later—the verdict would in each case be the same. The fundamental difficulty in the way of securing a uniform moral verdict is in all, or nearly all, cases due to a diversity of knowledge or reasoning; and the proof of this is seen in the fact that increased intellectual

* W. R. Sorley, *Ethics of Naturalism*, p. 42.
 † Kidd, *Social Evolution*, p. 107.

spawn there it would have been destroyed by the previous plague. The magicians also brought up frogs. This seems very senseless. It would have been far better had they sent them away.

3. *The Plague of Lice.* These were made out of the dust. Their presence everywhere must have produced a cheerful state of things. This was a lively occupation for a God. The very thought of it makes one's flesh creep.

4. *The Plague of Flies.* We fail to see the utility of this plague, even from God's standpoint, inasmuch as, the preceding plague not having succeeded, it was not likely that this one would. And it did not, for God still hardened Pharaoh's heart.

5. *Murrain of Beasts.* Whatever was the nature of this malady, the record states that *all* the cattle of the Egyptians died. The Egyptians were, therefore, left without any cattle of any kind. Their horses, asses, camels, and sheep were all destroyed.

6. *The Plague of Boils.* Here Moses takes ashes, and, sprinkling them like fine dust, a pestilence of boils is the result. These boils appear upon "man and beast." But there were no beasts left, for all had died of the murrain. So the blains must have broken out on dead animals.

7. *The Plague of Hail.* Hail is almost unknown in Egypt for climatic reasons. Again the cattle are killed, although they had been twice destroyed before.

8. *The Plague of Locusts.* These devour everything, so that neither animal nor plant is left. One wonders what the Egyptians did for food after this. Surely the destruction of all fish in the river, and of all animals and plants on the land, must have produced universal starvation of the people. Yet the Egyptians lived on, and the king was as obstinate as ever.

9. *The Plague of Darkness.* This was probably a severe sandstorm such as is common in that country. The Samoon of Khamaseen has been often described by travellers as producing darkness and lasting about three days. This darkness is said to have been felt.

10. *The Death of the Firstborn.* This plague was also extended to the beasts, of which there could be none left, for all had been killed three times over already. Now the Israelites, after *borrowing* the jewels and valuables of the Egyptians, departed; and Pharaoh pursued them with a great army of chariots and horses, although all the horses had been destroyed. This jumble of impossibilities and absurdities is supposed to be the work of the great "I Am," whose biography is truly unique.

But enough of this incoherent relation of nonsense and God-like brutality. We will now return to the biography of the alleged deliverer of Israel. It is not certain when Moses was born. Some orthodox chronologists allege that the event took place about 1450 B.C. But there is no trustworthy record in the Jewish Scriptures to justify this supposition. Gliddon, in his *Types of Mankind*, points out that "Moses, or the Hebrews, not being mentioned upon Egyptian monuments from the twelfth to the seventeenth century B.C. inclusive, and never being alluded to by any extant writer who lived prior to the Septuagint translation at Alexandria (commencing in the third century B.C.), there are no extraneous aids from sources, alien to the Jewish books, through which any information, worthy of historical acceptance, can be gathered elsewhere about him or them."

At the age of forty Moses commenced his career by an act of murder and sanctimonious interference. The Bible says: "And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren. And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand. And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known" (Exodus ii. 11-14). This incident furnishes the key to the character of Moses through the whole of his life. He was cruel, crafty, and passionate, being ever ready and willing to obey the most unjustifiable commands of his God. We read in Exodus (xxxii.) that the people became displeased

with Moses because he had remained too long with his Deity upon the Mount. Hence they said unto Aaron: "Up, make us gods, which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what has become of him." Aaron complied with their request, and, having induced the people to supply him with articles of gold (for this is now, the possession of gold was a necessary prelude to worshipping God), out of which he made gods for them, they then held a feast, and were having what our American friends would say a "good time." God, it appears, heard the merry-making, and he said unto Moses: "Go, get thee down; for the people which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves." Aaron's god-making business upset the Lord, for he exclaimed: "Let me alone, lest my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I consume them." Moses saw the folly of such passionate conduct, and he besought his Lord to do nothing of the kind, lest he should cause a wrong impression to be made upon the minds of the Egyptians. The persuasive powers of Moses were stronger than God's stability of purpose, hence we read: "The Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people." The God, who, we are told, "never changes," was induced to change his mind through fear of what some of his children would think of him.

In this case Moses gave very good advice, but he failed to adopt it himself; for, having pacified his God, (Moses) went down from the Mount to see what was going on. He took with him "two tables of testimony" which God had written. On approaching the camp, and hearing the dancing, "Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the Mount." Having performed this very cruel and foolish act, he stood in the gate of the camp and proclaimed: "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go forth and slay every man his brother, and every man his neighbor, and every man his neighbor. And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men." Such was the conduct of Moses, of whom it is said he "was meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth" (Numbers xii. 3).

CHARLES WATSON

(To be continued.)

Faith That Surely Wanes.

BY COLONEL R. G. INGERSOLL.

(Concluded from page 358.)

THE most that is now claimed for the Bible by "Higher Critics" is that some passages are true, and that God has left us free to pick these passages out.

The ministers are preaching infidelity. What would old Lyman Beecher have thought of a man like Abbott? He would have consigned him to hell. What would John Wesley have thought of a Methodist like Dr. Cadman? He would have denounced him as a son of the devil. What would Calvin have thought of a Presbyterian like Professor Briggs? He would have burned him at the stake, and through the smoke of the flames would have shouted: "You are a dog of Satan!" How would Jeremy Taylor have treated an Episcopalian like Heber Newton?

The Governor of New Hampshire is right when he says that Christianity has declined. The flame of faith are flickering, zeal is cooling, and even the fire is beginning to see the other side. I admit that there are still millions of orthodox Christians whose minds are incapable of growth, and who care no more for facts than a monitor does for bullets. Such obstructions on the highway of progress are removed only by death.

The dogma of eternal pain is no longer believed by the reasonably intelligent. People who have a sense of justice know that eternal revenge cannot be meted out by infinite goodness. They know that hell would be a heaven impossible. If Christians believed in hell

they once did, the fagots would be lighted again, heretics would be stretched on the rack, and all the instruments of torture would again be stained with innocent blood. Christianity has declined because intelligence has increased.

Men and women who know something of the history of man, of the horrors of plague, famine, and flood, of earthquake, volcano, and cyclone, of religious persecution and slavery, have but little confidence in special Providence. They do not believe that a prayer was ever answered.

Thousands of people who accept Christ as a moral guide have thrown away the supernatural.

Christianity does not satisfy the brain and heart. It contains too many absurdities. It is unphilosophic, unnatural, impossible. Not to resist evil is moral suicide. To love your enemies is impossible. To desert wife and children for the sake of heaven is cowardly and selfish. To promise rewards for belief is dishonest. To threaten torture for honest unbelief is infamous. Christianity is declining because men and women are growing better.

The Governor was not satisfied with saying that Christianity had declined, but he added this: "Every good citizen knows that when the restraining influences of religion are withdrawn from a community its decay, moral, mental, and financial, is swift and sure."

The restraining influences of religion have never been withdrawn from Spain or Portugal, from Austria or Italy. The "restraining influences" are still active in Russia. Emperor William relies on them in Germany, and the same influences are very busy taking care of Ireland. If these influences should be withdrawn from Spain there would be "mental, moral, and financial decay." Is not this statement perfectly absurd?

The fact is that religion has reduced Spain to a guitar, Italy to a hand organ, and Ireland to exile. What are the restraining influences of religion? I admit that religion can prevent people from eating meat on Friday, from dancing in Lent, from going to the theatre on holy days, and from swearing in public. In other words, religion can restrain people from committing artificial offences. But the real question is: Can religion restrain people from committing natural crimes?

The Church teaches that God can and will forgive sins. Christianity sells sin on credit. It says to men and women: "Be good; do right; but, no matter how many crimes you commit, you can be forgiven." How can such a religion be regarded as a restraining influence? There was a time when religion had power; when the Church ruled Christendom; when popes crowned and uncrowned kings. Was there at that time moral, mental, and financial growth? Did the nations thus restrained by religion prosper? When these restraining influences were weakened, when popes were humbled, when creeds were denied, when morality, intelligence, and prosperity began to decay?

What are the restraining influences of religion? Did anybody ever hear of a policeman being dismissed because a new church had been organised?

Christianity teaches that a man who does right carries a cross. The exact opposite of this is true. The cross is carried by the man who does wrong. I believe in the restraining influences of intelligence. Intelligence is the only lever capable of raising mankind. If you wish to make men moral and prosperous, develop the brain. Men must be taught to rely on themselves. To supply the supernatural is a waste of time.

The only evils that have been caused by the decline of Christianity, as pointed out by the Governor, are that in some villages they hear no solemn bells, that the dead are buried without Christian ceremony, that marriages are contracted before justices of the peace, and that children go unchristened.

These evils are hardly serious enough to cause moral, mental, and financial decay. The average church bell is not very musical—not calculated to develop the mind or quicken the conscience. The absence of the ordinary funeral sermon does not add to the horror of death, and the failure to hear a minister say, as he stands by the grave, "One star differs in glory from another star. There is a difference between the flesh of fowl and fish. Be not deceived. Evil communications corrupt good manners," does not necessarily increase the grief

of the mourners. So far as children are concerned, if they are vaccinated, it does not make much difference whether they are christened or not.

Marriage is a civil contract, and God is not one of the contracting parties. It is a contract with which the Church has no business to interfere. Marriages with us are regulated by law. The real marriage—the uniting of hearts, the lighting of the sacred flame in each—is the work of nature, and is the best work that nature does. The ceremony of marriage gives notice to the world that the real marriage has taken place. Ministers have no real interest in marriages outside of the fees. Certainly marriages by justices of the peace cannot cause the mental, moral, and financial decay of a State.

The things pointed out by the Governor were undoubtedly produced by the decline of Christianity; but they are not evils, and they cannot possibly injure the people morally, mentally, or financially. The Governor calls on the people to think, work, and pray. With two-thirds of this I agree. If the people of New Hampshire will think and work without praying, they will grow morally, mentally, and financially. If they pray without working and thinking, they will decay.

Prayer is beggary—an effort to get something for nothing. Labor is the honest prayer.

I do not think that the good and true in Christianity are declining. The good and true are more clearly perceived and more precious than ever. The supernatural, the miraculous part of Christianity, is declining. The New Testament has been compelled to acknowledge the jurisdiction of reason. If Christianity continues to decline at the same rate and ratio that it has declined in this generation, in a few years all that is supernatural in the Christian religion will cease to exist. There is a conflict—a battle between the natural and the supernatural. The natural was baffled and beaten by thousands of years. The flag of defeat was carried by the few, by the brave and wise, by the real heroes of our race. They were conquered, captured, imprisoned, tortured, and burned. Others took their places. The banner was kept in the air. In spite of countless defeats, the army of the natural increased. It began to gain victories. It did not torture and kill the conquered. It enlightened and blessed. It fought ignorance with science, cruelty with kindness, slavery with justice, and all vices with virtues. In this great conflict we have passed midnight. When the morning comes its ray will gild but one flag—the flag of the natural.

All over Christendom religions are declining. Only children and the intellectually undeveloped have faith—the old faith that defies facts. Only a few years ago to be excommunicated by the Pope blanched the cheeks of the bravest. Now the result would be laughter. Only a few years ago, for the sake of saving heathen souls, priests would brave all dangers and endure all hardships.

I once read the diary of a priest—one who long ago went down the Illinois river, the first white man to be borne on its waters. In this diary he wrote that he had just been paid for all that he had suffered. He had added a gem to the crown of his glory—had saved a soul for Christ. He had baptised a papoose.

That kind of faith has departed from the world.

The zeal that flamed in the hearts of Calvin, Luther, and Knox is cold and dead. Where are the Wesleys and Whitfields? Where are the old evangelists, the revivalists who swayed the hearts of their hearers with words of flame? The preachers of our day have lost the Promethean fire. They have lost the tone of certainty, of authority. "Thus saith the Lord" has dwindled to "perhaps." Sermons, messages from God, promises radiant with eternal joy, threats lurid with the flames of hell, have changed to colorless essays, to apologies and literary phrases, to inferences and per-adventures.

"The blood-dyed vestures of the Redeemer are not waving in triumph over the ramparts of sin and rebellion," but over the fortresses of faith float the white flags of truce. The trumpets no longer sound for battle, but for parley. The fires of hell have been extinguished, and heaven itself is only a dream. The "eternal verities" have changed to doubts. The torch of inspiration, choked with ashes, has lost its flame. There is no longer in the Church "a sound from heaven

as of a rushing, mighty wind"; no "cloven tongues like as of fire"; no "wonders in the heaven above," and "no signs in the earth beneath." The miracles have faded away, and the sceptre is passing from superstition to science—science, the only possible savior of mankind.

The Dogmatist's Creed.

BELIEVE as I believe—no more, no less ;
That I am right, and no one else, confess ;
Feel as I feel ; think only as I think ;
Eat what I eat, and drink but what I drink ;
Look as I look ; do always as I do ;
And then, and only then,
I'll fellowship with you.

That I am right, and always right, I know,
Because my own convictions tell me so ;
And to be right is simply this : To be
Entirely, in all respects, like me.
To deviate a hair's breadth, or begin
To question and to doubt
Or hesitate, is sin.

I reverence the Bible, if it be
Translated first, and then explained—by me.
By churchly laws and customs I abide,
If they with my opinions coincide.
All creeds and doctrines I concede divine,
Excepting those, of course,
Which disagree with mine.

Let sink the drowning, if he will not swim
Upon the plank that I throw out to him ;
Let starve the hungry, if he will not eat
My kind and quantity of bread and meat ;
Let freeze the naked, if he will not be
Clothed in such garments
As are cut for me.

'Twere better that the sick should die than live,
Unless they take the medicine I give ;
'Twere better sinners perish than refuse
'To be conformed to my peculiar views ;
'Twere better that the world stand still than move
In any other way
Than that which I approve.

Thought the Great Thing.

The great difficulty is always to open people's eyes : to touch their feelings, and break their hearts, is easy ; the difficult thing is to break their heads. What does it matter, as long as they remain stupid, whether you change their feelings or not ? You cannot be always at their elbow to tell them what is right : and they may do just as wrong as before, or worse ; and their very best intentions merely make the road smooth for them—you know where.—*John Ruskin, "Ethics of the Dust," p. 89.*

Fictitious Sins.

The manufacture of sins is so easy a manufacture that I am convinced men could readily be persuaded that it was wicked to use the left leg as much as the right ; whole congregations would only permit themselves to hop ; and would consider that, when they walked in the ordinary fashion, they were committing a deadly sin.—*Arthur Helps.*

Two of the Pious.

A Christian and a Heathen in His Blindness were disputing, when the Christian, with that charming consideration which serves to distinguish the truly pious from the wolves that perish, exclaimed :

"If I could have my way, I'd blow up all your gods with dynamite."

"And if I could have mine," retorted the Heathen in His Blindness, bitterly malevolent but oleaginously suave, "I'd fan all yours out of the universe."—*Ambrose Bierce.*

In the eyes of all truly competent men the question whether the universe as we see it is the result of regularly working forces, having a causal connection with each other, and therefore capable of being understood by human reason, or whether it is the work of an automatic, incomprehensible being that admits of no recognition by the reason of man, has long since been decided in favor of the former alternative. Every item of human knowledge, every page of practical experience, every conquest of science, gives but this one answer, and makes the old theistic theory of the universe, which originated in the days when mankind was still in its first childhood, appear as a mere fable engendered by the reverie of past ages.—*Buchner.*

Acid Drops.

WHAT became of the Mahdi's head ? The *Daily News* says that it was sent to Cairo in an old kerosene oil tin, and when the authorities heard the news they had it sent back hot haste to Wady Halfa, where it was hurriedly buried. It was Gordon's nephew who kept the Mahdi's head as an interesting relic. Mr. Wilfrid Blunt, however, declares that young Gordon acted under Lord Kitchener's express orders and is anxious to clear himself of all personal responsibility for the body-snatching which has caused such a rumour. Our own opinion on the whole matter has been given already. We regard it as a shocking display of barbarity. Reasonable state ought not to be alleged for such savagery.

Lord Kitchener has got his £30,000 in spite of the Mahdi's head. Mr. Balfour did not denounce him for desecrating the prophet's tomb ; that was left to Mr. John Morley. According to Mr. Balfour, the desecration was a deliberate policy, and the Soudanese regiments were specially selected for the task in order that "they might know and transmit the knowledge throughout the length and breadth of the Soudan that the Mahdi was, after all, not the Heaven-sent prophet they imagined him to be, but belonged to a temporary, passing, and dying creed." Mr. Balfour spoke this with a strange face, but he must have been laughing internally. He is too intelligent and acute to believe that a man must be very wrong because you can knock his corpse about with impunity.

Sir George Gabriel Stokes has been celebrating the jubilee of his tenure of the Lucasian Professorship of Cambridge University. There was a great gathering of scientists from all civilised nations, and eulogies were pronounced by Lord Kelvin and others. No doubt these eulogies were all deserved. But, after all, the mathematical is not the highest type of mind ; and Sir George Gabriel Stokes has shown himself to be anything but a great reasoner in his theological addresses. One of the poorest discourses we ever heard of was the one he delivered at the Hall of Science, many years ago on behalf of the Christian Evidence Society. It was neither learned, logical, nor witty, but just insufferably stupid. Perhaps the explanation of this may be found in the fact which is noted by Professor Jebb in his sonnet on the occasion of Stokes's jubilee. "Thy strength hath rested on the Divine," says the rhyming panegyrist. When strength of any kind rests in that fashion we know what a lamentable exhibition may usually be expected.

Our readers will remember how, according to the New Testament, Jesus Christ was presented to King Herod and Governor Pontius Pilate. But times have changed since then, and the distinguished representatives of Jesus Christ are presented to royalty in a different fashion. Present-day, for instance, the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, President of the Wesleyan Conference, was presented at the levee for the Queen by the Prince of Wales ; and this is how he was dressed, unless the *British Weekly* fables : Geneva gown with cassock beneath, knee breeches with buckles, silk stockings, shoes with silver buckles, and the clerical three-cornered mortar-board.

The first Wesleyan President presented at Court was the Rev. Richard Roberts, in 1885. A few others have been presented since. Mr. Hughes holds that the predecessor should be presented every year, and by his predecessor. All that now remains is for the Wesleyans to set up his name—a proceeding to which, we believe, Mr. Hughes is not averse—and let their prelates lord it in high places on a par with those of the Established Church. Only give them their all the "lowly" Churches will aspire to get their share of all the "worldly" advantages—wealth, place, privilege, power.

June 4 was "Judges' Sunday" at St. Paul's Cathedral. The preacher was the Bishop of Stepney. This gentleman claims to know a great deal about the working classes, and their intense love of religion when it is presented to them properly, with God well in front and the Devil invisibly behind. His sermon—we mean the reverend gentleman's sermon, not the Devil's—was mainly about the justice of God, and in which he admitted it was possible to make out a very plausible case. "In East London," he said, "in the debates and lectures, infinitely the hardest thing to defend with regard to God was his justice." The preacher confessed that "there was something in this world amiss," but he threw the whole blame for it upon man. God was not "directly responsible," but quite agree with the Bishop of Stepney, only that is to set up God altogether. To say the boss is not responsible is to say there is no boss.

When the Bishop of Stepney came to deal with the question of Eternal Punishment, he laid down the very convenient rule that you should "Throw overboard any theory of eternal punishment which conflicts with the doctrines of your own science." Precisely so. That is just what the Freethinkers

has been doing all along. But this rule puts Conscience above Scripture; which, in turn, puts an end to Christianity.

"We are all Agnostics, in a sense," the Bishop of Stepney exclaimed towards the close of his sermon. What a beautifully definite expression! It reminds us of Sir William Harcourt's saying, "We are all Socialists now." Of course Sir William Harcourt is not a Socialist, and the Bishop of Stepney is not an Agnostic. The truth is that each of them finds it politic to juggle with a certain word, and for a similar object.

The Archbishop of Canterbury has been speaking at Peterborough in favor of Sunday Closing. He said he was against anything that took away the reverence of the Sunday. Of course he is. Every man is against the destruction of what he lives by. Carpenters are not going to vote for the suppression of the wood trade, nor bricklayers for the abolition of clay-pits.

We quite agree with the Archbishop that, if a Sunday Closing Bill were passed for England, "people would provide for their Sunday needs on Saturday." We have seen them doing it in Glasgow. Thousands of them drink steadily all Saturday evening, and take in as large a supply of liquor as they can carry—sometimes more than they can carry, and then there is a job for the policeman. In addition to the internal supply, they purchase an external supply, which may be seen sticking out of their pockets, or bulging those convenient receptacles into most gigantic proportions. Men in that condition take care that the supply is adequate. Enough in these cases always means as much as you'll want and a good deal over for you must be on the right side. And, being bought, the liquor is religiously consumed; and this is what is called Sunday Temperance, and the Archbishop of Canterbury wants to see it introduced into England.

The late Lord Randolph Churchill was a great "friend of God." How he opposed the entrance of Bradlaugh the Atheist into the House of Commons! Mr. Winston Churchill is a true chip of the old block. Speaking at Birmingham, he referred to the alliance between the Tories and the Liberal Unionists, and exclaimed, "What God has joined let no man put asunder." We really did not know that it was God who brought Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Salisbury together. But we live and learn.

James Bohan, about thirty, a Catholic priest, was arrested for being drunk and disorderly at Birmingham. He was discharged on his promising to go to a friend in London.

At Peckham last Sunday a body of fanatical Christians, headed by an ex-felon, and assembled near a place of public convenience, waved a black flag and gave three cheers for the death of the National Secular Society. It did not transpire, however, whether that event had already taken place or had been notified in the book of prophecy.

It is astonishing how often the N.S.S. has been proclaimed as dead. It seems to die about half-a-dozen times every year. No cat ever had so many lives. Even now its funeral is as distant as ever. All its enemies will probably be buried first.

The Puritan (ominous name!) is of the same opinion as the Methodist Times—namely, that the Sabbatarians must not rest satisfied with the slaughter of two Sunday newspapers, but immediately engage in a fresh crusade against "relaxations of Sunday observance." "Among the more prosperous classes," it says, "Sunday has become the favorite day for social intercourse, entertainments, amusements. The fashionable restaurants of West London are rarely crowded with such brilliant throngs of diners as on Sunday nights. Every city and town now has its working-men's clubs, which on Sunday are packed out with crowds of drinkers and loafers, who can obtain unlimited drink, without the restrictions of the ordinary public-house." The last clause of this extract is a pious exaggeration. Working-men in their clubs on Sunday evening, are not such drunkards as the Puritan insinuates. Be that as it may, however, it is no longer possible to drive them to church, and, unless it is where they are. A crusade against working-men's clubs is not a very promising enterprise. Still less so is the project of interfering with fashionable West-end people's dinners. On the whole, we think the Puritan and the Puritan party had better let well alone, and make the most of the Sunday tyranny which still obtains. Seeking to win more may cause a reaction, which would lead to "Sabbath-breaking" on a more extensive scale.

The Ethical World sneers at "certain prominent 'freethinkers'" for opposing the agitation against Sunday newspapers. The author of the said sneer has not taken the trouble to read what the said prominent "freethinkers" have written on the subject; or, if he has read it, he seems incapable of understanding it.

Jesus Christ came nearly two thousand years ago, and the

New Age now says "that Christianity may be said to be in sight." What a rapid religion it is, to be sure!

Howard Kretz, student, of New York, being fascinated by Theosophy, and resolved to prove the power of mind over matter, jumped off the middle span of Brooklyn Bridge into the East River. It was a drop of 126 feet, but water is a yielding substance, and, instead of being killed, the Theosophic diver was only knocked senseless—if that were possible in his case. He was picked up by a tug, and as he is still alive he is satisfied with his demonstration. We hope he will continue so; for, if he should take it into his head to afford the world another proof of the power of mind over matter, by dropping off the same height on something hard, his matter may become a mere poultice, and his mind be obliged to wait for another incarnation.

Tom Holdsworth, hairdresser, Bradford, has been fined at the local police-court for shaving customers on Sunday morning. Those who prosecuted him should take out a summons against God Almighty for making hair grow on Saturday night. We are always opposed to half measures.

"Father" Stanton, of St. Alban's, Holborn, is said to have been told by a visitor to his church that everything was all right there except the incense, which was objectionable. "Well, you see," the Rome-imitator replied, "there are only two stinks in the next world—incense and brimstone—and you'll have to choose between them!" This is very hard on people with sensitive noses.

In spite of the enormous growth of the Catholic Church in England, in the matter of chapels, priests, convents, and wealth, it does not appear to be making any headway in other respects. For instance, in 1851 Roman Catholic marriages were 51 per thousand; in 1857 they were 46; in 1867 they were 44; in 1887 they were 43; and in 1897 they were 41. This shows a constant decline relatively to the population; or rather, to be strictly accurate, relatively to the total number of marriages.

Dr. Robert Wallace, the member for East Edinburgh, who was stricken down with cerebral congestion while addressing the House of Commons, was once a Presbyterian minister. Leaving the pulpit, he became editor of the Scotsman; and finally he adopted a Parliamentary career. He was a witty speaker who kept a serious face. He was well known to have left far behind him the Presbyterian creed of his youth. Practically he was a Freethinker. The House of Commons will be duller without him.

Christian Scientists had a field day early in the week at Queen's Hall, Langham-place. Mr. W. N. Miller, described as Q.C. of Toronto and C.S.B. of Massachusetts, gave an address, and adduced himself as a proof of his principles. Christian Science had cured him of deafness. Moreover, he knew people whom it had cured of influenza, disease of the hip-joint, and other maladies. In fact, it was the Second Coming of Christ. Lord Dunmore was bagged as the chairman of this scientific assembly.

While the Christian Scientists confine their operations to adults, they are pretty safe; but if they extend them to children they will find themselves, like the Peculiar People, within the reach of the law. We rather think, though, that they will not go so far. The Peculiar People are simple and honest; and the Christian Scientists are—well, they are not simple.

Christians are getting ashamed of one of the verses of our wonderful National Anthem. They don't feel like asking God to confound the politics, and frustrate the knavish tricks, of England's "enemies." The following "improvement" is taken from the program of Christ Church, Streat-ham:—

O Lord our God, arise!
Scatter her enemies,
Make war to cease,
Keep us from plague and death,
Turn Thou our woes to mirth,
And over all the earth
Let there be peace.

Considered as poetry, this is very skimble-skamble stuff. It isn't even worthy of the Poet Laureate. On the whole, we rather prefer the vigorous, if vulgar, original.

"Hide, O, hide those hills of snow," sang someone, perhaps Fletcher, who added a second verse to Shakespeare's incomparable, "Take, O, take those lips away." And the same sort of exclamation, though in less poetical language, came from the lips of the Rev. Dr. Tichener, pastor of the Montclair Baptist Church, Jersey, U.S.A. This gentleman was marrying Miss Lucille Osgoodby to Mr. Muir Glover, and the bridesmaids appeared in low-necked gowns, which so shocked the officiating pastor that he protested against the profanation of his sacred establishment by such an exhibition of female nudity. Perhaps the reverend gentleman was

distracted by the spectacle, like Dr. Johnson, who declined to go any more behind the scenes at David Garrick's theatre because he found the white bosoms of the fair actresses so disturbing. Indeed, it is rather rough on a man of God to commit assault and battery upon his eyes at such a time and place. Had the occasion been more private, the reverend gentleman might have emulated the pleasantries of Tartuffe.

Female nudity may be bad enough in a church, but how is it worse than male nudity? Thousands of churches have figures of Jesus hanging on his cross, and the Man of Sorrows is stark naked save for a trivial cloth about his middle. Surely, if this is a proper and edifying sight for Christian virgins, there is no great harm in a know-all man of God having to look for a few minutes on a bridesmaid's neck—or what ladies call their neck when they are in evening dress. The deity, of course, may be left out of the question. His all-seeing eye is not at the mercy of a lady's milliner for a knowledge of her figure.

An acquaintance of our own was riding on one of the South London trams when the vehicle passed the School for the Indigent Blind. He overheard a well-dressed passenger remark to a friend: "That's the School for the Indignant Blind." The defenders of the Benevolent Design Argument might try to find out the amount of that indignation.

From the newspapers we learn that the son of Bishop Colenso is a professional soul-saver. It is a thousand pities that the son cannot find an intelligent "savage" to convert him to Rationalism.

Christian Evidence windbags are never tired of asserting that Christianity abolished the gladiatorial contests. These hypocrites never mention that the same "religion of mercy" substituted the more fiendish *auto-da-fé* and made witchcraft a capital offence.

When an Indian prince saves a picked English cricket team from a miserable defeat by the Australians, it is high time for the English jingo to abate his arrogance, and recognise that he is really not everybody on this planet. Humanity is a great deal wider and bigger than any nation, even though it be the most Christian nation.

That pious paper called *The Young Man* says that "Political prophecy has been called the most gratuitous form of human folly." By whom has it been so called? And why is political prophecy singled out for stigmatising? The real truth is, that the *Young Man* murders a fine witticism of George Eliot's. That great novelist remarked that prophecy was the most gratuitous form of error. Not one kind of prophecy, but all kinds of prophecy.

On the other side of the account the *Young Man* may receive credit for the following passage: "Since the Americans have been in Manila three hundred drinking shops have been opened in a hitherto sober country—a fact which may be commended to the attention of the Jingo parsons of America who have been hounding on their country to aggression in the Philippines, and who at home are rabid Prohibitionists."

A sensation has been caused in Japan by the withdrawal from Christianity of three leading orthodox Christians. Their action has given the cause of Christianity a great setback in Japan. The most notable case is that of the Rev. Paul Kanimori, former pastor of the Tokio Congregational Church and president of the Doshisha (Christian) University, and author of several religious works. This champion of Christianity is now one of the shrewdest business men of Tokio and a director of the Stock Exchange.—*Sunday News* (Charleston, U.S.A.).

A young Ritualistic curate, applying for a vacancy, dated his letter, "St. Anthony Day." The vicar, an old-fashioned evangelical, headed his reply, "Washing Day." So says a writer in the *Church Gazette*.

According to *M. A. P.*, that famous music-hall artist, Mr. Albert Chevalier, was intended for the Church, and he has still a good collection of theology in his study at the top of the house. "The early fathers, Newman, and 'Bob' Ingersoll stand shoulder to shoulder." Mr. Chevalier "likes to hear both sides."

Talmage has never forgotten or forgiven the terrible trouncing he received from Ingersoll. "The time is coming," he says in a sermon printed in the *Christian Globe*, "when the infidels and the atheists who openly and out and out and above board preach and practise Infidelity and Atheism will be considered as criminals against society." Talmage would like to see them all under lock and key, or else killed and buried. Poor man! What a rage he is in! But hard words break no bones, and the "infidels and atheists" can afford to laugh at his insane ravings.

The late C. H. Spurgeon's *Autobiography*, of which the

third volume has just been published, contains an account—of an interview between himself and Mr. Ruskin. The latter came to say that the Apostle Paul was a liar and no gentleman, and that Spurgeon was a fool. The curious pair then talked it over, and Spurgeon "proved" that Paul was right in declaring that the seed was not quickened unless it died. He says he quite convinced Ruskin. Well, we should like to have Ruskin's account of the convincing. Maybe he went away thinking Spurgeon a bigger fool than ever.

Spurgeon believed in ministers of the poor Carpenter's Son of Nazareth being well paid for preaching. Once, when he was offered a church and a small stipend, he replied that they should invite the angel Gabriel, who didn't require meat or clothes, and who could fly down from heaven in the morning and return home at night.

W. Barker, who hails from 5 Pier-walk, Gorleston, communicates to the *Yarmouth Times* some startling discoveries he has made, which will doubtless secure him a distinguished place in the history of invention. He has found that the Freethinkers "number in their ranks some of the most notorious labor sweaters." This is news. But somehow or other it doesn't fit in with well-known facts. When the London Trades Council circulated a list of papers that were printed at "rat houses," it included a number of highly respectable religious journals. The *Freethinker* has always been printed by men who work the Trade Union number of hours and are paid the Trade Union rate of wages.

This brilliant W. Barker has also found that Colonel Ingersoll, outside a narrow circle of Freethinkers, is "known only as a labor sweater." We are not told how Ingersoll sweats labor. As a matter of fact, he is not an employer of labor at all; and the notion of Ingersoll "sweating" would make Americans laugh. Certainly he makes the church sweat. To that extent, of course, his friends must plead guilty for him.

Mr. David Christie Murray, the novelist turned journalist, has been enlightening the readers of the *Morning Herald* on "Cocksure Science." Mr. Murray is a higher authority on the adjective than he is on the substantive. His attack on Mr. Grant Allen strikes us as a very stupid performance. More than this we need not say, as Mr. Allen is well able to take care of himself. And really we quite agree with Mr. Murray when he exclaims: "Be not dismayed. Faith has spoken her last word." Faith has always been garrulous, and she has not yet changed her character. She utters an infinite deal of nothing, Sunday after Sunday, year after year, century after century. Faith gets up in a pulpit, shuts her eyes, and spends ten minutes in imparting information to Omniscience. Faith looks at a curtain that no one can see behind, and talks by the hour of what is on the other side of it. Faith draws up incomprehensible creeds, and devotes any amount of time to explaining them, and leaves them incomprehensible at the finish. Faith gets hold of children and talks, and talks to them until their brains are half addled, and they go doddering about for the rest of their lives. Yes, yes; Faith has her tongue and uses it, and she has not said her last word by a long way.

The Cross Wanes.

THE stars of Hellas set, and night fell deep,
On Pindus, on Olympus of the Gods.
The Julian splendor sank; the star of Rome
Waned all away into the Northern night.
And now the Cross, a war-fire light so long
On the vast dome, eighth hill of Rome the Throne,
Wanes in the clearer air of rising mind,
And the keen rays of thought, true Archer-God,
Transpierce it, and the scarlet python writhes,
And the great Jew-cult, which inherited
Greece, Italy, philosophy and power,
The Logos and the fanes of thundering Jove,
Words (wind) of Alexandria, swords of Rome,
That faith fails too, and passes to the past;
And fearful men, who scarce dare think of light,
Gaze, with dim vision, in the vasty void,
And dread the space of God's free air and heaven
More than black Tartarus or the Stygian mud,
Than Egypt's darkness or the viler Jew's,
More than the demons of the Dantesque hell,
More than the demon of the Calvin heaven.

—T. J. Powys, "Trio," pp. 133.

I know very well that we neither are nor can be equal. But I consider that the man who thinks necessary in order to maintain his self-respect to keep away from the so-called "people" is as wrong as a coward who hides from the foe through fear of defeat.—Goethe.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Monday, June 11, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road : 7.30.
The Mahdi's Head : a Study in Applied Christianity."

To Correspondents.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—All communications for Mr. Charles Watts should be sent to him at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

H. PERCY WARD.—Thanks for your batch of cuttings.

W. B. GOUGE.—We agree with you that Colonel Ingersoll's new lecture on the Devil ought to be widely circulated. Freethinkers should put it into the hands of their less heterodox friends. It is a splendid propagandist pamphlet.

W. P. BALL.—Your cuttings are always welcome. Thanks.

A. B. MOSS.—Yes, Mr. Foote is in good health at present. Pleased to note you are so busy in the lecture field.

T. WILMOT.—We hope you will always have a good supply of the *Freethinker* at your meetings. Mr. Forder supplies on sale or return, so you have nothing to lose.

F. L. GREIG.—Not as good as we think you might do.

G. W. BLYTHE.—Saying that death should always bring resignation, and that this is what Christians mostly mean when they talk of bowing to the will of God, doesn't imply that we are looking with a more favorable eye on Godism." How could you imagine that it does?

J. F. HAMPSON.—Thanks for cuttings.

MISS EMMA BRADLAUGH FUND.—*Per R. Forder*:—M. A. M., 10s.; H. M. Ridgway, 10s.; Dr. E. B. Foote (New York), 6s. 6d.; D. B., 5s.; E. Cottrell, 1s.; Mrs. Cottrell, 1s.; Miss Cottrell, 6d.; J. Hitching, 1s. The subscription acknowledged in this Fund from W. Hunt for £1 1s. was an error.

A. E. ELDERKIN.—We printed many of the extracts from the Rev. M. Savage's book in the *Freethinker*. You must have overlooked them. There are a few more to go in as soon as convenient.

J. T. JORDAN.—The words were quoted from Mr. Gladstone by the Rev. M. V. Savage, not by us—as you will see by looking at the end of the paragraphs headed "Religion and Morality" in our issue for May 7. We are unable to give you the exact reference, though we daresay Mr. Savage quotes correctly.

JAMES NEATE speaks highly of the lecture by Mr. Davies (his first) in Victoria Park on Sunday. "We should like," he says, "to draw the attention of other Branches to Mr. Davies as a lecturer who will give them satisfaction and do our cause credit." Mr. Davies's address is 65 Lion-street, New Kent-road, S.E.

H. B. SPARKES acknowledges receipt of a parcel of literature for distribution at West Ham.

C. CATTELL.—In our next.

J. FARTRIDGE.—Too much behind date now. Sorry you have had vain trouble in the matter.

A. J. HOOPER.—Some old theological books are valuable. Of course the majority are commercially worthless. Barrow's sermons, by the way, are often very good reading. He had a masculine mind and a strong style.

H. BRUCESON.—Mr. Foote's criticism of Mrs. Ward's *Robert Elsmere* appeared in the *Freethinker* for September 23 and 30, 1888. Mr. Forder might be able to obtain copies for you.

GLASWEGIAN.—We should have been glad to notice Mr. Robertson's *History of Freethought* had it been sent us for review.

S. WALKER.—Büchner's *Force and Matter* can still be obtained, we believe, from Mr. Forder. His valuable work on *Man*, we think, is still in print. His numerous essays have not been published in English. You will find Dr. Wallace's *Darwinism* an admirable statement of Evolution, although the author's spiritualism is rather obtrusively presented at the finish.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Isle of Man Times—New York Truthseeker—Secular Thought—Champion (India)—Two Worlds—Ethical World—Progressive Thinker—Sydney Bulletin—People's News—Echo—Der Arme Teufel—Christian Globe—Yarmouth Times—English Mechanic—Oxford Morning Echo—Christian Herald—Morning Herald—Edinburgh Evening News.

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

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.

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 offices, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 6d.

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

Sugar Plums.

IN spite of the terribly hot weather, a capital audience assembled at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "Dreyfus Vindicated and Zola Avenged." Mr. S. Hartmann occupied the chair. The lecture was listened to with profound attention, and very warmly applauded. Mr. Foote lectures from the same platform again this evening (June 11), taking for his subject "The Mahdi's Head : a Study in Applied Christianity." We appeal to Freethinkers to bring their Christian friends along to hear this lecture.

Mr. Cohen had two good meetings on Sunday in Brockwell Park. Several of his hearers asked for N.S.S. members' forms, and promised to fill them in during the week. All copies of the *Freethinker* were sold out at the first meeting, none being left for sale in the evening—which was, in one way, a pity.

Mr. Cohen's lecture in Victoria Park to-day (June 11) will be followed by the annual collection on behalf of Hospital Sunday.

Mr. A. B. Moss lectured to two fine open-air audiences on Sunday, in the morning at Hyde Park and in the evening at Hammersmith.

The first meeting of the new N.S.S. Executive will be held soon after this number of the *Freethinker* goes to press. One of the things that will probably be arranged for is another series of Freethought Demonstrations in the London Parks. The President will give this matter his special attention.

Colonel Ingersoll's lecture in the Academy of Music, New York, on Thomas Paine, in behalf of the Paine Bust Fund, is reported verbatim in the New York *Truthseeker*. We shall begin the reproduction of it in next week's *Freethinker*. The *Truthseeker* also promises in its next issue a poem of a hundred lines or so which Colonel Ingersoll reads, amidst great applause, at the conclusion of his lecture on the Devil. It is the Colonel's own composition, and is entitled "A Declaration of the Free." We hope to reproduce this also in our next issue.

Most of our readers will peruse with pleasure the following extract from a letter by a sailor in one of England's war-ships: "I have now taken in the *Freethinker* for something like two years. Strange to say, in all that time I have only come across seven Freethinkers in the service. In the last ship I was on we had the respectable number of six; but I am sorry to say that on this one we only number two. One strange experience I have had which you will very likely appreciate. Through a slight inadvertence on the part of my newsagent, I found myself minus my copy of the *Freethinker*. I did not know what to do, as I had never seen one on show at any newsagent's. Walking along the street, as I was passing a newsagent's shop, I saw one in the window. To go in and ask for it was the work of a moment. I was dumbfounded to hear it was not for sale, being the copy saved every week for a Church of England minister. While I was getting over my shock, who should walk in but the minister in question, and ask for his paper. The lady in the shop mentioned to him that I had applied for it, so that drew his attention to me. He asked me if I was a Freethinker, and I told him I was. He asked me how long I had held that view, and I told him I had held it ever since I had begun to study the Bible and had got books in reference to it. I told him the more I studied that book the more I doubted its accuracy. I mentioned to him several books you publish. Now for his reason for taking in such a paper. For over twelve months he had been studying your arguments for the express purpose of finding a flaw in them, but he had the manliness to confess to me that he had signally failed. He offered to lend me the copy he had just purchased if I would return it to him when I had finished with it; an offer I gladly embraced. When he told me his name and address, which of course I shall keep secret, I was surprised to find he was the vicar of one of the leading churches here."

The Birmingham Branch continues to make headway. On Sunday evening last the Society's platform was occupied by a lady, Miss Lillie S. Goyne. It was her first appearance as a Freethought lecturer, and the applause which her lecture received on its conclusion showed that those present hoped to have the pleasure of often hearing her again.

Mr. Charles Watts has had all his pamphlets that are in print bound up in two volumes. No doubt a good many of

his admirers will be glad to have them in this convenient form. Particulars will be found in our advertisement columns.

There was a good and attentive audience at the opening lecture given by Mr. Easton in Finsbury Park on Sunday last, in spite of the fact that he was surrounded by no less than six samples of Christian would-be orators, each representing himself only, and with much energy. A number of copies of the *Freethinker* were sold, and several hundred tracts distributed. Mr. A. B. Moss lectures to-day (June 11) at 3.30, his subject being "Science and Superstition."

Mr. F. T. Jane, whose story, "The Violet Flame," has been running in the *English Mechanic*, and has given rise to considerable correspondence, contributes a letter himself on the subject, in which he says that the book of Revelation is "quite as open to the charge of grotesqueness," and confesses to an "absolute minimum of belief in the supernatural."

Friends in the Newcastle district are requested to note that Mr. C. Cohen has again been specially engaged to visit Newcastle on the Sundays, June 18 and 25; the 18th being what is known as "Race Sunday," a great day on Newcastle Moor for all kinds of propaganda effort. Mr. Cohen lectures on the Quayside at 11 a.m., and on the Moor at 6.30, on each of the above dates. Friends would do well to remember that the Branch is much in need of help, and that the collections on such occasions never meet the expenses, and, further, that a wet day would involve a serious loss. It is, therefore, hoped friends will make the meetings known, and do their best to ensure success.

The Exodus from Egypt.

(Concluded from page 372.)

THE reign in which the majority of Bible reconcilers place the alleged exodus from Egypt is that of Merenptah, son of the great Rameses. This king was, however, certainly not drowned in the Red Sea, for his tomb has been discovered and identified. But, we may be told, it is not stated in the Biblical account that the Egyptian king *was* drowned. This is true; but the fact is clearly implied. In one passage Pharaoh is mentioned as present with the Egyptian army near the sea; in another passage "the Lord" says to Moses: "I will get me honor upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots and upon his horsemen"; in a third it is stated that "the waters returned and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, even all the host of Pharaoh that went in after them into the sea; there remained not so much as one of them" (Exodus xiv. 10, 17, 28). Also, from verse 23, we find that all Pharaoh's army "went in after them into the sea."

Now, unless we are to suppose that the king remained on the shore *alone* while every man of his army entered the bed of the sea in pursuit of the Israelites—which is too improbable to be seriously entertained—he must, according to the sacred narrative, have perished with his horsemen and charioteers. We know, also, as a fact, that Rameses II. rode at the head of his army, and did battle with his own hand.

Let us take now a sample of the way in which the Bible story is sought to be reconciled. Professor G. Rawlinson, in a work which professes to be "history," speaks of the Exodus as an undoubted historical occurrence which took place in the reign of Merenptah. In order, however, to render the Bible account more credible, he finds it necessary to explain away all the miraculous portions. The event, stripped of these elements, was nothing more than the following: "The exact spot," says the Professor, "cannot now be fixed,but it was probably some part of the region that is now dry land, between Suez and the southern extremity of the Bitter Lakes. Here, in high tide, the sea and the lakes communicated; but on the evening of Menepthah's arrival an unusual ebb of the tide, co-operating with a 'strong east wind,' which held back the water of the Bitter Lakes, left the bed of the sea bare for a certain space; and the Israelites were thus able to cross during the night from one side of the sea to the other. As morning dawned, Menepthah sent his chariots in pursuit. The force entered on the slippery and dangerous ground, and advanced half-way; but its progress was slow; the chariot wheels sunk into the soft ooze, the horses slipped and floundered; all was disorder and confusion. Before the troops could extricate themselves the waters returned on either hand; a high flow of the tide, the necessary

consequence of a low ebb, brought in the whelming flood from the south-east; a strong wind from the Mediterranean drove down upon them the pent-up waters of the Bitter Lakes from the north-west. The channel which had lately been dry land became once more sea, and the entire force that had entered in pursuit of the Israelites perished" (*Ancient Egypt*, p. 264).

We know now how the Exodus really occurred. The Bible statements that the sea divided in obedience to the stretching forth of Moses' rod, that the waters "were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left," that "the floods stood upright as an heap," that a dense cloud prevented the Egyptians from coming up with the Hebrews, and that "the Lord" further impeded the progress of the pursuers by "taking off their chariot wheels"—these are matters which Mr. Rawlinson evidently considers to be mere embellishments of the narrative, and therefore coolly ignores.

But what about the destruction of the king and his army? How can such a catastrophe be ascribed to Merenptah? Oh, very easily; that monarch, according to Professor Rawlinson, only sent about five hundred chariots in the channel after the Israelites. When these were overwhelmed by the returning flood, Merenptah returned with the main body of his troops, no worse off than such a slight loss entailed. The Christian reader for whom this apologetic Professor wrote ought to be grateful to him for so cleverly smoothing away Bible difficulties, and, at the same time, furnishing them with such a strong confirmation of holy writ; for it goes without saying that ninety-nine out of every hundred readers will believe that the writer had some historical foundation for the version he gives of the Exodus story. Needless it is to say that he had none whatever—but the fictitious Bible narrative, which he has altered to his own sweet will to what he conceived *might* be history.

We will see next how another Professor (Wellhausen, of Marburg) interprets the same Old Testament story. That scholar, in his *Sketch of the History of Israel and Judah* (pp. 2-4), thus describes both the sojourning in Egypt and the Exodus: "Some fifteen centuries before our era a section of the Hebrew group left its ancient seat in the extreme south of Palestine to occupy the distant pasture-lands of Egypt (Goshen), where they carried on their old calling—that of shepherds and goat-herds. Although settled within the territory of the Pharaohs, and recognising their authority, they continued to retain all their old characteristics—their language, their patriarchal institutions, their nomadic habits of life. But in course of time these foreign guests were subjected to changed treatment. Forced labor was exacted of them for the construction of new public works in Goshen.....They had no remedy at hand, and submitted in despair.....At length, at a time when Egypt was scourged by a grievous plague, the Hebrews broke up their settlement in Goshen one night in spring, and directed their steps towards their old home again.....To a not very numerous pastoral people such an undertaking presented no great difficulty. Nevertheless, its execution was not to be carried out unimpeded. The Hebrews, compelled to the direct eastward road, turned towards the shore of the Red Sea, and encamped at last on the Egyptian shore of the northern arm of the Red Sea, where they were overtaken by Pharaoh's army. The situation was a critical one; but a high wind during the night left the sea so low that it became possible to ford it, and they made the venture with success. The Egyptians, rushing after, came up with them on the further shore, and a struggle ensued. But the assailants fought at a disadvantage, the ground being ill-suited for their chariots and horsemen; they fell into confusion, and attempted retreat. Meanwhile, the wind had changed; the waters returned, and the pursuers were annihilated."

This version of the Exodus, like that of Professor Rawlinson, is of value only as showing how much of the Bible story can be given up without rejecting the whole. Neither version has, as far as is known, any foundation in fact. There is no evidence which tends to prove that the Israelites resided in Egypt, either as slaves or otherwise, before they came to live in Palestine. On the other hand, we know as an incontrovertible fact that the Hebrews were of the same race and language as the Phœnicians, the Moabites, the Edomites, the

Midianites, the Ammonites, and other inhabitants of Canaan, and that they came originally, not from Egypt, but from the neighborhood of the Euphrates. We know, also, that during the Egyptian domination of Syria and Palestine (from B.C. 1630 to 1150, or later) multitudes of the inhabitants of Canaan were carried captive to Egypt, and were doubtless employed in forced labor of some kind by the kings of Egypt. It is, of course, quite possible that some of these exiles might have eluded the vigilance of their taskmasters and returned to Palestine. Whether this were the case or not, there cannot be the smallest doubt that no such exodus as that recorded in the Old Testament ever took place.

The most ancient narratives in the Bible are certain portions of the book of Judges. It is in this book, then, that we must look for any records of the beginning of the Jewish nation. The earliest of these I take to be the following:—

"And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites; the Hittite, and the Amorite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite: and they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their own daughters to their sons, and served their gods" (Judg. iii. 5, 6).

This short record takes us as far back as we can get with regard to the origin of the Israelites. That people, at some unstated time, dwelt peaceably and amicably among the other Semitic inhabitants of Canaan, and intermarried with them. No war of extermination, like that described in the book of Joshua, had then been waged; nor had the local deity, Yah, been yet promoted to the dignity of national god, as stated in the later narratives in Exodus and Joshua. These narratives are purely fictitious; the statement in Judges appears to be fact.

The Hittites and Amorites mentioned in the passage quoted were great and powerful nations that for centuries (including the two Biblical dates of the alleged Exodus) withstood all the might of Egypt, and were with difficulty reduced to nominal subjection by the large armies brought against them by a succession of Egyptian monarchs. These two nations are mentioned again and again on the monumental inscriptions of Egypt; the Israelites never. The last-named people thus appear to have been but a few insignificant tribes, independent of each other, who had not yet formed the alliance which afterwards bound them together, and had, therefore, not yet assumed the collective name of "Israel." This is the only explanation that accords with all the known facts of history.

ABRACADABRA.

The Word "Religion."

From Mr. Cohen's article in the *Freethinker* of May 7, and Mr. Thurlow's letter of April 23, it is evident that some ardent Secularists very strongly object even to the occasional use, or qualified adoption, of the word "religion" by other Secularists. Now, there is much to be said on both sides, and, for my own part, I think that Secularism should be as inclusive as possible. Secularists are not so numerous that we can afford to repel actual or possible adherents, and still less actual workers, in the cause of Secularism, by treating their retention and modified use of certain words as "highly reprehensible"—a condemnation which would obviously include Mill and many earnest anti-supernaturalists who think that the endeavor to establish a purely Secular "religion" is highly laudable. If people are with us in substance and reality, I see no necessity that they should limit their language or their thought or method to those of the strictest sect of materialistic Secularism. In such a family controversy it is not well that either party should regard the view or method of the other as one which cannot be too strongly reprobated." I think we should be as liberal towards each other's views as possible, and should beware of the habit of assuming the absolute correctness and superiority of our own personal views or preferences or arguments as against those of other Secularists, who, if they, too, chose to speak strongly, might equally condemn our condemnation as narrow-minded, and us as blindly oblivious of great streams of tendency in religious evolution.

For there is a great stream in this direction, belittle

it as we may. Matthew Arnold's definition of religion as "morality touched with emotion" is only one out of many signs of the tendency to give the word "religion" an increasingly moral significance. While supernaturalism began independently of morality, it is equally certain that a union of the two has been brought about—of which union the Ten Commandments will form sufficient illustration and proof. Religions which included moral as well as animistic elements overcame the immoral religions in the competitive struggle for existence, and there has been a general evolution and increasing importance of the moral or secular element in the prevalent religious systems of the world. The tendency to identify religion with morality is no modern innovation. Two thousand years ago it appeared in pagan writings like those of Cicero, and we may see it in the New Testament itself. St. James, for instance, identifies religion with secular virtues when he declares that "Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, is this: To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James i. 27). He also teaches that the religion, or *seeming* religion, of a man that bridleth not his own tongue is vain, and that faith without works is dead, like that of devils who "believe and tremble" (James i. 26; ii. 17, 19). The tendency to evolve religion into morality or secular righteousness is seen still earlier in the Hebrew prophets, and is set forth in works like Matthew Arnold's *Literature and Dogma*.

It might even be claimed that the word "religion" affords good evidence in itself that it was coined or evolved or appropriated at an extremely early, and perhaps prehistoric, date, to signify moral elements of conduct, backed and enforced by supernatural sanctions and terrors—or, in other words, that it arose to express a secular utilization of animistic beliefs. For there is absolutely nothing in the derivation or formation of the word to denote animism or belief in supernatural beings. It is generally (though probably erroneously) supposed to come from *ligo*, I bind, and the intensifying prefix *re*. According to this derivation, it would signify powerful obligation or binding influence, this binding influence being, of course, based on superstitious beliefs. Some, however, like Cicero, would derive it from *lego*, I gather or consider, and would give it a more philosophical signification. Nuttall derives it from *lego* through the form *religens*, carefully pondering or considering (or fearing the gods, others say), as opposed to *negligens*. At most it appears to signify a *result* of belief in supernatural beings and occult influences, quite as much as it means the belief itself. It represents a state of mind or kind of conduct bound up, or supposed to be partly bound up, with supernatural sanctions, just as the words "jury," "justice," etc., which no one thinks of discarding, are bound up with the supernaturalistic word *juro*, I swear (by the gods). It means, or comes to mean, the performance of duties to God and man, quite as much as it means a mere belief, which the Devil himself must hold to the fullest extent, and therefore would be a thoroughly or perfectly religious personage if religion consisted of belief alone.

Those who occasionally speak of a "religion of good works," or who systematically put forward a purely secular system of belief and conduct as a natural "religion" competing with superstitious religions or animistic systems of belief and conduct, may urge that it is not they who ignore the development or evolution of the word "religion," or of religion itself, but those who raise this charge against them and deny them the right to call themselves religious in the best sense of the word. Such builders of a reformed religion of the future may tell us—not altogether unjustly, perhaps—that we of the destructive school are not the best judges in the matter, seeing that we are exceptional in our type of disposition and intellect, and that most people take no permanent interest in this passing and negational stage of individual or social development. They may say that we pay too little attention to all-essential, emotional elements of human nature which rule mankind far more powerfully than any amount of the hard reasoning, for which only the minority are fitted. As constructive evolvers of the permanent portion of Secularism—namely, the part which is to remain after all the supernatural religious, and the attack upon them, have alike passed away—they may find the word "religion" useful

or satisfactory to them and others in various ways, as, for instance, in expressing a rich coloring of emotion, or depth of feeling and faith, or sense of dutifulness and solemn obligation, or sympathetic and loyal devotion to the real salvation of mankind. Religion having been almost inextricably identified in the minds of many with moral emotion and right conduct as its most precious essentials, they wish to drop the supernaturalism which to them has become an unessential and perishable encumbrance, or at best a temporary and no-longer-needed scaffolding; but in throwing away this obsolete, rudimentary, vanishing portion of their religion they do not feel bound to throw away the name as well. It expresses their state of feeling, or mental or moral attitude, in a way which no other word can do. Buddhism is generally (though not invariably) acknowledged to be one of the great "religions" of the world, though it is purely Atheistic. Is it, then, altogether inexcusable that Secularism, Ethicalism, Positivism, Humanitarianism, or whatever name devotion to right conduct and human welfare may assume, should be put forward by some earnest advocates as the best, highest, truest "religion" the world has yet seen?

It is true that nine persons out of ten would be misled if we spoke of an Atheist as a religious, or truly religious, man. So they would if we assured them that he was not an infidel. We are not bound to accept the ruling of the majority in either case. Nine out of ten of the people around us would equally be deceived if we told them that a man was truly religious, if all the while his religious belief was accompanied by a life of crime or debauchery. Religion is to them a compound of goodness and godliness, and when they speak of "true religion" they mean more especially the former. Many people, indeed, have said or felt that Bradlaugh was more "truly religious" than his opponents. Meanings and applications of words change or evolve in accordance with changing wants and opinions, rather than in obedience to strict rules of logic or consistency. Religion is dropping its worst parts—shedding its doctrines one by one—evolving in the direction of Moralism. It seems probable that the Churches, in progressive countries at least, will continue to advance in this direction without shedding the old-world "religion." From associations, including such as are permanently embodied in literature and poetry, as well as in other imperishable sources of emotional and intellectual influence, large numbers of good people will find that the word "religion" has to them a peculiarly deep impressiveness. If conscience compels them to quit the Church of their childhood, they will still cling to words and phrases associated in their minds and hearts with some of the most valuable of the instincts and emotions necessary for the welfare and progress of the race. The bolder and freer spirits—or should we say the more literal and mechanical-minded?—need not look harshly on those who feel that they would elevate or purify religion rather than destroy it. It is the *thing*—the progress—that is essential, not the name we call it by. Many good and eminent men have advocated a purely secular "religion," and their views are entitled to respect. Independently of the permanent retention of the word "religion," I am sure that, as a temporary stage, the permitted (or, at least, undenounced or only mildly deprecated) use of the term is useful as softening the abruptness of the change from Christianity to Secularism. It facilitates the adherence and organisation of many who rebel against theology and superstition, but who rightly or wrongly still confound religion with righteousness. If they are in error, their mistake is not of a culpable nature. They *may* be right as a matter of practical policy. We may be wrong. Let the matter be one for friendly argument, and not for hurling even the smallest thunderbolts of moral reprobation at each other. Secularism should certainly not narrow itself by an exclusiveness or harshness that would shut out some of the most eminent Atheists the century has seen. And while we are tolerant of Secularists who patronise the word "religion" in its better sense, we may fairly expect, on the other hand, that they will equally excuse and understand us when we say things of religion which are not true of the kind of religion they desire to establish.

Similarly it is easy to go too far in reprobating or prohibiting the use of other words appropriated by the Churches. When Bacon attributes "natural piety" to

the Atheist, he does no violence to the proper original meaning of the word "piety," which is our form of the Latin *pietas*, signifying, according to the dictionary "piety, devotion, religion, duty, dutifulness, affection, love, attachment, kindness, clemency, pity, compassion, justice, equity, righteousness, loyalty, obedience." Our expression "filial piety" still preserves the secular side of the Roman meaning of the word. Ingersoll's "Social Salvation," Tennyson's "simple faith is more than Norman blood," and many other instances, will show that such words as salvation, faith, devotion, soul, spirit, creed, inspiration, grace, holy, sacred, reverent, creature, and so forth, are not necessarily to be abandoned to the enemy. They express ideas, feelings, and facts which are the common property of the race, independently of animistic superstitions. The word "soul," for instance, may, I think, be used to include the deep, strong feelings such as are but poorly represented by the word "mind," which is applied more especially to the intellectual aspect of our mental states or activities. That theologians pretend that soul, mind, spirit, etc., are immortal entities is no more reason for entirely giving up the use of such words than the knowledge of the fact that the heart is only a force-pump should compel us to abandon the use of that word in its figurative and emotional sense. Care should, of course, be taken not to use such words misleadingly or unnecessarily. But we should also bear in mind that there are two ways of misleading our hearers. A mechanically logical accuracy which drops constructive emotionalism and the expressions which best convey it may be as misleading concerning the true inwardness of Secularism as the associations hitherto connected with some of the best known and more powerful emotional words may mislead people in another direction. Secularists need not be Gradgrinds because they revolt against superstitions. They may cultivate the moral riches of the less intellectual or non-argumentative portions of human nature, including the inspiring and sustaining strength and beauty of emotions or feelings on which the real world-wide victory of constructive Secularism will depend. And if some of them choose to speak of such work, or such frame of mind or soul or heart, as their religion, or their faith, or what not, I, for one, shall see infinitely more to admire and commend in their work and their disposition than to condemn in their use of words or phrases which appear to them to be legitimate and appropriate, though other Secularists of a more iconoclastic type may frown upon them as deceptive, or as discredited by superstitious associations.

I must confess, however, that, for an Atheistic body, the Positivists, with their "prayers," "worship," "churches," and so forth, carry their imitation of orthodox religion much further than commends itself to my own tastes. I do not wonder that orthodox visitors should regard the services at the "Church of Humanity" as a "ghastly" travesty, or that Huxley should describe Comte's system as Roman Catholicism minus Christianity. Nevertheless, the services carried on at such "churches" evidently suit some persons probably long accustomed to orthodox solemnities, and the "grave, sweet melody" of prayer-books or "Gardens of the Soul," or strongly inclined by natural disposition to the ecclesiastical style of thought and language. The formation of Atheistic churches and priesthoods is at least adverse to the orthodox churches, and helps in its degree to pave the way towards a general emancipation from the mental and social tyranny of superstition.

W. P. BALL.

Book Chat.

THE June number of *Humanity* (organ of the Humanitarian League) contains the usual supply of useful notes, also an excellent article by Howard Williams on "Porphyry, Meville, and the Moral Revival." The supplement is an eight-page tract on "Woman Suffragists and the Lash," dealing with the Edinburgh Memorial to the Home Secretary which demanded corporal punishment—on men—in cases of violent assault on women. Mr. Salt, who supplies the Introduction to this leaflet, says that "the action of Xerxes, when he caused the Hellespont to be scourged for wrecking his ships, was not more idiotic than that which finds force with the flagellomaniacs of to-day."

* * * Sarah Grand, the novelist, who has embraced Theosophy

or something very much like it, contributes a brief letter to *Humanity* on this subject. It is so brief, indeed, that we venture to quote it *in extenso*: "Certainly I am against flogging and all half-measures. A man who outrages women and children is not fit to live, and I would put him to a painless death, and have done with him." We may take this as an illustration of sex bias. In a certain sense, man is, and always will be, woman's enemy; and Sarah Grand wants to avenge her sex whenever the opportunity occurs. She might reflect, however, that, although a woman cannot commit a rape, she may still be as great an enemy to her own half of the species. How about the bawds who systematically debauch young girls, and place them upon the market of prostitution? Should they also be put to a painless death? And, if not, why not? Rape is certainly one of the most odious offences conceivable. We are not seeking to minimise it. We are only asking for logic and impartiality.

Sarah Grand talks of "a painless death." Will she kindly inform us how it is inflicted? Death may be swift, and almost instantaneous, as a physical fact; but, as a psychological fact, how are you going to make it so? Will you take the culprit from the prisoner's dock, and strangle him or electrocute him straight away? That would be short shrift, but is it now possible? If, on the other hand, you give a man three weeks' preparation for his end, he is really facing death—and, so to speak, dying—all that time. By day in thought, and by night in dreams, he foretastes the violent death which is awaiting him. And how can this be "painless," in any rational sense of the word?

The Bible doesn't seem to be in it with Shakespeare, nowadays. Of course there are more copies of the Bible sold and circulated, but not precisely bought to be read. A large number of copies must be purchased for church-going purposes, like the Prayer Book, only on a larger scale, because the Bible is used everywhere and the Prayer Book only in the Church of England. Then, again, a large number of Bibles must be purchased to lie on parlor-window tables, and on drawing-room tables beside the big album and the showily-bound, gilt-edged edition of the highly-respectable domestic poet. But copies of Shakespeare are not bought for artificial or adventitious reasons. And what a number of editions are pouring upon the market! To say nothing of the great editions, like the Cambridge and Dyce's, there are the handy pocket editions, which are meant for students and lovers of the mighty poet, whose very name is a monument. Years ago the late Professor Henry Morley found place for all the plays of Shakespeare in Cassell's threepenny and sixpenny library. These little volumes were decently printed, and went easily into the pocket; but they had no sort of artistic pretensions. They did not actually displease the eye, and that was all. But now we have the pretty Avon Shakespeare and the Windsor Shakespeare; and, better still, the delightful Dent's Shakespeare, with its good paper, and bold, clear type, and pleasant limp leather binding—each being a separate little volume, and any one of them forming an ideal companion for a railway journey, or a country walk, or a stroll in a London park. But the cry is still they come. And now we have another pocket edition of Shakespeare, which Messrs. Bell and Sons are publishing. It is called the Chiswick Shakespeare because it is printed at the Chiswick Press, which is a guarantee of excellence. Type, paper, and general appearance are all that could be desired. The Cambridge text is adopted—on the whole the best, and *Hamlet* leads off the series. Mr. John Dennis supplies a brief Introduction and a few Notes, and Mr. Byam Shaw some archaic illustrations. The price is one shilling. Surely this is cheap enough, and the Chiswick Shakespeare will probably have a large sale—as it deserves to.

We have read *Hamlet* over again in this pretty edition. Every new edition is a fresh opportunity—a fresh excuse, if you like—for re-reading this wonderful masterpiece. Age cannot wither it, nor custom stale its infinite variety. And, having read it once more, we call to mind with much amusement the (in its way) still more wonderful criticism of Shakespeare by the clever (sometimes *too* clever) Mr. George Bernard Shaw. Being a wayward wit himself, and strenuously bent on originality, Mr. Shaw has cultivated his own powers to a point from which he looks down and despises Shakespeare. That is to say, he professes to do so; but whether he really does so or not will never be known, unless Mr. Shaw, in one of his moments of self-revelation, laughs out aloud at his own extravagant joke, and shakes his bells, and flings his cap in our faces.

Mr. Shaw himself can write a witty play, but the wit is obvious and deliberate. The wit of Shakespeare is spontaneous and incalculable. And when the wit and the humor get well mixed, and the result is a Jack Falstaff, one feels the inexhaustible richness of Shakespeare's genius. No doubt even Jack Falstaff is open to criticism. But what does that matter? The very sun has spots, but who thinks of them when rejoicing in its glory?

There must have been a wide and rapid decline of religious belief in this country, so that so many thousands of English readers are able to understand, and to sympathise with, Fitzgerald's version of *Omar Khayyam*. We hear that Messrs. Macmillan have sold considerably more than fourteen thousand copies of the new edition, and as each copy will have two or more readers, this makes a really healthy audience for the old Oriental's blasphemies. We need not emphasise the fact that Christian wisdom (save the mark!) is the exact opposite to that of Omar Khayyam. The whole conception of life is different from the old Persian's Counsel of Perfection.

Omar says there is no God and no life hereafter, in verse of passionate bitterness:—

And that inverted bowl they call the sky,
Whereunder crawling, cooped, we live and die,
Lift not your hands to It for help, for It
As impotently rolls as you or I.

Like Lucretius, that grand old Roman Freethinker, Omar introduces argument into his poetry. The Persian philosopher-poet, noting how self-contradictory is the very conception of a deity, says:—

What! out of senseless Nothing to provoke
A conscious Something, to resent the yoke
Of unpermitted pleasure, under pain
Of everlasting penalties if broke!
What! from his helpless creatures be repaid
Pure gold for what he lent us, dross allayed—
Sue for a debt we never did contract,
And cannot answer—oh, the sorry trade!

A fierce despair bursts out in the following:—

Ah, Love! could you and I with Him conspire
To grasp this sorry scheme of things entire;
Would we not shatter it to bits—and then
Remould it nearer to the heart's desire?

This is strong meat for the lambkins of Jesus.

Mr. Andrew Lang, in the June issue of *Longman's Magazine*, goes for the Higher Critics with a claymore. Taking their argument, that because the "sacred" writings contain anachronisms the fact throws a doubt on the authorship, he refers to the case of Thackeray's *History of Henry Esmond*. Our merry Andrew points out that Thackeray confuses names, makes chronological blunders, and does generally what the critics complain about in the Biblical tracts; and, according to their logic, Thackeray cannot be the author of his novel. The case of Thackeray's masterpiece really helps the Higher Critics. The great novelist was admittedly evolving history out of his inner consciousness. If the Biblical writers make the same blunders, it is only fair to assume they were also romancing.

The literary journals have been writing about the centenary of the birth of Thomas Hood. One of our contemporaries seems to fear that Hood's reputation is at a low ebb. There is not much room for fear about the reputation of a poet who has given to English literature *The Song of the Shirt* and *The Bridge of Sighs*, and who has never ceased to add to the gaiety of nations.

Correspondence.

SECULARISM AND RELIGIOUS PHRASES.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I had two reasons for not joining in this correspondence. (1) I wrote the address which contained the phrases in question with no small feeling of sympathy for a bereaved family, and it did not seem becoming to enter on an argument as to the character of the language used. (2) I regarded the phrases objected to as too much a matter of literary taste to be profitably discussed in a journalistic debate. When I say "Religion," I mean Devotion to the Good. When I say "spiritual," I mean that which is finest and most poetical; and so on. I shall obstinately continue to employ these words, even though (as I may as well add) I am an Atheist, and though I reject all supernaturalism, and though I disbelieve every article of the Apostles' Creed.

I am much obliged to Mr. Clogg for his defence of my phrases, and I agree with all he says. As to my brethren (if they will pardon the "priestly" term), Messrs. Dyson and Thurlow, I take their criticism in good part. But if either of them knows the name and address of any person who has been misled into thinking I am a Christian, I hope they will supply me with the information, and I will do public penance.

F. J. GOULD.

41 Lower Hastings-street, Leicester.

The Charles Watts Fund.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Mr. George Anderson acknowledges the following donations:—W. Cabell, 10s. 6d.; J. Jones, 5s.; M. Weatherburn, 1s.; E. H. G. (per Miss Vance), 2s. 6d.

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, "The Madhi's Head: a Study in Applied Christianity."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 8.30, A. T. Dancey's Dramatic Co. in "The Master of Clive Chase."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road, S.E.): 7, Spring Festival—Speakers: Dr. Coit and H. H. Quilter.

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11, Stanton Coit, "The Mighty Atom."

WEST LONDON BRANCH (15 Edgware-road): June 12, at 9, Half-yearly meeting.

EAST LONDON BRANCH (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road): 8, E. White.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, R. P. Edwards.

BROCKWELL PARK (near Herne-hill Gates): 3.15 and 6.30, Stanley Jones.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, Stanley Jones.

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, C. Cohen.

FINSBURY BRANCH (Clerkenwell Green): 11.30, E. White, "What did Jesus Do?"

FINSBURY PARK (near Band Stand): 3.30, A. B. Moss, "Superstition and Science."

HAMMERSMITH (The Grove): 7.15, W. Ramsey.

HAMPSTEAD HEATH (Jack Straw's Castle): 3.15, E. Pack.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): Lectures every week evening at 8. Sunday, at 11.30, E. Pack.

KILBURN (corner of Victoria-road): 7.15, E. Pack.

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 11.30, W. Heaford.

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, C. Cohen; 7, E. White. June 14, at 8, C. Cohen.

PECKHAM RYE: 3.15 and 6.15, R. P. Edwards.

STRATFORD (The Grove): 7, A. B. Moss, "Design and Natural Selection."

THE TRIANGLE (Salmon Lane, Limehouse): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey. June 13, at 8, A. B. Moss.

S. L. E. S. (Peckham Rye): 11.15, Mr. Newland. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, Mr. Storrar.

VICTORIA PARK (near the Fountain): 3.15, C. Cohen.

WESTMINSTER (Grosvenor Embankment): 11.30, H. Courtney "Morality without Superstition."

COUNTRY.

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, A lecture.

GREAT YARMOUTH FREETHINKERS' ASSOCIATION (Freethinkers' Hall, bottom of Broad-row): 7, Violin Selections by Professors Elliot and Ray; 7.15, Mr. Sterry, "The Son of God."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Humberstone-gate): 6.30, H. Payne, "Trade Unionism, Co-operation, and Socialism."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, Mr. Rhodes, "Lee's Life of Shakespeare."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): Closed for Summer Season.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): Members' and Friends' Excursion to Hazlehead, etc. Meet at 1 o'clock prompt, fronting Victoria Station. Train leaves at 1.15.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7.30, Annual meeting—election of officers.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton.—June 11, m., Mile End; a., Victoria Park; e., Edmonton. 14, Mile End. 18 and 25, Newcastle-on-Tyne. 27, Mile End.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.—June 11, a., Finsbury Park; e., Stratford. 13, e., Limehouse. 18, a. and e., Brockwell Park. 25, m., Battersea. July 9, e., Edmonton. 16, m., Clerkenwell; a., Hampstead Heath; e., Kilburn. 23, m., Mile End.

H. PERCY WARD, 5 Alexandra-road, Edgbaston, Birmingham.—June 18, Birmingham; 25, Northampton.

R. P. EDWARDS, 52 Bramley-road, Notting-hill.—June 11, m., Battersea; a. and e., Peckham. 18, m., Ridley-road; a., Victoria Park; e., Mile End. 25, m., Camberwell. July 2, m., Hyde Park; a., Hampstead; e., Hammersmith. 9, m., Ridley-road; a. and e., Peckham. 16, m., Station-road; a. and e., Brockwell Park. 23, m., Battersea; e., Stratford. 30, m., Limehouse; a., Victoria Park; e., Edmonton.

E. PACK, 10 Henstridge-place, Ordnance-road, St. John's Wood.—June 11, m., Hyde Park; a., Hampstead Heath; e., Kilburn. 18, m., Mile End; e., Edmonton. 25, m., Pimlico Pier; a., Brockwell Park; e., Peckham Rye.

A. E. ELDERKIN, Watford.—June 18, Chatham.

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