

THE Freethinker

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

An Eccentric Agnostic.

THE Marquis of Queensberry, who died in London on the last day of January, belonged to a rather eccentric family. He was a descendant of "Old Q," the wicked nobleman famous for his debaucheries when the Fourth George was little else than a profligate man about town, although the toadies called him the finest gentleman in Europe. "Old Q" was reported to be a perfect devil of lust and cynicism, but perhaps he was not as black as he was painted. There are some men who cultivate a reputation for virtue, and others who cultivate a reputation for vice. Some profess to be the best of saints, and others the worst of sinners. But in both cases there is apt to be a good deal of exaggeration. Be that as it may, however, the Marquis of Queensberry of those days was regarded as a paragon of immorality, and he certainly did a good deal towards living up to the character. Withal he was noted for his eccentricities, and this trait seems to run in the blood of the house. The late Marquis wrote high-flown verses to the Spirit of the Matterhorn, and also drew up the rules that govern the modern form of prize-fighting. He professed, and probably felt, the most admirable sentiments, yet he was twice married and both his wives divorced him. His second marriage was ostensibly dissolved on the ground of its nullity, yet he was agitating at the same time for the right of a husband to bring a second wife into the home if there were any reasons for living with the first wife as a kind of sister. He called himself an Agnostic, and he sent a handsome cheque to General Booth. Towards the end of his life he had reason to deplore the hereditary oddness of his family, for one of his sons got mixed up very badly in the unsavory Oscar Wilde case. This was a great grief to him, and there was a certain Scotch-terrier-ism in the way in which he pursued that wretched man, who might have been almost a genius if he had possessed any character.

The first time I ever saw the Marquis of Queensberry was at one of Bradlaugh's meetings in St. James's Hall, during the great parliamentary struggle. His lordship came from "the Gilded Chamber," for he was then a member of it, and spoke bravely on behalf of the terrible Iconoclast's right to take the seat to which he had been duly elected by the borough of Northampton. But there was no appearance of greatness about him. He looked like a jockey got up for an evening party. What I was most struck by was his nervousness. He almost stuttered, and each of his fingers was working on its own account. The disparity was wonderful between the lord and the commoner. Bradlaugh was in all respects a giant, whilst the Marquis of Queensberry neither looked nor was anything of the kind. But I have heard that he was a man of undoubted courage, and I honored him for his bold adherence to principle on that occasion.

Some years afterwards the Marquis lost his seat in the House of Lords. He was a Scotch peer, and the Scotch peers are too numerous to sit universally in the Upper Chamber. They select their own contingent of hereditary legislators, and the Marquis of Queensberry was one of the batch. But he was jockeyed out of his seat when his "unbelief" became notorious; contrary, by the way, to all the rules of the game. He protested against his exclusion, in a dignified public letter to Lord Salisbury; but he obtained no redress, and legally he had no remedy. To make matters worse, one of his sons was created a peer, and sat in the House of Lords whilst his father mourned outside.

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The second time I saw the Marquis of Queensberry was seven or eight years ago at his hotel, where he was occupying private apartments. He had asked me to call upon him in reference to his pamphlet on Marriage, which I had a special reason for lecturing upon at the Hall of Science. He seemed rather anxious to enlist my sympathy and support, but he soon learnt that it was impossible. He spoke, however, with remarkable freedom and candor, and more than hinted at his own personal experiences, which had been rather unhappy. I did not invite his confidence, but I listened considerably, and he asked me to call again. Having nothing particular to see him about, and not being a tufthunter, I did not avail myself of the invitation; and I never saw him afterwards, except on the following Sunday evening, when he attended my lecture at the Hall of Science, occupied a seat on the platform, and spoke for a few minutes when the chairman invited discussion. I received a pleasant letter from him, early in last year, when I sent him a circular respecting Mr. Watts's illness. This is all I have to relate, and it will be seen that my intercourse with him was very slight. According to the *Westminster Gazette*, he was "a supporter of Mr. Bradlaugh and other militant apostles of Atheism." This is not quite accurate, I think; at any rate, I never received a subscription from him for any purpose of my own or any official purpose of the Secular movement. Indeed, I never solicited anything; but I believe my reticence was amply compensated. I gathered from him, incidentally, that he had many applications for pecuniary aid.

I have referred to the Marquis of Queensberry's courage, and I recur to the subject. In 1882 he rose from his seat in the stalls at the Globe Theatre, and protested in the name of Freethought against "Mr. Tennyson's abominable caricature." The hero, if he may be called so, of Tennyson's drama, "The Promise of May," was a Freethinker and a bad lot—a reckless sensualist and a cruel seducer. Lord Queensberry thought this grossly unfair, and he said so publicly, in a way that excited much attention. One of the poet's sons explained that the Marquis was mistaken; the play was not intended to illustrate any connection between wickedness and Freethought.

"Edgar is not, as the critics will have it, a Freethinker, drawn into crime by his Communistic theories; Edgar is not even an honest Radical, nor a sincere follower of Schopenhauer; he is nothing thorough and nothing sincere. He has no conscience until he is brought face to face with the consequences of his crime, and in the awakening of that conscience the poet has manifested his fullest and subtlest strength."

This is very well in its way, but it sounds a little like special pleading; and Lord Queensberry's mistake, if it *was* a mistake, was a very natural one in the circumstances.

Lord Queensberry was not, I believe, a rich man like the Duke of Bedford or the Marquis of Westminster. But his means were said to be ample, and it is a great pity that he did not do more for Freethought. Had he been a Christian, he would have been expected to contribute more liberally to the promotion of his faith. We regret that he did not transfer his practical support with his mental allegiance. We are afraid that the wealthier Freethinkers are too apt to dissociate the idea of duty from their donations, and to regard them as acts of pure generosity. Well, they are so, in the sense of being voluntary; but the moral obligation subsists, and should not be ignored. Ability, devotion, and enthusiasm are indispensable; yes, and money is

indispensable too. There can be no fighting without arms, ammunition, and commissariat. The efficiency of Secular organisation is really a question of finance; and, although it is best that the sinews of war should come from many contributors, I sometimes wish the Freethought millionaire would come along, and plank down fifty or a hundred thousand pounds, and set the cause spinning forward gloriously. For I long to see our movement triumphing before I die.

G. W. FOOTE.

Secularism and War.

It is not my intention to refer further in these columns to the unfortunate conflict in which we are now engaged in South Africa than to say that, whatever were the causes of that outbreak, we must all deplore it. The reckless sacrifice of so many brave lives, the unpardonable blunderings of the "powers that be," and the untold sorrow and misery the war has wrought, must be saddening to us all, whatever our individual opinions may be as to who is responsible for the calamitous event. Without being so foolish as to say that all wars are necessarily unjustifiable, I assert that, in my opinion, it is a crime to resort to force in any case until every other plan has been tried. While I am by no means a "peace-at-any-price" man, I do sincerely hold that only defensive wars should be sanctioned in an age of intellectual supremacy. By defensive war is here meant the defence of our territory from the attacks of enemies. Whoever strikes the first blow in any dispute is the warlike aggressor, and that very act renders reprisal justifiable amongst people where true patriotism is found.

My desire on this occasion is to deal with war in general, and to emphasise the fact that while, as a rule, the professed followers of the "Prince of Peace" favor war, one of the "Objects" of the National Secular Society is: "The promotion of peace between nations, and the substitution of Arbitration for War in the settlement of international disputes." Where this principle can be properly applied, there should be no two opinions as to the wisdom and humanity of its application. If, in the past, this rule had always been observed by the professed Christian nations, millions of human lives would have been spared, the worse than useless expenditure of the people's money would have been prevented, and a terrible amount of mental suffering would have been avoided. To my mind, the tendency of war is to brutalise human passions, to destroy the production and growth of the elements of industry, and to wreck the happiness of domestic circles. Perhaps in the present state of the world, despite the empty boast of the influence of Christianity, *all* war is not avoidable. Still, according to the official teaching of Secularism, when national quarrels arise they should be settled, if possible, by an appeal to reason and intellectual arbitrament, not by the sword and brute force. If the progress of civilisation has failed to prevent the cruel slaughter on the battlefield, it is evident that, so far, it has been impotent in achieving what should have been one of its principal objects.

The President of the British Association recently deplored the multiplication of scientific inventions which were used for the destruction of mankind, while he gloried in the advance of other results of science. The warlike employment of the development of scientific genius has induced certain theologians to seek to depreciate the value of science. Such persons, however, forget, or omit to mention, that science is not to be held responsible for all the uses to which it has been put. To condemn poison because with it a man kills his family would be very absurd. The poison was the means, but the cause of the calamity was the exercise of the evil passions of man's nature. So it is with science; as long as war is regarded as the only way of settling disputes, and so long as it is vested with false glory, every means will be employed to add to its potency. But let the truth be once recognised that the real greatness of a nation does not consist in military exploits and in the brutalising of man's nature, but rather in unfettered industry, in peaceful pursuits, and

in the cultivation of the humane factors in our natures, then science will not be called to the aid of human slaughter. M. Bloch has endeavored to show that the solution of the war problem is to be found in the destructive inventions of science, which, it is contended, will render war impossible. If such be so, science will have done more towards humanising the world than Christianity has ever accomplished.

It appears to me that religion, in its various forms, has done more than aught else to produce and maintain the wars that have devastated the globe. And, as a matter of fact, the Christians have been among the greatest offenders in this particular. As Lecky writes: "When all qualifications have been fully admitted, the broad fact will remain that, with the exception of Mohammedanism, no other religion has done so much to produce war as was done by the religious teachers of Christendom during several centuries. The military fanaticism they evoked by the indulgence of the *popes*, by the ceaseless exhortations of the pulpit, by the religious importance that was attached to the relics at Jerusalem, and by the extreme antipathy they fostered towards all who differed from their theology, has scarcely ever been equalled in its intensity, and it has caused the effusion of oceans of blood, and has been productive of incalculable misery to the world." This accords with the testimony of Buckle, who, referring to the meddling and persecuting spirit manifested by Christians, writes: "During almost a hundred and fifty years Europe was afflicted by religious wars, religious massacres, and religious persecutions." This is a sad and humiliating comment upon the alleged mission of the "Prince of Peace."

Believers in the Bible, to be consistent, should be supporters of war, for the reason that its God was the most warlike personage that ever violated the laws of peace. The Old Testament informs us that "The Lord is a man of war" (Exodus xv. 3). "And they warred against the Midianites, as the Lord commanded Moses" (Numbers xxxi.). God told Joshua to make war upon King Ai, and to take the city, which he did with the result that 12,000 men and women were slain (Joshua viii.). David says the Lord "teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight." No wonder that Christ exclaimed: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword." In the face of these Biblical sanctions for war it is not surprising to find that Christians have ever favored it. It was noteworthy that at the Peace Conference at the Hague the occupants of the pulpits were comparatively silent on behalf of peace. In Scotland the Tsar's Rescript was directly opposed by Christians. At a monthly meeting of the Dundee Presbytery a resolution in favor of the Rescript was rejected by seventeen votes to seven. The Rev. Dr. Grant urged that the time had not come for turning swords into ploughshares, and that the union of Maxim guns with the cause of Christianity was essential to the happiness of mankind and the promotion of the reign of godliness on earth. The Rev. W. Mason went, as the American would say, "one better" than his clerical brother. He declared that, "instead of reducing armaments, we should adopt the conscription, and pay no heed to men with soft hearts and not much harder heads." We have recently had a similar defence of the war spirit in London from preachers of the Gospel.

If it be asked what I regard to be the causes of war, my answer would be that the first cause appears to me to be the destructive instincts in man, which the Church has done its best to strengthen, but which Secularism tries, if not to destroy, at least to subdue and regulate by cultivating the higher promptings of humanity. The uncontrolled exercise of such instincts savors of barbarism, and should find no support within the domain of civilisation. The Church has fanned the fire of the fanaticism of war, and thereby encouraged brute force in preference to the influence of moral and intellectual predominance. The second cause of war is, in my opinion, the operations of aristocratic governments, who have paid more heed to "prestige" and "precedents" than to the real and immediate requirements of the nation. Of this, alas! we have had ample proof. Thousands of heroic lives have been sacrificed in battle through the incompetency and the red-tapeism of the "powers that be." And, unfortunately, the general

masses appear still to be practically indifferent to this grave and disastrous crime. When will the people wake to a sense of their duty? If fighting there must be, surely it should be conducted with efficiency and a due regard to the claims of humanity. The third cause I ascribe to dishonest journalism. The press is a mighty power, but to be useful it requires to be directed by veracity and discretion. Reference is made here more particularly to our newspapers. The excitement of war is of itself quite sufficient to disturb the public equilibrium, without giving mere reports as if they were undoubted verities. It is also desirable that upon the question of war party politics should be no factor. The great consideration should be the justice of the conflict, and the carrying it on in an honorable, effectual, and humane manner. In warlike times sections of the press are apt to sacrifice principle to policy, and to yield to public clamor rather than to adhere to a calm, dignified, and impartial survey of public events. Above all, the newspaper press should be accurate when positive; and where certainty of statement is not possible, definite expressions should be avoided.

When these three causes of war are removed, the blessings of peace will be more easily secured and preserved than they are at the present time.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

The Idea of God.

SOMEONE has been kind enough to send me the report of a couple of sermons by the Rev. R. J. Campbell, of Brighton, on "The Idea of God." I had noticed this gentleman's name in the religious press and had read something of his great abilities as a preacher, and also as a powerful exponent of advanced theology. It was, therefore, with some anticipations that I turned to see what evidence there was of profundity of thought in the brace of sermons to hand. A clergyman of real intellectual power is so seldom—if ever—met with nowadays that it could be a real treat to find one whose arguments, if not convincing, would be at least intellectually entertaining.

I was, however, once more doomed to disappointment, and if the writings before me are fair specimens of Mr. Campbell's ability, then his high rating is only one more proof of clerical decadence. Yet he is engaged on a subject upon which some of the great dead divines have held forth with both power and eloquence. The existence of God is a subject that lends itself admirably to fine language and to the spinning of a number of metaphysical speculations, which, by their apparent depth, impress many with the strength of their originator. Mr. Campbell shines in neither one direction nor the other. His language is ordinary, and his reasoning defective. For the most part he seems to be engaged in the familiar task of determining the smallest number of ideas that will support the largest number of words.

Mr. Campbell's object is to examine the contents of the God-idea and to seek its verification in experience. A very laudable object, but one cannot praise the plan adopted in order to realise it. One would imagine that in these days, when evolution is an accepted fact with all civilised thinkers, the merest beginner, who was honestly desirous of estimating the accuracy of religious ideas, would not fail to take into consideration the question of growth. Mr. Campbell tells us that the idea of God is one "of infinite complexity," yet he has "nothing to do with the historic genesis of the idea of God." From a clerical point of view this is no doubt the safest plan to adopt; from the standpoint of a scientific inquirer it is simply foolish. To seek to understand an idea of "infinite complexity" without any attempt to divide it into its component parts, and without any effort to trace the course of its development, is to act as a chemist might who ignored both analysis and synthesis in his studies.

No one denies that the idea of God is; no one denies that the majority of people prefer to hold it, although Mr. Campbell admits that "at the present moment much of the culture of this country is in conflict with

orthodox Christianity." The main question—the only important question—is, "What is the idea of God worth in the light of all that is now known of its history?" It is useless trying to answer this question by taking the mind of a civilised man, examining its contents, and stopping there. The present individual is only a starting point for investigation; it is his existence and ideas that have to be explained, and one can safely say that to have "nothing to do with the historic genesis of the idea of God" is to reject the only method of examination that can be of any value.

Of course, one can easily realise that the adoption of this method of examination would not be profitable to the claims of religious teachers. If it were taught from the pulpits that all existing religions are ultimately derived from the ignorance and credulity of primitive man, and that all subsequent religious history has consisted in a series of modifications of these primitive "psychological blunders," such a course would neither be reconcilable with the interests of the clergy or the perpetuation of religious beliefs. Happily for the pulpit, although the results of anthropological inquiry into the roots of religious ideas are tolerably well known, very few of those who read dream of applying this knowledge to their own religious beliefs, and the clergy are hardly likely to set them straight on the matter.

Yet there does not exist to-day any reasonable doubt in the minds of competent observers that all existing religious ideas have their origin in two sources—the subjective world of dreams, swoons, epileptic seizures, intermittent insanity, and the like, and that unconscious and instinctive personification of natural forces which is such a large element in the life of all uncivilised people. It is of secondary importance as to which of these forces are earliest in operation, which is the more powerful, or what are the forces that subsequently modify their operation. The main point is that no competent student can have any doubt that in the inevitable blunders that uncivilised man makes concerning his subjective and objective experiences we have the real source of all existing religious ideas. And a study of the historical growth of the God idea would also make it plain that the so-called development of it has really consisted in a series of attempts to harmonise an inherited irrational belief with the demands of contemporary knowledge.

Instead of adopting the historical method of investigation, or disputing its claims, Mr. Campbell dismisses it with the cheap remark that Mr. Grant Allen "wrote a book upon the subject from this point of view, but I am not aware that he established much thereby"—a remark that reflects but little credit upon his grasp of the book in question—and decides to take the modern idea as it is, and ask, "How the modern man comes to be in possession of it." And, quite unexpectedly, he answers this question in a fairly satisfactory manner. The main source of the idea, he says, is tradition. People believe in God for the same reason that a great many possess large areas of land: they inherit it. Intellectual conviction plays no larger part in the possession of the idea than personal worth does in the possession of landed estates. We are the children of our parents, the offspring of our race, and herein lies the whole secret.

"We are born," says Mr. Campbell, "in a country where God is worshipped, and the idea of God is presented to our minds long before we are capable of reflecting upon it. The little children in our church this morning are being supplied with religious ideas from the very fact that they are here..... Pious fathers, praying mothers, conscientious teachers, the early associations of church and home, have familiarised us with the conception of a Being who is the source of all things, and in whom all things hold together."

Quite so. And one might further say that if it were not for these praying mothers and pious fathers, if children were not "supplied" (significant word, that) with the idea of God from the churches, not one educated man or woman out of a thousand would hold it. No man ever adopts the idea of God as the result of study or of his own intellectual development; he possesses it before he acquires knowledge, and afterwards enlists his knowledge in defence of his early prejudices.

Even Mr. Campbell sees that all these elaborate

proofs of the existence of God, such as a "consciousness of the infinite," a "consciousness of causality," the necessity for a first cause, etc., are more excuses than anything else. None of these "proofs" ever convinced a man that God existed. He believed it first, and then went to religious apologists in order to find out why he believed it; and, doubtless, a great many must have been surprised at discovering what profound philosophers they had been without knowing it.

But while Mr. Campbell admits this much, it evidently dawns upon him that it will not do to leave the reader with the impression that the belief in God, being without any logical basis, may be rejected. And so to avert this calamity he falls back upon the perfectly familiar, but fundamentally dishonest, plea that "there is something higher than logic," and declares that "persons unacquainted with the processes of reasoning are frequently unaware of the fact that all knowledge rests upon assumptions incapable of proof." I have called this statement fundamentally dishonest because, while it is true in one sense, it is false in another; and Mr. Campbell, if challenged, would prove his statement in the first sense and use it in the second.

It is perfectly true that, as all explanation consists in merging one class of facts in a larger class of facts, we cannot demonstrate the truth of first principles in a similar manner. To do so would be to destroy their character as first principles. But it is also true—and this is altogether ignored by Mr. Campbell—that when we have once reached certain first principles such as those of Inertia, Universal Causation, the Conservation of Energy, etc., we are bound to prove that these first principles are reasonable and believable by showing that they are in complete harmony with experience. Mr. Campbell says, in substance, that because we cannot prove universal causation in the same way that we demonstrate a proposition in Euclid, therefore there can be no objection to accepting the idea of God, the truth of which cannot be demonstrated either. Well, but put even in this manner the plea cannot stand. If we are compelled to believe a number of things that we cannot demonstrate to be true, it should surely be our object to reduce this class of beliefs to the smallest possible number, not to increase them. But, as I have said, we can prove the reasonableness of any first principle by showing (1) that it is in harmony with experience, and (2) that, once adopted, it helps us to understand a number of things by reasoning from it.

Now, Mr. Campbell's belief in God does neither of these things. It neither helps him to understand the world, nor does it harmonise with our experience of the world. He asks: "May we not say that the saint's trust in God is at least as justifiable as a man's love for his own children?" By all means, no! A man's love for his children is the expression of an organic connection between the two. It persists without any conscious cultivation on the individual's part, and often defies attempts at eradication; and it is finally logically justifiable by a reference to the necessities of social existence. On the other hand, the saint's trust in God is a clear expression of artificial culture; it is directed towards an unknown, and possibly non-existent, object; it is often the plain expression of a morbid temperament, and altogether fails to find any justification by a reference to the conditions of life.

If the idea of God were of any real value to man, either as a source of comfort or as an explanation of difficulties, something might be said in favor of its retention. But it is neither. Those who find comfort in it are those who have been taught to do so. The comfort is the expression of their training, not an evidence of the value of the belief. And those who are without it find no lack of comfort from other sources. They have simply got rid of a theory that adds many new difficulties without removing any that already exist. As an hypothesis, the idea of God is worse than useless. We do not reason up to it as the result of logical examination; we cannot logically reason down from it to the facts of life, once it has been accepted. Valueless as an instrument of investigation or as a means of explanation, its only utility consists in satisfying feelings which are themselves created and perpetuated in order to furnish a reason for the continued existence of this belief.

C. COHEN.

Christianity and Morality.

By DR. CHARLES LETOURNEAU.

Translated by G. W. FOOTE from "*L'Evolution de la Morale.*"

JEWISH morality is less comprehensive; it was produced amongst a small people, and has no regard for animal life, nor even for humanity. It has, however, certain aspects of relative elevation, which I have already indicated; but those aspects belong simply to the stage of mental development to which Israel had attained. With respect to clericalism, Jehovahism was as absurd as Brahminism.

The Bible is sown with atrocious or unreasonable prescriptions. For Jehovah, the inexpiable crimes are idolatry and blasphemy. The Jews were always to stone whoever incited them to idolatry, whether son, daughter, brother, or wife. They were to exterminate the inhabitants and the animals, and destroy the belongings, of idolatrous cities where Hebrews had been attracted and converted.

The blasphemers were to be stoned, and so was the sorcerer. Death was decreed against those who resorted to wizards. This is justice after the fashion of the negroes of Central Africa. Jehovah was also like certain idols on the banks of the Niger in his pronounced taste for the odor of burning fat. To eat of that holy fat was to the Jew a capital crime. The same punishment was awarded to those who should eat of the blood.

Against the enemy Jehovah commanded a savage cruelty. All the males of cities carried by assault were to be put to the edge of the sword. In other cities, which Jehovah gave as a heritage to his people, the whole population was to be massacred.

Elsewhere it is said that every girl who marries without being a virgin should be stoned. The wife is also an impure being. To touch her, or any object which has been in contact with her during her menstrual period, is to become impure until the evening. She is further impure during seven days, if she gives birth to a son; and during fourteen days after the birth of a daughter.

The most singular prescriptions are solemnly formulated. It is forbidden to shave or cut the hair round. Quadrupeds may be eaten if they ruminates and are cloven-footed, but no one must eat the hare nor the cony, *which of course ruminates*, but do not divide the hoof. It is also necessary to abstain carefully from certain fantastic animals, having at the same time four feet and wings, etc., etc.

If the commandments of Jehovah are sometimes singular, the methods of appeasing him, and of effacing sins, are not more rational. The almighty Lord is above all hungry for victims. Formerly, as we have seen, he devoured the first-born children; later, he is contented with animals. He pardons, for a calf, a sin committed in ignorance; a broken oath for a lamb or a goat; a fraud or a falsehood for a ram without spot. For an emissary he-goat the sins of all Israel are remitted.

The Koran, which was born of the Bible, is not more sensible. It orders abstinence from the blood and flesh of the pig, and of animals suffocated, stunned, killed by a fall, or slain by a wild beast. For Allah, as for Jehovah, the greatest virtue is belief. No infidel must be loved, be it a father, a son, a brother, or an ally. The believer is rewarded in this life by rich booty from the infidels, and in paradise by dwelling in delicious gardens, peopled with black-eyed houris, etc. Reprobates, on the other hand, will drink boiling water like molten metal, and liquid feculence.

Essentially all anthropomorphic religions resemble each other, whether monotheistic, like Judaism and Islamism, or polytheistic, like the religions of Greece and Rome. From the theological point of view the great moral question is how to please the supernatural being or beings who are feared and adored, and, above all, how not to displease them.

Yet the gods of Greece and Rome cared less for the current morality than those of Persia, India, and Judæa. They were not the authors of the moral law; they were its guardians. Certain crimes were chiefly regarded as direct offences against the deities, and it was in that light they were expiated. Mommsen affirms that, at least, in the primitive ages of antiquity, capital sentences were

regarded as the effect of the malediction of offended gods. Stealing fruit by night, for example, was to commit a theft on Ceres, etc.

The great reward after death consisted in conserving an interest in the life of posterity, in being able to protect and assist them. It was this terrestrial life, above all, about which the practical good sense of the ancients was solicitous. In the belief of Hesiod the shades of the men of the Golden Age had become good genii, wandering over the earth and dispensing riches and repressing injustice; whilst the spirits of the wicked were tormented, and tormented men, in the form of spectres, and lemures. These beliefs were generally prevalent, but there were no obligatory dogmas, nor was there any official preaching.

There was no theocratic code; nothing analogous to the amazing, and often ferocious, despotism of the great Asiatic religions; above all no asceticism, and no doctrine of renunciation, except that which was preached by the Stoics, and which Christianity assimilated with such alacrity.

In sum, the morality of Greece and Rome, with its qualities and its defects, was laic and, above all, civil. Christianity came and completely changed the direction of ethics. From that time this earthly life was considered as a pilgrimage, an exile; the heavenly Jerusalem was the destination. To arrive thither it was necessary to obey the orders that were reputed divine, whatever might be the result in this world. The great duty was to love and obey God; the great rock of danger was sin; and this, according to St. Augustine, could only be avoided, if it pleased the divinity, by the assistance of grace.

For the old philosophers, death was a hard necessity, the effect of a law; for the Catholics it became a consequence of sin and an object of terror; for, after it, the soul had a thousand chances of being engulfed in the billows of infernal fire. Reprobates would burn there eternally, and, according to St. Gregory, the spectacle of their tortures would rejoice the elect.

This terror of infernal torment was, as we know, the great means by which Christianity inculcated its morality. None is more efficacious with believers, but it is certainly not the noblest.

It has been observed with reason that the antique virtues were masculine; they were courage, magnanimity, and, above all, patriotism. The whole influence of Christianity tended, on the contrary, to effeminate the character, in addressing itself no longer to reason, but to emotion, in glorifying humility, meekness, love of God, continence, and faith. Faith, above all; blind faith became the first of duties; *Credo quia absurdum*.

The ancient ideal was chiefly civil and patriotic; the Christian ideal was ascetic. For the sectary of Jesus the earthly country was little, and the Christian conscripts sometimes refused military service, even at the cost of martyrdom.

Abstinence, renunciation, and maceration were *par excellence* the means of attaining to sanctity. One should, if possible, be a monk; at the very least, conform his life to the monastic ideal, lead a mechanical existence, and not think..... The body was profoundly despised and neglected, and dirtiness became agreeable to God. St. Anthony never washed his feet; St. Ammon never saw himself naked; Sylvia, a beautiful virgin of sixteen, never washed more than her fingers; Paula and Melania, whose consciences were directed by St. Jerome, believed that "baths were defiling."

The ascetic detachment of the Hindoos was imitated and far surpassed. St. Melania, having lost her husband and her two sons, knelt down and thanked the Lord that she could henceforth serve him more fully. It was good to forget one's mother and to abandon one's children in order to consecrate one's self to the ascetic life. Evagrius burnt the letters of his parents, from whom he had been long absent. St. Gregory relates that a young monk, being unable to repress his filial affection, went secretly by night to visit his parents, and God punished him with sudden death.

But the virtue of virtues was chastity. All that related to the union of the sexes was regarded as horrible. Woman was the great enemy; she should blush for her sex, for her beauty, and for her apparel. Marriage was only tolerated. "It is better to marry

than to burn," said St. Paul. St. Jerome, for his part, saw but one good thing in marriage; it produced virgins..... By the unanimous testimony of Fathers and Councils all sexual intercourse outside marriage was criminal. From the moment Christianity triumphed under Constantine, the Mosaic penalties against sexual offences were adopted and aggravated; adultery became a capital crime, and sodomists were drowned, decapitated, burnt, or ingeniously tortured.

The Christian desire for the extinction of the human species should have maintained suicide in honor, as it had been in antiquity. But in the eyes of the Christians it was murder. It killed the soul. Yet one form of suicide was ardently sought by the fanatics—namely, martyrdom.... Nevertheless, with respect to suicide, Christianity wrought a kind of revolution, both moral and, indeed, beneficent. It was the same with respect to abortion and infanticide, to which antiquity attached no great importance. Christianity, on the contrary, condemned and repressed them, not through humanity, but because the death of the unbaptised fœtus or child entailed the terrible consequence of eternal damnation.

Christianity did some good also in relation to slavery. Not that its doctrine condemned slavery in itself. On the contrary, St. Paul advised Christian slaves to be the most docile; he even declared that the slave was the only property the Christians might keep, and taxed with vanity and stupidity those who thought otherwise. Indeed, in Europe, the ecclesiastics were the last possessors of slaves. In the Christian doctrine equality was not for this world, and the servile virtues were glorified; yet the clergy carried on an active propaganda in favor of the enfranchisement of slaves..... Charity was also enjoined as producing, above all if displayed to monks, abundant spiritual benefits..... Christianity also opposed the bloody sports of the amphitheatre. In 329, after the Council of Nice, an edict of Constantine condemned the games of the circus, and the last combat of gladiators took place at Rome in 404.

These are real services; but, to say nothing of its anti-human and anti-social doctrines, they should not make us forget the frightful tyranny with which the religion of Jesus has burdened both spirit and body. The ancient world—above all the Roman Empire, with its incongruous Pantheon—practised religious toleration until the day when Christianity came to sap the political constitution itself. The Christians had then their martyrs, and those martyrs were worthy of admiration. Nothing is finer than self-sacrifice for what is believed to be the truth. But the persecuted were scarcely in power before they surpassed their persecutors in cruelty. The rites of Pagan worship became high treason, which the Theodosian code unhesitatingly visited with capital punishment; the temples, even the finest, were demolished, and the idols destroyed. The Church haughtily arrogated the right of persecution, and used it largely from Constantine and Theodosius to the threshold of contemporary history.....

Here I end my exposition. As usual, I have let the facts speak for themselves. They are eloquent, and tell us loudly enough the good and the evil that religions have done to morality. Doubtless they have contributed to tame man's evil passions, by adding to the curb of laws that of religious cruelty; but their special share consists above all, as we are coming to see, in a deviation of the moral sense. Religious morality does not test the value of actions according to their social utility, but according to priestly fancy or the apprehension of a beyond. In its eyes, to eat forbidden food is as grave, if not more so, as to commit a murder; asceticism is, in certain religions, the supreme virtue. Lastly, when morality becomes divine, not only is it regarded as immutable and beyond improvement, but a right is claimed to impose it, if necessary, by fire and sword.

In this last respect, the palm belongs beyond question to Christianity. Without doubt she has had her martyrs, but she has made many more; glorifying her own, vilifying others, and thus habituating men to the idea that they should be ready to give their life for her faith. The teaching has its value, but not that of the seas of blood it has cost..... To resume, what arises above all from our inquiry is that we should not ask religious conceptions to regulate conduct. Amongst the gods of the great religions those of Epicurus have alone been wise. Their great business was to relish their nectar; they

ignored the human animalculæ. But the other gods have been pesterers and despots; they have meddled at random with our affairs; and in the interest of social progress we should remind them that their kingdom is not of this world, and exclude them from it.

Donning Dude's Duds Damns Dames and Damsels.

"A woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man..... for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God."—*God's Truth.* (See *Deuteronomy xxvii. 5.*)

The Christian God—you know the God I mean—
Is aye the same, to-day, the morn, yestreen;
To him, a thousand years are but a day;
A thousand miles, but fifteen feet away.

This God laid down a law, as Christians know,
Three thousand years—that is, three days—ago,
On Canaan's thither side, midst scenes of dread,
Where Jordan dies within the Sea that's Dead;
Two thousand miles away, as flies the crow,
But shorter lines than straight ones God doth know;
And so, to be exact, I'm forced to say
It was from London thirty feet away.

'Tis clear, the former ratio—the chronic—
And latter one—the spacial—are harmonic;
So, therefore, God declared, as Scriptures show,
Ten yards from here, and seventy hours ago,
That ev'ry woman he will blight and ban
Who dares to wear the toggery of man;
Said he, in words that cannot be ignored,
"She is abomination to the Lord."

What God detests is sin; and sin is banned;
So, woman, known as "New," should understand
That wearing any part of man's attire
Exposes her to God's malignant ire.

A pair of trousers worn in street, or room,
By any woman, doubtless means her doom;
The epicene, hermaphroditic "bloomers"
Are *semi*-male, and, so, but *demi*-doomers;
But, *wholly* doomed, in hell to howl and holler,
Is ev'ry dame that wears a "Shakespeare" collar.

The changeless God informs us that he loathes
The female-man who wears the male-man's clothes;
She sins whene'er she wears a "Tam O'Shanter"—
When dead, the sinner goes to hell instanter.
Let truth be told! To lie is most improper!
The damsel's damned who dares to don a "topper"!
'Tis sad, but true! say all but false consolers,
Damnation lurks in "billycocks," and "bowlers"!

In passing, I may say that there is sin in
A garment that is partly wool and linen;
All linsey-wolsey's hateful in his sight,
Says God—if Holy Writ be wholly right.
Unless your cloth be purely flax, or wool,
You'll die the death, and dree the doom of dool.
If more you wish to know of God's economy,
Consult Leviticus and Deuteronomy.

To say that God's now diff'rent, is absurd
To rev'rent readers of his written word.
This Law, our reason says, was meant for more
Than merely distant folk, in days of yore;
'Twas made, says God—who surely ought to know—
Just thirty feet from here, three days ago!

G. L. MACKENZIE.

Had Been to Sunday-school.

A well-known politician who lives in a nearby town has three very bright and promising young children. Their mother frequently tells them some Bible story before undressing and putting them to bed for the night. The other night, after their usual religious instruction, the mother went into the nursery to undress the children, and to her surprise found the two eldest entirely unclothed.

"What are you doing, children?" she inquired.

"We are playing Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden," answered the elder of the two.

A search for the youngest found him in an adjoining room in the same undraped condition.

"Why, what are you doing?" exclaimed the astonished mother.

"I'm only God, and I've got to put Adam and Eve out of the garden of Eden," was the reply.

—*Hartford Courant.*

Acid Drops.

THE British military reverses in South Africa are now explained. There are six reasons for our misfortunes out there. But they were not discovered on the spot. The gentleman who made the discovery is minister of the Abbey Church, Arbroath, in godly Scotland. According to this hired servant of the Lord, this nation has incurred the displeasure of that celestial personage, first of all, by permitting men like Mr. John Morley, "who ignore the existence of God," to sit in parliament. This is certainly worth knowing. What we have to do, apparently, is to treat Mr. Morley as our Jonah, and toss him overboard. Then the waves of trouble will subside, and we may hope to reach the haven of victory.

The Arbroath prophet assigns as the second reason "the banishment of religion from State education." We were not aware that this had been done. The Bible is still allowed even in our Board schools. But this is not sufficient for the Rev. Mr. Douglas. Religion means his particular dogmas. These constitute true religion; without them, there is no religion at all.

The third reason is "the proposal of disestablishment." This is a professional point on which Mr. Douglas feels keenly. The fourth and fifth reasons are really one—namely, the spread of Romanism and the weakening of true-blue Protestantism. The sixth reason is our "shameful silence in the presence of the Armenian atrocities." Well, we were not exactly silent. Strong protests went forth from this country. Probably the reverend gentleman means that our *guns* were silent. In other words, he is vexed that we did not provoke a general European war; for that is what would have happened if we had resorted to forcible interference. And as Mr. Douglas is angry, God is angry too. Hence the difficulties of our position in South Africa. The Almighty is helping the Boers for a bit, in order that we may all learn to see eye to eye with the Rev. Mr. Wilson, of Arbroath, ayont the Tweed.

In the fighting at Spion Kop Major Childe, commanding the South African Light Horse, was killed. He had had a presentiment that he was going to die, and had requested his brother officers to put over his grave, "Is it well with the child? It is well." Not a very appropriate epitaph for a soldier, it is true; but a Newcastle paper, according to the *Christian World*, actually fancied the quotation, which, of course, is from the Bible story of Elisha's raising of the Shunammite's son, to be a "legacy from one of the Gaiety Theatre burlesques"!

The Crimean War was really a smaller affair than this South African War. We have ever so many more men out to fight the Boers than we had to fight the Russians. Nevertheless, we have had no official Day of Humiliation and Prayer, as we had on March 21, 1855. The nation were then called upon by the Queen's proclamation to humble themselves before Almighty God "in order to obtain pardon of our sins, and in the most devout and solemn manner send up our prayers and supplications to the Divine Majesty, for imploring his blessing and assistance on our arms, for the restoration of peace to us and our dominions." This pious and ungrammatical rigmarole will hardly be repeated, for the nation is far less religious than it was forty-five years ago, and would only laugh at such absurdity.

The *Rock* asks, Why does the Government still hesitate to order a day of humiliation and prayer? Well, it may be that the Government does not think that such a day will do any good. If the *Rock* were to ask why the Government did not make adequate preparations for the present war, there might be some sense in the question. Prayer and humiliation will hardly mend matters.

Dr. Boyd Carpenter, Bishop of Ripon, has been inspired by the war to the composition of some "beautiful lines," as the *Daily Mail* calls them. The said beautiful verses appear in the *Sunday Companion*, and are entitled "Britain's Star." They are "copyright," so we must not reproduce them in full. But that doesn't matter, for they ar'n't worth it. Here is the first verse:—

Britain is put to the testing
While nations near and far,
Hostile or friendly, are asking:
Will she fulfil her star?

What stuff is this! What wretched versification! How commonplace in idea and expression! And what on earth does the prelatial would-be poet mean by Britain fulfilling her star? If by "star" he means her *destiny*, she has obviously no choice in the matter. Perhaps his lordship was thinking of the Star of Bethlehem, and got into a muddle in consequence.

This episcopal rhymster answers the question of the nations in his last verse :—

Yea, if she know her calling,
And renews her spirit within;
Yea, if she looketh upward,
Her victory to win.

Even from the grammatical point of view, the Bishop is a sinner. Experts in this subject will notice what a mess he makes of the subjunctive in the first two lines. And why "within" after "spirit" except to fill out the line? Where else would the spirit be? Is the Bishop anxious that we should not fancy he means spirit *outside*, in the shape of Scotch or Irish? Then as to looking *upward* in order to win a victory. Wouldn't it be better for a soldier to look straight at his enemy? And, having fixed the said enemy with his glittering eye, wouldn't a good straight shot be far more likely to settle the matter than the most pious supplication to the One Above?

One doesn't expect a Bishop to be a poet, but he ought at least to be capable of grammar and sense. On the whole, Dr. Carpenter should stick to prose, and preferably to sermons. That is his trade. He will never rival Mr. Kipling.

That sprightly young spark, Mr. Winston Churchill, seems bent on bringing himself into prominence somehow or other. He has been confused with an American novelist who *can* write, but that is not this Churchill's loss, being, in fact, very much to his advantage. We had brilliant accounts of his bravery as a belligerent a little time ago, followed up by a letter to Kruger asking for release on the ground that he was a journalist and a non-combatant.

Now we find him writing the following pious nonsense: "I found no comfort in any of the philosophical ideas which some men parade in their hours of ease, and strength, and safety. They seemed only fairweather friends. I realised with awful force that no exercise of my own feeble wit and strength could save me from my enemies, and that, without the assistance of that High Power which interferes more often than we are always prone to admit in the eternal sequence of causes and effects, I could never succeed. I prayed long and earnestly for help and guidance. My prayer, as it seems to me, was swiftly and wonderfully answered. I cannot now relate the strange circumstances which followed, and which changed my nearly hopeless position into one of superior advantage."

Some of the rabid clerico-military papers in Paris are doing their best to get up a conflict with England. The men who persecuted poor Dreyfus are the men who are engaged in this unholy enterprise. It is to be hoped, however, that the common sense of the great body of the French people will be too much for these journalistic fire-caters.

The *Leeds Daily News* is severe on the late Marquis of Queensberry. He was a sportsman, it appears; well, so is Lord Rosebery, and one of the most familiar figures on race courses used to be the gentleman who is now Lord Chief Justice of England. But the latter is a Catholic, and the former is supposed to be a Protestant, and their love of sport doesn't matter. The fact is, Lord Queensberry was an "infidel," and that was his real crime. "He did not believe in God," our Leeds contemporary says, and it adds that "he believed in nothing, not even in himself"—which is a stupid exaggeration.

The Rev. N. C. Howe, vicar of Swindon, has been accused of serious misconduct with Miss Rosskyle, a lady of independent means, at the vicarage as well as at Oxford and St. Leonard's, extending over three years. The case has been adjourned.

A congregation at East Orange, New Jersey, U.S.A., has called upon its minister to resign. Sky-pilot McClenaghan's offence was having an illegitimate child, keeping the matter dark, and finally marrying her to his nephew.

Sheriff Guthrie, of Glasgow, is entitled to hold silly opinions, but he should not air them on the bench. The other day he had a case of bigamy before him, and he inflicted upon the bigamist the light sentence of forty days' imprisonment, on the ground that his marriage with the second wife "had only been before the Sheriff, which was not a proper or decent way for anybody to get married." Now what does this mean? It means that Sheriff Guthrie, while sitting on the bench to administer the law of the land, flouts it as improper and indecent. Well, to our mind, the impropriety and indecency are in his own behavior.

What a way these religious people, sheriffs or otherwise,

have of flinging about the word "indecent." They cast it at everybody who differs from them in taste or opinion. If they get married before (or by) a minister of religion, they think it quite "indecent" for other people to go through the marriage ceremony in the office of a State official; just as they think it "indecent" for a witness to tell the truth on affirmation instead of taking the oath. They think the better of you for swearing, even if you tell a few lies afterwards.

Tuesday's *Daily News* gave the names of several French priests who have recently left the Catholic Church. Ministers of religion are leaving their Churches in other parts of the world. We note in an American exchange that the Rev. Wesley C. Haskell, pastor of the Second Congregational Church, the largest and most fashionable in Rockford, Illinois, has given in his resignation. "How can I be orthodox?" he said. "I do not believe the Bible is the book of God from cover to cover. I do not believe in the substantial theory of the atonement as held by the orthodox Church. I am out of sympathy with the dogma that clings to the Apostles' Creed. I do not believe in the doctrine of everlasting punishment, as taught by the Church. I cannot believe blindly against the truths which history, science, and reason reveal. Can I, not believing in these things, preach in a church which does? I want to be honest with myself and friends, and above all I prize a clear conscience."

Maliotoa Tanus, the Samoan chief, is evidently no fool. In the light of the partition of Samoa, he says that "the Hague Conference was the biggest farce of the century." Nor does he confine his reprobation to the politicians. He hits out even more vigorously at the missionaries. "The missionaries," he says, "who graced our country with their holy—or unholy—presence, introduced the same religious differences and hatreds against each other as obtained at the hour in civilised States. The missionaries live in palatial concrete houses, with all the luxuries their country can afford, and charge us for Bibles and prayer-books, which, we understand, are sent as free offerings."

Mr. Joseph Symes, of the Melbourne *Liberator*, relates the following experience he had in connection with the Moody and Sankey revival movement: "Moody, the revivalist quack, is reported to be dead. In 1873 I was connected with the Newcastle *Chronicle*, the most widely circulated paper in the Tyneside district in England. Joseph Cowen, the proprietor, had for many years figured as the most advanced man in the district, a Republican, and also by no means orthodox. I had not been long enough in the office to know that man's character, and innocently imagined him to be somewhat true to his professions. I never made a greater mistake. Well, it was announced that Moody was going to preach the Gospel and Sankey to sing the Gospel, in the Bath Lane School room, on a given night. An old comicality of a street preacher, named Davis, when he saw the announcement respecting the preaching and the singing of the Gospel, announced: 'And I'm going to *dance* the Gospel'; and probably kept his word. I was selected to go and hear Moody and Sankey, and report for the *Chronicle*. No hint was given me as to what sort of a report I was expected to furnish; and I, in my innocence, supposed they wanted my private opinion of the performance worked up as an honest report. In substance, I reported that I was quite pleased with Sankey's singing and harmonium performances, except that the sentiments of some of the hymns were very wishy-washy. As to Moody's preaching, I reported, I had never heard anything poorer; that I was completely puzzled to account for his popularity; and expressed the opinion that Sankey was running him. This was my honest opinion. My report was a lyddite shell, fully and appropriately exploded, in the *Chronicle* office. The advertisers had to be considered, and I had never so much as thought of them. It was quickly seen that my report would offend all the mass of stupid piety in the district. Therefore it was set aside, and some one in the office who had not heard Moody worked up a most flattering report of the proceedings for the next issue. Moody and Tyneside piety and lay hypocrisy were flattered, Cowen's income was not endangered, and truth and justice were trampled in the mud."

Cardinal Vaughan must be sorry he tackled Professor Mivart. The man of science charges the red-hatted priest with not having even read the articles he condemns. "Happily I can now speak," he says, "with entire frankness as to all my convictions." So he condemns the authoritative teaching of "fables, fairy tales, and puerile and pestilent superstitions" which goes on under the Catholic Church, particularly in France. He then continues in the following vein, which is calculated to make the Cardinal use strong Scripture language: "It is now evident that a vast and impassable abyss yawns between Catholic dogma and science, and no man with ordinary knowledge can henceforth join the communion of the Roman Catholic Church if he correctly understands what its principles and its teaching really are,

unless they are radically changed. For who could profess to believe the narrative about the Tower of Babel, or that all species of animals came up to Adam to be named by him? Moreover, amongst the writings esteemed 'canonical' by the Catholic Church are the book of Tobit and the second book of Maccabees, and also the story which relates how, when Daniel was thrown a second time into the lions' den, an angel seized Habbacuc, in Judea, by the hair of his head, and carried him, with his bowl of pottage, to give it to Daniel for his dinner. To ask a reasonable man to believe such puerile tales would be to insult him."

Professor Mivart laughs at Cardinal Vaughan's attack on "private judgment." How on earth, he asks, can we recognise what is a just and lawful authority without exercising our reason? "It is impossible," he adds, "to accept anything as true which is a contradiction in terms. Upon that truth all theological reasoning is based, and all other reasoning also." Quite true; but if Professor Mivart goes on in this way he will soon become an out-and-out Freethinker.

Here is a tip for the vegetarians. Jesus Christ taught us to pray for our daily bread. He said nothing about our daily beefsteak.

Revival meetings have been going ahead splendidly in the Baptist Church, West Henrietta, New York. One lady, Mrs. Margaret Snap, had to be taken to the asylum in a state of religious frenzy. Evidently the Lord's spirit was acting powerfully.

The man who sits in the pew is making his opinions heard in America. The *Chicago Advance* suggests that he should interrupt the minister now and then in the middle of his sermon, and ask him what he means. "If the people do not understand the points he is making, or trying to make, let them ask pointed questions. Why not? It seems to be contrary to church manners, but it is practised in other assemblies, and it has sometimes been the practice to ask questions in religious assemblies. Jesus did not think that it was out of place for his hearers to ask questions, but rather, when the questions were honest, he welcomed them."

Miss Tait, daughter of the Rev. H. Tait, headmaster of the Rossall Preparatory School, expired in Rossall Church whilst kneeling at prayer. Her father preached in the same church a fortnight ago, and a few hours later was found dead on the sea-beach.

A new font for holy water has been designed by a Mr. Bruns, of Arnhem, Holland, the *Lancet* tells us, with the object of avoiding danger from bacteria. He has found that ordinary fonts contain "abundant bacterial growth," with occasional microbes of deadly diseases. Mr. Bruns's font looks like an ornamental oaken case projecting from the wall.

The *Westminster Gazette*, commenting on Roman Catholic pilgrimages and the priests' ingenuity in raising the wind, says: "It was they who hit on the idea of the 'pilgrims of desire.' Many persons find themselves unable, for an infinite variety of reasons, to go on a pilgrimage. The Assumptionists help them out of the difficulty. It is sufficient that they should ardently desire to accomplish the pilgrimage, and that they should make a donation in money to the Order; they may then stop at home, and the result is guaranteed the same as if they had been in person to Lourdes or Jerusalem." But might not, remarks the *Church Gazette*, Messrs. Cook and Gaze do something on similar lines to oblige the "tourist of desire"? It would save a great deal of trouble to stop at home.

A Dundee Sheriff expressed surprise to learn that the Salvation Army had added life insurance to the fire insurance which he believed to be their principal business.

The degrading and idolatrous character of saint-worship in the Roman Catholic Church is clearly shown by a collection of slips deposited in a box on an altar of Saint Antony, somewhere in Latin America, and published by the bishop and clergy. The following are a few specimens: A man thanks "glorious St. Antony" for his partial recovery from a severe illness. He, therefore, gives him one-half of the sum he has promised. When completely cured he will give the other half. A woman gives two and a-half pesetas to St. Antony for enabling her to let her house quickly. A third slip declares the writer's conviction that St. Antony is so wonderful a miracle-worker that no one has ever been heard of, or will be heard of, who has come in faith to him and been disappointed.

It was not Providence, but the caretaker, who discovered that the roof of a Portsmouth church was on fire shortly before the congregation arrived on Sunday morning. The caretaker fell into the pews of the gallery, and was badly injured while endeavoring to extinguish the flames. Eventually, the fire brigade put the conflagration out. Meanwhile

Providence seems to have been asleep—or, perhaps, in a bad temper.

The *Church Gazette*, after alluding to some "captious criticism" in the *Rock* on Prebendary Barlow and Canon Edwards, says: "But the vials of its wrath are reserved for its concluding climax, where Professor Ryle, along with the higher criticism, are simply pulverised by a sentiment of the late Mr. Moody, which is treated as conclusive. It is thus given: 'A recent speaker at one of the memorial services to the late D. L. Moody said that the only time he ever saw the great evangelist angry was when referring to some of the views of the higher critics.' After this, criticism is surely doomed. But neither Mr. Moody nor the *Rock* can resist the natural tendency of things."

The legality of the Sunday shave is now established. The 29th section of an Act of Charles II., of pious memory, is held to be inoperative against barbers, who are not to be regarded as common tradesmen. At the time that that Act was passed the barber held pretty much the position of the surgeon—at any rate, he was entitled to let blood, as the present-day shavers not infrequently do, and as the modern surgeons do not hesitate to do in their hospital experiments.

The Lord, however, can hardly prefer his worshipper to have a dirty chin even on Sunday, especially when the worshipper is disposed to pay for a shave, and there is an accommodating barber ready to shave him.

Councillor Midgley, of Leeds, says: "Give us a head constable who is a Christian, and I am quite willing to forgive a few minor matters." The burgesses of Mr. Midgley's ward might be inclined to say: "Give us a man of some common sense, and we shall be quite willing to dispense with Councillor Midgley."

The great Charles Darwin, in his Biography of his grandfather, Erasmus Darwin, mentioned the fact that the Bible Society, towards the end of last century, passed a resolution against teaching Christianity to the black slaves in the West Indies. A somewhat similar resolution seems to have been carried in the Transvaal. According to Mr. William Hoskin, who was Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce at Johannesburg, the section of the Dutch Reformed Church to which Christian Joubert, the late Minister of Mines, belongs, and which is the most numerous in the Transvaal, passed in its Synod at Pretoria two years ago a resolution "forbidding any of its ministers or officers, on pain of expulsion, to preach Christianity to the natives."

Rev. Mr. Barker, a temperance worker, of Cleveland, Ohio, was found in a girl's room in a compromising position. He says the saloon keepers offered the girl a large sum of money to entice him. Evidently they knew his little weakness.

Mr. Henniker Heaton is still worrying the Post Office on account of the anomalies in its telegraph charges. "St. Cloud" is charged as two words, while "Saint Cloud" passes as one. On the other hand, "Saint Peter" is charged as two words, while "St. Peter" counts as one. Those who want to refer to that peppery old saint in a telegram, and don't want to waste a halfpenny, will know what to do.

The restraining influence of religion has been well exhibited in the case of a young man in County Down, who, in a fit of religious mania, struck his uncle a fearful blow while asleep, murdered his aunt, and then strangled himself.

Referring to M. Ribot's newly-published work on education, the *Review of the Week* says: "From this we learn that the education of the country, in spite of its State schools, is rapidly passing into the hands of the priests; and in a few years this fact will become apparent in the voting-booths and the Chambers." We have frequently called attention to this danger—a danger to the Republic and to civilisation. The Jesuits principally, but other Catholic orders also in their degrees, have been devoting all their strength and means to capturing the next generation. And perhaps, after all, they have not had such a very difficult task to perform, for the general tendency of things in France seems to be in their favor. One wonders at times whether Flaubert was right in some of those letters he wrote to George Sand during the war of 1870. He declared that the "Prussian" war terminated the French Revolution and destroyed it. France, he said, would become Catholic, yes, very Catholic. "Misfortune," he observed, "makes weaklings devout, and everybody now is weak." Even the Commune was to him something gothic, a return to the Middle Ages. He foresaw a fine clerical and monarchical reaction before very long; and "how the good ecclesiastics will flourish!" he exclaimed. Nor had he the least belief in universal education. He said it would only multiply fools who could read and write. The great thing in every nation was to have a certain number of sound leading minds who could get a hearing and mould the opinion of the multitude.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, February 11, The Athenæum Hall, London W.; 7.30, "The Curse of Christianity."

To Correspondents.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—February 11, Bolton; 18, New Brompton; 25, Glasgow; 26, 27, and 28, Glasgow districts. March 4, Dundee; 11, Huddersfield. April 8, Camberwell.—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.

J. M. DONALD.—Pleased to hear that Mr. Cohen's visit to Aberdeen was so successful, and that you are so highly pleased with him as a speaker.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

D. FRANKEL.—See paragraph, which had been written before the arrival of your letter.

A. G. BOND.—Professor Mivart is a biologist of recognised standing. Of course he is not exactly a Darwin, but he is the principal scientist in the Roman Catholic Church in this country—if he is still in it. We fully expect to see him excommunicated, although the Pope is reported to be anxious that the trouble should be settled without a public scandal.

TOM TAYLOR.—Your question has been answered by post, as you desired, although we cannot undertake to answer in that way regularly. Sorry to hear that your circumstances do not permit at present of your taking up Shares, as you intended, in the Freethought Publishing Company. Never mind; better luck in future. Thanks for your good wishes.

H. PERCY WARD.—Thanks. See paragraphs. Kindly keep us posted from time to time on the progress of Secularism in Birmingham.

F. JOHNSON.—America has 65,000 men in the Philippines—further off from New York than South Africa is from London.

J. ROBERTS.—We know you are full of good intentions, but are you not letting your heart run away with your head? We devote whole columns week after week, and year after year, to attacking British superstition and hypocrisy. That is all right, and you appear to like it. But when we insert a little bit about Boer superstition and hypocrisy, you cry out that we are dealing unfairly with those poor downtrodden people. Why, this is the veriest midsummer madness! One would think that the Boers were sacred people, and that we deserved the fate of Uzzah for daring to lay a critical finger upon them. For the rest, you forget that the N. S. S. is not a political organisation. It does not exist to take sides in politics with our opinions or with yours. Every time a burning question arises, some impetuous spirits want the N. S. S. to "pronounce itself," but the common sense of the general body of members may be trusted to restrict the Society to its proper objects. You, and some others, are quite mistaken in supposing that the N. S. S. ever endorsed Bradlaugh's political views. It took a strong part in his constitutional struggle simply because he was attacked on account of his Atheism.

R. P. EDWARDS and J. G. WARREN.—Your postcards arrive as we are going to press—too late.

G. A. SMITH.—Lecture notices must reach us by first post on Tuesday.

W. COX (Liverpool).—Your letter shall have the earliest possible attention, but don't be surprised if you have to wait a week or so for a definite answer, as a Board meeting must be held first.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Progressive Thinker—Freidenker—Leeds Daily News—Truthseeker (New York)—Liberator—Blue Grass Blade—Huddersfield Examiner—Public Opinion—Crescent—Sydney Bulletin—Ethical World—Zoophilist—Torch of Reason—El Libre Pensamiento—Boston Investigator—Two Worlds—Secular Thought—People's Newspaper—De Vrije Gedachte—Isle of Man Times.

THE National Secular Society's office is at No. 377 Strand, London, where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

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

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

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

MR. FOOTE will be lecturing at the Athenæum Hall again this evening (Feb. 11), taking for his subject "The Curse of Christianity." This subject is particularly interesting at the present time, and it is to be hoped that Freethinkers will try to bring their Christian friends to hear the lecture.

Mr. Foote delivered three lectures in the Secular Hall, Manchester, on Sunday. The audiences were a great improvement on ordinary meetings there of late, though not as large as Mr. Foote is accustomed to meet in Cottonopolis. What with the influenza, and the wretched weather which has caused so much other sickness, to say nothing of the general absorption of the public mind in the war, there is just now a sensible diminution in audiences. All progressive movements are suffering at present. This is natural and inevitable, but the reaction will come by-and-by.

Mr. Charles Watts lectured in Sheffield last Sunday. The audiences were good, although not quite so large as he usually has in Sheffield. Still, they were exceedingly enthusiastic. The severe weather, no doubt, prevented the friends from coming from surrounding districts. A brief, but interesting, discussion followed each lecture. To-day, Sunday, February 11, Mr. Watts lectures afternoon and evening in Bolton. Weather permitting, no doubt friends from Blackburn and other surrounding districts will be present. A lively discussion is expected to follow the lecture on "The Decay of Christianity." In the evening Mr. Watts will speak by special request on "Colonel Ingersoll as I Knew Him."

Mr. Cohen is lecturing in the north. He has gone as far as Aberdeen, where he had good meetings and a hearty reception, and won the highest appreciation of the local "saints." We are desirous to announce that his lectures at Middlesboro' on February 14 and 15 will be delivered in the Spiritual Hall, Newport-crescent.

From the last number of the *Liberator* (Melbourne) to hand we see that Mr. Joseph Symes is "mending, though slowly." This number of his paper is dated December 30. By the present time, therefore, we may reasonably hope that he is himself again. Unfortunately, his assaulter, and probably would-be assassin, has not been traced.

We see from the same number of the *Liberator* that Mr. W. W. Collins, who was elected to the New Zealand parliament six years ago, and lost his seat three years ago, has been re-elected for Christchurch. We send him—for we believe he still sees the *Freethinker*—our compliments and best wishes.

The New York *Truthseeker* for January 27 is a Thomas Paine number. The front page contains a large portrait from the Sharp engraving, and several interesting items are contributed by Mr. Moncure D. Conway, one being a letter—now first published—from Paine to Jefferson, dated October 10, 1793, in which a Peace Congress is suggested as the best means of terminating the war.

Mr. H. Percy Ward writes from Birmingham:—Mr. J. H. Ridgway's Golden Wedding party, which took place last Thursday night at the Victoria Hotel, passed off as merrily as the proverbial marriage bell. The chair was taken by Mr. C. Steptoe. After several songs and recitations, Mr. A. Scrimshire made an appropriate speech, and, on behalf of the Branch, presented Mr. Ridgway with an illuminated testimonial, Mrs. Bonner's biography of Charles Bradlaugh and a purse of gold (ten guineas). Mr. Ridgway, in thanking the members and friends of the Branch for their tokens of respect, referred to his first public speech of forty-seven years ago in favor of political liberty. Since that time he had endeavored to do his best in the cause of freedom, and was determined to do so until the end. Speeches were then delivered by Messrs. H. P. Ward, W. T. Pitt, J. Partridge, and W. H. Wood. Mr. Ward read letters from the following Secularists expressing admiration for Mr. Ridgway's services to Freethought:—Messrs. G. W. Foote, G. J. Holyoake, Charles Watts, F. J. Gould, Joseph McCabe, Sydney A. Gimson, J. Umpleby, C. H. Cattell, and Mrs. Bonner. About a hundred ladies and gentlemen were present. Many hearty cheers for Mr. and Mrs. Ridgway closed a most enjoyable evening.

Double the usual number of *Freethinkers* were sold at the Birmingham Branch meetings on Sunday. Mr. Foote's article on "A Blackguard Bishop"—him of Coventry—was highly relished.

We hear that the Birmingham Branch is holding a special meeting just as we are going to press in order to decide definitely whether the Bristol-street Board-school shall be rented again for Sunday meetings. Our own opinion on the question has been stated already.

Secular Thought (Toronto) reproduces from our columns two articles by F. J. Gould and Francis Neale.

The East London Branch has arranged to have a Tea and Concert on Sunday, February 25, at the Montague Hall, 53 Stepney-green, E. Tea will be on the table at 5.30, and the Concert will begin at 7. It is hoped that there will be a good gathering on this occasion. The tickets are 1s. each, and can be obtained at 28 Stonecutter-street, or at Mr. Haines's, 212 Mile-end-road.

National Secular Society.

REPORT of monthly Executive meeting, held at 377 Strand, W.C., on Thursday, February 1st; the President, Mr. G. W. Foote, in the chair. Present: Messrs. E. Bater, J. Cooper, T. Gorniot, W. Heaford, W. Leat, B. Munton, J. Neate, E. W. Quay, E. E. Sims, T. Thurlow, C. Watts, and the Secretary. Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed. Cash statement for the month adopted.

New members from East London and Liverpool Branches were enrolled.

The West Ham Branch gave notice of the expulsion of a member.

The Secretary was instructed to arrange a course of outdoor lectures for the Finsbury Park Branch.

The Annual Excursion was again discussed, and it was resolved that the actual date should be fixed at the next meeting.

The notices to Branches who may desire to invite the Conference this year were ordered to be sent out, and Mr. E. Bater gave notice that he would, at the next meeting, raise the question as to the Conference being held in London.

The meeting adjourned until Thursday, February 22.

EDITH M. VANCE, *Secretary*.

She Recognised the Place.

THE preacher on his visit read a chapter from the book,

Then offered up a prayer to the Lord,
And, with the rancher's family for auditors, he took
A theme of exhortation from the word.

He talked about the beauties of the blessed Promised Land,

The living streams and never-dying flowers,
The trees of deathless beauty waving cheer on every hand,
The song-birds singing music in the bowers.

He dwelt upon the virtues of the residents up there;

They all were men and women fair to see,
The ever-golden sunshine, the pure and balmy air,
The cities in their lordly majesty.

The rancher's little daughter sat and listened, opened-eyed,
Her face reflecting reverence and awe,

And when the preacher finished she in childish rapture cried,
"It's just like Colorado, aint it, ma?"

—*Denver Post*.

The Deacon's Interpretation.

"Job wuz in de real estate en stock-raisin' business," said the old colored deacon, "en he wuz de best farmer in all de lan'; but de Devil got inter de sheriff en he levy on all Job had, en Job wuz so po' he had ter set down en scratch fer a livin'."

"Dat ain't de way it read," objected one of the brethren.

"Brer Williams," said the deacon, "you is old en gray, but you has yet ter l'arn dat, no matter how you reads the Bible, it gits dar. Tu'n it upside down en crossways, en it lan's you at de same ferry whar you fust got in de boat. So, either git out de meetin', or leimne go on wid Job lak' I wuz gwine!"

—*Atlanta Constitution*.

Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold. Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances. Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus. 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. Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.

Dr. Mivart on the Vatican.

THE Vatican is peculiarly exposed to the danger of facing dilemmas on account of its policy of presenting a progressive face to the world and retaining a sternly conservative spirit within. One of those dilemmas it is actually striving to wriggle out of through the secession of Dr. St. George Mivart. It is not long since Dr. Jessopp aptly compared the Church of Rome to the Celestial Empire, so picturesque in its conservatism and impenetrability. There are times when the Roman theologian makes substantially the same statement himself; when, for instance, he casts a compassionate glance on the nervous sects that are tossed on the waves of modern thought. It came, however, at a time when Rome was zealously protesting its up-to-dateness, and so the essayist's imputation was resented with feeling. The Church of Rome, Dr. Ward retorted, was not bound about with unalterable formulæ, and not deaf to the changing whispers of the time-spirit. It knew a little history. It admitted a human element in its theology, a human crystallization round a small "divine" nucleus, and granted that this must advance with the general progress of thought.

And so, in the logical course of things, Rome now finds itself impaled on the other horn of the dilemma. If changes are to be admitted in its formulæ, and if those changes have been enforced on the Church by outside speculation and discovery, then it were wise to take our lesson at once from the leaders of thought, and not wait until it has been forced upon an unwilling hierarchy. That is the fundamental heresy of Dr. Mivart. Leo XIII., that able statesman and reactionary thinker, has been amusing—I say it in all seriousness—Catholic scholars for several decades with his solemn pronouncements on every question that vexed the soul of man. He has dogmatised on labor questions and Assyriology, on questions of art, science, politics, education, philosophy, and theology. The one subject he knows much about is classical literature; since, then, he has in no case claimed to use that mythical infallibility with which the faithful credit him, scholars have been free to smile inaudibly over his deliverances. But Dr. Mivart has cast off the outward "reserve" (not to put too fine a point on it), and has startled the world with the singular discovery that men of science are likely to know more about their respective subjects than a hide-bound and uninformed pontiff, and that some of the dogmas of the Church have undergone considerable change in the course of history.

Much of the sentiment which has suffused the blushing pages of Roman and Anglican journals is due, no doubt, to Dr. Mivart's opinion as to the birth of Christ: seeing that God respected all the laws of embryological and infantine development in the making of the Savior, Dr. Mivart thought it natural to suppose the first step in the process was also a normal one. In reality, however, the Vatican has been principally exercised about the assertion that the dogmas of the Church may change. There would be little security for the authority of Rome if its dogmas were admitted to be subject to the emendations of progressive human speculation. In the profession of faith, therefore, which was drawn up for the heretic's signature, prominence was given to this dogma. It was seriously expected that an able student of science and history would subscribe to the theory of the absolute finality and immutability of Roman Catholic doctrines. Dr. Mivart has, unfortunately, not yet given the direct and emphatic refusal that such a proposal merits; he has more or less temporised by stipulating that the *Tablet* shall apologise for its insults before he considers the matter. He has, however, clearly identified himself with the "heresies" he wrote of in his famous articles, and we may trust he will soon stand out before the world as the independent and interesting thinker he really is. It is a sufficient mystery that men like Lord Russell and the Marquis of Ripon can subscribe to so childish a claim. Mivart could not honestly do it.

I have selected one point amongst the "heresies" because it is susceptible of the briefest and clearest treatment. That the dogmas of Rome have not varied in their substance is an historical assertion that may be

easily tested—unlike the more or less safe dogmas of the immaculate conception of Mary or the miraculous conception of Christ; moreover, it is a point on which, to apply Mivart's principle, the historian can pronounce with more security than a pope, ignorant of history, who does not even profess to draw upon his theoretical infallibility. Indeed, an obvious test of the dogma suggests itself in connection with Dr. Mivart's own activity. A few years ago he startled the Church with a new theory of the temperature and general comfort (or discomfort) of Tartarus. The "eminent theologian" who is mentioned in the famous articles in the *Nineteenth Century* was my own professor, Father David, O.S.F., now a consultant to the Roman Holy Office (the bureau for the detection of heresy). This ecclesiastic fully endorsed Dr. Mivart's views, and does so still. Indeed, the fact that Rome put the articles on the *Index* made no difference in the views of the large number of ecclesiastics who had toned down the old-world dogma of hell. Not many decades since the Vatican enjoined the clergy to refuse the sacraments to any man who refused to believe in a material fire for the damned. Now the Vatican dare not enforce that decree; it is openly treated as obsolete in Catholic journals. In one form or other there has been a great and widespread modification of the old notion of eternal punishment; though, at the same time, the Freethinker would scarcely credit to what extent the hideous old dogma still thrives.

But a clearer and more convincing illustration is found in the dogma of the "inspiration" of the Bible. Nothing could be more obvious and more undeniable than the series of essential changes which have overtaken this dogma. A very few centuries ago it meant that every word of Scripture came from God. The discovery of innumerable "variants" proved fatal to that dogma, and an entirely different interpretation had to be put on the term "inspiration." The next stage was that all the ideas of Scripture were divine, though they were clothed with a garment of human language. By-and-by came irreverent questions about the wagging of the tale of Tobias' dog, or the cloak that St. Paul had left behind him, and so forth; it had to be recognised that there were *obiter dicta* in Scripture that could not seriously be attributed to the Holy Spirit (Newman had to fight bitterly for the admission of even that, not half a century ago!). Then came science with its discovery of innumerable errors in the Old Testament; history and archæology following closely in its train with a similar indictment. The Christian world at large has admitted the truth of that indictment long ago, but I well remember the anxiety and timidity of Catholic clerical circles. It is only seven or eight years since they first began to seriously entertain the question whether there were errors in the Old Testament. Duchesne, an able scholar of the Paris *Institut*, timidly drew up a list of about a dozen errors which he thought were incontrovertible; and we timidly admitted them—in the privacy of our own rooms, for Leo XIII. was thundering over our heads the old dogma of the absolute accuracy of the Bible, and the English Jesuits were filling the *Tablet* with heated arguments to the same effect. However, the initial fight is won. Every informed Catholic considers himself free to admit errors of history or science in the Old Testament; by "inspiration" he means guidance on points of faith or morals—some vague influence that becomes daily more intangible and evanescent. The very professor of Scripture at Louvain Catholic University told me that he had no definite idea of the meaning of inspiration.

To contend, in such circumstances (and they have been repeated in the case of more than one dogma), that the doctrines in the Church are immutable is little less than humorous. Again we ask ourselves how men of the high ability of our Lord Chief Justice can be deluded by such thin sophistry. It is a moral and a psychological problem that seems beyond us. We have only this consolation in noting the proceedings of the Vatican—it is making it only the more difficult for men of honor and unwarping intelligence to be drawn into its financial nets.

J. McCABE.

Victor Hugo.

Victor in Drama, Victor in Romance,
Cloud-weaver of phantasmal hopes and fears;
French of the French, and Lord of human tears;
Child-lover; Bard whose fame-lit laurels glance
Darkening the wreaths of all who would advance
Beyond our strait, their claim to be thy peers.

—TENNYSON.

SWINBURNE, who often writes extravagantly, but never at random, has proclaimed with all his unrivalled eloquence that Victor Hugo was the greatest of his contemporaries. Let us see what claims he has to be considered a younger brother of Shakespeare, or whether he is not rather to be regarded as the most magnificent of melodramatists. Hugo's long life of literary activity began with the publication of *Odes et Ballades*, which certainly did not promise that magic mastery over rhyme and rhythm which he achieved later. At twenty-five he was planning a dramatic campaign in which Realism should be pitted against Conventionalism. The production of his play on *Cromwell* in 1827 showed the poet in open revolt against the monarchical tradition which he inherited from his mother. On the publication of his lyrical volume, *Les Orientales*, Hugo had advanced another step, for he had lost a faith and gained a style.

Les Orientales was a remarkable volume in many ways. It contained the first unmistakable proof that a magnificent, surging, enfranchising power had come into French literature. Hugo's verse was so different to the jewelled toys turned out of the poetical workshops at the time. As often grandiose as grand, he was, at least, a master-artist with gigantic faults. Compared with others, his work was as the ocean to a mill-pond. Each succeeding volume from his pen abundantly proved his genius. The French language had been ransacked for centuries, yet here was a man who was able to introduce new rhymes by the dozen; and not merely grotesque rhymes, but for the loftiest purposes of poetry. Nothing shows his prodigious wealth of vocabulary more than this. The sad events of 1843, when Hugo's loved daughter and her husband were drowned, and the *coup d'état*, which led to Hugo's exile, left indelible marks on his poetry.

As the grass trembles to the wind, so did Hugo respond to every emotion. *Les Châtiments*, which appeared in 1853, and *Les Contemplations*, 1856, contain his best work. The gathered emotions of his life are enshrined here. All his powers culminate; he carries his reader with him as in a chariot of fire. There is nothing equal to it in French literature. He leaves all rivals far behind him in a perfect glory of inspiration. He could not, of course, escape the defects of his qualities. The prefaces to his volumes of verse remind one not a little of Napoleon's addresses to his army. They read like preludes to poetic victories. Like Napoleon, intense egoism was the very breath of his being. In art the handicraft is almost everything; but no poet ever caressed his emotions more fervently, or more assiduously nursed his reveries. This constitutes his weakness in amatory poetry. His love-songs do not carry the world with them, like the lyrics of Beranger or Burns.

Even when words are put into God's mouth—for he used Deity as Shakespeare did witches—we cannot help smiling at the deific alias of M. Hugo. No one dared to come with impunity between the wind and his nobility. He resigned his seat in the National Assembly for no better reason than that he was not listened to with becoming attention. His arrogance of pretension sometimes approached towards claims to omniscience. If facts varied with his own notions, so much the worse for the facts. He flattered himself that he knew Parisian life. His knowledge, compared with that of Balzac or Zola, or even Gaboriau, was as a child's to a professor's. He pretended he thoroughly knew the dialects of the Channel Islands; but he knew less of them than a schoolboy. He sometimes paraded his knowledge of English and Scotch affairs with the most laughable results. He firmly believed to his dying day that his beloved Notre Dame was built of granite.

Maybe the persistent adulation of Saint Beuve helped

Those who swallow their Deity, really and truly, in transubstantiation, can hardly find anything else otherwise than of easy digestion.—Byron.

to deepen the poet's intense egoism. The great critic cooled in his fulsome praise latterly, and it is even suggested that the period of laudation was not entirely unconnected with Hugo's pretty wife. It is characteristic of Hugo that all shades of religious opinion should be ably represented in his pages. Theism, Pantheism, Atheism, every mood, from a glowing optimism to a cynical despair, is there. He would have sympathised with Septimus Severus, who kept a bust of Christ in his private chapel "along with Virgil, Orpheus, Abraham, and other creatures of the same kind."

Hugo is plainly not at home upon "sacred" ground. He never writes like Dante, Calderon, or Milton. He cared no more for that Mississippi of falsehood, the Bible, than he did for Herodotus, Ossian, or Sismondi. To write successfully upon Christian themes, a man must feel as a Christian. M. Hugo's piety was but a reflex of the sentimental interludes in his life, inserted between the Voltairian influences of his mother and the St. Simonian scepticism of his later years. In spite of the fact that his long and chequered career was filled with experiences of the most diverse kind, Hugo never possessed that sane outlook on life which characterises Shakespeare. He mixed with the society of princes; he knew the men and women of the streets; he was well known in the political arena; the wide worlds of literature and the drama were open to him. He knew the extremes of triumph and exile; at one time the idol of the people, and at another eating the bitter bread of banishment.

Yet he was always a poet, always the slave of his emotions. His view of humanity is taken from extremes. Every character in his novels and plays is sublimed to a saint or degraded to a criminal. In spite of Hugo's endless fertility of rhetoric, how melodramatic are his *Marion*, his *Tisbe*, his *Hernani*. Valjean the convict, Gilliat the fisherman, Gavroche the *gamin de Paris*, divide the honor of his romances. But they will not compare for a single instant with those immortal characters which are the crown and glory of Shakespeare's genius.

Looking for a second Shakespeare in Victor Hugo, we awake, as it were, in a desecrated temple, with a shattered god stretched upon the floor. Hugo was not devoid of sympathy. He possessed a rich and puissant nature. His compassion for the poor and suffering, his joy in childhood and infancy, his loving remembrance of the dead, his devotion to liberty, abundantly prove this. But it was beyond his power to depict real men and women. His novels are like a grand cathedral window, its panes cramped together with heavy lines of lead, whereas his poems are cast at a single jet, without speck or flaw.

The story of his exile gives dignity to his life. For nineteen dark years his voice did not falter, nor his heart fail. From Jersey and Guernsey he despatched that marvellous series of songs and satires which passed secretly from hand to hand in France, were read with tears and cries of rage during that reign of terror which ended in the downfall of the second empire. These poems were veritable bombshells in the political arena, for Hugo wrote poetry as an eagle flies.

Did ever despot suffer such an impeachment as Napoleon the Little? Was ever monarch attacked in such grand and sonorous lines, with such sinewy rhetoric, sounding declamation, pictorial richness. Lyrics, written for the political purposes of the moment, for ever echoing in the heart and present in the memory of the men who read them. Yes! the genius of a great poet asserts its prerogative over us long after he has gone down to the dreamless dust. It would be well if the musical strains of Hugo's muse could penetrate more completely through the clerical and royalist turmoil which surrounds everything in that country which the old man eloquent loved so wisely and served so well.

MIMNERMUS.

A parson some time ago sought financial help for a church charity. Amongst those whom he asked to give something was a lady, who, unfortunately, bore a vinegary face. She declined to give money, but promised to "lend her countenance" to the cause. He retired in dismay.

Testifying as the Spirit Moved.

"YE see, last week a Friday the sewin' society met up to Deacon Hopper's. They sewed an' stitched an' cut yoke an' bias an' polenay an' redingote an' them other fancy stichin's until 'bout three p.m., an' then they all eat a hearty mess o' corn-beef sandwiches, one-two-three-four cake, an' bean coffee. Then come sewin' agin, an' all went well until 'bout four p.m. They all begin gettin' dreadful thirsty. The corn beef got in its work big, an' water didn't seem to be much relief. Just then, who should come in but Deacon; an' arter the customary 'Haow do—Haow do—Haow do all raound?' Miss Sukey Thomas she spoke up peart an' says:—

"'Deacon,' says she; 'ain't ye got no sweet cider? We're in a horrid state o' thirst, an' little jest-made cider would be a mercy.'

"The deacon hesitated a minute, an' then my wife insists that all of a suddint his face kinder lighted up, an' he winked to hisself.

"'Wal, ladies,' he says, 'it's a leetle late in the season fur the general run,' he says, 'but now I come to think it over they is jest one barrel left out to the mill, an' I can testify that it is nice an' sweet as honey. I'll jest bring in a leetle for you to try, an' maybe you'll testify along with me consarnin' its harmless excellence.'

"Wal, now, Bill, what do ye 'spose that pious deacon done? Deliberately an'—as courts has it, with malice aforethought an' aforesaid—he went out to where he had a barrel of cider that had been left out an' froze hard. You know what that means. The water froze solid, an' the nice, sweet, smooth, ilely alcohol was all left in the centre of the ice. This good old Christian feller got a auger, bored through the ice, an' drewed off a milk-pail full o' that concentrated juice o' happiness, an' fetched it in to them trustin' old female women, with a face as calm an' holy as he ever wore while handin' raound the c'lection-plate.

"'There, ladies,' he says, 'try that an' testify.'

"Wal, they tried it, an', golly, they tried ag'in. Wife says 'twas the sweetest, smoothest stuff she ever dranked. It went down like honey, an' set as easy as soothin' syrup. An' then, after they'd tried it, they begin to testify; an' the more they tried the louder they testified an' all of a suddint the deacon said suthin' 'bout havin' to see a feller, an' he skipped out an' left 'em testifyin' as loud as a meetin'-house full of Methodists with the power on. I tell ye that no pious Presbyterian hain't got no right nor call to have a sense o' humor. An' now comes the pint that'll show what depths o' sin an' transgression the innate love o' the redickilous 'll bring the most piouesest to. I don't know where the deacon went to, or what he see that made him go; but it's sartin he hadn't been gone long when the parson come drivin' in. Jest dropped 'raound to have a bite o' vittles an' pass the good word raound amongst the sisters. Anyhow, wherever the deacon had been, rumor says, an' I reckon rumor knows, that the deacon, when he met the parson in the barn, was carryin' a pitcher o' that same mild cider, an' the parson, bein' thirsty, dranked a good pint right daown, an' smacked his lips as loud as a Chinee fire-cracker.

"'Good deacon! Good!' he says. 'I always liked new-made cider. Jest a day old; not an hour more. Another swallow? Well, yes. Jest one more. Ah, fine; fine! Guess I'll drop in an' cheer up the sisters a little—um—ah—fine cider—yes, sir!'

"Wal, he went into the house, an' the sisters offered him a little refreshment an' a drink o' cider, which he took a good one an' smacked his lips louder'n ever and looked round s'if he might smack somebody else's jest to show they wa'n't no hard feelin's. You kin imagine the rest—thirty-odd female women an' a orthodox parson all testifyin' ter once like the rapid fire-guns at San Juan. Such sewin'! Aunt Sukey Thomas sewed a stockin' foot on a dish towel. Amy Cushman worked a feather stitch in red raound a blue cotton shirt, an' Miss Humpy Wood missed the heel of a stockin' she was darnin' an' stuck the darnin' needle a right sharp ways inter parson. He hollered a terrible loud 'Amen!' an' jumped clean inter Widder Rock's lap—best-lookin' woman in the room, the widder—an' he didn't seem in no hurry to change his seat. Just then there come a horrid smothered laugh from outside the door, an' wife she run an' opened, an', although they wa'n't no one there, wife swears that they was footprints in the new-fallen snow that looked big enough to be the deacon's an' fur enough apart to suggest a man runnin', and she further swears that if they'd been any snow to show they'd a been eye-marks 'raound the keyhole. Wal, she come back an' looked 'raound comperhensive at the work o' the society, an' says she:—

"'Ladies,' says she, 'I guess we better give this whole batch to the heathin,' she says. 'The heathin may know what to do with them things,' says she; 'but I don't believe nobody else would. I'm a goin' home, an' she come away.'

"They do say that they was mighty goin's on in that happy home before the sewin' society got their things on an' dispersed, singin' glorificiously. I wa'n't there to see, so I can't say sartin, but I do know that parson preached a temperance sermon Sunday an' Deacon Orville Hopper got took with a fit o' coughin', an' hed to go aout in a hurry, an' he's be'n keepin' out o' parson's way ever since."

—New York Sun.

Correspondence.

BONNER, DE VILLIERS, AND THE BEDBOROUGH CASE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In the letter signed "R. de Villiers, M.D.," which was allowed to appear in the current *Freethinker*, the writer—even were his allegations and imputations against my honor at all justifiable—obscures the real issue, which also seems to have been overlooked in your own previous remarks on this matter.

The Ellis book was attacked. Those responsible for it must defend it, as befits a matter of principle. They had nothing to conceal or to be ashamed of, and the connection of each was known and open. On the publisher's part, the position of Dr. de Villiers was sufficiently known—at least, to those who had had dealings with the "University Press," and either he, or some suitable colleague (if he had one), should have come forward in a proper manner. As it was, whilst author and printer were at hand and prepared, Dr. de Villiers promptly "left for the Continent," and there was no one to represent the publisher. This at once gave a questionable appearance to the case, and placed the others concerned in it in an invidious position, despite the fact that eventually the book was not actually indicted. I will now deal with the points as raised in the five paragraphs of Dr. de Villiers' letter. In defending myself I must follow his lead, and it is he who is responsible for the publication of what would normally be matters of privacy.

Par. 1.—The writer appeals to your compassion on the ground that he is "principal sufferer in the Bedborough prosecution." This distinction might well be claimed by Mr. Bedborough, who, in addition to suffering some imprisonment and various appearances in the dock, lost time, money, employment, and reputation. My statement in the *Freethinker* of January 14 is in no sense or particular "corrected," but is really left untouched; and what I then said is absolutely true.

Par. 2.—I gather that the writer is unacquainted with the legal position of a printer in such a case. A printer is bound by law to keep a file copy of each book or work he prints, and to register upon it the name and address of the person for whom it is printed, with the number printed and date of completion; and, should the work prove actionable, he is liable to be called upon to produce these particulars. In the present instance, the names of author, publisher, and printer appeared in proper fashion, and there was, of course, no attempt at concealment, which would have been unworthy. When, therefore, an Inspector from Scotland Yard [N.B.—one; not the plural which Dr. de Villiers gives] called upon me for formal confirmation of these points, I—after verifying the copy of the work which he produced (which was the first and only bound copy which I have seen)—unhesitatingly gave it in the ordinary course. The Inspector called a second time with a subpoena. I attended in Court, as I should have done in any case, but was not called upon; and, as I pointed out at the time, my "evidence" could hardly be pertinent to the prosecution of Mr. Bedborough, as it would merely show that I had printed the book for the publisher named thereon, and I had had no dealings with Mr. Bedborough in the matter. There was no mystery about this, and not the slightest need for a "private detective," so far as I was concerned. I freely mentioned it to callers interested, who included Mr. Bedborough and the Hon. Sec. and several members of the Defence Committee, and should have done so to Dr. de Villiers had we met. As to securing my "immunity from a prosecution," I not only made no such stipulation or arrangement, but the idea did not pass through my mind. Even if I could so fall away from my principles and the traditions of the family to which I belong, it would have been directly against my own interests to do so at the expense of a debtor from whom I was but too anxious to secure a heavy and long overdue account. I was quite aware of the possibility of my inclusion in the indictment, if it really were the book which was attacked (as it then appeared to be), and, as I have stated, I was fully prepared to meet my responsibilities, to which end I saw my solicitor immediately after the Scotland Yard official had called. "Mr. Matthews's statement" did not emanate from me; in fact, I then had no knowledge on the point.

Par. 3.—(a) These figures are inaccurate and misleading. Neither printing nor payment for the book took place in 1898. The volume was printed by May, 1897, the cost being £100 os. 9d.; and this amount was paid, after pressure, on October 30, 1897. This edition was, however, not published, and an amended and reduced edition was completed from stereotypes in October, 1897, costing £27 18s. 5d. This last amount, together with the balance due on a previous transaction, was paid in July, 1899 [see on]. My business with Dr. de Villiers, extending from September, 1895, to October, 1897, amounted in all to £905, the payments extending through twenty-one months longer. [This pertains to the statements as to my quite legitimate profits, which must necessarily suffer—being competitive prices for prompt settlement—by long credit and difficulty in obtaining payment.]

(b) I had, and have, no enmity against Dr. de Villiers. With the capital which was understood to be at his disposal it was natural enough to start a printing office for his own publications. (c) The *Reformer* was most certainly not started "to supplant the *Free Review*." The statement is wide of the truth; and it would be as reasonable to say that the *University Magazine* was intended to supplant the *Freethinker*, or that the *Freethinker* was started to supplant the *National Reformer*. The two were unconnected, and on different lines. We had contemplated a monthly, and had been pressed to start one; and we finally decided to do so, but without any reference to the *University Magazine*; and I am not aware that the latter lost even one subscriber thereby. (d) The purchase of the *Free Review* is beside the point; but the outstanding debt on the printing, at the time of the transfer, was less than one-fourth of the amount named. Even were it otherwise, what of it? The charges to our friend and colleague and fellow non-capitalist, Mr. Robertson, were at special rates, and, had the amount owing been greater, it would, so far as I am concerned, simply mean that I had experienced the greater inconvenience. In any case, this was a matter between ourselves.

Par. 4.—The balance was not "disputed" until January, 1899—fifteen to twenty-one months after dates of the items, and after promises of payment had been made and broken—and then only in respect of a small item. Some curious letters which I received about New Year, 1899, signed (for the first time) "Geo. Astor Singer," brought to a head suspicions previously engendered, and led me to inquire into the *personnel* of the "University Press, Limited," and to examine its registration papers. The result was grave and startling, and I at once consulted my solicitors, and thenceforth acted under their advice. My debtor's conduct was such that I was forced to sue him, and my action eventually met with complete success. Dr. de Villiers is perfectly welcome to publish the evidence, provided he publishes it all and with it the *Judge's remarks upon it*. Perhaps he will also provide the evidence then demanded, but not forthcoming, of the separate existence of, say, "Geo. Astor Singer, M.A.," which will prove that that name—which is used with effect in Dr. de Villiers's letter—is not, as then stated, merely one of a number of aliases. At the same time I invite him to produce the "snap-shot" he mentions in his second paragraph.

Par. 5.—Any profit I made was, at least, well earned. "At that time," however, I, like author and bookbinder, had not been fully paid; and, unless they are still in that condition, I am not "the only person who has made a profit." Assuming for the moment that "banishment" expresses the writer's intermittent absences from this country, it is due solely to his lack of the moral courage which would have kept him at his post to face his responsibilities in an honorable fashion. It is, most emphatically, not due to me, and I repudiate the imputation.

In conclusion, I have to protest against the publication of your own remarks concerning myself in this matter, and of the letter to which I now reply—especially as I am aware that you are not altogether in the dark concerning its writer. As regards Dr. Ellis's *Sexual Inversion*, my opinion is now as it was in 1898 concerning its scientific value, and I am convinced that, had it been fairly attacked and properly defended by author and publisher, it would not have been condemned.

1 & 2 Took's Court, E.C.

A. BONNER.

P.S.—I have shown this letter to Mr. Robertson, and he authorises me to add that the statement as to the payment to him of £500 for the *Free Review* is false. The sum paid (in instalments) for the *Review* was only £250. £250 more was to be paid for future articles, which were to extend over five years; but long before that period was over, and before the amount had been earned by extra articles, Dr. de Villiers asked to be relieved from the rate of payment specified, and to this Mr. Robertson agreed.

[Mr. Bonner's letter is inordinately long, but we insert it *in extenso* in order that he may not nurse a grievance. In the small note accompanying his letter he refers to "the attack in the *Freethinker*." But this is reversing the chronological order of events. Mr. Bonner began the "attack" on Mr. de Villiers by referring to the "legal proceedings" he had to take against him for the payment of a printing account. With regard to Mr. Bonner's "protest" in the last paragraph, we beg to say that he ought to be grateful to us for affording him an opportunity of justifying himself. The concluding part of his sentence is not very happy or in very good taste. We know absolutely nothing, personally, of Mr. de Villiers, or Mr. Singer, or the University Press; never having had any dealings or correspondence with any of these parties, whether they are all actual, or, as Mr. Bonner hints, imaginary. What we have to say in conclusion is this: Mr. Bedborough was arrested for selling, a warrant was issued against Mr. de Villiers for publishing, but no steps were taken against Mr. Bonner for printing. We were curious to know *why*, but Mr. Bonner cannot enlighten us, and it still remains a mystery. All the other points are subordinate and personal.—EDITOR.]

If the man tears down who tells the truth, does it follow that it is necessary to tell a lie in order to build up?

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "The Curse of Christianity."
CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, E. Pack, "Modern Pharisees."
NORTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Leighton Hall, Leighton-crescent, Kentish Town): 7, H. Snell, "Tennyson and Modern Thought."
SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 7, Stanton Coit, "The Failure of Democracy."
WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Royal Palace Hotel, High-street, Kensington, W.): 11, Stanton Coit, "Thou shalt not bear false witness."

COUNTRY.

BELFAST ETHICAL SOCIETY (York-street Lecture Hall, 69 York-street): 3.45, J. H. Gilliland, "Catholicism and Science."
BIRMINGHAM BRANCH (Prince of Wales Assembly Rooms): H. P. Ward—11, "A Plea for Republicanism"; 7, "Why I Left the Wesleyan Pulpit."
BLYTH (Mechanics' Hall): February 9, at 7.30, C. Cohen, "Why Secularism is Superior to Christianity."
BOLTON (Spinner's Hall, St. George's-road): Charles Watts—3, "Defeat of the Cross"; 6.30, "Colonel Ingersoll as I Knew Him."
CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday School; 7, P. Braham, "Wireless Telegraphy."
EDINBURGH (Moulders' Hall, 105 High-street): 6.30, Limelight views of the seat of war in South Africa. Music, songs, etc.
GLASGOW (110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion Class—J. Allan; 6.30, Mr. Campbell, A lecture on Burns. Musical accompaniment and limelight illustrations.
LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Humberstone-gate): 6.30, F. J. Gould, "Mary Wollstonecraft and Women's Rights."
LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, Open meeting—Discussion on the War.
MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 7, A. Bradshaw, "Habits of Plants and Flowers." Lantern views.
PORTH BRANCH (30 Middle-street, Pontypridd): 6, A Meeting.
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): A lecture or reading (see Saturday's local papers).
SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, Market-place): 7, A Scottish reading.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton.—February 11, Stanley; 25, Manchester. March 4, Porth, South Wales.

H. PERCY WARD, 2 Leamington-place, George-street, Balsall Heath, Birmingham.—February 11, Birmingham; 25, Birmingham. March 11, Sheffield; 18, Birmingham. April 1, Glasgow; 8, Birmingham; 15, Stockton-on-Tees; 29, Birmingham.

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