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Christ's Lambs.

DREYFUS is back in France, and the revelation of the tortures he has suffered is sending a thrill through the heart of the nation. One reads the story, only half told as it is, with a shuddering disgust. It appears that the sentence passed upon him by the court-martial was quite illegal. Had he been the author of the bordereau, which is proved and confessed to have been written by a crazy, he would only have been liable to five years' imprisonment for espionage. But they called the offence treason, and punished him accordingly. Maître Demange, the counsel, noticed the legal error and wanted to appeal against it, but Dreyfus forbade him to do so. "I am," he said, "as little a spy as a traitor. If I were either, I would not be worthy that you should take the trouble of discussing which. Both crimes mean infamy, and I care what will, you must not appeal." Well, the result of this illegality was sent away to rot to death on a tropical island, rightly named from the Devil. The names of the real criminals and their abettors was clearly got rid of him. But their victim would not die. His enormous will-power kept him alive. The fierce sunlight nearly stifled him in his narrow pen, for he was like a wild beast. He had more than one sun-burn. Fever raged in his blood and brain, and the gaolers playfully stopped the preserves he was wont to receive from Cayenne, and his daily rations of milk. Thinking at length that he was nearing his end, but shocked at his longevity, they took to dealing with him by mental torture. Instead of allowing him to have his correspondence, with a view to settling him by his letters, his only consolation, they kept the letters back and gave him copies to read. Copies! When the wretched man wanted to read the very words written by his beloved hand, to handle the very paper that had been pressed to her bosom and stained with her tears. Then they took to doctoring the copies of her letters. "Why were there none, and when he asked piteously, "Why have they not written?" they summoned the hellish courage to reply: "Your family has abandoned you." The pen almost drops from one's hand in writing such an infamy. One is horrified to think that "civilised" human beings could be capable of such a refinement of cruelty. But one is consoled in learning that the wretched and moral bereavement, had the divine courage to his tormentors, "You lie! they have not abandoned me." Really it looks as though the liars, and assassins of the General Staff were trying to rid the world of a man who had character enough to be a great military leader if ever France had to unfurl a banner of war in defiance of invasion. But that is the way. We are not yet at the end of this chapter of infamy. Relying upon another forgery—it has been

forgery all through—the vile Drumont was raving in the *Libre Parole* about the possibility of Dreyfus escaping from the Devil's Island; and—will it be believed?—M. Lebon, the Minister of the Colonies, merely on the strength of this nonsense, and to curry favor with the fanatical Anti-Semites, telegraphed orders to place the prisoner in irons. And this is how it was done, according to the *Daily Telegraph's* correspondent at Rennes:—

"Thereupon gyves were duly forged and put on; the very first day the wretched man's ankles, owing to the pressure of the iron, swelled, and were lacerated. A few days later they were covered with horrible wounds extending to the bone. But the torture went on without respite. The prisoner, as he stretched out his blood-stained feet, asked why he was treated thus, but silence was his only answer. For two mortal months these torments continued. Every morning the irons, stained with blood-made rust, were removed, and the horrible wound was dressed so that it might begin to cicatrise, and every evening the irons were riveted on the crisp flesh anew, till it was torn and raw again."

For two whole months this went on, says the *Aurore*, the journal edited by Clémenceau, and to which Zola contributes. "Meanwhile," that journal says, "Lebon, delighted, watched every morning the Christian Anti-Semitic sheets, and noted with joy that he was not attacked. Such, at the end of the nineteenth century, is what has taken place in the French Republic, and there are some of Christ's tender lambs who are asking to begin again."

Christ's tender lambs! A poignant phrase, calculated to make the guilty ones writhe. It marks the special and most important aspect of this Dreyfus case. Let us not forget that the conspiracy against Dreyfus is a Christian conspiracy, and part of a general conspiracy against the French Republic. Superficial observers are always talking of what they consider the fickleness of the French nation. But no nation was ever fickle. A nation is a most conservative agglomeration. What they call French fickleness is merely the good or ill fortune of the two great parties into which France, more than any other country, is divided. There is the France of the Old Régime, and there is the France of the Revolution, and they both live on the same soil and in the same cities. Every now and then Reason reposes and Faith catches its opportunity. Humanity becomes languid, and Priestcraft snatches a victory. France has gone through one of these intervals during the past few years. But the principles and the party of progress are now reasserting themselves, and the curse of Clericalism will be stayed.

When the blood of Robespierre flowed under the knife of the guillotine, it is said that a man who remembered his Deistic mouthings amidst incessant slaughter, stood over the great Terrorist's dead body, and exclaimed, "Yes, Robespierre, there is a God." Were it not for the absurdity of Theism on so many grounds, one might almost imagine that a living Nemesis had brought Dreyfus through his awful ordeal. The truth is that his own heroism has sustained him, and he lives to remind the world of the tender mercies of Religion.

G. W. FOOTE.

Belief and Conduct.

If we were to paraphrase Kant's "What can I know? What ought I to do? and For what may I hope?" by "What ought I to believe? How far am I responsible for believing it? and What relation do my beliefs bear to my conduct?" we should in so doing sum up by far the larger part of our religious, or anti-religious, discussions. Rightly or wrongly, we do praise some beliefs and censure others; and, as a belief may be the determining factor in conduct, it would seem as though there were some justification for our so doing. If, as Kingdon Clifford declared, belief is the link that unites knowledge to action, what a man believes can be hardly less important than what he does, and it will consequently be of some interest and no little value to attempt some answer to the above-named questions.

So far as the Christian Churches are concerned, they have usually proceeded on the assumption that belief is wholly a matter of conscious choice; that it is as easy for one to believe in A as in B without any corresponding change in either knowledge or character. Christianity, with its constant exhortation to blind belief, its threatened penalties and promised rewards in a future life, is plainly built upon such a conception, and it lies also at the root of all State action in matters of religion. Religious persecution is likewise based upon the assumption that a person's beliefs are under his control in precisely the same sense that his conduct is, and that just as it is possible by threats or bribes to induce the performance of certain actions, so by the same means may be ensured the adoption of particular beliefs. Apart from such a conception of the nature of belief the rational motive for persecution is absent, and the phenomenon becomes unintelligible.

That persecution has always failed to bring about uniformity of belief—although it has more than once succeeded in inducing uniformity of profession—is a historical truism; and it is quite as clear that its tendency has been not only to prevent that free criticism of current beliefs, which alone can secure a progressive purification and strengthening of opinion, but also to destroy all confidence in public honesty and truthfulness. Whenever a man's professed beliefs coincide with his personal interests, their sincerity must always be open to question; and when it is further found that their rejection would expose him to actual persecution, deprivation of office, or boycott in business, the presumption against their being honestly held is all the stronger. How can anyone be certain that another is honest in his profession of belief if it is known that he will be damned in the public esteem, or dismissed the public service, should he profess anything different? It is his interest to pretend to believe, whether he does or not. Said Dr. Parsons, head of Balliol College, to Theodore Hook, when he came before him for "matriculation": "Are you prepared to subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles?" "Oh, certainly," was the cheerful reply; "forty, if you please." And what Hook said from pure facetiousness of temper numbers of others are ready to practise from much lower motives, with the result that public honesty and confidence are destroyed, the whole tone of life lowered, and each gets insensibly into the habit of regarding his neighbor as a bit of a coward, a bit of a liar, a bit of a fool, or perhaps a mingling of the three.

It may appear a trite observation to make, and yet a glance round at the religious world proves it to be far from an unnecessary one, that every man's beliefs are selected for him rather than selected by him. Heredity in the shape of a specialised, physical, or nervous structure, and environment in the shape of climate, class, education, etc., are the factors that determine the beliefs of each. It may be difficult, perhaps impossible, to determine the relative value of each factor, but there can be little doubt that these do decide which of the conflicting mass of beliefs, amidst which we are born, shall receive our support. Not only is each man's belief strictly relative to his organisation as a whole, not only does the adoption of a belief depend upon the possibility of it being assimilated to his general character, but a particular state of health even may determine how he will regard certain teachings in philosophy or religion. Dyspepsia may resolve itself into a powerful

advocate of Calvinism, as Universalism may discover a staunch ally in a healthy physique; or on the philosophic side Optimism or Pessimism may receive considerable assistance from the same quarters. People are, to a considerable extent, destined to be sceptical or orthodox, Materialist or Idealist, by their heredity, and each, by a kind of magnetic attraction, will select the view of life that is best fitted to his particular constitution.

All belief is a simple question of probability—a state of mind that falls short of absolute certainty. It is the assent of the mind to a given proposition, and is entirely determined by the quantity and quality of the evidence produced. Produce evidence that my greatest friend is a rogue, and, although I may be on the look-out to detect a flaw in the indictment, may betray an obvious bias in my reasoning on the subject, still my assent is not a matter of choice, but of necessity. It has no more to do with my "will" than the color of my hair or the state of the weather. Consequently, to make a man morally responsible for the beliefs he may entertain is to saddle him also with responsibility for the physical structure he inherits and the environments that act upon it. As a matter of fact, he no more "chooses" the beliefs he holds than he selects the brain that entertains them.

For my part, I believe it to be a matter of utter impossibility for anyone to "adopt" or "give up" a belief. We may realise that we hold entirely different beliefs concerning religion or politics or science to those that we held years ago, but if we trouble to examine the course of our mental development during the same period we shall discover innumerable circumstances that have led up to our present position, and that, while we are conscious of the result, we have been unconscious of the process. Mental growth is as continuous as physical growth, and we are no more conscious of the one than we are of the other. We may be troubled with "growing pains" in either case, but all that we can do is to register the changes at different periods, and when possible retrace the steps of our insensible evolution. But it by no means follows that, because our beliefs are determined by causes over which we have as little control as we have over the place of our birth, therefore what one believes is of little or no consequence. All that is meant is that whatever praise or blame may be attached to a belief must refer to its objective, not its subjective, aspect. As beliefs all are equal, since they are little more than registers of one's mental acquisitions or disposition. It is only when we come to deal with the effect of beliefs on society at large that they may properly be called bad. A belief that is real may have some influence on conduct, and must be sharply discriminated from a mere formal assent to a given proposition. What I have said only means that by recognising the factors that induce belief we cease indulging in useless and stupid recriminations against such beliefs as we hold are inaccurate in form or dangerous in tendency, and, by correcting, when possible, the environment of heredity by a sound education and healthy environment, secure the existence of beliefs that shall be socially more beneficial.

But even if we were all perfectly rational in our views concerning the nature of belief, it is still easy to over-estimate its influence on conduct. It is a common observation that good men often entertain beliefs of a demoralising character, and bad men hold beliefs of an entirely opposite description. Not every believer loves to dwell on the torments of the damned in language to suffering, and not every unbeliever who denounces in indignant language the brutality of certain aspects of the Christian faith is as quick to redress injustice as he would wish. The gulf between professed belief and actual practice is a well-worn theme with both moralists and satirist, but it is one that, when examined, points to a social truth of the most far-reaching character. For all evidence seems to show that conduct is determined far more by the inherited character of the individual than by the knowledge acquired during his individual lifetime. Here and there one may find an individual guiding his life by the knowledge they have acquired, but in the vast majority of cases it is impressions already registered, the habits already formed—in a word, the established character of the individual—that will ultimately determine conduct. In but a few cases does the perception of a new truth lead to any immediate and marked alteration in action.

only when it has had time to sink in, and become assimilated with, the established character that we can readily reckon on its manifestation in future behavior. Had when one reflects how infinitesimal is the knowledge that can be acquired by any single individual as against the dead-weight of custom and habit that he inherits as a member of a social organism and "heir of ages," one need feel little surprised that the influence of acquired knowledge on conduct is not more marked than it is.

Nor should this view of the matter at all weaken our estimate of the value of intellectual pursuits; rather the reverse. For we may say that, even if a man's inherited character represents the preponderating force in the field of conduct, it represents the past rather than the present, while knowledge represents the means by which the past may be modified so as to harmonise with present requirements. Slow as knowledge may be in modifying character, it is the only force on which any dependence can be placed, and our main business should be to determine what are the forces that govern human development, not to waste our energies in useless regrets over the method of their operation.

C. COHEN.

The Failure of Christianity.

In referring to the failure of Christianity we wish it to be understood that it is not to its profession that we owe so much as to the non-practical obedience to its teachings. The mere avowal of belief in the Christian religion is found to be so profitable in business, and so useful in societarian intercourse, that the great bulk of professing Christians dissimilate and "assume a virtue if they have it not."

It has been frequently pointed out that the avowed object of Christianity is twofold. First, to convert mankind to a belief in the efficacy of Christ's death as an atonement for sin; and, in the second place, to furnish a gospel that would prove an efficient guide in the secular duties of life. Nothing appears more clear in our mind than that in both cases the Christian religion has proved a decided failure. It has existed in various forms for about eighteen hundred years, and yet the great majority of the human race have either not heard of it, or have entirely rejected it. The population of the globe at the present time amounts to about 1,275 millions, of which, according to the most liberal calculation, only 350 millions profess to believe in Christianity; that is, less than one-third. But, if we make an allowance for the large number who are merely nominal Christians, we are not three-fourths of the world's inhabitants to-day far as the "conversion of the world is concerned."

Careful readers of the New Testament, having retentive memories, need only to be reminded of what the theory of Christianity is to enable them to see at once its inadequacy as a guide in daily life. In fact, not only are Christian teachings thoroughly impracticable, but some of them are entirely delusive. Take, for instance, the subject of prayer. Nothing is more clearly set forth in the New Testament than the promise that God will answer the supplications of those who believe in him. Christ himself distinctly told his disciples that whatever they asked of his father he would grant their request. "All things, whatever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matthew xviii. 19; xxi. 22; John xvi. 23). It is said that by such means even a mountain may be cast into the sea, and that food, clothing, and indeed everything, may thus be obtained. Diseases which affect the human family may be removed by the prayer of faith, which we are told "shall save the sick." This, according to the Christian theory, all those who believe in it should adopt the method of prayer and faith in all their actions. There is no limit placed to this mode of application. It is true there is a conflict of opinion between St. Paul and James as to faith and works, but neither dispenses with prayer or faith. Now, to those who firmly believe in this Christian teaching we submit the following facts. Jesus himself prayed for the unity of Christendom, that his followers might be one (John xvii. 21); but that prayer has never been answered—in fact, the disunion among Christians

to-day is greater than it ever was, and plans more sensible than reliance on prayers are now being adopted to achieve what the prayers of Jesus failed to accomplish. For years past we have had recurring famines, in India, Africa, and elsewhere; and, recently, the accounts from Russia told the sad tale that thousands of Christians were perishing for want of food. Yet from millions of lips the prayer was uttered to God: "Give us this day our daily bread." We have often pointed out the futility of attempting to apply Christianity to the solution of great social problems. In that necessary work it has proved a decided failure. But here is a case of simplicity itself—that of feeding the hungry. Christ told his believers to ask, and they should have what they required. They did ask, but their requests were not granted. Does not this show that the New Testament promise cannot be relied upon? The more sensible professing Christians have discovered this fact, hence they rely upon human benevolence—not prayer—to provide the means of feeding the starving. If Jesus had been solicitous for the then future poor, he should have revealed the secret of how he made five loaves and two fishes satisfy the hunger of "about five thousand men," and then had twelve baskets full of fragments left. Such knowledge, if it could be practically applied, would be of greater service to the world than all the promises of Christ that his father would hear and answer prayer.

When we reflect upon this delusion of prayer, and the false pretensions of the faith that teaches it, we are overwhelmed with the thought of the enormous amount of privation and suffering which could be averted if Christianity were as true as it is manifestly false. If all the statements made in the New Testament were trustworthy, and if all the promises therein were kept, poverty and sickness could be banished from the face of the earth, and famine and pestilence would be known only as evils of the past. In the presence of human misery, which exists in its many aspects around us, we cannot but pronounce Christianity as a remedial force for the ills of life as an unmistakable failure. It has been tried under the most favorable circumstances, and it has proved to be an empty sound, impotent to redress the wrongs of mundane existence.

Another very palpable instance of the failure of Christianity is its inability to carry out its teachings of peace among nations. The world has been devastated with sanguinary encounters, and the followers of Jesus have neither prevented those horrors nor done much to mitigate their evil effects upon mankind. Indeed, Christians on both sides of the contending forces have implored God to aid them in killing each other. This was the case in the Crimean war, the Franco-German war, and the civil war in America. In all these conflicts each side prayed to God that it might win all the battles. One would think that the disastrous consequences of those dreadful struggles between Christian nations would have been sufficient to destroy all belief in the efficacy of the prayer of supplication, for every Sunday during all these events the clergy repeated the request: "Give us peace in our time, O Lord." Still, the tragic slaughters went on, and God ignored all such appeals. Surely, if anything could show the impotency of the Christian faith, as a promoter of peace, it would be the present expenditure of millions of the people's money, and the loss of millions of human lives in reckless warfare. Even to-day the prayers of the Churches are offered up for the Peace Conference, which does not even propose to adopt Christianity as a cure for the evils of war. What a satire on Christian prayer for peace are the busy state of the warship building trade and the extra military preparations now going on, absorbing as they do a vast proportion of the earnings of the laborers of all the great nations of the world!

But the failure of Christianity is manifest in small as well as in large things. On every ocean disasters befall praying Christians. A minister in the act of prayer, only the other day, disappeared in the angry waves from the steamer Stella surrounded by his brother Christians, who appealed to heaven for help, but no help came. Here was a demonstration of the impotency of Christianity in the hour of danger and of death. Similar striking evidence is furnished every year. This is not mere opinion or belief, but a visible and positive proof that dependence upon Christianity

for practical help in the time of need is a delusion, at least so far as this world is concerned. It is the height of absurdity upon the part of those who escape from being consumed by fire, or from being drowned at sea, to thank God for their deliverance. What about those who perished? Where was "providence" in their case? If God is to be praised for saving a few, ought he not to be blamed, if he were all-powerful, for allowing others to be lost? If the good is ascribed to an almighty being, so must, in this matter at least, the evil

The truth is, time and experience have proved Christianity to be a failure. It can be preached, but it cannot be practised, in this age of physical and mental activity. It is based upon superstition, its teachings are theoretical, and its influence upon the secular welfare of mankind has been, to put it mildly, detrimental in the extreme. Whatever tends to transfer dependence from the real to the imaginary is opposed to the best interests of the human family. As Shakespeare has said:—

Our remedies oft in ourselves do lie,
Which we ascribe to heaven.

CHARLES WATTS.

What is Religion?

[An Address delivered by COLONEL R. G. INGERSOLL before the American Free Religious Association at Boston, June 2, 1899.]

(Continued from page 434.)

OUGHT the superior races to thank God that they are not the inferior? If we say yes, then I ask another question. Should the inferior races thank God that they are not superior, or should they thank God that they are not beasts?

When God made these different races, he knew that the superior would enslave the inferior—knew that the inferior would be conquered and finally destroyed.

If God did this, and knew the blood that would be shed, the agonies that would be endured, saw the countless fields covered with the corpses of the slain, saw all the bleeding backs of slaves, all the broken hearts of mothers bereft of babes—if he saw and knew all this, can we conceive of a more malicious fiend?

Why, then, should we say that God is good?

The dungeons against whose dripping walls the brave and generous have sighed their souls away, the scaffolds stained and glorified with noble blood, the hopeless slaves with scarred and bleeding backs, the writhing martyrs clothed in flame, the virtuous stretched on racks, their joints and muscles torn apart, the flayed and bleeding bodies of the just, the extinguished eyes of those who sought for truth, the countless patriots who fought and died in vain, the burdened, beaten, weeping wives, the shrivelled faces of neglected babes, the murdered millions of the vanished years, the victims of the winds and waves, of flood and flame, of imprisoned forces in the earth, of lightning stroke, of lava's molten stream, of famine, plague, and lingering pain, the mouths that drip with blood, the fangs that poison, the beaks that wound and tear, the triumphs of the base, the rule and sway of wrong, the crowns that cruelty has worn, and the robed hypocrites with clasped and bloody hands who thanked their God—a phantom fiend—that liberty had been banished from the world; these souvenirs of the dreadful past, these horrors that still exist, these frightful facts deny that any God exists who has the will and power to guard and bless the human race.

Most people cling to the supernatural. If they give up one God, they imagine another. Having outgrown Jehovah, they talk about the power that works for righteousness.

What is this power?

Man advances, and necessarily advances, through experience. A man wishing to go to a certain place comes to where the road divides. He takes the left-hand, believing it to be the right road, and travels until he finds that it is the wrong one. He retraces his steps and takes the right-hand road, and reaches the place desired. The next time he goes to the same place he does not take the left-hand road. He has tried that, and knows that it is the wrong road. He takes the right road, and thereupon these theologians say: "There is a power that works for righteousness."

A child, charmed by the beauty of the flame, grasps it with its dimpled hand. The hand is burned, and after that, the child keeps its hand out of the fire. The power that works for righteousness has taught the child a lesson.

The accumulated experience of the world is a power and force that works for righteousness. This force is not conscious, not intelligent. It has no will, no purpose. It is a result.

So thousands have endeavored to establish the existence of God by the fact that we have what is called the moral sense—that is to say, a conscience.

It is insisted by these theologians, and by many of the so-called philosophers, that this moral sense, this sense of duty, of obligation, was imported, and that conscience is an exotic. Taking the ground that it was not produced here, was not produced by man, they then imagined a God from whom it came.

Man is a social being. We live together in families, tribes, and nations.

The members of a family, of a tribe, of a nation, who increase the happiness of the family, of the tribe, or of the nation, are considered good members. They are praised, admired, and respected. They are regarded as good—that is to say, as moral.

The members who add to the misery of the family, the tribe, or the nation, are considered bad members. They are blamed, despised, punished. They are regarded as immoral.

The family, the tribe, the nation, creates a standard of conduct, of morality. There is nothing supernatural in this.

The greatest of human beings has said: "Conscience is born of love."

The sense of obligation, of duty, was naturally produced.

Among savages the immediate consequences of actions are taken into consideration. As people advance, the remote consequences are perceived. The standard of conduct becomes higher. The imagination is cultivated. A man puts himself in the place of another. The sense of duty becomes stronger, more imperative. Man judges himself.

He loves, and love is the commencement, the foundation, of the highest virtues. He injures one that he loves. Then come regret, repentance, sorrow, conscience. In all this there is nothing supernatural.

Man has deceived himself. Nature is a mirror in which man sees his own image, and all supernatural religions rest on the pretence that the image, which appears to be behind this mirror, has been caught.

All the metaphysicians of the spiritual type, from Plato to Swedenborg, have manufactured their facts, and all founders of religions have done the same.

Suppose that an infinite God exists, what can we do for him? Being infinite, he is conditionless; being conditionless, he cannot be benefitted or injured. He cannot want. He has.

Think of the egotism of a man who believes that an infinite being wants his praise!

What has our religion done? Of course it is admitted by Christians that all other religions are false, and consequently we need examine only our own.

Has Christianity done good? Has it made men nobler, more merciful, nearer honest? When the Church had control, were men made better and happier?

What has been the effect of Christianity in Italy, in Spain, in Portugal, in Ireland?

What has religion done for Hungary or Austria? What was the effect of Christianity in Switzerland, in Holland, in Scotland, in England, in America? Let us be honest. Could those countries have been worse without any religion? Could they have been worse had they had any other religion than Christianity?

Would Torquemada have been worse had he been a follower of Zoroaster? Would Calvin have been more bloodthirsty if he had believed in the religion of the South Sea Islanders? Would the Dutch have been more idiotic if they had denied the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and worshipped the blessed trinity of sausage, beer, and cheese? Would John Knox have been any worse had he deserted Christ and become a follower of Confucius?

Take our own dear, merciful Puritan Fathers. What did Christianity do for them? They hated pleasure.

Acid Drops.

THE infamous story is leaking out of how Dreyfus was treated on the Devil's Island, by order of the authorities in Paris. Once they fastened him up in irons for a month. The apparatus was fastened to his bed with a padlock. He could just turn on his side by a painful effort, but could not bend his legs, and it was very hard to sit up. Sometimes they resorted to the infernal torture of intercepting his wife's letters for weeks at a stretch, so that the poor prisoner began to think he was abandoned by his own. Another time they put two warders in the cell with him night and day, so that he might not have even the peace of solitude. It reads like a dark history from the Middle Ages. Yet it all happened in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and in the name of the French Republic.

"Publicity," said Bentham, "is the very soul of justice." "Without publicity," he added, "all other checks are fruitless; in comparison with publicity, all other checks are of small account." These cruelties were inflicted upon Dreyfus because he was absolutely in the power of others, and the light of publicity never fell upon their proceedings. Not even the best of us is fit to wield power without responsibility; and when it comes to the worst of us, there is a realisation of hell on earth.

Let us hope that France will learn a lesson from the Dreyfus case and abolish the last relics of the old absolutism. It is a scandal to humanity that Dreyfus was treated in such a fashion; it will be a greater scandal if such treatment is allowed to be possible in the future. And just think of Colonel Picquart, arrested and imprisoned for nearly a year, and never an attempt made to bring him up for trial, until at last, when the whole civilised world is crying "Shame!" he is liberated on the ground that there is really no indictment. Apparently those Generals could have kept him in prison for ever without a trial if they had not been foiled by the general conscience of civilisation. Is it not idle to call a country free where such judicial crimes can be perpetrated with absolute impunity?

General Galliffet is naturally not a welcome personage to the French Socialists, but if he helps to save the Republic once more, as he did when he offered his sword to Gambetta against the plotting reactionists under the presidency of MacMahon, it is just as well to make the best of his services. It is high time that France had a straightforward and resolute War Minister—and Galliffet is that, whatever else he may or may not be. There is an excellent ring in his announcement to M. Lasies that no document shall be held back from the Rennes court-martial, that everything shall be open and above-board, and that when judgment is given he will enforce respect for it, though he has to do so at the cannon's mouth. It is certain that Galliffet won't hesitate to shoot, and the liars and forgers who have had it all their own way so long had better not give him the chance of doing it.

"Anglo-Parisian" contributed a long and interesting letter to the *Daily Chronicle* of July 6 on the Dreyfus case, showing that the military conspiracy against the French Republic is really worked, not by the commonplace Generals like Mercier and Boisdeffre, but by the Jesuits led by their General, the famous and astute Father Du Lac. This writer gives chapter and verse for all his statements, which are in the main what we have said time after time in the *Freethinker*.

"When Gambetta," the *Daily News* remarks, "said that priestcraft was the enemy, he showed profound insight into the essence of politics in France, Italy, and Belgium." Gambetta was an Atheist. He had an eye for facts. It was impossible to delude him with fictions. He recognised that the great battle, involving all other disputes of any real importance, was the battle between Reason and Faith, between Priestcraft and Humanity; and in the course of time, on the page of history, that will be his greatest distinction.

An American divine has started a new argument against missionaries to the blacks. His name is Dr. Gottlieb C. H. Hasskari, D.D., and he is pastor of the Second Lutheran Church, of Chambersburg, Pa. He contends that the negro is not a man at all, having entered Noah's Ark as a beast, and being (so to speak) Darwin's missing link. Not being men, therefore, negroes have no souls, and it is wrong to sacrifice life or money to convert them to Christianity. According to the *New York Sun*, negro ministers have been preaching in reply to Dr. Hasskari's book. For our part, we should say they do it too much honor. Such a bigot and ignoramus should be allowed to soak in his own juice.

A newspaper paragraph says that a scientist has discovered a method of bleaching the negro's skin. Under his treatment, "God's image carved in ebony" will become whiter than snow. The Christian Church says it can whitewash the colored man's soul, and this scientist claims that he can

On the door of life they hung the crape of death. They
 all the bells of gladness. They made cradles
 putting rockers on coffins. In the Puritan year there
 were twelve Decembers. They tried to do away with
 infancy and youth, with the prattle of babes and the song
 of the morning.
 The religion of the Puritan was an unadulterated
 course. The Puritan believed the Bible to be the word
 of God, and this belief has always made those who
 held it cruel and wretched. Would the Puritan have
 been worse if he had adopted the religion of the North
 American Indians?
 Let me refer to just one fact showing the influence of
 belief in the Bible on human beings.
 On the day of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth
 she was presented with a Geneva Bible by an old man
 representing Time, with Truth standing by his side as
 a child. The Queen received the Bible, kissed it, and
 pledged herself to diligently read therein. In the dedica-
 tion of this blessed Bible the Queen was piously exhorted
 to put all Papists to the sword."
 In this incident we see the real spirit of Protestant
 fervor of the Bible. In other words, it was just as
 childish, just as infamous, as the Catholic spirit.
 Has the Bible made the people of Georgia kind and
 merciful? Would the lynchers be more ferocious if
 they worshipped gods of wood and stone?
 Religion has been tried, and in all countries, in all
 ages, has failed.
 Religion has never made man merciful.
 Remember the Inquisition.
 What effect did religion have on slavery?
 What effect upon Libby, Saulsbury, and Anderson-
 Jones?
 Religion has always been the enemy of science, of
 investigation and thought.
 Religion has never made man free.
 It has never made man moral, temperate, industrious,
 honest.
 Are Christians more temperate, nearer virtuous, nearer
 honest, than savages?
 Among savages do we not find that their vices and
 crimes are the fruits of their superstitions?
 To those who believe in the uniformity of nature
 religion is impossible.
 Can we affect the nature and qualities of substance
 by prayer? Can we hasten or delay the tides by wor-
 ship? Can we change winds by sacrifice? Will kneel-
 ing give us wealth? Can we cure disease by supplica-
 tion? Can we add to our knowledge by ceremony?
 Can we receive virtue or honor as alms?
 Are the facts in the mental world just as stubborn,
 and necessarily produced, as the facts in the material
 world? Is not what we call mind just as natural as
 what we call body?
 Religion rests on the idea that nature has a master,
 and that this master will listen to prayer; that this
 master punishes and rewards; that he loves praise and
 glory, and hates the brave and free.
 If we have obtained any help from heaven?
 We must have a theory, we must have facts for the
 foundation. We must have corner-stones. We must
 build on guesses, fancies, analogies, or inferences.
 The structure must have a basement. If we build, we
 must begin at the bottom.
 I have a theory, and I have four corner-stones.
 The first stone is that matter—substance—cannot be
 destroyed, cannot be annihilated.
 The second stone is that force cannot be destroyed,
 cannot be annihilated.
 The third stone is that matter and force cannot
 be separated—no matter without force; no force without
 matter.
 The fourth stone is that that which cannot be destroyed
 and cannot have been created; that the indestructible is the
 eternal.
 If these corner-stones are facts, it follows as a necessity
 that matter and force are from and to eternity; that they
 neither be increased nor diminished.
 It follows that nothing has been, or can be, created;
 that there never has been, or can be, a creator.
 It follows that there could not have been any intelli-
 gence, any design back of matter and force.

(To be concluded.)

modify his complexion. This happy union of Science and Religion will enable the American Christian gentleman to grasp the African's hand, instead of kicking him under the coat-tails as heretofore.

It is said that the Queen has an abhorrence of consenting to a woman's execution. Well, it isn't a pleasant operation to strangle a woman, though women have committed some of the most diabolical, cold-blooded murders. But if men are to be hung, it seems mere sentimentalism not to hang the opposite sex too. For our part, we are for the abolition of capital punishment altogether. At the same time, we are quite unable to share the light and easy ideas of some opponents of the extreme penalty. When hanging is done away with, there still remains the awkward problem of what to do with your murderer. It isn't safe to let him (or her) loose again, and caging him (or her) up for life is a terrible business.

One of the arguments used by the friends of Mrs. Maybrick is perhaps good abstract logic, but it is not common sense. They say she either poisoned her husband or she did not; if she did she ought to be hung, and if she did not she ought to have been liberated. This, however, overlooks the fact that the case was far from being so simple. At best it is an argument against any respite being granted by the Home Secretary. While we have no Court of Criminal Appeal, as we ought to have, that official is a sort of revising agent, giving the prisoner the benefit of the least doubtfulness or of the exceptional nature of the circumstances.

Mary Ann Ansell, the young woman under sentence of death for cruelly and deliberately poisoning her sister, with the object of gaining a little insurance money, did not make a confession to her mother during their interview in the prison. What she said was extremely rich, and we will not spoil its exquisite flavor by any comment. "I am prepared," she said, "to meet my Maker, but I hope a petition will be got up for me."

Another pious murderer, J. C. Parker, was executed on Tuesday morning at Northampton Gaol. He said that God was helping him through, and that he hoped to "die happy and gain that beautiful world beyond." He does not seem to have expressed any anxiety as to whether the beautiful world beyond had been reached by the poor girl he murdered.

Constable Alken is really too discriminating. He ran in a clergyman named Henry Moffat, of Edith-road, West Kensington, for having his hand in another man's pocket. How on earth is a clergyman to live if he isn't allowed to do that? And why make an example of this poor fellow when thousands of worse sinners go unmolested? Why swallow a bishop and strain at a curate?

The Rev. Richard Elliott, clerk in holy orders, of 1 Richmond-road, Exeter, was fined ten shillings and costs, with the alternative of fourteen days' imprisonment, for being drunk and using bad language—possibly Bible language—in the streets. Prisoner's wife said he had been unwell, and ought not to have gone out; also that "he had a weakness of the head and eye." It was hardly necessary to say that he had a weakness of the head, which was only too apparent. Besides, it is natural to expect some debility of that organ in a clergyman.

The *Christian Advocate*, an American paper, proposes "a moral clearing-house for the churches." The number of ministerial crimes, it says, is rapidly increasing. "Great scoundrels," the *Advocate* confesses, "have left our own body, and are now occupying positions in other denominations, and we could give a list of Congregational, Presbyterian, Episcopal, and Baptist ministers, disgraced in their own bodies, who have subsequently found their way into the Methodist Episcopal Church." The *Advocate* says there ought to be a ministerial black-list published. It would be a bulky volume.

This is how an American man of God—the Rev. G. E. Tilly, of Jamaica, New York—speaks of the acquisition of the Philippines: "It is God's war. We will keep the Philippines. It is the will of God, even if it takes half the population of the United States. In his inscrutable wisdom, God has given to this country the great privilege of planting Christianity at the very gates of Buddhism; and the will of God shall prevail."

This Jamaica (U.S.A.) minister has apparently never heard of the presence of England out in the East. He does not know—or does he patriotically forget?—that the British Empire includes India, where Buddhism arose; Ceylon, whence Buddha ascended to heaven, a good while before Jesus Christ; and Burma, where the Buddhist population are the mildest and most gentle on earth. If the reverend Mr. Tilly alludes to China, he may be told that England has been "at the very gates," in Hong Kong, for a considerable time. It would appear, therefore, that the Lord has really

chosen England as his missionary agent. We would just as soon he had chosen America; but facts are facts, and justice be done, though the heavens fall, and bring down the American eagle with them.

The Rev. Mr. Tilly's idea of God is at the very least peculiar. It seems to us that a God who can only give the Yankee missionary basis in the Philippines, at the cost of half the population of the United States, is fit for a museum in Manila. Why not send Jesus Christ to Manila? That would be the best move if the object of the Americans is to convert the natives to Christianity.

"They have become Christians, and got drunk and moribund." So writes the Rev. H. R. Hawsis of the Mission of New Zealand.

Rev. Dr. Clifford says that, if the British Government carries war into the Transvaal, there will be such a rising among Nonconformists in this country as will make it exceedingly uncomfortable for the said Government. Has the rev. gentleman, we wonder, sounded Mr. Price Hughes on this question? Anyhow, we have very little belief in the power of the Nonconformists to frighten Lord Salisbury, who has always treated them with sarcastic disdain. Our hope is rather in common sense and common humanity. Diplomacy is a fraud if it cannot settle this trouble without bloodshed.

We do not often agree with the *Methodist Times*. Mr. Price Hughes's paper—but when it says that "A preacher has to deal with a congregation not accustomed to deep thought or concentrated mental effort," we are able to express our entire concurrence.

Mr. J. H. Shorthouse, the author of *John Inglesand*, has just written that the Roman Catholic Church was "nothing but a propagandist machine for extracting money, obedience and alms from an ignorant, a deceived, and a terrified world." He declares that the Papal Curia is "a monster upon falsehood, and falsehood enters, consciously or unconsciously, willingly or unwillingly, into the soul of every human creature that comes under its influence." Moreover, its story "is one of horror, and of crime, and of cruelty." "It has always been, and is now, the enemy of the human race." This is all quite true; but what Mr. Shorthouse means of Roman Catholicism we say of Christianity. The difference is in cruelty, mendacity, and mendacity, between one variety of Christianity and another, is only a question of degree.

Strange things are still heard of in Christendom. In Mosca, in Hungary, the safe of the municipality was broken, and of 3,000 florins. Numerous arrests were made without covering the thieves. Torture was then applied to the prisoners, including three women, the Mayor and Council being present at the performance. The prisoners were punished with red-hot iron rods, burning spirit-lamps were placed under their bare feet, and the blades of penknives inserted under their finger nails. Had this occurred in Turkey, it should have been asked to think of the irredeemable barbarities of Mohammedans.

A middle-aged lady advertises in the *Hertfordshire Mercury* that she will give £1 monthly and do light duties "in return for Christian home and little instruction in poultry keeping." She does not say what religion the poultry should belong to.

The following incident, which can be vouched for, occurred in Finsbury Park, recently, during a slight disturbance at the afternoon lecture. Elderly man (to a youth who was deliberately up to the Secularist lecturer and commenced "booh" loudly): "Now, my lad, you hav'n't heard a word of this man has said. Why should you try to annoy him? Youth: "I don't want to hear; this is the lot that says ain't no Supreme Being, and I'd like to kick their brains out." Booh! booh!" Comment is needless.

A man named Terence, who was on the Newcastle Moor annoying Mr. Cohen while lecturing there, has been brought before the local magistrates on a charge of defacing public buildings by chalking pious mottoes on them, such as "Devils fear God and tremble." In his defence he said he had been preaching at Liverpool, Manchester, and other places, and that it was wicked to interfere with him when he was doing the Lord's work. He was fined five shillings or seven days, and chose the latter. No doubt the poor man's account is cracked. Had he been born two thousand years ago he might have made a name, and secured an honorable mention in the Bible. As it is, he is too late.

London ratepayers will have to find £19,000 a year to help £87,000 the Tory Government is voting to help the parsons to pay their rates. And of this £19,000 only £10,000 will be distributed within the county.

Here are a few instances of country clergy who have "kept up the lives of educated gentlemen upon the artisans," and who are being relieved as to their rates.

Government. The name is that of the parish ; the figures represent the commuted tithe rent charge :—Amersham, £1,500; Soham, £1,653; Pulham, £1,300; Welford, £1,663; Dennington, £1,050; Hadleigh, £1,325; Bocking, £1,300; Littleport, £1,931; Sible Hedingham, £1,500. All the incumbents of these fat livings will get relief under the new Bill. How they must laugh in their sleeves at the gullible multitude of fools on whom they live!

The Daily News has been doing good service by printing Church statistics bearing on the wisdom and justice of the Clergy Relief Bill. The figures in its long special article of Monday last were specially valuable. They are all based on the Parliamentary return of June, 1891, on the revenues of the Church. Here are four large totals of income :—

Archibishopal and Episcopal Sees	£98,908
Cathedral and Collegiate Churches...	...	£192,460
Ecclesiastical Benefices	£4,213,662
Ecclesiastical Commissioners	£1,247,827
Total	£5,752,857

But this is not all. The rateable value of houses attached to churches and benefices amounts to £548,133. Then there is a further £1,000,000 arising from fees, pew rents, and offerings. Together the Daily News shows that there is an average of £455 a year for every one of the 13,979 Church of England parishes. Yet, instead of arranging its revenues so that no clergyman's income shall fall below £200 a year, the Church is overpaying its bishops and other lucky men of God, and edging from the laity, and even from the State, on behalf of the unlucky ones. There never was such a mercenary, grasping Church in the whole history of the world.

Mrs. Bramwell Booth boasts that the Salvation Army drum beats in one part of the world or another during the day twenty-four hours. 'Tis true, 'tis pity, and pity 'tis 'tis true. That horrid drum is typical of the British religion—dull, monotonous, and philistia; and the Britisher swarms all over this planet, with his Salvation Army and its noisy drum.

By the way, at the same meeting—it was at the Duke of Sutherland's Stafford House—Mrs. Bramwell Booth confessed that at least ninety per cent. of the working-class population of this country never attended any place of worship," and she said it was for that enormous ninety per cent. that the Salvation Army was working. But what a blood-colored sarcasm this is on the "respectable" Churches! Sixty per cent. of the Church and Nonconformist ministers, expending between them some ten millions a year at the very least, cannot get ten per cent. of the working classes into the gospel, and the Salvation Army has to cater for all the rest (so to speak) at the tail of a van.

What was Sir John Lubbock doing at the ceremony of reopening Wesley's Chapel the other day? Mr. Asquith's presence we understand, also his speech, for the Nonconformists are the bulk—we do not say the backbone—of the Liberal party.

"A Bad Example" is the title of one of the stories in Mr. S. Maugham's Orientations. Mr. Maugham, we should say, is the author of Liza of Lambeth, that powerful story of London life. The central figure of "A Bad Example" follows the teachings of "the Book," which results in his being shut up in a lunatic asylum.

The American Bible Society says that it issued and distributed 380,892 copies last year. Each of these books contained the statement that the Lord worked hard for six days, and rested on the seventh; that he divided the light into one pile and chunks of light into another; that Noah, the most expert packer of history, really got a pair of every animal into a boat not big enough to carry one day's worth of shipments to Chicago; that the sun and not the earth backward and were held in suspension while the rascally Israelites walked between the glassy walls; that a just God commanded his chosen people to butcher not only their enemies, but the wives and children of their enemies and the women within the stalls; that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were roasted about in a furnace; that Jonah lived three days in the belly of a great fish, was vomited, out and immediately proceeded to tell the story of his life; and a lot of other puerile rot. These copies went forth to young and old, to men and women and maids in their teens, giving them bestial lessons of onanism and other acts of sexual perversion, and teaching them in the penitentiary within the year. Yet on Sunday preachers bewail the spread of what they call "immorality," which is "unfaith," and wonder that people do not climb over each other in a rush to join their churches. When Christianity gets broad enough, I suppose that we will have a decent Bible. In the meantime, I agree with the

Catholic priesthood that it is a good book for laymen and laywomen to let alone.—*Bram's Iconoclast* (Chicago).

Bingley Free Library has sent the following on a postcard to the publisher of the *Positivist Review*: "The Library Committee have decided for the future not to accept any religious, denominational, or rationalist papers, and request you will cease to forward the *Positivist Review*. Thanking you for past favors," etc. This is a cowardly way of getting rid of a difficulty. Instead of giving fairplay all round—no more and no less—Committees are saying: "Oh, we'll get rid of the whole bother by excluding every paper which anybody has anything to say against. Freethought papers shall go, and religious papers too." But why draw the line just there? Even the daily papers contain articles, especially on the literary side, in which strong opinions on religion are often expressed? Why not exclude such papers too, at least when they contain such articles? The end of this policy would be the appearance of only the most colorless papers on Free Library tables—trade journals and the like; for if you exclude what anybody objects to, you also exclude what anybody cares for.

"There is too much indifference to religion itself to permit of any general vitality in the demand for disestablishment." So says the author of the study of Lord Rosebery in the current number of the *Fortnightly Review*, and there is much truth in the observation. Christianity is slowly dying of dry rot. Most of its sermons and apologies to-day are very dry rot.

Canon Barnett, preaching in Bristol Cathedral, said that "the great need of religion was mental alertness." We quite agree with him. Only if the mental alertness were sufficient there would be very little religion left, and we hardly think that is what he desires.

Canon Barnett said of Ritual that half its attraction is the belief that it is illegal. People, he said, so like doing what they are forbidden to do. Precisely so. That accounts for the rapidity with which Eve snapped up the apple in Eden. Jehovah ought to have remembered Canon Barnett's sage perception. Had he said nothing at all about the apples, it is just possible that Eve wouldn't have cared for them a bit. She might have gone on eating pears, peaches, apricots, cherries, grapes, etc., etc., and left the pippins hanging till the present hour. It is dangerous to tell a man he *mustn't* do anything; to tell a woman so is to ensure her doing it at the very first opportunity. Hence the loss of Eden, death, and all our woe.

The Bishops don't appear to be in any hurry to go to kingdom-come. A number of them almost lag superfluous upon this earthly scene. The Bishop of Liverpool was born in 1816, the Bishop of Gloucester in 1819, the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1821, the Bishops of Durham, Ely, and Exeter in 1825, the Archbishop of York in 1827. St. Peter must be wondering when these right reverend gentlemen are going to knock at his wicket.

The Spanish Cortes is going to have a debate on a motion demanding the expulsion of the Jesuits. There is also a motion for the complete expulsion of all the monastic orders.

We have before remarked that jokes which appeared in the *Freethinker* many years ago as "profane" are often trotted out now in quite respectable circles. There was an old story, for instance, of the negro preacher who said that the Lord made the first man of wet clay, and set him "up agin de palin's to dry," whereupon a black auditor inquired "Who made de palin's?" and was told to sit down, as "such questions as dat would upset any system of teology." This story is actually cited in the *Home Magazine* as one of the Rev. Dr. Newman Hall's!

The Rev. Dr. Lee says that the late Canon Liddon suffered greatly in consequence of the rise of the Higher Criticism. The publication of *Lux Mundi* seems to have affected his health and shortened his life. To think that Dr. Gore, the head of Pusey House, should "openly deny that Christ is omniscient God," and thus give "a stab in the back to Tractarian Theology," and indirectly "invite Rome to stand in the gap which his own policy had made"! Dreadful! The reader who wishes to see more on this subject will find it in Mr. Foote's *Book of God*, particularly in the ninth chapter.

How to Help Us.

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

To the Friends of Freethought.

WITH the death of the late Charles Bradlaugh it may be said that the "heroic period" of English Freethought came to an end. Unless an unforeseen religious reaction should occur, it is hardly probable that the Freethought party will again be the object of such an outburst of persecution as that which occasioned Mr. Bradlaugh's great parliamentary struggle and my own imprisonment for "blasphemy." From the time when I became President of the National Secular Society, after Mr. Bradlaugh's resignation early in 1890, I have always seen and felt that the triumphs of Freethought in the immediate future were to be won in the field of organisation. It was the recognition of this truth which prompted me to devise and incorporate the Secular Society, Limited, which nullifies the worst effects of the old Blasphemy Laws, and affords full legal security for the receipt and expenditure of donations or bequests for Secular purposes. Having accomplished that task, I turn to a matter of no less importance. What I now seek to do is to organise our literary propaganda on a proper and sufficient basis. Hitherto it has been carried on at haphazard. There has been plenty of enterprise, but no resources, and the union of the two is requisite to efficiency.

I propose to start with the *Freethinker* and the publishing business connected with it. Both have been carried on by me for many years without the capital to develop them. This has entailed great and undue labor upon me; and since the loss of my invaluable colleague, the late J. M. Wheeler, I have found that my increased editorial work, in addition to lecturing in London and the provinces, seeing after the publication of books and pamphlets, and superintending the general affairs of our party, is really too much for me. Moreover, it prevents me from giving adequate attention to important matters which belong to the President's province. Thus the vital interests of our movement suffer; and I believe the friends of Freethought will see the advisability of a speedy alteration of this unsatisfactory state of things.

The *Freethinker* more than pays its way, without advertising or any sort of commercial management; and with these advantages it should become a valuable property. I have also a considerable stock of Freethought books and pamphlets. They are all saleable, some quickly, others slowly. This side of the business, with capital behind it, would be really profitable—commercially, by yielding an excellent return on outlay, and morally, by multiplying and improving the supply of Freethought literature to the public. Of course, it is the *Freethinker* which carries everything else along, and the first object should be to extend its circulation. This can only be done by means of capital. I therefore propose to form a Limited Liability Company to take over the *Freethinker* and my publishing stock at a valuation; one half payable in cash, and the other half in shares bearing no dividend until the other shareholders receive at least five per cent., after which mine would rank on a par with other shares. I would also enter into a contract with the Company to conduct the *Freethinker* and supervise the publishing business; and should be quite content to let a considerable part of my remuneration depend upon the Company's success.

A capital of £5,000 would enable the Directors to settle with me and provide ample working capital for the present. The shares should be £1 each, payable at intervals during a year, as might be found necessary. Further capital could be raised as the Company developed a profitable business.

I have already mentioned this matter to some friends,

and have received several promises of support, on condition that the whole 5,000 shares, or a reasonable number, are subscribed for, and that not more than 10s. per share be called up in 1899. I now lay the matter before the whole Freethought party, as far as it is represented by the general body of my readers. It is my desire to have this Company formed soon, if it is to be formed at all; and I therefore invite Freethinkers over the kingdom, or even in other lands where they may be scattered, to let me know at their earliest convenience what number of £1 shares they are prepared to take on the foregoing conditions.

Those who can take only a few shares, or even one, should not hesitate to do so. The larger the number enlisted in this enterprise the better. It will give them a tangible interest in our movement, and, to the extent of their investment, a certain influence in the conduct of its operations.

Perhaps I may be pardoned for thinking that I have some right to expect a handsome response. I have suffered imprisonment for Freethought, I have fought in the front of its battles, I have been elected year after year as President of its national organisation. What I am proposing will render my own service more fruitful to the cause. But it will do more than this. It will place our literary propaganda upon a proper footing; it will enable us to face well-organised Superstition on something like terms of equality; and it will lift the leading Freethought journal in England, and all that is connected with it, above the accidents of my own personality, so that whether I stand or fall, or live or die, the Flag will be kept flying.

G. W. FOOTE

28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C., July 12, 1899.

P.S.—The following are the promises of support already received, the figure after each name indicating the number of £1 shares:—

Mr. George Anderson	500
A London Friend	500
Mr. Horace S. Seal	200
Mr. Fr. Essemann... .. .	100
A Scotch Friend	50
Mr. S. Hartmann	30
Messrs. John and James McGlashan	20
Mr. Richard Johnson	20
Mr. C. Girtanner	10
Mr. T. E. Green	10
Mr. George Dixon... .. .	10
Mr. C. Daviss	10
A Gateshead Friend	10
Dr. T. R. Allinson... .. .	5
Mr. G. J. Warren	5
Mr. Joseph Barry	5
Mr. Jas. Partridge... .. .	5
Mr. A. L. Brame	5
Mr. S. M. Peacock	2
Mr. W. H. Spivey... .. .	2
Mr. M. Christopher	1,000
Shares to Mr. G. W. Foote (say)	2,500
Gross total to date	10,000

Humanity persists and flows on although the individual disappears after a short course of life; but neither his life nor that of the water-drop, is lost. For just as the water could not complete its circulation without dissolving and superinducing the combinations of other matters, so every man leaves the traces of his existence behind him in what is separated or brought into new combinations, in the contribution to the culture treasury of humanity, which is furnished by every human life, from the least to the greatest.—Rudolf Hausen.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, July 16, Regent's Park, Freethought Demonstration,

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.

HARTMANN, treasurer of the National Secular Society, writes with reference to the projected Company, details of which will be found on another page: "I will take thirty shares in the Company, and I hope the required capital will be forthcoming within a short time. I wish I could take ten times as many shares. Besides the enormous advantage our movement would derive, it ought really to turn out a financial success. I consider our literary propaganda of almost greater importance than our ordinary lectures. Yours is a most practical scheme, and should appeal to the well-to-do Freethinkers. There is a chance for them to show that they are Freethinkers, not merely in name, but in reality."

JOHNSON (Manchester) writes with regard to the projected Company, in which he will take twenty shares: "I am very pleased that you have decided to form your business into a Limited Liability Company. I have often thought what a good idea it would be to form such a Company, and take off your shoulders the heavy weight of purely business matters, and leave you freer to attend more to other matters of great importance to the Secular cause. I hope and trust that Freethinkers throughout the country will rally round you and make your efforts successful."

GATESHEAD FRIEND, who will take ten shares in the projected Company, writes: "I wish your new enterprise every success, and wish I could do more towards a plan which will help to free your hands for our work."

CHALMERS.—Always glad to receive cuttings.

H. HEADLEY.—We will look through the manuscript.

B. BARTRAM.—Shall receive attention.

PERCY WARD.—Your cuttings are very welcome. Thanks.

W. B.—We should never have peace of mind if we troubled ourselves with the perennial scurrilities of the baser sort of Christian Evidencers. When a pig vomits it is best to keep a distance.

WILMOT, on behalf of the Camberwell Branch, begs to thank Miss Truelove for her present of a large framed portrait of Richard Carlile, and a bust of Henry Hetherington, formerly a member of her father.

W. O.—Thanks for the copy of your excellent letter in the *Falton Mail* in defence of secular education. Such communications to local newspapers are of great service to Freethought.

W. O.—The matter shall have attention, and you will be written to.

M. OATES.—Under consideration.

SKAPEN.—Not overlooked; in our next.

LEVINE.—Thanks for your cuttings.

RAYNE ADAMS, Annisquam, Massachusetts, writes: "Will you kindly inform me through the correspondence column of the *Freethinker* if you contemplate a review in that periodical of Mr. J. M. Robertson's *Short History of Freethought*?"

I am very anxious to read a review of the book from your pen. We have already said, in answer to an English correspondent, that the *Freethinker* was not included in the list of papers to which copies of Mr. Robertson's book were sent for review. It is not our custom to obtrude notices of books upon unwilling authors.

W. O.—We are quite aware of the good work you did for years in connection with the Camberwell Branch, and have more than once expressed our recognition of it. At the same time, there is a muddle at Peckham, and it has to be rectified somehow. Your explanation is hardly adequate. Mr. Foote had promised you a free lecture, but "you" meant the Branch, which you never really formed, as Miss Vance told you again and again in official letters that you left unheeded. She also informed you that Mr. Foote would not give a date for a free lecture until that matter of the Branch was settled—and it is not settled yet.

The best thing to do now is to bury it, and let the work at Peckham be carried on by the Camberwell Branch as before. Surely, you can work with that Branch, instead of forming a new one, for which there is obviously no special

possibility to inform you where Mr. Percy Ward is to lecture at Peckham. You will find the famous Tacitus passage with fully in Mr. Foote's *Sign of the Cross* (6d.)—a criticism of Mr. Wilson Barrett's play.

Thanks. See paragraph. Glad to hear you are pleased with *Bible Romances*. See Exodus xxxiii. 23 for story of Moses viewing the Lord's back parts. Pleased to know that your newsgent displays the *Freethinker* in his window. We wish all newsgents would do it that justice.

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

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FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

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.

THE second of the Freethought Sunday Demonstrations was held in Hyde Park on Sunday afternoon. As the brake, which Mr. Wilson kindly lent as usual, would have had to go considerable distance from the spot where Hyde Park crowds congregate, it was decided to take advantage of the West London Branch's lecture-stand, around which a large audience soon gathered. The sun was shining down mercilessly, and the auditors were all perspiring. Imagine, then, the experience of the speakers! They all had a Turkish bath—minus the luxury of shampooing and the sweet dawdle in the cooling-room. Mr. Harry Snell acted as chairman, and his introductory address was most excellent, being solid and serious on the whole, but with witty touches here and there that kept the people—including a capital sprinkling of ladies—in good humor. Mr. Heaford spoke with vigor and effect. The exclamations of "Good old Heaford"—though he isn't so very old—showed he was thoroughly welcome. Mr. Robert Forder occupied only a few minutes, the conditions being too taxing for his strength. Then came Mr. Foote, who was received with enthusiasm. The poor Christian Evidence men, who pitched as near to the Secularists as they could, for obvious reasons, and who had been shouting "National Secular Society—National Secular Society," and "Where is Mr. Foote? Where is Mr. Foote?" were soon deserted by all but the veriest handful of faithful listeners. The crowd grew bigger and bigger all the time Mr. Foote was speaking, and it was good to hear the ringing cheers when he finished. Mr. A. B. Moss came last and spoke with his usual force, and then Mr. Snell pronounced the benediction. Mr. Cohen could not come, having to be at Brockwell Park, and Mr. Watts was not well enough to attend. However, the speakers were quite numerous enough in that blazing weather.

The third of these Freethought Demonstrations will be held at 3.30 this afternoon (July 16) in Regent's Park, near the Park entrance to the Zoological Gardens. The platform will be Mr. Wilson's brake, and a shady pitch will be sought under a big tree. A good list of speakers is being arranged, including Mr. Foote for certain, and there is sure to be a very large gathering.

Mr. Cohen had a hard task last Sunday, lecturing out of doors in such trying weather while still weak from his recent illness. We are glad to hear that he had a very large meeting in Brockwell Park. Mr. Cohen lectures this morning (July 16) at 11.15 in Victoria Park. We call special attention to this, as morning lectures are a novelty there.

Mr. T. Wilmot, secretary of the Camberwell Branch, has taken up the Peckham Rye propaganda for the present, until the local friends shake down into order and efficiency. He arranged with Mr. Edwards for a lecture last Sunday, and is providing another lecturer to-day (July 16).

Mr. Wilmot is pressing Mr. Foote to give the Camberwell Branch a Sunday outdoor lecture in Brockwell Park. He says it would be of great service to the Branch, which rather needs assistance. Mr. Foote, however, is not quite able at the moment to say Yes to this invitation. He is hard-worked enough already, and there are plenty of younger men to carry on the open-air propaganda, in which Mr. Foote took his full share in former days. Of course the Sunday Freethought Demonstrations are a special effort, and do not involve an hour's speaking to a big out-of-door crowd.

By the kindness of Mr. George Anderson, each of the London Branches now engaged in outdoor propaganda has received a parcel of literature for distribution. Miss Vance, the N.S.S. Secretary, has also received instructions from Mr.

Anderson to forward other parcels to new Branches of the Society, who should make application to her at 377 Strand, W.C.

Secular Thought (Toronto) reproduces Mr. Foote's article on "Zola's Triumph" from the *Freethinker*.

The lecture arranged to take place at Clerkenwell-green on Sunday morning last had to be abandoned in consequence of Mr. Bater, who had charge of the meeting, being suddenly seized with illness. We are glad to learn, however, that he has somewhat recovered.

The South Shields Branch holds its annual excursion to-day (July 16) at Holywell Dene. A start will be made at the Ferry at 12.45, North Shields at 1. The fare for adults is 1s., children 6d. Accommodation was severely taxed last year, and intending excursionists should therefore give notice to Mr. R. Chapman, 30 Madras-street.

The Liverpool Branch goes on picnic to-day (July 16) to Chester. The party meets at the Liverpool Landing-stage at 1.45 p.m. for a start. Tickets (3s. 6d. each) can be obtained of the secretary, Mr. W. Cox, 1 Dove-road, Orrell-park, Walton, Liverpool.

We are pleased to hear, on the authority of the Rev. F. B. Meyer, who has recently returned from India, and has just been speaking at the Centenary meeting of the Religious Tract Society, that opposition to Christianity is rampant in the great peninsula. "Buddhist priests," he says, "translate Ingersoll's tracts to counteract missionary teaching, and not a student leaves the university in Madras without receiving a pack of infidel literature." All the one hundred and ten weekly newspapers published in the vernacular have a distinct bias against Christianity. Mr. Meyer says that the future fight in India will not be against *mis*belief, but against *un*belief, and that nothing but a flood of gospel literature will save India to Christianity.

On July 6 the Birmingham Branch held a "social" at the Victoria Hotel, John Bright-street. There was a large gathering of members and friends. The occasion was taken advantage of to present Mr. A. Scrimshire with a testimonial in recognition of valuable services he had rendered the Branch. The presentation, an illuminated address, was made by the President, Mr. J. H. Ridgway, who spoke of the high qualities Mr. Scrimshire possessed, and eulogised the generous manner in which he freely used them for objects of benevolence and progress. This the meeting heartily endorsed. Mr. Scrimshire, in acknowledging, expressed great surprise at receiving such a mark of appreciation for his services, which to give the Branch had always been a delight to him. He should regard it with the greatest pleasure, and with pride hand it down to his children. An enjoyable evening was spent in songs, music, and readings.—J. PARTRIDGE.

Mr. G. J. Holyoake is on the warpath again. We have received a "cyclostyle" pamphlet containing his vigorous comments on the action of Messrs. Macmillan in restraining Mr. W. H. Holyoak, of Leicester, from infringing their copyright in Fitzgerald's *Omar Khayyam*. Copies of this curious production can be obtained for one shilling at 77, Humberstone-gate, Leicester. We refrain from discussing the case itself; to do that would require a great deal of space. While private property exists we suppose publishers are entitled to protect their copyrights. At the same time, there were circumstances in this particular instance which might have called for less peremptory treatment of the infringer.

Buddhism and Christism.

WITH the remarkable exception of the death of Jesus on the cross, and of the doctrine of atonement by vicarious suffering, which is absolutely excluded by Buddhism, the Buddhistic records contain statements about the life and doctrines of Buddha which clearly correspond, and impossibly by mere chance, with the legends recorded in the pamphlets, called the gospels, about the life and doctrines of Christ. The early Christians, in scheming out their new faith, had ample opportunities of building it up with the tempting materials afforded them by the corresponding movement, instituted in a prior age by the great Indian reformer. Their contact with Theraputs and Essenes, those essential Buddhists, will alone account for much of these similitudes; and the sphere of Alexandria, with its intercourse with the East, and aptitude for cultivation of Eastern philosophies, explains the rest. Proofs existing of the knowledge of Buddhistic history among renowned Christian writers of very early periods, it may readily be concluded that there was such knowledge, in the same circle, from the first (see Bunsen, *The Angel-Messiah*, p. 50; Strange, *The Sources and Developments of Christianity*, pp. 213, 214; Renan, *Vie de Jesus*, p. 308). MIMNERMUS.

The Question of the Drunkard.

A FEW days ago I had a friendly conversation with a young Christian. I had been chatting some time, and I had incidentally mentioned that I was occupied day long on Sundays with meetings and children's classes. My amiable friend jumped at a hasty, not unnatural conclusion, and asked me if I was a Local Preacher. "Oh, no," I said, "I am secretary of the Leicester Secular Society."

There was a pause of mingled amazement and curiosity. If this incident had occurred fifty years ago, the young man would have looked at me from top to toe, and more or less politely introduced the topic of howling death-beds. But the coal-scuttle bonnet has fled; the crinoline has followed; and the death-bed arguments but a ghost of its former self, and only finds refuge at the tea-table of the uneducated. So the Christian friend, with an intelligence that did him credit, immediately made a thrust at a vital issue.

"The Secular Society?" he repeated. "Indeed—well—now—may I ask what motive-force you would bring to bear upon a drunkard in order to secure his conversion?"

"You mean his reformation?"

"Very well, his reformation."

"You mean," I rejoined, "what is the method by which Agnostics or Atheists propose to improve moral character?"

"Yes."

"Well," I continued, "our first concern is not with the drunkard."

He looked surprised, as if he thought me callous.

"Let me give you an illustration," I said. "Suppose a teacher has a hundred boys in his school. If he knows his business, he will of course carry on his school on some consciously worked-out principle. Do you think then, that he will assume the majority of his pupils to be normal or abnormal?"

"He will assume them to be normal."

"Out of the hundred, he will expect that the large part will appreciate his plans, and (with due allowance for boyish fidgets and spirits) will co-operate with him in the process of training?"

"I should think so."

"At the same time, he will know beforehand that a few of his scholars will be troublesome, and one or two will be defective or vicious?"

"Very likely."

"Will he conduct his school mainly with a view to the discipline of the normal and healthy boys, or to abnormal and vicious boys?"

"The normal and healthy."

"Quite so; and in society at large the efforts of reformers, statesmen, and educators must be directed towards the well-being of the normal first, and abnormal afterwards. In other words, the drunkard does not claim our first consideration. He is not a primary problem."

"I admit that."

"You see," I went on, "I am not saying that the drunkard does not deserve our sympathy and assistance. But I say that a system of moral progress must not fix its chief attention upon the failures, but upon the great mass of the people who are capable of healthy development."

At this point our conversation was broken off. The subject is important, and serves to bring out a radical defect in popular Christianity. Revivalist preachers and not a few of the better-instructed kind of Christians advocates—lay immense stress upon the reclamation of the drunken, the prostitute, and the gambler. This is not a religion of hygiene; it is rather a pathology of science (if it is worth so dignified a name) of the diseased and morbid. The mistake of method is strikingly shown in the story of Jesus in the Gospels. Jesus is portrayed as a healer. Now, I do not deny the beneficence of healing, and I pay due respect to the more enlightened departments of medical science. But I affirm that the highest sociological would not apply itself to the treatment of women to the preservation of healthy blood and normal conditions. Jesus ought to have been an educator, not a

The Vegetable Lamb of Tartary.

It is probable that the reader has never considered the appearance or botanical position of the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden. We are all familiar with the idea that the Tree of Knowledge was an apple-tree, and that certain direful results followed upon Eve's sudden partiality for pippins; but the reason for the expulsion of the first pair from Eden was not so much the apples that they did eat as the fruit of the Tree of Life which they might have eaten; for, if they had continued their experiments and tasted the latter, they would have lived for ever (Genesis iii. 22). Now, the same geniuses who discovered that the Tree of Knowledge was an apple-tree, also settled to their own satisfaction the exact appearance of the Tree of Life. They decided this question upon Scriptural grounds. It was clear to them that the Tree of Life must be connected with Jesus Christ, for did he not declare "I am the way, the truth, and the Life"? In the New Testament Jesus Christ is called the "Lamb of God," and the Fathers had drawn mystical parallels between him and the Passover Lamb. It was therefore evident, by all the principles of mediæval logic, that the Tree of Life must have possessed more or less of the figure of a lamb.

Now, about two hundred years ago we English were introduced to the Dutch method of clipping trees into fanciful shapes; and in old gardens we may still meet with box and other shrubs apeing the figures of animal nature. Giraffes and peacocks are the first favorites in this style of sculpture, although it occasionally requires a strong effort of the imagination to comprehend what animal the gardener intended to portray. But the Lamb-Tree, which the mediæval imagination evolved from its inner consciousness, was a far different creation to any of these.

If the Tree of Knowledge were an apple-tree, then every orchard contained a descendant or relation of that famous tree; but in no Christian land do we meet with a lamb-tree. However, to the mediæval mind it was obvious that the Tree of Life must have left some terrestrial representative, and therefore the lamb-tree must exist somewhere. Accordingly the monks pitched upon Tartary. Tartary was a very favorite spot for signs and wonders in the Middle Ages. It was a veritable Unknown Land to Europeans; and if you made any assertion about it, it was excessively unlikely that any inquisitive person would ever go there to prove that you were wrong. Nowadays, however, Tartary is too well known, and when people want to find a local habitation for Mahatmas, and such small deer, they have to refer them to Tibet.

Well, as we said before, the mediæval myth-makers pitched upon Tartary as a likely place for their Lamb-Tree; and, in the fully-developed form of the legend, this vegetable phenomenon was a most remarkable one. It was said that in the wilds of Tartary there grew a tree which sprang from a seed. This tree consisted of a stalk or trunk, upon the top of which was a growth having the exact form of a lamb. This Vegetable Lamb possessed four feet, a head and a tail, and was covered with white wool. Not only did this lamb resemble the ordinary animal in outward appearance, but when the tree came to maturity the head actually ate grass; for it bent down from its stalk, and browsed away all the herbage within its reach, right the way round. When all the grass had thus been eaten, it would have been imagined that the poor lamb would have died of starvation; but here a wise provision of nature came in. Directly the grass had disappeared, the stem of the lamb-tree shrivelled up, and the animal immediately died, leaving nothing but its bones and wool behind. Not only had the monks learnt of the existence and manner of growth of this wonderful plant, but they even knew its native name, which was *Boramets*. Later philologists have endeavored to discover the origin of the name *Boramets*. They say it is derived from the Slavonic word *Baran*, which signifies a sheep. But there is also the Russian word *Boronets*, meaning a particular kind of plant; and other etymologies might be suggested. However, guess-work philology is a most barren study; and perhaps it is not worth while to pursue the matter farther.

The existence of this *Boramets*, *Agnus Scythicus*, or

physician. The type of human health is the mother. What is the foremost office of the mother? Does she bring forth a diseased babe, and is her work mainly that of applying remedies to sickness and deformities? The human race would be in a very sorry condition if that were usually the case. No; the mother bears a child which is generally of healthy constitution, and her milk, her nurture, and her love all tend to the maintenance and expansion of right physiological balance. In the same way, our rules of education and the principles of our humanist religion must be directed to the training of those natures (and they form the majority of mankind) which will respond to our appeals and reward our culture.

Christians are lamentably weak in psychology. They have a ridiculous habit of dividing men and women into hard-and-fast classes, as fruiterers do with apples, and labelling them "sound" or "damaged." The church-spirit is "sound," and the drunkard is "damaged." Human nature will not submit to this crude sub-division. There is no drunkard-class definitely separated from the temperate-class. Moderation fines off by delicate shades into asceticism on the one hand, and instability of will on the other. The drunkard is but the last expression of a bad social tendency. Intemperance (whether in drink or general habits) is an evil that affects society at large, and, while society at large has sufficient health and sanity to keep clear-headed and self-controlled, its worst tendencies are embodied in its slightly intemperate members, its frequently intemperate members, its almost constantly intemperate members, and its hopelessly intemperate members. If, then, we desire to attack the evil of drunkenness (or prostitution, or gambling, etc.), we shall do no permanent good by praying for drunkards, preaching to drunkards, scolding drunkards, petting drunkards, or writing special literature on the difficulties of drunkards. That is the superficial method; the rational method; the Christian method. We must study the deep causes. We must observe thousands of persons who are not drunkards, and examine thousands of institutions which have no apparent connection with the public-house. A generation or so ago the women of America conducted a Whiskey War. They went down in the streets, and denounced the saloon-keepers in their prayers. I desire to speak respectfully of these, and of all other, women; and I heartily support what is known as the Woman Movement. But I am bound to characterise this Whiskey War as a piece of pure folly. It was mean and unjust to single out publicans for impeachment and obloquy. The publicans are but the index of a social taste, and the menials of a public will. We must assail the taste and the will, not the more or less mechanical instruments. To put the whole question in brief, we must aim at a formative, rather than a re-formative, method. We must deal with human nature as a thing that may be taught to grow, and not as a coat that needs patching, a house that wants rebuilding, or a cancer that calls for the knife. We must treat human nature as an organism that makes for health, and not debility. Human nature requires discipline, not crucifixion; and it will be won by morality by the suasive counsels of Reason, and not the red drops of Golgotha.

F. J. GOULD.

Jesus.

Where is poor Jesus gone?
He sits with Dives now,
And not even the crumbs are slung
To Lazarus below.

Where is poor Jesus gone?
Is he with Magdalen?
He doles her one by one
Her wages of shame!

Where is poor Jesus gone?
The good Samaritan,
What does he there alone?
He stabs the wounded man!

Where is poor Jesus gone,
The lamb they sacrificed?
They've made God of this carrion,
And labelled it "Christ"!

—Francis Adams, "Songs of the Army of the Night."

Vegetable Lamb of Tartary, was fully believed in for several centuries; and, of course, it was duly described in those mendacious books of travel which appeared towards the end of the Middle Ages. About 1330 the "travels" of Ordericus of Friuli were published, and contained an account of the Vegetable Lamb. But the falsehoods of Ordericus were overshadowed by the far more famous "travels" of the English knight, Sir John Mandeville, which contains a slightly different legend. The author thus piously refers to the Boramet: "There groweth there a manner of fruit as though it were a gourd, and when they are ripe men cut them open, and find within a little beast in flesh and bone and blood, as though it were a little lamb without wool; and men eat both the fruit and the beast, and that is a great marvel. Of that fruit I have eaten, although it were wonderful; but I know well that God is marvellous in his works."

The author of Mandeville's Travels was fully persuaded of the existence of the Vegetable Lamb; and he even professed to have eaten one. Other travellers claimed to have met with traces of the Boramet, but their acquaintance with it was not as close as that of Sir John Mandeville. Probably the last explorer who came away from Tartary persuaded of the existence of the plant was Jans Struys, an adventurous Dutchman of the seventeenth century. Struys did not profess to have seen the Boramet itself; but he brought home one of its fleeces, which he said were highly valued in southern Russia on account of their softness and the beautiful curly appearance of the wool. This fleece, however, was clearly what is now called Astrakhan wool, which is really derived from the unborn or newly-born lamb of the species commonly known to naturalists. Eighteenth-century travellers established the true nature of Astrakhan wool, and proved beyond a doubt that no such plant as the Boramet was ever known to grow in Tartary; and they found that the Tartars laughed at the whole story.

Yet the Vegetable Lamb of Tartary had been firmly believed in throughout the Middle Ages. It was not until 1557 that the celebrated Pavian physician, Girolamo Cardano, ventured very timidly to argue against it, showing the impossibility of supposing that a purely animal being could grow on a tree like a vegetable. Cardano's treatise came in for a great deal of abuse; but its arguments could not be gainsaid, and scientific men ceased to believe in the existence of the wonderful Boramet. In 1698 Sir Hans Sloane read a paper before the Royal Society, and exhibited to the members an object which had been sent to him from India as a veritable specimen of the Tartarian lamb, but which he recognised as being really part of the root of a tree-fern which had been trimmed up to resemble a four-footed animal. In 1725 Dr. J. P. Breyn, of Dantzic, contributed a learned paper to the Royal Society, and submitted a much better-looking specimen. These articles, however, were made from a fern which does not grow in Tartary. It is a native of Southern China, Assam, and Malaysia, and is known to botanists as the *Polypodium Boramet*. The Chinese make toy dogs from its roots, cleverly trimming them into the shape of a head and body, and arranging the stalks to look like four legs. There is a specimen in the Natural History Museum at South Kensington; and it is illustrated in *Lloyd's Encyclopædic Dictionary* under "*Agnus Scythicus*." But the heathen Chinese calls the result of his ingenuity a dog, for he has never heard of the Tartaric lamb. It was the first Europeans who met with these Chinese toys who associated them with the Boramet, and they sent them home as specimens of the Vegetable Lamb of Tartary.

It is hardly necessary to remark further that no such plant as the Vegetable Lamb ever grew anywhere, except in the mediæval imagination. It is a mere fruit of the monkish speculation of the Middle Ages, to which we owe many such monsters; and it is only of interest to us as showing how a totally false popular idea may be fostered owing to a temporary difficulty in disproving it. It took about two centuries to disprove the story of the Tartarian lamb, so that we need not despair if more deeply-rooted fables take a longer period to destroy.

CHILPERIC.

What is the use of pretty painted glass in your churches when you have the plagues of Egypt outside of them?—*Ruskin*.

Dr. Jesus Christ.

A FOLLOWER of Jesus Christ and Him Crucified inserted, on June 27 last, an impassioned appeal in the Agony Column of a morning contemporary in favor of the Midwives' Registration Bill, now before Parliament. He wound up by saying anent the custom of having male doctors for ladies: "Jesus Christ, if a doctor, would condemn and refuse this practice." Now, this sort of thing is decidedly amusing. We have heard the Eminent One in question called "a great physician," but always supposed that it was merely a poetic outburst. But this agony-column contributor evidently takes the statement to heart. Let us, therefore, calmly and dispassionately ascertain what Our Dear Carpenter actually did in the "medical" line. It is truly hard at first to imagine Him hanging His halo on the largest jack-plane, and pounding away with a pestle and mortar. But, in our intense desire for truth, we dare not dismiss an idea because of its improbability. Moreover, during the last few years "Christian Science," that wretched craze, semi-pious, wholly canting, quasi-medical, and entirely humbug, has caught hold of the jaded tastes of the "upper crust" of English society. This seemed to point to the fact of the founder of our faith being a medico.

We prayerfully devoted a whole evening to the subject, the results of which we willingly present to our readers. Any information connected with the career of Our Lord must be welcome to the religious readers of this journal. The first incident in the life of the Savior of a medical nature was his circumcision. In this instance he was, however, the subject, and not the operator.

We next find him, at the age of eleven, disputing with "the doctors." This looks more like business; but his tender years constrain us to believe that he was then merely a doctor's boy, and not a student. Later we find him under the care of our scholarly friend, Dr. Satan, undergoing dietetic and other treatment, the knowledge of which he turned to such remarkable account later in life.

On the completion of his studies, he was soon busied with him curing blind people by means of clay and saliva; tackling skin-diseases, dismissing legions of devils from patients, and rebuking fever. Had he lived in our days, he would probably have patented his mud pills for green people. He never became a fashionable physician. Maybe, because he lacked the necessary bald head and white necktie. Long ginger curls and a blue blanket do not inspire confidence in the "hupper suckles." He was not, by any means, unsuccessful, being always exceedingly popular with the ladies. His marvellous cure of Miss Marie Magdalen of the Frivolity Theatre, Jerusalem, made his reputation. The recovery of the Centurian's "gal," Mr. Lazarus; and the widow's "mite," fairly astonished the faculty of his day. Unfortunately, we know little of the means employed to put these defunct patients "on their feet." The biographers of Our Blessed Lord might have omitted one of those contradictory genealogies and given us that recipe.

He was a surgeon of no mean ability. Evidence of this is to be found in his masterly operation on the severed ear of the High-Priest's servant. Doubtless his early training in his father's shop familiarised him with the use of the knives. He made an ideal "saw-bones." An unyielding advocate of the scalpel and dissecting knife, he is reported to have said: "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out; if thine hand offend thee, cut it off." Drastic measures, truly; but worthy of a citizen of the Roman Empire. His knowledge was comprehensive, even including massage and hypnotism. The brief, but adequate, exercises which he prescribed in the cases of withered hands and paralysis clearly show this.

Furthermore, we find the professional man's scorn of opposition. He cured a lady of a "sanguinary" issue, for which she had been treated for a dozen years, and scornfully, said he, "suffered many things of a physicians." Wot oh! Not only have we ascertained that he was a doctor, but he really was the founder of a school of medicine. The disciples constituted the medical students. His erratic peregrinations in Judæa were neither more nor less than professional visits of a medical adviser. His *al fresco* discourses were courses

instruction for his followers, who later set up for themselves, Dr. Simon Peter being perhaps the most eminent who achieved fame as the first managing director of the Catholic Church, Limited. Here we will leave the one-time carpenter. We have made an important discovery. The "light of the world" is, after all, but the red light from the surgery of Dr. Jesus MIMNERMUS.

Did Morals Precede Religion?

Unless we agree with Lucretius that fear created the gods, it seems to me that whatever religion man first accepted must have been submitted to his moral judgment. His moral judgment may have been of the lowest, but, to get him to accept a religion, that religion must have been something not lower than his morals. Let us suppose that his sole moral principle was that a man might not kill and eat his eldest son, but outside this, he might do as he pleased without feeling any remorse. It is evident that the god of any religion must as a hypothetical ancestor of ours accepted must have had at least as humane a character, and that a god who would kill all his children would, had he been proposed for the acceptance of our ancestor, have been at once rejected. Fear would not make him accept anything, no matter how monstrous. Fear would hinder him from accepting any god worse than himself. Thus, barring the explanation of Lucretius, the acceptance of any religion. If this my surmise be true, it, then, also appears that morals were precedent to religion, and, therefore, not dependent upon religion, but the character of religion and the acceptance or rejection of any religion depended upon man's morals. Or, religion, morals are prior to, and independent of, religion; religion comes after, and depends wholly upon, moral standards. I should like to see this question discussed in these columns, as it has for years seemed to me a fundamental one, and, if answered in my way, entirely does away with the claim put forward by superstitionists, that morals are dependent upon religion.

BEDROCK.

Book Chat.

The religious belief of Shakespeare, like his profession, has been the subject of many discussions. He has been represented as an evangelical Christian, a strict Churchman of James I., as a Protestant bigot, as a Spiritualist, as an Agnostic. Now we find "Father" Bowden and Mister Simpson, M.A., in *The Religion of Shakespeare* (Burns), claiming that he was an adherent of the Catholic religion, or, to speak by the card, "Father" Bowden is doing for these many years "asleep in Jesus." The lamented Mister Simpson, M.A., evidently wasted a lot of his time in fruitless endeavors to prove Shakespeare a Catholic from the days, and "Father" Bowden, who is not so much of a scholar as the present writer, tries to bolster the deceased gent's arguments. But the fallacy of the whole proceeding will be explained when we explain that both the reverend gent and the layman in *propria persona*. Had he done so, he would have done as poor a dramatist as Byron. The authors of this book were with the same trouble, have equally proved that Shakespeare was a soldier, sailor, tinker, tailor, lawyer, or what not. That Shakespeare had a considerable acquaintance with the Bible does not itself prove him a Christian, and the influence of the Old Testament upon his style and the influence of the Bible in his poetry. Shakespeare used every intel-lectual wherever he found it, and it is no exaggeration to say that there is hardly a single drama of his absolute originality. He took the coarse web of some Italian tale, or a story, from Plutarch, and, shooting through the meshes which are at once the admiration and the despair of centuries, he produced those masterpieces which are at once the admiration and the despair of centuries. And because, forsooth, he makes a Catholic character speak as a Catholic, it is assumed by "Father" Bowden and Mister Simpson that Shakespeare belonged himself to what Carlyle calls "the great lying Church." They do not assume, when Shakespeare makes the grand old god appeal to Heathen Jove and the rest of the Pantheon, that Shakespeare himself was a Pagan, because that would be their purpose. The impartial reader will want evidence adduced in favor of Shakespeare being a Christian, rather than the mere references, in character, to such things as purgatory, etc., or casual mention of masses and prayers. Certainly Shakespeare was no Christian. His views on life and death are entirely opposite. His sense of Shakespeare are not more Christian, in any sense of the word, than those of Horace, Sophocles, or Cicero. The religious faith could not have been deep in the

writer of *Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Measure for Measure, and The Tempest*. With his characters, appeals to the supernatural are never real motives, but mere pretexts. When, for instance, the thought that death ends all is put in the mouth of Shakespeare's most intellectual characters, it is conclusive that he thought this appropriate to them. And what is this but saying that the thought is his own. Much might be said on this subject, but sufficient has been said to recall that Shakespeare's religion, if religion we term it, demands a wider name than that of Catholicism. It was that of Humanity.

* * *

Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper, reviewing Mr. F. J. Gould's *Children's Book of Moral Lessons* in its issue of July 2, says that "it is really a first-class reading-book for the youngsters." It is gratifying to find the paper with the largest circulation in the world speaking in such complimentary terms of our colleague's book.

Correspondence.

MR. ENGSTRÖM'S CHRISTIANS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—As the four English scientists claimed by Mr. Engström to be devout Christians are still in the land of the living, I propose a test as to their devout Christianity. Jesus stated, according to the book of Mr. Engström's idolatry, that "he that believeth shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." If Mr. Engström can get either or all of his quartette of distinguished scientists to endorse the common acceptance of that promise and threat of Jesus's, I will give Mr. Engström a guinea for each such endorsement to help his society to discover whatever—if any—Christian evidences may be discoverable.

Although an Atheist myself, I warmly wish—like Lord Kelvin—for the success of the Christian Evidence Society. It's just evidence we've been waiting for these 2,000 years, and until we get it we, who read and think freely, can only pronounce Christianity a fraud, partly an unconscious fraud, mostly a conscious one on the part of its propagators.

As I know of no evidence which proves any of the supernatural claims of the countless rival religions to Christianity, so I know of none which demonstrates the truth of any single one of the supernatural claims of Christianity. It's time there were started Buddhist, Mohammedan, Zoroastrian, Mormon, Aztec, Jahvistic, Brahminist, Muggletonian, Unitarian, etc. Evidence Societies to assist concurrently that of Mr. Engström; for the evidence is the thing, and there is none!

The more these Societies *in esse* or *in posse* fail, as they have up to now most ignominiously failed, to produce a scrap of demonstrable evidence for the existence of devils, or gods, or hells, or heavens, or miracles, the more must people who are not financially interested in any of the different religions drift further and further away from even a pretended credence in such utterly absurd and noxious emanations from the immature intelligence of the race.

At this time of day it is even more remarkable that parsons, priests, and presbyters can—if they can—pass each other without smiling at the credulity of their dupes, than that in Rome it was possible, two thousand years back, for a couple of augurs of the old religion to meet each other without a laugh.

However, Mr. Engström and his Society, with their modest programme to find evidence in proof of the absurd, have every likelihood of a lengthy—and a useless—career. If subscribers last as long as the programme, then it should be eternal! But who nowadays can be got to subscribe towards a Philosopher's Stone Evidence Society? Alas! as scientists have given up as a delusion the search for that marvellous Stone, even so will common people, I'm afraid, ere long give up as a delusion still more baseless and degrading the search for Christian "Evidences"—the veritable Hunting of the Snark!

SIGVATSON.

Think Thou and Act.

Think thou and act; to-morrow thou shalt die.
Outstretched in the sun's warmth upon the shore,
Thou say'st: "Man's measured path is all gone o'er:
Up all his years, steeply, with strain and sigh,
Man clomb until he touched the truth; and I,
Even I, am he whom it was destined for."
How should this be? Art thou then so much more
Than they who sowed, that thou should'st reap thereby?
Nay, come up hither. From this wave-washed mound
Unto the farthest flood-brim look with me;
Then reach on with thy thought till it be drown'd.
Miles and miles distant though the grey line be,
And though thy soul sail leagues and leagues beyond,—
Still, leagues beyond those leagues, there is more sea.

—D. G. Rossetti.

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.): Closed during July and August.

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 8.30, A Concert.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, E. White.

BROCKWELL PARK (near Herne-hill Gates): 3.15 and 6.30, R. P. Edwards.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, R. P. Edwards.

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

FINSBURY BRANCH (Clerkenwell Green): 11.30, A. B. Moss.

FINSBURY PARK (near Band Stand): 3.30, J. Rowney.

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

HAMMERSMITH (The Grove): 7.15, A lecture.

HAMPSTEAD HEATH (Jack Straw's Castle): 3.15, A lecture.

KILBURN (corner of Victoria-road): 7.15, A. B. Moss.

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 11.30, Stanley Jones.

REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester Gate): 3.30, Freethought Demonstration—Messrs. G. W. Foote, C. Cohen, A. B. Moss, and Harry Snell.

STRATFORD (The Grove): 7, E. Pack.

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

VICTORIA PARK (near the Fountain): 11.15, C. Cohen, A special lecture: 3.15, J. Rowney; 6.30, Mr. Stanley.

MILE END WASTE: 11.30 and 7, J. Rowney. July 19, at 8, C. Cohen.

THE TRIANGLE (Salmon-lane, Limehouse): 11.30, E. Pack. July 18, at 8, C. Cohen.

WESTMINSTER (Grosvenor Embankment): 11.30, E. Calvert, "The Soul."

COUNTRY.

DERBY: 7, Half-yearly meeting at Mr. H. McGuinness's house. GREAT YARMOUTH FREETHINKERS' ASSOCIATION (Freethinkers' Hall, bottom of Broad-row): 7, Violin Selections by Professors Elliott and Rae; 7.15, H. Drane, "God and Man."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Humberstone-gate): 6.30, T. Edwards, "The Antiquity of Man."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): The hall will be closed during the months of July and August. July 16, Annual Picnic. Meet on Liverpool Landing Stage at 1.45.

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

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): W. Heaford—1, "Common Sense and Religion"; 3, "The Christian's Hopes and Fears"; 7, "Some Fallacies of Theism." Tea at 5. The two first lectures will begin, if fine, near the Monolith.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, Market-place): 7.30, Picnic arrangements; and a reading.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton.—July 16, m., Victoria Park.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.—July 16, m., Clerkenwell; a., Demonstration in Regent's Park; e., Kilburn 23, m., Mile End; a., Demonstration in Victoria Park. 30, probably Northampton.

R. P. EDWARDS, 52 Bramley-road, Notting-hill.—July 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.—July 16, m., Mile End. 23, a. and e., Peckham Rye. 30, m., Battersea Park.

H. PERCY WARD, 5 Alexandra-road, Edgbaston, Birmingham.—July 16, Public debate at Northampton.

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