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PRICE TWOPENCE.

“Our” Hospitals.

LAST Sunday was Hospital Sunday, and collections were made in the London churches and chapels for the relief of the sick—or rather, to put it more accurately, for the support of those public institutions in which the poorer sick are doctored gratis, and in which they sometimes suffer much of many physicians. This great concern of the various religious bodies for hospitals and their inmates is a very recent phenomenon. It started when the ministers found that preaching kingdom-come was falling a little flat, and when they saw the advisability of adding what they call “social Christianity” to the old program. But now that the matter is taken up in the various places of worship engage once a year in a sort of charitable competition. Instead of obeying Christ—which is about the last thing a Christian ever contemplates—and keeping their charities private, they assure themselves beforehand of the utmost publicity. Not letting one hand know what the other does in this way is antiquated nonsense. Modern, up-to-date Christianity knows of many improvements (and practises them!) on the teachings and policy of its primitive Founder. And one of these improvements is to have your gifts published in a general list, so that those who give little may be shamed and those who give much may be glorified. For of such is the kingdom of heaven.

Hospital Sunday is also utilised by the preachers as a first-rate opportunity—considering the rattle of the collection-boxes—for blowing the trumpet of their faith; which is also in defiance of their Master’s precepts. The occasion is marked by a perfect riot of self-congratulation. Pulpits and pews beam upon each other with proud benevolence. To listen to the sermons you would imagine that Christianity had invented charity, and pretty nearly every other virtue. Do we not hear indeed, from time to time, that the very word “humanity” was unknown before the Christian era? And is not the authority of Max Müller invoked to cover this cheap philological sophistry? As though the word “philanthropy”—the Greek form of “humanity”—is not at least as old as Plato; and as though so good a judge as Lord Bacon had not preferred it to the later Latinism!

One of last Sunday’s preachers who got reported in the London papers was Canon Ainger, who held forth in the Temple Church, where some of the congregation must have been at least in a position to detect his inaccuracy. Canon Ainger referred to hospitals as “those noble institutions which, of all that had sprung out of their religion, were nearest and closest to the teaching and example of the Savior.” Now we beg to remind this clergyman—upon whom we will not be too hard, for the sake of his editorial labors on Charles Lamb—that the “teaching and example” of his Savior were absolutely foreign to hospitals and all their ways. Jesus Christ never said a good word for doctors; on the contrary, he sneered at them. Nor did he recommend medicine or surgery. His one recipe for the cure of the sick was faith and prayer. Yet those who follow him in this respect are called Peculiar People, and are occasionally sent to prison as felons for doing so; while a Canon of the Church of England has the coolness to represent Jesus Christ as a special patron of hospitals—and it is a wonder he did not add dispensaries. A mad world, my masters! Yes, a mad world, indeed; where a very small part of the lunatics are in asylums, and a very small part of the rogues are in gaol.

When a man like Canon Ainger talks in this way, one is tempted to call every clergyman a professional liar. It is not true, and he must know it, that hospitals sprang out of his religion. Hospitals for men and women—yes, and even hospitals for animals—existed in India hundreds of years before Jesus Christ was born. That is, if he ever was born. Public provision was made for the sick in ancient Egypt. Every quarter of Pagan Rome had its *archiater*, or paid medical officer, whose function it was to attend to the sick. And some of us think to-day that, if hospitals are to exist at all, they should be municipalised. In Greece the Asclepians, dedicated to Æsculapius the god of healing, were asylums for the sick, and schools of medical instruction before medicine assumed a scientific character. They were always situated on salubrious spots, and near thermal springs or medicinal fountains. Access was free to all, and the priests subsisted on voluntary oblations. “As asylums,” Dr. John Watson says, “the temples bore no inapt resemblance to the hospitals and infirmaries of modern times; into which, in fact, some of them were ultimately converted.”

Christianity did not invent charity, and it did not originate hospitals; in fact, it took a thousand years to improve ever so little upon the example of its predecessors. The truth is that the hospital system does not depend upon religion at all, but upon medical science; and hospitals are multiplied and enlarged as the medical profession grows more numerous and powerful. Much of what passes for charity is disguised professionalism. The hospitals are the great practice-grounds for the doctors, who do not attend there for nothing, but for the acquisition of experience, skill, and dexterity, that may be turned to profit in the treatment of rich patients. This is an aspect of the case which the thoughtful public should bear in mind, in spite of the superficial plaudits of the clergy, who are also looking after their professional interests.

Now let us see what the Christian Churches in London really do contribute to the hospitals. Seven thousand patients are treated daily as in-patients or out-patients. Multiply this number by the days of the year, and what a vast army of the more or less “unfit” is realised! Yet only £38,000 is collected in all the churches and chapels. According to Archdeacon Sinclair, this represents one halfpenny per head for the five million inhabitants of London. But it really represents a penny three-farthings per head. Yet when this gentleman’s arithmetic is corrected, what is there to boast of? Less than twopence each all round! And they call heaven and earth to witness their unparalleled bounty! For verily the springs of charity would run quite dry without their wonderful religion!

Archdeacon Sinclair had the candor to remark that the slenderness of this contribution towards the maintenance of the hospitals was “a grave accusation against the Christianity of London.” We quite agree with him; not because we expect Christians to be more charitable than other people, but because of the enormous pretensions they make to superiority. They are the most pharisaic religionists on earth; ridiculously belauding their own faith, and malignantly vilifying every other. They recognise no good outside their own fold, and they lay claim to all the conquests of civilisation and humanity, after resisting them until opposition became not only futile but contemptible. It is this feature of Christianity that most raises the gorge of the heathen and the unbelievers.

G. W. FOOTE.

A Real Secular Reformer.

(Concluded from page 387.)

WE designate Robert Owen a real Secular reformer because in all his efforts for human improvement he relied upon mundane agencies and adopted the Secular method to obtain both individual and national advancement. As we pointed out in our article last week, he never resorted to Christianity to aid him in his work of reform. Indeed, amongst Secularists to-day there cannot probably be found a more determined and outspoken antagonist to the errors of the Christian faith than was Robert Owen. His writings abound with proofs of this statement. The following are his own words, which we have taken from volume i. of his publication, *The New Moral World* :—

"I proclaim that ignorance and error, crime and folly, had their source in the different religions of the world.Religion destroys the rational faculties of the human race.....Through the natural effect of these vicious institutions of the priesthood, acting and re-acting continually upon human nature, they are also calculated, as well as if they were devised for the purpose, to constitute a weak, artificial, heartless, miserable condition of human society. The Christian customs cannot, therefore, be intended to be the practice of the human race when they shall acquire sufficient experience to become rational creatures.....It [Christianity] supposes that we have been formed with the power, by our own will, to believe or not to believe what is presented to our mind; which is contrary to fact.....No sect of religionists has mental charity or genuine kind feelings for those who possess other and opposing notions of religion, or for those who are compelled to believe that all mysterious religions are founded in deception.....During fifty years I have been actively engaged in opposing the religions of faith in things unseen and unknown, and the cruel, unjust, horrid, and irrational state of society which these religions alone could have produced" (pp. 44, 84, 107, 193, and 225).

Of course, the above excerpts refer to the theological religions of the world. Before his death Owen started a "Society of Rational Religionists," but its principles were all opposed to Christianity. He also became a kind of Spiritualist; still, to the final hour of his life he regarded all supernatural religions as "the bane of humanity, and the cause of all its crimes, irrationalities, absurdities, and sufferings."

A mind thus free from the follies and retarding influences of theology was necessary for directing the work of a genuine Secular reformer, which undoubtedly Robert Owen was. Believing as he did that human character depended for its excellence or otherwise upon proper education and the conditions of environment, he directed his attention to the training of the young and to improving the state of society in which they were placed. He knew that, as a rule, children are not devout, nor do they take kindly to religious or theological instruction. Considering the often mysterious and transcendental character of such training, it is not more to be wondered at that the young should dislike it than that their youthful energies should be perverted and weakened by compelling them to undergo the torture of a course of metaphysics. That they are curious and inquisitive, we all know; but this curiosity is really the spur and incentive to the acquisition of knowledge which will lead them to profit by the monitions of experience. Manifestly, there is, as the adage says, "no royal road to learning," and when we refer an inquiring child to the erroneous cosmogony of the first chapters of Genesis we do no other than imprint upon its mind a series of ideas of a prejudicial nature, which, if once clearly fastened on that mind, it may evermore be almost impossible to modify, although science, criticism, and reason should unite—as we think they do—in affirming that the Mosaic cosmogony has no foundation in reason or just claim upon the intellectual assent. We bend the twig when young, and subsequently struggle in vain to straighten the twisted and deformed tree. Children ought not to have creeds or catechisms forced upon them; their lives should be a pleasure, and they should be carefully preserved from everything of a saddening or melancholy nature. No sane person will, we think, pretend that theology is a cheerful study; it is rather the reverse,

and hence we think that the young can derive no possible satisfaction from the study of man's alleged original fall from righteousness, his alleged perversity, his sins against Deity, and that Deity's acts of vengeance for those offences. Owen thought that the time would come when mankind would find it hard to believe that their precursors were so irrational in their treatment of the young as to feed them with meats that are only proper for maturity. At present those who recognise the absurdity of such a proceeding are comparatively few, but they compensate for this in depth of thought and solidity of judgment; and we are confident that every year which elapses is bringing society nearer to the perception of the fact that neither considerations of Divinity nor of heaven or hell are at all the proper pabulum, or food, for the youthful mind. On the other hand, the conviction is steadily gaining ground that the proper work of the educationalist is to prepare his pupils for the great battle of life, to strengthen the understandings of those entrusted to his care in all that is essential to the making of men and women fit to inhabit this beautiful earth, and to transmit to their posterity a nobler heritage than that previously acquired by themselves.

To thoroughly understand the great services which Robert Owen rendered in emancipating the rising generation from the state of physical and moral degradation to which theologians and their teachings have reduced them, it is only necessary to consider the conditions of the young when this Secular reformer commenced his work. Children as young as six years old were forced to labor, and some of them were compelled to work fourteen hours a day. Further, they were submitted to heartrending cruelty and slow starvation which would "make the annals of slavery pale." Mr. John Fielden, who had personally investigated the apprentice system, tells us "that they were flogged, fettered, and tortured in the most exquisite refinement of cruelty; that they were in many cases starved to the bone, while flogged to their work, and that even in some instances they were driven to commit suicide to evade the cruelties of a world in which, though born to it so recently, their happiest moments had been passed in the garb and coercion of a workhouse." "It is," says Mr. Balmforth, "a curious commentary on our boasted humanity that the hardships and abominations of the apprenticeship system were only brought to light by the foulness and disease which emanated from the dens in which the children were worked and housed." (See *Social and Political Pioneers*, pp. 72 and 73.) Side by side with this cruelty and the poisonous atmosphere in which the children had to exist there was a deplorable amount of juvenile ignorance. In 1803 the only instruction children received was in Sunday schools. The teaching given there was, we are told, very "limited and primitive." It was feared that the "inferior orders" would become educated "above their station," and so "imbibe notions of pride." Thus theology was then, as it is now, the persistent enemy to educational progress.

It was to remedy these terrible evils, to which the rising generation were victims, that Robert Owen directed his attention. The first thing he did at New Lanark was to improve the surrounding conditions of the people. He found that they "lived almost without control—in habits of vice, poverty, idleness, debt, and destitution." Owen, says the author of *Social and Political Pioneers*, "immediately began a thorough reform." He reduced the temptation to drunkenness and all vice; he urged wives to make their homes so comfortable that their attractions for husbands should be greater than those of the public-houses; that the age at which children were employed should be raised to eight or ten years; and that the village school be open to all from the age of five without any charge. Owen was the first to establish infant schools in Great Britain. He saw their necessity in the formation of good characters. His method of instruction was one of love, not fear; kindness, not punishment. With him education was made pleasant by pictures, games, music, singing, and dancing. Thus the emotions were cultivated without the sacrifice of reason.

Unfortunately, Owen did not live to see the complete triumph of his principles. Christian bigotry was his greatest foe. Simply because he was a Secular reformer

he was ignored by the professed followers of Christ. All education that did not include religious dogmas was severely condemned. Christian professors said plainly that the children of the poor were not to be taught to write or cipher. It would render "them discontented and unhappy in their lot." "Instead of making them good servants," education "would render them fractious and refractory; it would enable them to read seditious pamphlets, vicious books, and publications against Christianity." This will give the reader some idea of the kind of Christian opposition a Secular reformer in Owen's time had to encounter; and it will also explain to a rational mind why Secular principles have been comparatively slow in their development. It is, however, a great consolation to us to know that much of the theological bigotry of the past has been overcome by the power of Freethought, and we hope and believe that within the next few decades Secularism will be still more victorious over the stagnating influence of Christian theology.

CHARLES WATTS.

The Pharisaic Religious Press.

The *Rock*, in a recent issue, publishes a leader on "The Indecency of the Daily Press." The daily press will probably survive the accusation, and is hardly likely to mend its ways—should that be necessary—in consequence of the censure of the *Rock*. That ultra-Protestant journal, following other Evangelical prints, has taken upon itself to denounce the publication of extended reports of divorce proceedings. Why it should do so just now is obvious. At the time when its leader was published there had terminated a divorce suit which had occupied the attention of the Court *ad nauseam* for an exceptionally long period. As the public may remember, it was a case in which the principal parties were a clergyman, his wife, and a churchwarden. The clergyman obtained a divorce, the churchwarden was assessed in heavy damages, and the clergyman's wife was ordered to pay the costs of her husband and another party to the suit out of her separate estate. All the parties were church people, and the evidence, to say the least of it, was unsavory. Had it been one of those aristocratic, or military, or theatrical causes which unhappily are not infrequent, the religious press would have probably abstained from comment. These pious journals would have passed by with no further demonstration than uplifted hands and eyes. But this divorce suit, during its fifteen days' hearing, revealed a specially rotten state of things in a little church circle. And so the religious press, last week and the week before, endeavored to divert attention from the case itself by roundly abusing the daily press for publishing reports. As if, indeed, church people, when they are found out, are entitled to a special immunity in regard to the publicity of their misdeeds.

No particular interest attaches to the story told in the Divorce Court. There are probably infinitely worse cases occurring in religious circles which never see the light. The only point calling for notice is the Pharisaic tone adopted by the Christian weeklies. They don't cast stones at the woman taken in adultery, or the pious church official who seduced her, but at the press which reports—and in a skilfully-guarded fashion, too—the main features that came out in evidence. And they put on an air of offended modesty, and make such protestations on behalf of decency in print that one would never think that they are engaged, for all they are worth, in pushing the circulation of the Holy—and, to some extent, dirty—Scriptures.

In a portentous style, the *Rock* commences its leader with the words: "A very serious suggestion is made, and deliberately made, in the above heading"—namely, "The Indecency of the Daily Press." Very graciously, it goes on to say, the English daily press, as a whole, is a pattern to the world. But there is a "very serious blemish" in it, and this, of course, as we quite expected, is disclosed in the reports of divorce cases, and especially of the church case which has just been tried. "Scarcely a paper we have seen has not related some incidents which should never find mention in journals which, by their general high character, have free admittance to

our homes." Well, the daily press didn't invent the incidents. It did its best to cloak them over, short of suppressing what the public expect, if they are not entitled, to know. Surely the censure of the *Rock*, and the other religious papers, should be visited upon those of its own Church who, in the retirement of the vicarage grounds, and in the vicarage itself, enacted all that has been disclosed. According to the *Rock*, no excuse is available for "sullyng the pages of our daily press with gross details which, so far from serving any good purpose, can only have a demoralising influence, all the more dangerous because a respectable daily paper finds free circulation amongst all sections and all ages of the community."

This is all very fine, in a Pharisaic kind of way, but it wants a little examination. What does the *Rock* mean by "serving any good purpose"? An account of a murder, it might say, serves no good purpose; or the report of a railway smash, because that inspires travellers with oftentimes unnecessary terror; or of an inquest, because that may lead to gloomy thoughts; or, as recently, of a parson self-convicted of 120 frauds, because that may show what is possible in spite of religious training and professional preaching. The daily press takes things as they come; it is the brief chronicler of the times, and if the times are so much out of joint that church people, who are supposed to be examples to others, figure disgracefully in a public court, that is no fault of the public press, which, mildly as may be, records their misdoings. Who is to decide whether a good purpose is served? We can't allow the *Rock* to constitute itself a censor of what may or may not serve a useful purpose, and therefore what may or may not appear. If we did, that energetic paper might not only strike out in the press the mere mention of *Young v. Young* and *Mintoft*, but might go into the Law Courts and strike it off the cause-list, and then go further and censure the President of the Divorce Court for presuming to hear it. There is no limit to censorship of that kind if once its right of interference is allowed.

However much we may respect the *Rock*, we cannot admit its claim to dictate the amount of publicity, if any, which should be given to particular cases as they arise. That paper never fails to record in the fullest form all sorts of crimes, real or imaginary, alleged against Romish priests, monks, and nuns. If, on the other hand, Mr. Kensit were accused of walking off with the Primate's crozier, it would suppress disclosure of the appropriation as not likely to serve a useful purpose, though it might be only another instance of Mr. Kensit's removal of distasteful ecclesiastical "trinklements." Quite recently the *Rock* stretched the truth till it came near to absolute lying in its account of a Protestant outrage on a Roman Catholic procession at Peckham.

The main point is that the Church press has suddenly discovered a "grave evil" in its more widely circulated contemporaries consequent upon the aforesaid divorce suit. "The diffusion of admittedly impure and debasing literature demands our serious attention," says the *Rock*. "Such an evil is calculated to undo half the good which is done by our Sunday schools, and by the circulation of sound, pure literature. It is not exaggerating to denounce, as an enormous public danger, the inclusion in newspapers of matter which, if published in book-form or for stage production, would lead to suppression and perhaps prosecution."

We thank thee, O *Rock*, for that hyphenated term, "book-form." What about your filthy Old Testament? To use your own words, this accusation of ours is "deliberately made." We do not say that the Old Testament is entirely or designedly filthy. But filthy it is in parts, and that beyond all possible dispute. You say it is but the record of historical events, meaning thereby Hebrew traditions, though that does not cover the poetic and prophetic sections. But supposing it is mere history, where does it differ from the present-day newspaper reports of the Divorce Court? Why, only in its *naked, undisguised, unblushing obscenity*.

Where is the "useful purpose" served in half or a third or a fourth of these Hebrew narratives and allusions? The major portion convey no useful moral lesson. One does not need to specify the passages referred to, some of which are intolerably long as well

as grossly obscene. They are picked out, Sunday after Sunday, by the boys in your boasted Sunday schools and shown to one another under the very noses of their silly, half-awake teachers. If there is a moral attaching to them, it is lost, and in all cases there is the vice of suggestion. They seem to be practically inseparable from the general text. But whether or not the Old Testament can be Bowdlerised, no real attempt to deal with it in that way is made. The Bible, with all its old Jewish filth, is pitched bodily and unexpurgated at the heads of children and youths arrived at puberty with absolute carelessness as to the consequences. Youths and maidens are commanded to read it and digest it, and they do—the parts which excite their youthful curiosity and growing thirst for sexual knowledge.

To the *Rock* and its fellow Pharisaic organs of the religious press one is impelled to say: Leave the daily press alone; it knows its own business better than you. At the best, your interference is impertinence. Put your own house in order. Overhaul your so-called Holy Writ. "Thou hypocrite, first cast the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast the mote out of thy brother's eye."

FRANCIS NEALE.

The Decay of Persecution.

(Continued from page 388.)

IN the primitive condition of mankind peace, as we understand it, is practically non-existent. In its place there exists a state of intertribal warfare, relieved only by periods during which a species of armed truce prevails. But the expectation of each man is to kill someone or be killed himself. All are so familiarised with pain and death that each will inflict either one or the other with little or no compunction. The stories one reads of the tortures and sports in vogue amongst savage races, the custom, not quite general, of killing all the members of a beaten tribe, show this much quite clearly, and serve to explain the origin of the (to us) brutal punishments inflicted for various offences.

Amongst ourselves, on the contrary, the conditions of life are such that pain in its extreme form is known chiefly by hearsay. Not one person in a thousand has ever witnessed a death by violence; nor is the sight of suffering as common as in previous ages. There is as a necessary result of these altered conditions a decided unwillingness to inflict pain, and a corresponding sense of uneasiness on witnessing it; while in early societies, where suffering in one form or another is the normal accompaniment of everyday life, there is far greater callousness shown at its presence.

Again, the mere development of the industrial and the decline of the military type of society brings about the development of a new set of feelings, or rather brings into the foreground a number of feelings that have hitherto been kept in subordination. In a military State the necessary amount of combination is chiefly secured either by coercion from within or pressure from without. In an industrial State there is a greater amount of individual initiative, greater personal independence, and the requisite organisation is secured either by growth or by mutual agreement. Although these two types may co-exist in the same society, yet they are the negation of each other, and it is simply impossible for people to engage in industrial pursuits, which necessarily involve the growth of a different set of feelings to those essential to war, without developing sympathies and opinions that materially modify their outlook of life in general.

In the history of any country of modern times there is enough evidence to show that the growth of toleration and the secularisation of politics are practically two aspects of the same general process. Day after day people find themselves brought into close personal contact with those whose opinions they hold, or are supposed to hold, in the utmost detestation. On the political or social platform they find themselves side by side with people who, while theoretically detestable in one direction, are practically admirable in all others. They find themselves fellow thinkers in the same council, fellow workers in the same movements, sharing in the

same ideals, and participating in the same triumphs. Insensibly the standard of judgment alters. Instead of testing people by their speculative opinions concerning another order of existence, they are content to judge their fellows by their conduct here, and by their opinions of the life in which they have a common share, and of which they each bear a portion of the common burden. The strength of their social sympathies gradually overcomes the power of their supernatural differences, and these experiences, added to the peaceful feelings that are the normal accompaniments of industrial pursuits, inevitably weaken the sentiments from which the lust of persecution springs.

The complexity of modern life still further accentuates this process. Where the conditions of life are simple, and the experiences that one passes through are often repeated, conclusions are reached rapidly, and the opinions formed are not disturbed by observing that other people from exactly the same data have drawn an altogether different conclusion. Under such conditions opinions once formed are relatively unchangeable. A good illustration of this principle is seen in the case of uneducated people, who form opinions with a rapidity and express them with a dogmatism that is in striking contrast to one who takes a more comprehensive view of the subject under consideration. Experience, which makes far wider knowledge, also makes far greater caution in forming and expressing opinions, and greater respect for conclusions of an opposite character than others may have arrived at.

But—and it is here that scientific discoveries begin to play their part—as the view of life widens, when phenomena that appear so simple are shown to be really very complex and capable of a radically different interpretation, when people find themselves brought into contact with differences of opinion where they least expect to find them, and when it is further observed that these differences are yet accompanied by good and useful lives, there grows up a suspicion of one's own fallibility and a distrust of opinions that have hitherto been regarded as beyond the possibility of doubt. There is induced an almost unconscious revision of accepted beliefs, a greater readiness to be on the look out for error, and thus by many subtle causes there ensues a weakening of that spirit of dogmatism which, while it is one of the conditions of persecution, is at once the distinguishing feature of primitive savages and modern bigots.

But all this, while sufficient to account for the nature of punishments inflicted for heresy, does not explain their origin. This, I believe, is to be found in the view then held as to the relations of the individual to the social structure. In the modern sense of the words, individual rights and individual responsibilities can scarcely be said to exist in primitive societies. The individual exists far more for the benefit of the tribe than the tribe can be said to exist for the benefit of the individual. An important result of this view of the matter is that actions and opinions are judged from the standpoint of the whole of the body politic rather than from that of its individual members. There is a strong sense of corporate responsibility, the whole of the tribe being held more or less responsible for the conduct of each of its units. This sense of general responsibility is, of course, present to a greater or smaller extent with all societies, savage or civilised; only in the latter case it is, an organic responsibility that refers to the conduct of life in this world, and not to a world concerning which we have no certain information, and which, for aught we know to the contrary, may not even exist.

The peculiar feature of uncivilised society is that this natural feeling of corporate responsibility is transferred to a region in which it has no legitimate application. If an individual holds an opinion that is unfavorable to the gods, or declines to perform certain services on behalf of the gods, he may excite their anger and call down punishment on the whole of the tribe; and this belief naturally excites a lively sense of resentment against such troublesome individuals. When a member of one savage tribe is injured by the member of another, no trouble is taken to find the offending party and have it out with him; any one of his fellow-tribesmen will do, and a vendetta is declared against the whole. There is a splendid impartiality about such

an arrangement; and the uncivilised man conceives his god as acting in exactly the same manner, which is his way of paying a compliment to the deity. The heretic is, consequently, not merely a mistaken man; he is a socially injurious one. He may involve the whole society in punishment or destruction, and his suppression becomes a matter of social necessity. He must be thrown overboard, as the sailors did with Jonah, and for exactly the same reason.

This sense of corporate responsibility will be found to play a large part in the early history of all religions. It is to be found running right through the Bible, and undoubtedly had great weight with the early Christians. And it is this alone which for generations gave persecution an air of sacred duty, and enabled men and women who were otherwise admirable to take part in it. For the fact that so many good men and women aided and abetted the persecutions of past generations loses its air of paradox when we bear in mind that it was a logical effect of early religious opinions. As I have said, the heretic is not only one who is intellectually in error; he is the promulgator of opinions that will wreck the eternal happiness of all who may be influenced by him. He is a centre of spreading infection, and one who may cause the deity to withhold his favors from the society of which he is a part. It is thus that persecution takes on the air of a solemn obligation that a man owes to his fellows; it is in this manner that there are invoked in its interest all the feelings and sentiments that we otherwise associate with the most solemn of all social duties. In brief, unbelief is not under these conditions a matter between deity and the individual; it is a species of high treason towards the State, and is treated accordingly.

This state of things is gradually broken down by the growth of more accurate conceptions of the nature of individual and social responsibility, and also by the inevitable separation of social matters from theology. The State is seen to exist for the individual instead of the individual for the State, and this conception necessarily produces a marked change in our notions of individual and social responsibility. I myself, and not my neighbor, am responsible for whatever speculative opinions I may entertain; and, provided such opinions do not issue in actions that are socially injurious, society has no more collective concern with them than it has to decide what food I shall eat or what liquid I shall drink. And, finally, the growing exclusion of theology from political and social matters leads to the same result. While the selection and enforcement of religious opinions is believed to be part of the functions of the State, punishment of heresy is as natural as punishment for refusal to pay rates and taxes. With the separation of the two spheres, the picture of government enforcing theological opinions is a proceeding that must strike all by its incongruity. Religion is left to depend more and more upon its power of conviction, and the appeal to reason or to discussion inevitably produces a type of mind that is foreign to the idea of persecution.

In the growth of this altered conception of the nature of corporate responsibility we have, I believe, one of the main causes that have led to people looking upon persecution as little short of a crime. That a more diffused culture, the power of discussion, and the growth of more correct ideas concerning the operations of nature have played their part is undeniable; but it seems to me that they are secondary rather than primary causes of the change. As I have tried to show, the main causes of persecution are (1) the extension to the supernatural world of that sense of corporate responsibility which, excluding individual rights and responsibilities, conceives every opinion as socially injurious or beneficial, and punishes or rewards in accordance with that view; and (2) that state of primitive warfare which, habituating men to the sight of suffering, induces carelessness of the suffering of others, and thus gives rise to punishments of a brutal and bloodthirsty character. This spirit of persecution has declined in proportion to the growth of the status of the individual and the development of industrial life, the former fixing the direct responsibility for opinions; and the latter, by giving rise to the more peaceful and benevolent instincts, has rendered the sight of pain more unusual, and therefore has made its infliction more distasteful. Persecution is, unfortunately, far from dead; but then

neither are militarism and its associated feelings. We are in a transitional state, and, although we still have with us the old type of mind as a reminder of less civilised times, it bids fair to become weaker and finally disappear from the face of civilised society.

C. COHEN.

A Century of Christian Charity!

AN INCOMPLETE LIST OF BLASPHEMY PROSECUTIONS AND SENTENCES ON FREETHINKERS DURING ONE HUNDRED YEARS IN THIS BOASTED LAND OF FREEDOM.

- 1794—Simmons, for *Age of Reason*, two years.
- Crosby, " " two years.
- 1797—John Davies, for "*Scripturians' Creed*", one year.
- John Gratton, for *Christian Mysteries*, heavy fine.
- Thomas Williams, three years' imprisonment.
- 1812—D. T. Eaton, prosecuted seven times, pillory inflicted, and £2,800 literature destroyed.
- 1813—George Houston, two years and fine £200.
- 1817—William Hone. His political parodies were prosecuted as blasphemous.
- Shelley deprived of his children on account of his infidelity.
- Richard Carlile, nine and a-half years and fines amounting to thousands of pounds.
- Retchford, six months for report of Carlile's trial.
- 1818—James Williams, six months.
- Joseph Russell, six months.
- James Tucker, six months.
- 1819—John Cahuac, heavy fine for Palmer's *Principles of Nature*.
- 1820—Thomas Davison, two years.
- Joseph Swann, four and a-half years.
- Thomas Tyler, three months.
- 1821—Jane Carlile, two years for Sherwin's *Life of Paine*.
- Mary Anne Carlile, two years.
- 1822—Mrs. Susan Wright, twenty and a-half months.
- Samuel Waddington, one year for *Principles of Nature*.
- Humphrey Boyle, twenty-three months.
- Charles Trust, six months and £20 fine for *Principles of Nature*.
- Joseph Rhodes, two years.
- Joseph William Trust, two years.
- William Holmes, two years.
- John Barkley, six months.
- William Rance, one year.
- Charles Sanderson, one year.
- Turner, one year.
- Atkinson, one year.
- 1823—Robert Wedderburn, two years for blasphemous speech.
- William Tunbridge, two years.
- James Watson, one year for *Principles of Nature*, and several other prosecutions.
- John Jones, six months for Carlile's *Letter to Wait*.
- William Clark, four months for *Queen Mab*.
- 1824—William Campion, three years.
- John Clarke, three years.
- William Haley, three years.
- T. R. Perry, three years.
- Richard Hassell, two years.
- T. Jefferies, eighteen months.
- W. Cochrane, six months.
- J. Christopher, six months.
- M. J. O'Connor, six months.
- James Afleck, three months for *Queen Mab*.
- 1827-31—Robert Taylor, three years for blasphemous discourses.
- 1840—John Cleave, four months for Haslam's *Letters to Clergy*.
- Abel Heywood, committed for trial, but prosecution abandoned.
- Henry Hetherington, several prosecutions.
- 1841—Moxon, the publisher, the last prosecution for *Queen Mab*.
- 1842—Charles Southwell, one year and £100 fine for *Oracle of Reason*.
- G. J. Holyoake, six months.
- George Adams, one month.
- Mrs. Harriett Adams, one month.
- 1843—H. Robinson, twelve months.
- James Finlay three months.
- 1844—Matilda Roalse, two months.
- 1846—Thomas Paterson, fifteen months.
- 1857—Mrs. Emma Martin, six months.
- Thomas Pooley, twenty-one months (five months only served owing to exertions of Buckle, Mill, etc.).
- 1878—Annie Besant, deprived of her child for publishing an atheistical work and associating with an infidel author (Bradlaugh).
- 1882—Henry Seymour, for blasphemous placard.
- 1883—G. W. Foote, one year for *Freethinker*.
- W. J. Ramsey, nine months for *Freethinker*.
- H. A. Kemp, three months for *Freethinker*.

In addition to the foregoing, scores of the 750 prosecutions of the unstamped press were simply blasphemy trials. The authorities disguised the odiousness of their acts under cover of proceeding against unstamped papers or pamphlets. The list I have compiled does not include about thirty prosecutions directed against booksellers. Carlile's shopmen, for example, suffered very severely, twenty dividing amongst them forty years' imprisonment.

Our late leader had to win the seat which Northampton gave him in the face of the most bigoted and terrible opposition. The late Marquis of Queensberry had his seat in the House of Lords taken from him on account of his infidelity. Last, but not least, thousands of pounds bequeathed for Freethought purposes in the past have been diverted to other channels. But, happily, Mr. Foote has succeeded in stopping this robbery.

MILNERMUS.

Acid Drops.

LORD SALISBURY is probably not a reader of the *Freethinker*. We only say "probably" because it does not do to be too sure. Some persons do read this journal who would never be suspected of looking at it, even through a telescope. What is certain is that Lord Salisbury's speech to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel was remarkably like our own article on "Breaking China." He observed that modern missionaries were not so fond of martyrdom as the ancient missionaries. They preach Christ with the guns behind them, and run back under cover when they are hard pressed. In the East they have a proverb, as Lord Salisbury reminded his hearers: "First the missionary, then the consul, then the general." Well, that is what we said, with a slight variation of language. Our statement was that the missionaries were advance agents of Commercialism and Imperialism.

The Bishop of Stepney let the cat right out of the bag. Preaching in St. Paul's Cathedral, he said that the Missionary Societies see to it that the trade of England and the flag of England are accompanied by the Banner of the Cross. Between the cynicism of Lord Salisbury and the asinism of the Bishop of Stepney the truth is coming to the daylight.

The *Daily News* hopes the missionaries will profit by Lord Salisbury's warning, and "temper their Christian enthusiasm with Christian prudence." But what is Christian prudence, and where is it to be found? We suppose it means Foreign Office prudence.

Apropos of Lord Salisbury's advice to missionaries, the *Topical Times* publishes the following satirical lines:—

Pack your bag and do not tarry,
Go and be a missionary,
Teach the heathen how to be
Circumspect, like you and me,
How to hide their shameful limbs,
How to warble Watts's hymns,
How to feel they're worthier far
Than their erring neighbors are!

Yet I warn you at the start. Ah!
Be a saint, but not a martyr;
Why should missionaries come
To a useless martyrdom?
If the natives won't admit you,
If they all look black and hit you,
Since that proves their country lacks hymns,
Wire for soldiers and some Maxims!

Maxims are things to teach them!
When our military reach them,
Though at first, perhaps, they'll hurt them,
In the end they will convert them
Into British subjects, then,
For the remnant of those men,
Here on earth has heaven begun,
So your mission will be done!

"Cyrano," in the same journal, observes: "The foreigner would have been quite comfortable in China, able to live and trade in perfect peace and amity, if only he had never meddled with the religion of the people. And, in the name of common sense, why should he? China has a civilisation older than our own; has a literature that is worthy of respect; has religious beliefs deeply implanted in the minds of the people, so that attacks are keenly resented. I should think a prompt kicking into the street the most courteous treatment possible for the man who should come as a guest into my house, only to tell me that I was a superstitious fool, and that his special belief was to be swallowed by me. No man, unless he was a hopeless cad or lunatic, would think of behaving like this as between man and man. Why, then, should it be thought either decent or praiseworthy as between nation and nation? Lord Salisbury, I think, underrated what I may style the religious side of the question."

The *Umpire* thinks that Lord Salisbury did well to point out that the people the missionary wants to convert "know

full well that, though he freely gives them his tracts, it is only in exchange for their own tracts—of territory. Lord Salisbury further observed that the missionary does not go to the stake with the fervor that he used to. Quite so; there is more of the martyr about him nowadays. No wonder the natives jib when they learn that his mission is to be followed by their sub-mission!"

A word for "Brother Boxer" is put in by the *Manchester Sporting Chronicle*. Here is a noteworthy passage: "It is not as traders that the Boxer hates us and thirsts for our gore. It is because we have struck his deepest sensibilities and infuriated him on that question which is the most sacred to him—his religion. Because we persist in flooding his country with missionaries who tell him he is a heathen and a worshipper of graven images. It is religion again that is at the bottom of it all. Good old religion! A missionary with a box of fourpenny Testaments and a determination to show the benighted heathen the error of his ways is the greatest force in the world for producing hatred, bloodshed, and universal pandemonium."

While the missionaries are causing so much trouble in China, it is amusing to read that a Bible stall has been closed at Omdurman. Permission was granted for it early this year, but it has since been withdrawn. We also see that a mosque is being erected by the Government at Khartoum. Evidently it is not intended that the religious question shall be a source of disturbance in that locality. Lord Kitchener was wise in his generation when he refused to allow any religion in the Gordon College which he established out there at a cost of £100,000. His object—and a very statesman-like object too—was to provide a good and useful education for the better sort of young Arabs. The English men of God protested very loudly against that impious arrangement, but they found Lord Kitchener as easy to shift as the great wall of China.

A new poet has arrived. Shades of Milton, Tennyson, Browning, "lay low and say nuffin'." The new poet is the gifted Sheldon of *In His Steps* fame. Here are two verses by him which we take from the *Christian Age*:—

'Tis strange that what we think of most
We mention in our speech the least,
And Him of whom we ought to boast
We seat below us at the feast.

Though Christ, and Heaven, and Hell, and Death
Are most tremendous facts, we say,
We mention them with bated breath,
Except in sermons on Sunday!

The concluding lines of the second stanza are simply fine. They make you long, and long with an insatiable thirst, for more. Nothing so excruciatingly funny has found its way into print for many years past. There is no record of Jesus of Nazareth "dropping into poetry"; but if he ever did it in the style of the author of *In His Steps*, can we wonder that he was crucified?

Christian fighting Christian in the Transvaal was bound to eventuate in some personal surprises. We now learn that a Nottinghamshire Wesleyan fighting at the front recently came face to face with a Boer. Both levelled their rifles to shoot, but the Notts man shot first, killing his opponent. As the Boer fell, a New Testament dropped from his pocket. In it was a Methodist class-ticket, printed in Dutch. This ticket was sent to England, and was shown the other night to the members of the Wesley Quarterly Meeting.

"I should lose my faith in God," Kruger is reported to have said, "if I thought that the English were to remain masters of the Transvaal." Well, this only shows how religion lends itself to the personal point of view. Kruger did not feel like losing his faith in God when the natives were dispossessed of their land by the Boers.

Two recent novels bear the titles of *Ananias* and *Sapphira*. The books are not from the pen of the gifted editor of the *Methodist Times*.

According to the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, in the *Sunday Reader*, the great John Wesley predicted that "money would be the ruin of Methodism." Meanwhile the reverend gentleman and his ministerial colleagues are raking in as much of the "ruin" as they can lay hands on, and their efforts are attended with a considerable amount of success.

Mr. Hughes has never known a Methodist lose his religion because he was a poor man, but he has known several rich men suffer that deprivation. This is rather rough on rich Methodists, and likely to alarm them—perhaps to alarm them out of the Methodist fold into one that is more accommodating. Mr. Hughes hastens, therefore, to say that "the richer Methodists were never so Christian as they are now." But what he probably means is that he never knew them in such a shelling-out disposition.

John Wesley's advice is heartily endorsed by Mr. Hughes,

as it would doubtless be approved by most other men of God. "First: Get all you can honestly. Secondly: Receive all you can. Thirdly: Give all you can." We suspect that the third person is the most important member of this Trinity.

"A little more of the courageousness and plain-speaking of John Wesley," says Mr. Hughes, "and the manhood of the nation would not be so conspicuous by its absence at our places of worship." We note with pleasure this candid admission that men are scarce in churches and chapels, and we venture to think that they are not likely to be attracted there by an extra supply of collection boxes. What brings the preacher there is not so calculated to bring the congregation.

The Rev. Wickham Tozer, Chairman of the Ipswich Board of Guardians, is concerned at the fact that another member of that great Bumble authority "demeaned" himself by playing draughts and dominoes with the workhouse inmates. Good old Tozer spotted the member, and denounced him before the Board as having engaged in a pastime which was "derogatory to them, and not likely to do the workhouse inmates any good." He also doubted whether it was legal! Well, we have it on the authority of Bumble that the law is "a hass." We are perfectly sure that the Rev. Tozer is.

If you don't "Swelp me God" and kiss the book, you are liable in Germany to a fine of fifty marks and six weeks' imprisonment. That was the fate of a pious carpenter named Wollenberg, in the Mecklenburgh town of Rostock. He was called as a witness in a case, but declined to take the oath on the ground that Christ said "Swear not at all." It was pointed out to him that the Scriptures also ordained that everyone was to be subject to authority. He replied that obedience to men ceased when it entailed the breaking of one of God's commandments. Remaining obdurate, they fined him and clapped him in prison.

A story is going the round of the press of two shivering little urchins who listened one cold winter's night to a party of children singing the hymn, "There's a Friend for little children." Hearing this line, one of the urchins remarked to his companion: "We ain't seen 'im, 'ave we?" "No, we ain't," replied the other; but on hearing the next line, "Above the bright blue sky," he added: "That accounts for it, don't it?"

A certain Archbishop of York, who was an ardent fisherman, once betook himself for a few days to a little Yorkshire village which boasted a good trout-stream, and put up at a clean but modest hotel. His Grace, on his arrival, informed the landlord who he was, and on leaving wrote a cheque for his bill. The landlord closely scanned the signature. "What name is this?" he asked. "W. Ebor," answered his Grace. "Ah," said the landlord, as he pocketed the cheque, "I thought you were not telling me the truth when you said you were the Archbishop of York!"

One of the maniacs who think that people are to be converted by having Scriptural texts thrust under their noses recently scribbled up in a railway carriage on a southern line the words: "The wages of Sin is death!" Immediately afterwards some weary worker, stung, perhaps, by personal experience, wrote: "The wages on this line are a thousand times worse."

Mr. Janko Wesselinowitch recently published at Belgrade a humorous poem illustrating the loves of the ancient Greek gods. The police confiscated the paper, and accused him of "disloyalty to religion." In court the poem was read aloud, and, though none could deny the satire applied to Jove, Venus, and Mercury, the Public Prosecutor insisted upon the condemnation and punishment of the journalist. M. Wesselinowitch was therefore found guilty, but extenuating circumstances were admitted, the offended gods being only Greek deities, and he got off with five days' imprisonment.

At the Earl's Court Exhibition a member of the Mohammedan faith was put in charge of an Arab school in the Cairo section. Between intervals of teaching this good Mussulman had a keen eye for business, and was soon the centre of a brisk trade in "extracts from the Koran, sixpence each." Many visitors bought. Ladies put the pieces of paper in their purses, wondering if "there was anything in it"; whilst men pocketed the slips and laughed. They none of them could read Arabic. But the other day someone who could saw a "charm." He also laughed. The slim Oriental had written down some letters of the Arabic alphabet! Was it likely he was going to risk his immortal soul by selling the holy words to infidels for sixpence?

As it is usually the plodding fool that wins, so it is that the Sabbatarian crank, by sheer persistency, scores. What are the friends of a Rational Sunday thinking about? Some time ago we mentioned, amongst other inroads on reasonable liberty on the Lord's Day, the proposed action of the

Town Council at Bournemouth in the way of restricting Sunday recreation at that seaside resort. The proposals—stupidly bigoted as they were—should have been nipped in the bud. But no effective opposition was offered at an early period, and now it is almost too late to do anything, for the local authorities have definitely decided upon making Sunday at Bournemouth really a *dies non*.

No more Sunday drives are to be permitted. That is to say, no more vehicles will be allowed to ply for hire. You've got to go to church or chapel or lounge about. If you want to get out of Bournemouth itself, and away from all its quite too-numerous church steeples, you will have to "hoof it." Unless, indeed, you happen to have a private carriage of your own, and then you may go whithersoever you please. That is a beautiful example of bye-laws for the rich and bye-laws for the poor. The very members of the Town Council who stop the rural rides of visitors on Sundays do not hesitate to avail themselves of "Sunday labor," which, by the way, is enforced in carrying them to church, chapel, and to many other destinations, which may mean pleasure and possibly business at the end.

The parson-ridden Town Council have now decided that, at the expiration of all existing omnibus, motor-car, and excursion coach licenses, no further licenses shall be issued except on condition that the vehicles shall not ply for hire on Sunday. In the meantime, a member of the Council named Gunning has given notice that he will move the revoking of the licenses of any who, prior to the expiry aforesaid, undertake to carry people out on Sunday drives. Obviously the only thing that is open now, especially for week-end visitors, is to transfer themselves in future to some other seaside place, and leave pious Bournemouth to itself, not only on the "Holy Sabbath," but on the Friday evening, the Saturday, and the Monday. If this will suit the weak, supine, inarticulate tradespeople, it will also suit those who might be visitors under less restrictive conditions, but who can find equally agreeable resorts elsewhere.

Bournemouth has its attractions, despite its stupid municipal authorities, but it is a place stifled with oppressive piety; its public walks are saturated with the spittle of consumptive people who are wheeled about in bath-chairs, and its cemetery is a place crammed with the prematurely dead—a melancholy spot which afforded Sir Walter Besant material for a most pathetic chapter in one of his novels.

Several of the retaliatory summonses taken out by Swansea tradespeople against members of the Corporation for Sunday labor were dismissed. "Treating hides," which was alleged against two employees of a magistrate, was declared to be a work of necessity. We cannot see the logic of the decisions. Where is the greater wickedness in going into a shop for a shave or for a newspaper, or a cigar or a packet of sweets or a little fruit, than in "dressing hides"?

A grey-haired cleric named William Richmond was charged at Great Yarmouth with indecent conduct on the beach. In an abject, whining address to the Bench, he begged to be let off. He was, he said, a clergyman of the Church of England well-known in Norwich and in the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk. If the Bench allowed the case to be published, the Bishop would take his license from him. The Bench let him off with a fine of twenty shillings.

A local preacher named Alexander Allison was co-respondent in an undefended divorce case from Stratford-on-Avon. Damages to the amount of £500 were assessed against him.

St. Louis seems to have a queer, mixed population. During the recent tramcar strikes women were stripped naked and beaten in the public streets. We are not astonished, therefore, to hear of a peculiar divorce suit in that city. Mrs. Lou Bates, a well-known "society" lady, wants to be divorced from her husband. Mr. Bates, in his answer, charges that his wife has misconducted herself with the ghost of Mr. William J. Florence, the celebrated actor, and is engaged to marry him when she dies. What a rumpus there would have been in the world if Joseph of Nazareth had preferred a similar charge against *his* wife! The joke is that we are told he had good cause for doing so. We suspect, however, that Mr. Bates of St. Louis will find great difficulty in getting an American jury to believe such a yarn—even a jury of Christians.

The most low varlets of the Most High are opposed to the Sunday Opening of Museums and Art Galleries, and yet do not object to the Grand Bonnet and Costume Shows, with music, singing, and recitations, in most of the churches.

Considerable amusement was caused the other night at an Art Club by the production of the following letter, addressed by a well-known painter of religious subjects to a lady of the ballet: "Dear Gussie,—I have been at my wits' ends to find a model for the lady in my 'Annunciation.' I have just

thought of you. Do come. You would do splendidly.—Yours affectionately, etc.”

The report that the great and only Talmage is in want of an advertising agent is groundless.

The London *Echo* has for years been in the habit of referring to “Tom” Paine. It never made the mistake of printing “Jack” Morley or “Bill” Harcourt.

The Duchesse D’Orleans, who died in the Protestant Evangelical Church, was not allowed to be buried in the family vault at Dreux. She was laid in a tomb apart, but a hole was made in the wall through which the hand of her marble effigy clasps that of her husband. What a lovely thing this religion is, to be sure!

The sun never sets upon the British Empire. “Yes,” said a Yankee, “that’s because God Almighty cannot trust Britishers in the dark.”

In an article on “The Ebb of Crime” the *Guardian*, while regretting the “vague and indeterminate” character of the religious instruction given in elementary schools, gladly recognises that its general effect, together with that of “the moral teaching with which it is associated,” is to diminish criminality. But is this really true? Is it not rather true that the youthful mind is occupied and stimulated by the scholastic part of the education, that this leads to more thinking, and that more thinking leads to less anti-social conduct? We attach no value whatever to the religious teaching, and very little to the so-called moral teaching.

The old Grand Duke of Oldenburg, whose death occurred recently, was not so sensitive as Emperor William about his “dignity.” A few years ago a Social-Democratic workman was arrested on a charge of “insulting the Grand Duke,” and condemned to six months’ imprisonment. When the old Duke heard of it he issued this order, “Let the fellow loose at once! Nobody can insult me. If a donkey does not approve of Oldenburg, he can go and bray in some other land.” The language is robustious, but the sentiment is all right. It is a great pity that Emperor William does not feel with the old Duke of Oldenburg that nobody can really insult him but himself.

Mdlle. Marie Nix, alias Gambert, a lady palmist, has been fined twenty shillings and costs at South Shields for fortune-telling. She denied that she had foretold future events, and said that she merely read her customers’ characters from their hands. The bench, however, thought otherwise. These empirics often go a bit beyond their legal tether.

The English law declares that those who pretend to read the future are fraudulent impostors—that is, if they take money for their services. This constitutes the fraud, but the fraud presupposes an imposition. Every prophet is, therefore, an impostor. Yet the Bible was largely written by gentlemen of that persuasion.

It is proposed to send three London County Councillors to Canada and America to study the asylum system there. They would be accompanied by the assistant clerk of the Asylums Committee, the asylums engineer, and one of the medical superintendents. But why not a chaplain also? The lunatics ought to be represented.

The Ipswich Borough Asylum inmates are classified religiously. According to the local *Journal*, table No. 13 of the twenty-ninth annual report gives the following figures:—Church of England 65, Congregationalist 2, Baptist 3, Primitive Methodist 1, Free Ditto 1, Nonconformist 3. We suppose the three Nonconformists are too silly to say to what particular denomination they belong. That, however, is only by the way. What is important is (1) the overwhelming proportion of Church of England lunatics—a phenomenon which the parsons ought to explain; and (2) the utter absence of Freethinkers—which needs very little explanation. Gaols and lunatic asylums are patronised almost entirely by Christians.

We once heard an orthodox orator reciting the triumphs of his faith. “We build hospitals,” he said, “we build almshouses, we build orphanages, we build asylums—” But before he could get any further an auditor remarked in a clear, freezing stage-whisper, “And you fill ’em.” Convulsions of laughter, and the ruin of the catalogue.

Some time ago we drew attention to the fact that Tyson, the Australian multi-millionaire, was a Freethinker. We have now to note that Elsie Tyson, the poor Scotch lassie who finds herself the heiress of his four millions, professes no great love for the clergy. “I am told,” she said to an interviewer, “that I ought to give money to ministers and missions and all that, but I don’t believe much in them.

The ministers have been so awfully attentive to me now, but when mother was sick they hardly noticed her, yet she was very religious.”

The clergy are borrowing our thunder. We have asked “What has become of Hell?” and now the very same question is put in the very same words by the Rev. George Wolfe Shinn, D.D., in the *North American Review*. This gentleman’s answer does not err on the side of definiteness. He appears to have dismissed the idea of a material hell of everlasting fire, but he sees it is necessary to keep some sort of a hell, and he therefore falls back upon the “awful fact” of “retribution.” We suppose he thinks that is a fairly good working idea for the present. Of course it will get worn out (or seen through—perhaps and seen through) in time. But what does that matter? Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

“It is no concern of mine whether he considers himself an Agnostic or a Yahoo.” This is what a Catholic priest, called Scott, says of Mr. Headley, a well-known Yarmouth Freethinker, in the local *Mercury*. We congratulate this man of God on his beautiful manners. His behavior is evidently on a par with his learning; for has he not referred to Professor Draper as an “obscure” writer?

Professor Huxley’s family don’t appear to be in any hurry. It is five years since he died, and his Biography, which has been definitely promised again and again, seems still as far off as ever. It is now promised “with certainty” before Christmas. We hope this will be the last time.

The Lord has not been kind to the Rev. Henry J. Dodwell. This unhappy man of God has been incarcerated as a Criminal Lunatic in Broadmoor Asylum ever since 1878, when he fired a pistol at the then Master of the Rolls, Sir George Jessel. Several efforts have been made to secure his release, but they have all failed in face of the doctors’ certificates. It really seems that “Providence” ought to give this poor devil a little attention after twenty-two years of such melancholy confinement.

A contemporary tells a story of the Headmaster of a great public school who preached a sermon on a certain “anonymous donor,” and said: “His name is known only to me, and to God, and to one or two others.”

Death of Admiral Maxse.

FREDERICK AUGUSTUS MAXSE, who was born in 1833, died in London on Monday night (June 25). He was a man of great natural parts and lofty character. There was something almost Quixotic about him to men of more accommodating dispositions. He was an avowed Republican even in the face of Radical as well as Liberal cold-shouldering; he supported George Odger as a working-class leader when he was looked upon by society at large as a sort of Caliban; and most manfully, with voice and subscription, he stood up for Charles Bradlaugh when the “gentlemen of England” tried to break and kill him. Admiral Maxse always thought for himself and went his own way. Advanced as he was, he opposed woman suffrage; and in recent years he displeased a great many Radicals by his belief that England should stand well-armed and resolute before the world. He was not to be brow-beaten. His courage was innate and invincible. He was as brave in advocating what he held to be the truth as he was in carrying dispatches “at imminent risk of his life” in the Crimea. Mr. George Meredith, his life-long friend, dedicated a book to him—a transcendent honor; and he is said to have suggested the fine sailor hero of *Beauchamp’s Career*. But what will probably be of chief interest to the majority of my readers is that when I was struck down by the bigots in 1885, and most of the Liberal no less than the Tory papers were howling at me as a vulgar illiterate “blasphemer,” the only public man outside the organised Freethought party who protested against this misrepresentation was Admiral Maxse. He said it was charitable to think that my detractors did not know me, and he asked them whether such a man as they depicted me could have made my speech to the jury before Lord Coleridge. I thanked Admiral Maxse for this service when he was living, and I thank him again now that he is dead. Such a man stands out from the crowd of timid mediocrities. He was one of nature’s aristocrats. And that implies courage as well as brains.

G. W. FOOTB.

N.B.

The FREETHINKER is no longer published at 28 Stone-cutter-street, but at 1 Stationers' Hall Court, Ludgate Hill, London, E.C., the office of the Freethought Publishing Company, Limited, where all orders and communications should be addressed.

To Correspondents.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—All communications for Mr. 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.

JOSEPH COLLINSON.—See paragraphs. We highly appreciate your strenuous work for the Humanitarian League.

J. G. CALDERWOOD.—We have addressed and posted your letter to Mr. Holyoake. He resides at Eastern Lodge, Brighton.

W. WRIGHT.—Thanks for the cutting.

C. K. DUMAS.—We do not think that Charles Bradlaugh's part of the "Freethinker's Text-Book" is now procurable unless second-hand. Thanks for the cutting. Such things are always welcome.

G. BRIGHTY, who heard Mr. Foote's lecture at the Athenæum Hall on Missionaries in China, feels inclined to rank him among the prophets, as he anticipated all that Lord Salisbury said on the same subject soon afterwards. "Allow me," this correspondent says, "to offer you my humble congratulations."

CHICAGO LIBERAL SOCIETY and DR. T. B. GREGORY.—We are obliged to you for the little circular. It would be pleasant to drop in at one of your meetings, but as that is impossible we send you our sympathy and good wishes.

HARRY RICHARDSON, 6 Eleanor-street, Campbell-road, Bow, E., will be glad to receive any parcels of old Freethought literature for distribution in East London. He undertakes that whatever is sent him shall be "well placed."

F. A. DAVIES.—We should be very sorry to judge an entire lecture by a single sentence. As a matter of fact, we knew nothing about the lecture itself, and were not even aware that you were the lecturer. Being apprised of the fact, we hasten to say, in common fairness, that we have heard good reports of your lectures from Mr. Roger and other members of the Camberwell Branch. But this does not alter our view of the wisdom and taste of the sentence that caused all the trouble. You forget the place and the occasion of your lecture when you refer to some strong expressions in Mr. Foote's *Royal Paupers*. The contents of that pamphlet were not delivered as a lecture on a secular platform, and to a miscellaneous open-air audience at a time of great popular excitement. Mr. Foote wrote that pamphlet a good many years ago, as a private individual. No one else was implicated in what he said. Besides, you can often say in a book or pamphlet what it would be very indiscreet to say in public to a mixed assembly; and the very title of the pamphlet was a warning to every reader what to expect. There are passages in Shakespeare, for instance—to take an extreme illustration—which it would be absurd to expunge from his works; yet the man who ventured to quote them at a public meeting would deserve what he would probably get. Perhaps this will make the matter clear.

J. PARTRIDGE.—See paragraphs. Miss Vance has sent you one parcel of literature for free distribution, and another can be sent if required. We reciprocate your good wishes, and thank your Committee for their kind attention.

M. E. PEGG.—Pleased to hear that your start with the open-air work at Manchester was successful, and that fair audiences greeted the lecturer (Mr. Ward), in spite of the heavy downpour of rain.

W. COX.—We hope the outdoor experiment at Liverpool will be successful. It is work that needs some caution, as well as courage, in such a city.

A. R. FRENCH.—Glad to hear you are "delighted" with *Bible Romances*. The work has never been bound in a volume before, so that you must be one of the very first to read it in that form. The new edition of the *Bible Handbook* is nearly ready for publication.

T. WILMOT.—See "Sugar Plums." We hope to meet a big crowd of the Camberwell friends at the excursion, and we gather from your letter that the hope is likely to be realised.

G. DAWSON BAKER.—Received with thanks. Proof in due course. We are glad to hear that you are busy, though sorry that you have little leisure for Freethought writing. Yours is a pen that should be occupied.

J. E. HOSMER.—We have pleasure in penning a paragraph for "Sugar Plums" on your Liberal University, away in what used to be "the wild and woolly West," but is now the home of dauntless enterprise and high civilisation. You and your friends have our very best wishes for your success. Unfortunately, we cannot offer you anything more substantial. Those whose lives are devoted to working for Freethought have seldom more than suffices for the day's necessities, and not always that.

G. PORTER.—Too late for this number. Will try to find room in the next.

W. P. BALL.—Much obliged to you for the cuttings.

RECEIVED.—Two Worlds—The Boston Investigator—The Sunday Reader—Truthseeker (New York)—Yarmouth Mercury—The Ipswich Journal.

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

THE National Secular Society's office is at 1 Stationers' Hall Court, Ludgate Hill, E.C., where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 1 Stationers' Hall Court, Ludgate Hill, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 1 Stationers' Hall Court, Ludgate Hill, E.C.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Freethought Publishing Company, Limited, 1 Stationers' Hall Court, Ludgate Hill, E.C.

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

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

Sugar Plums.

THIS is our last opportunity of calling attention to the N. S. S. Annual Excursion to Brighton, which takes place to-day (July 1). Particulars will be found in our advertisement columns, on the sixteenth page of this week's *Freethinker*. It will be noticed that the Special Train starts at a convenient time for persons in almost all parts of London; and, as the tickets are priced at a very low figure, there should be a large gathering of the "saints" on this occasion, especially if the weather happens to be favorable. Mr. Foote will join the Victoria contingent.

Provision will be made for the sale of tickets outside (please note *outside*) the four London stations in the advertisement—Victoria, Clapham Junction, London Bridge, and New Cross. This is for the sake of those who have not been able to secure their tickets beforehand. The ticket-sellers will be recognised by their wearing the old Bradlaugh-Northampton colors.

As the tickets for children under twelve are only 1s. 6d., Freethinking parents should take advantage of the opportunity to give some of their "offshoots" a day at Brighton.

A general wish has been expressed that the excursionists might all meet together (this is *not* a pun) at *one* meal. Accordingly an arrangement has been made for a General Tea at 5.30 in the large, handsome hall known to Brightonians as the Skating Rink, in connection with Mellison's Restaurant, in West-street, a few doors from the sea front. It was difficult to secure a suitable room, and a guarantee had to be given for 100; so a large number should foregather, and there is plenty of room for all comers. The tea will be 9d. per head, and more substantial food can be obtained if desired.

The London Branches of the N. S. S. are suspending their open-air propaganda to-day (July 1) in order that their members—including the often hard-working committees—may have nothing to keep them from joining the excursion to Brighton. Mr. Wilmot, secretary of the Camberwell Branch, says "everybody is going" in his district, so the Christian Evidence people will have it all their own way for once (God bless them!) in Brockwell Park. The Finsbury Branch also asks us to mention that there will be no lectures on Clerkenwell Green, and Miss Vance asks us to make the same announcement with regard to Finsbury Park.

Mr. Cohen had a good meeting at the Quayside, Newcastle-on-Tyne, on Sunday morning, but the projected evening meeting on the Town Moor was ruined by the rain, which started heavily at 5.30 and kept on all night. Mr. Cohen is at Newcastle again to-day (July 1), when special opportunity for discussion will be afforded to an opponent at the morning meeting. The evening meeting will be held on the Town Moor, near the Recreation Ground.

Mr. A. B. Moss was very busy on Sunday. In the morning he lectured at Station-road, Camberwell, and in the afternoon at Peckham Rye. Both audiences were large and appreciative. In the evening Mr. Moss went to Edmonton, but was unable to lecture in consequence of the rain.

We have received a communication from Mr. J. E. Hosmer, president of the Liberal University, Silverton, Oregon, which is in need of funds, as is very natural. Such an enterprise will necessarily take a lot of time, hard work, and perseverance to carry it to a successful issue. Its object is to provide university training on Liberal—that is, Freethought—lines, and especially to prepare Liberal propagandists for work in

America. Of course "a day of prayer" is of no use in this case, but the Liberal University management has appointed July 20, 1900, as a Day of Donation. American Liberals are all requested to send a donation by that date, even if it is no more than twenty-five cents (one shilling); and the names and addresses of donors will be published in the *Torch of Reason*—a paper, by the way, which we are always pleased to see, but which reaches us rather irregularly. There may be some Freethinkers in England who would like to contribute something towards the establishment of this far-off institution, which is really deserving of the fullest possible support. For, after all, Freethought is like science and art—international; and the promotion of Freethought anywhere is the promotion of Freethought everywhere.

Mr. H. Percy Ward is doing "splendid work" in Birmingham, according to Mr. J. Partridge, who is a good authority on work. His open-air lectures in the Bull Ring on Wednesday and Friday evenings and Sunday mornings are giving a fillip to the movement. "We want more literature for free distribution," Mr. Partridge says. Well, we have instructed Miss Vance to send down a parcel; and perhaps there are others who could send some things they have no particular occasion for themselves. Mr. Partridge's address is, 65 Cato-street, Birmingham.

Mr. Ward has also started a Freethought Book Shop at 3 Rea-street, Digbeth, Birmingham, where he "invites the support of all reformers," and will, we hope, obtain it. Of course he will sell the *Freethinker* and all the books and pamphlets issued by the Freethought Publishing Company. He will also supply every other kind of "advanced" literature. This is a good move in the right direction, and we trust that Mr. Ward will be able to build up a fairly profitable business. What he wants to do, primarily, is to promote the circulation of Freethought literature; but at the same time he has got to live somehow, and if a man doesn't live by his work, what on earth is he to live on? We earnestly hope that this Freethought Book Shop will be a rattling success; and one way of making it so is for the Birmingham "saints" to drop in and spend as much as they can spare on papers and other publications for their own reading, or for lending to their friends and acquaintances.

The Birmingham Branch goes on picnic to-day (July 1), not to Jerusalem, but to Stratford-on-Avon—a far more important place, for it was there that the world's greatest genius was born and died. The Branch members will be glad to meet any outside friends who can make it convenient to turn up at the "Coach and Horses," Henley-street (Stratford). They sent a special invitation to "Mr. Foote and family," overlooking the fact (since noticed) that the London excursion to Brighton takes place on the same day. Mr. Foote can only wish them "a good time." We may add, for the sake of Birmingham friends who may not have seen the printed announcements, that the picnic is timed to start at 8.30 sharp, from outside the Victoria Hotel, John Bright-street; and to start on the return journey from Stratford at 6. The tickets are 5s. each, covering the journey and tea; the journey alone being 3s. 6d., and the tea 1s. 6d. There, now! That's all, isn't it?

The Liverpool Branch has closed its hall for the summer. Its annual picnic is fixed for Sunday, July 22. After that a start will be made with open-air propaganda. Mr. Stanley Jones, who is now residing again in Liverpool, will lecture outdoors for the Branch on four Sundays, from August 12 to September 2 inclusive.

The committee of the Humanitarian League have sent to Sir Matthew White Ridley a strongly-worded resolution, viewing with alarm the extension of flogging as proposed in the Youthful Offenders' Bill now before Parliament, and earnestly hoping that the Government "will not give any further countenance to a cruel and discredited form of punishment."

Mr. George Jacob Holyoake, in a letter to the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*, raises a useful point about birching. "A short time ago," he writes, "the *Westminster Gazette* gave a caricature of Lord Salisbury and the Archbishop of Canterbury congratulating each other on the advantages of having been flogged. There are many people who are no better than they ought to be who are always telling us of the advantages they derive from the cane or the birch. As they are not what they should be, it is clear their education by flogging is incomplete, and it would be the better for society if they were flogged again. Instead of a Bill to extend flogging to others, would it not be a good thing to flog those persons further who confess to its efficacy upon them when applied formerly? As these people are not so good as they might be, and they testify how they can be made better, the public would better see the value of the birch in the improvement it makes in them. Lord Salisbury says most Peers have been flogged, and, as many people wish they were ended or mended, their further flogging would be a public benefit. If there be salvation in flogging, its efficacy will appear when fairly applied

to old offenders on their own confession—on an Archbishop and a Premier."

Mr. J. O. Bates, of the Vegetarian Stores, 42 Victoria-street, Gloucester, whose advertisement appears in this week's *Freethinker*, is a shareholder in the Freethought Publishing Company, Limited. He has now resolved to add this journal to the list of publications which he supplies to his customers, and has ordered nine copies weekly for a start. He says there will be "no returns," for what copies he does not sell he will keep for a week or two and then "give them away to make future subscribers with." We thank Mr. Bates for this effort to promote our circulation.

There is a striking essay in the June number of the *Fortnightly Review* on "The Evolution of Mystery." It is by the Belgian poet and dramatist, Maurice Maeterlinck, and translated admirably by Alfred Sutro. Here is a passage worth noting: "It is truth and sincerity that are called for to-day for the facing of all things—how much more when mystery confronts us! In the past, the prostration of man, his bending the knee, seemed beautiful because of what, in the past, was held to be true. We have acquired no fresh certitude, perhaps; but for us, none the less, the truth of the past has ceased to be true. We have not bridged the unknown; but still, though we know not what it is, we do partially know what it is not; and it is before this we should bow were the attitude of our fathers to be once more assumed by us. For although it has not, perhaps, been incontrovertibly proved that the unknown is neither vigilant, personal, sovereignly intelligent, nor sovereignly just, that it possesses neither the power nor the passions, intentions, virtues, and vices of man, it is still incomparably more probable that the unknown is entirely indifferent to all that appears of supreme importance in this life of ours. It is incomparably more probable that if, in the vast and eternal scheme of the unknown, a minute and ephemeral place be reserved for man, his actions, be he mightiest, best, or worst, will be as unimportant there as the movements of the obscurest geological cell in the history of ocean or continent. Though it may not have been irrefutably shown that the infinite and invisible are not for ever hovering round us, dealing out sorrow or joy as our intentions are evil or good, guiding our destiny step by step, and preparing, with the help of innumerable forces, the incomprehensible but eternal law that governs the accidents of our birth, our future, our death, and our life beyond the tomb, it is still incomparably more probable that the invisible and infinite, intervene as they may at every moment in our life, enter therein only as blind, indifferent, stupendous elements; and that, though they pass over us, in us, penetrate into our being, and inspire and mould our life, they are as careless of our individual existence as air, water, or light."

Maeterlinck is, however, no pessimist. "The hour," he says, "when a lofty conviction forsakes us should never be one of regret. If a belief we have clung to goes, or a spring snaps within us; if we at last dethrone the idea that so long has held sway, this is proof of vitality, progress, of our marching steadily onwards, and making good use of all that lies to our hand." His conclusion is that man's own life is the supreme concern to himself, and his sanity lies in making the most of it. Which is the philosophy of Secularism.

We are tempted to quote another passage from Maeterlinck's beautiful essay, the passage on the changed aspect of the mystery of death to the modern mind: "Does not each generation find the burden lighter to bear as the forms of death grow less violent and its posthumous terrors fade? It is the illness that goes before, the physical pain, of which we are to-day most afraid. But death is no more the hour of the wrathful, inscrutable judge; no longer the one and the terrible goal, the gulf of misery and eternal punishment. It is slowly becoming—indeed, in some cases, it has already become—the wished-for repose of a life that draws to its end. Its weight no longer oppresses each one of our actions; and, above all—this is the most striking change—it has ceased to intrude itself into our morality. And is this morality of ours less lofty, less pure, less profound, because of the disinterestedness it has thus acquired? Has the loss of an overwhelming dread robbed mankind of a single precious, indispensable feeling? And must not life itself find gain in the importance wrested from death? Surely; for the neutral forces that we hold in reserve within us are waiting and ready; and every discouragement, sorrow, or fear that departs has its place quickly filled by a confidence, admiration, or hope."

A special article on the late Mr. Grant Allen, with reference to the Memoir just published by his intimate friend, Mr. Edward Clodd, will appear in next week's *Freethinker* over the editor's signature.

Readers of this journal are informed that they can still order copies of the Freethought Publishing Company's list of Cheap Remainder Books, which appeared recently in our advertisement columns. The list was removed to make room for other matter. It will be inserted again shortly.

We venture once more to call attention to an item on our sixteenth page this week. We refer to the Application Form for Shares in the Freethought Publishing Company, Limited. Several friends have responded to our appeal, but we are anxious to hear from a considerable number of fresh applicants. In spite of the present being the holiday season, we are of opinion that a good many Freethinkers, who have as yet done nothing for this enterprise, should make up their minds on the matter and apply for at least *some* Shares forthwith, in order that the Board of Directors may be able to form comprehensive plans for the winter. It will be noticed that the Shares are payable in easy instalments.

Chemico-Physical Theories of Life.—IV.

As all energy in all bodies is simply a transference of force or motion, none is ever lost or dissipated, whatever may seem. Each energy in any substance dates its energy from some previous energy in some other substance.

Necessarily, then again all known forces are correlated, or interconvertible one with the other. Thus it is with magnetism, electricity, heat and light, admittedly. It is a justifiable speculation that life and mind are also correlative.

For if an atom be an automaton,* and its fundamental properties are indestructible, then the conclusion seems to follow, logically, that all energy, in all groups of atoms or bodies, at all times, is automatic. The philosophy of the new materialism removes the "if" from this proposition and puts it in positive form.

The recognition of the metallic and non-metallic elements as representative, in the chemical world, of an incipient sexuality of matter, is a grand advance in ideation, explanatory of much that was still obscure; and it is remarkable that there is only one element which seems to stand in the way of the universal application of the idea to the facts. That one is hydrogen, which, for the purpose of the theory, requires to be regarded as a metal. Whether it will ultimately be proven to be a metal or no time alone can tell; but even its exceptionality would not disprove the theory, but lead to its further evolution.

Though iron is the element which lends itself, in the highest degree, for the demonstration of electromagnetic properties, all the others possess these, as I have written, in varying degree. It would have negated evolution if it had been otherwise. It is a fact that the earth is a magnet. But it is not so by reason of its being all, or mostly, iron, though the distribution of that element throughout its mass is determinative of certain of the phenomena of terrestrial magnetism. So far as can be judged, the discriminating factor in all energy is magnetism. Just as a bar magnet attracts filings tenaciously at the poles, but weakly at the centre, so the earth attracts all bodies with greater intensity at the poles than at the Equator, thus demonstrating not alone the magnetism of the planet, but the magnetic subjection of all mundane bodies and constituents. Indeed, the reasoned conclusion from the facts is, "that every particle of every substance, and every atom of itself, a magnet with poles and polarity."

To the legitimate question, Whence is obtained the magnetism? a twofold answer can be given—viz., from its constituent atoms and from its battery. The molten interior is undoubtedly a battery in which heat and vast energy are begotten by interchange and transformation; which energy finds expression on the surface by the magnetism of the poles, gravitation, and by volcanic and geyser action, burning and boiling oil and water springs, &c. But the stratified crust is likewise. A

* In his "Graham" Lecture this year at the Philosophical Society, Glasgow, Sir W. Roberts-Austen, Master of the Mint said "that diffusion was not confined to molten metals. Solid metals even would diffuse in each other. Gold, for instance, placed in a tube at the base of a column of just melted lead, three inches long, would diffuse against gravity, and would appear in appreciable quantities at the top of the column in a single day. Its diffusion at ordinary temperature was very slow, but it was nevertheless sure, and as the result of experiments made was comparatively as a thousand years to one day of melted lead temperature." And he gave a demonstration of microphotographic slides of steel (1.5 carbon) sections indicating molecular unrest with every change of temperature.

logical corollary of these facts is the induction that all the products of the earth, mineral, vegetal, and animal, are actuated by what we, in total ignorance of its essential nature, call magnetism; this being the basic universal energy.

It would be outside the scope of this disquisition to consider the primary and secondary laws which the facts indicate to be the lines upon which magnetism controls evolution; but it is necessary to bear in mind certain cardinal facts as having relation to the chemical and physical theory of life and mind.

In the firemist, with which we started, of course all bodies exist in the most rarefied state—viz., that of gas, which is as much as to say that the atoms are in a free state. It is a fact that all solids can be volatilised to the gas condition, just as all gases may be solidified. Hence whatever gases may evolve into, the germ of evolution may be traced back to the gases. Gases may be of one element only, or two or more of the same class, that is, either metallic or non, constituting a quasi-sexual combination. As we know, the atmosphere is a mixture of gases. Production virtually begins only when one or more of the elements unite to form a quasi-sexual combination, the result being different from any of the combining generators. Water, for instance, is the well-known offspring of just such a union of hydrogen and oxygen. And just here the homogeneousness of specific gases and liquids may be noted, indicating a definite structure, and, consequently, inviolable accuracy in these structural arrangements; and this again further indicates that all atomic properties are exerted with equal inviolability, in the least as in the greatest production: whilst the atoms and molecules, even of the densest solid, are ever in intense motion, order is everywhere maintained, and at all times, by the ever dominant polarity. But, and if, the gaseous atoms are the basis of all animal substance, is not their energy likewise the basis of all animal energy—in other words, their life? Such a conclusion seems justified, seems almost necessary. At least, if it is rejected, it appears incumbent upon the rejector to demonstrate where the new force he pleads for comes in, and *what it is*. Let him tell us exactly where, in the process of conversion, say of a molecule of oxygen, from the so-called non-living to the living condition, the new force finds entry, and whence it comes and whither it goes. We know, of course, that the rejector cannot do this, for the more he is brought face to face with the facts, the more is he compelled to discern that all force is inalienably thirled* to matter, and that its forms are the outcome of correlations.

Accepting the natural conclusion as intellectually necessary, then another inference seems equally incumbent—viz., that from the inviolability with which the molecules act, select, and arrange themselves, this molecular energy, inerrancy, must be the germ of all intelligence! The evolution of the crystal, the vegetal, and the animalcule, when traced, even in outline, exhibits how indefinitely the one shades into the other; and the same selectivity, discrimination, and polarity presides over the whole process. It must be borne in mind that all life is, in the ultimate analysis, simply motion. The processes of growth in the crystal, the quasi-animalcule, the vegetal, the animal, may differ; but the laws are the same for all. These are the laws of material energy, the fundamental basis of all life. And the proof of this resides in the fact that the "living thing," like the "dead thing," so called, is conditioned similarly; and not the living thing merely, but the "thinking thing" also.

A few degrees of temperature, for instance—even one or less in many instances—are adequate to determine whether a thing shall exist on what we call the "living" or the "dead" plane. Further, it is adequate to determine whether a thing shall live sooner or later, and whether an organ shall take on a particular function sooner or later. It should be quite superfluous to point out that if life was aught *sui generis*, aught imposed upon nature, or infused into nature, *the facts would be all the other way about*. The life power or process would supersede all other powers or processes; but it doesn't, it cannot.

Now we have seen, or at least it is implied in what

* Possibly English readers may not be familiar with this word. It means, tied without possibility of separation.

precedes, that a lowering of temperature conditions the evolution of molecular aggregates, fluids, and solids from out the firemist; and we have in outline, and imperfectly no doubt, indicated the track of evolutionary integration therefrom. Temperature condition, then, is a cardinal one as respects matter and energy and the forms thereof.

It is then now pertinent to consider some physiological facts.

ROBERT PARK, M.D.

(To be concluded.)

Superstition in Germany.

CATHOLIC PRIESTS COUNTENANCE BELIEF IN GHOSTLY AND SATANIC VISITATIONS.

THE old superstition of a haunted house has been revived, not only once, but three times within about as many years, in Munich, creating great temporary excitement and causing a display of ignorance and credulity which is a disgrace to the progress of the age and the intellectual advantages of this acknowledged centre of learning and scientific achievement.

The first of these three instances occurred in 1897, when the inhabitants of the house, No. 20 Park-street, were disturbed at night by groans and sighs which could not be accounted for until a child saw the figure of an old woman dressed in black pass through the room, whereupon it was decided that the intruder was a demon in feminine disguise, and complaint was made to the priest of the parish, who came at once with his acolytes to drive out the evil spirit by means of prayers, holy water, and incense.

A DEMON EXORCISED.

The second instance took place in 1898, in another part of the town, where a mischievous couple, having quarrelled with an old woman living in the same house, avenged themselves by telling her that she had been chosen to be a sacrifice to the Devil, who would shortly come to claim her, in performance of a pledge given to him by a certain stock company formed in Berlin and having a branch in Munich, the object of which was to discover hidden treasures through diabolical assistance. The persons whom she had offended claimed to be stock-holders in that company, hence the readiness of Satan to punish their enemy.

The old woman was foolish enough to believe this absurd story, which was supplemented by appropriate sounds at night, whereby she was prevented from sleeping and frightened almost out of her senses. Finally she went to the priest and told the story, and he sent one of his assistants to exorcise the demon, after which the noises ceased, and the old woman recovered her peace of mind.

The third instance occurred very recently, in May, 1900 (to the shame of human enlightenment, be it spoken).

PANIC OVER A HAUNTED HOUSE.

The complainants were a family living in a modest apartment in one of the suburbs. The family consisted of a musician (a zither teacher), his wife, a young relative who served as maid-of-all-work, and a woman lodger, elsewhere employed during the day. The disturbances began during the night of May 7, and lasted nearly a week. The first intimation was a jarring sound, as though something had been thrown against a window which opened from the sitting-room into the otherwise dark chamber where the young girl slept. This noise was followed by rappings in various places, and by small pieces of coal thrown in different directions. The man was not at home when the mysterious commotion began, and when he came back and found the three women praying and telling their beads for fright, he only laughed; but later he, too, succumbed to the general panic. The news spread like wildfire throughout the neighborhood, and nothing else was talked about during the day, while every evening, from about seven o'clock till midnight, the street in front of the house was blocked by a crowd of men, women, and children eager to catch any crumb of information which might fall from the haunted second story, and envious of the few persons who had access to the suddenly notorious family.

During the daytime the only token of the presence of the invisible guest was the frequent throwing of pieces of coal (in itself an inexplicable circumstance, as there was no coal kept in either room); but with darkness came a variety of noises, which continued till after midnight.

"ENLIGHTENED" POPULAR OPINION.

The general opinion of the waiting crowd was in favor of the theory that the Devil in person was to blame for the uproar. One man said that in these days of high prices for coal nobody but a devil would waste fuel by throwing it around; another told how Satan had appeared—all white, with a bare skull instead of a head; another said he was all black, with red, flaming eyes and green horns; whereupon another declared it could not have been the chief Devil, for his horns are red.

Only one of the crowd was enlightened enough to assert that there was no such thing as a devil, and when he was challenged to explain the mystery he said it was only some mischievous boys playing tricks, and if he had time and a good horsewhip he could soon drive the devil out of the scamp.

The family upstairs did not claim to have seen any ghost, and they settled into the belief that the intruder was the spirit of the wife's mother, who had recently died in the hospital without taking leave of her relatives, and had therefore come back to communicate with them in this fashion.

Nearly frightened out of their wits at this idea, they sent for a priest, who came in the evening and stayed till after midnight without discovering any cause for the manifestations, which did not occur while he was present.

The next day the case was submitted to the police, and an officer was sent, who spent the night in the apartment, but neither saw nor heard anything unusual.

THREE PRIESTS TO ONE GHOST.

Meantime the family, nearly worn out with lack of sleep, had obtained permission from the inhabitants of the next story of the house to put their beds into the garret, and expected to rest there in peace; but the noises and the flying lumps of coal followed them to this retreat, and also a curtain fell from the wall in close vicinity to their beds. The next night they returned to their own quarters, and another police officer was sent as watchman. Also three priests came early in the evening and remained until after ten o'clock, nine o'clock being the hour when the demonstrations had heretofore begun. But on this occasion all was quiet, and, although upon examination several pieces of coal were found upon the window-sill of the chamber, they were not thrown into the adjoining room. Even after the priests and the watchman went away, leaving the family praying and telling their beads, the only noise was a knocking which was heard three times before midnight. The hour for ghosts being supposed to be from twelve to one, there was no danger of disturbance after that time. One of the priests advised the family to have a mass said for the repose of the soul of the deceased relative, and to pray diligently themselves to the same end; also to address the supposed ghost and ask what it wanted. Accordingly the mass was ordered (such a service must always be paid for); the family prayed frequently over their beads, and the next time the knocks were heard the daughter of the deceased cried out: "Spirit of my mother, what do you want?" while the young girl added the usual formula:—

All good spirits praise the Lord;
Speak, and say what you desire.

But there was no reply.

This attempt to converse with a ghost was deprecated by the neighbors, as it was well known that such a liberty was likely to be followed by the sudden death of the interrogator.

ELUCIDATED BY A REPORTER.

At the end of the week a reporter of one of the principal city newspapers had an interview with the young girl, who had all along been suspected by several intelligent observers to be the cause of the mystification, and who, finally, after being promised that if she would tell the truth she should not be punished, made a full confession.

She had once noticed that her relative was extremely

frightened at some accidental noise, and a desire arose to play upon that superstitious dread. Her first efforts were so successful that she kept on increasing and varying the method of attack. The pieces of coal were thrown as opportunity offered, and afterwards slyly laid by her upon the window-sill of her dimly-lighted chamber. The mysterious thumpings and knockings were produced by letting a heavy spool fall from the sewing-machine upon the platform near the window where the machine stood. As the platform was hollow, the spool in falling and rolling about made a peculiar noise, and as she directed the motion from a distance by tying the end of the thread around her finger the source of the disturbance was not discovered; also, as she herself showed great fear at these demonstrations, calling out "Jesus! Maria!" whenever a spool fell or a piece of coal flew, and praying and telling her beads as busily as the rest, her part in the business was not suspected by the family.

Of course, the excitement ended with her confession. The next gathering of the crowd was dispersed by the police, the girl was sent to her home in the country, and the enraged family demanded damages of her parents on account of the scandal, which had caused their landlord to notify them to leave his house.

THE MORAL.

The result of this incident may perhaps be to shake the superstitious credulity of many ignorant lookers-on; but what is to be said of the conduct of the better-informed in the matter? Not only did several priests appear to grant the possibility of ghostly possession, but a member of a Spiritualistic society visited the family and informed himself as to the minutest details of manifestations so absurd in themselves as to challenge investigation which must inevitably have led to discovery and exposure. It is the same old story everywhere, a lurking belief in the supernatural, which dominates most minds, and a desire on the part of more enlightened intellects to foster such a belief in the masses, in order to rule them by fear. Nor is it the Catholic Church alone that displays such ignorance and pursues such a policy.

Luther believed in the existence of the Devil, although he was ready to fight him. There are haunted houses in Protestant communities; Satan is burned in effigy by Salvationists in the public streets; believers and unbelievers run together to see and hear whatever peeps and mutters, and new sects are continually borrowing from old mysteries in every part of the world.

The only cure for such folly is a recognition of the fact that we know nothing except what is proved, and it will be a long time before the whole race has learned to accept and act upon that fundamental truth.

ELIZABETH E. EVANS.

—*Truthseeker* (New York).

Asses.

The ass has figured extensively in romance. His long ears and peculiar bray are explained by a story which goes back to the Flood. On that occasion, it is said, the male donkey was inadvertently left outside the ark, but, being a good swimmer, he nevertheless managed to preserve his life. After many desperate efforts he at last succeeded in calling out the patriarch's name, as nearly as the vocal organs of a jackass would allow. "No-ah, No-ah," cried the forlorn beast. Noah's attention was at last aroused, and, on looking out of window to see who was calling, he perceived the poor jackass almost spent and faintly battling with the waves. Quickly opening the window, he caught Neddy by the two ears and hauled him in. This he did with such vigor that Neddy's aural appendages were considerably elongated; and ever since donkeys have had long ears, and brayed "No-ah, No-ah" at the approach of wet weather. For the sake of Christians who are not well acquainted with God's Word, we add that this story is not in the Bible.

Classical scholars and students of modern literature know how the ass has been treated by poets and romancers. The stolid animal has generally been made the subject of comedy. Drunken and impotent Silenus, in the Pagan mythology, joins in the processions of Bacchus on a sober ass, and the patient animal staggers beneath the heavy burden of a fat-paunched tipsy god. Apuleius and Lucian transform the hero of their common story into an ass, and in that shape he encounters the most surprising experiences.

Voltaire makes an ass play a wonderful part in his *Pucelle*. And in all these cases it is worth noticing how the profane wits remember the ass's relation to Priapian mysteries, from his fabled interruption of the garden-god's attempt on the nymph Lotis downwards, and assign to him marvellous amatory adventures. Erasmus, in his *Praise of Folly*, does not forget the ass, with whom he compares the majority of men for stupidity, obstinacy, and lubricity; nor is the noble animal forgotten by Rabelais, who cracks many a joke and points many a witticism at his expense.

Our own genial humorist, Charles Lamb, confesses, however, to a deep tenderness for Neddy, and dwells with delight on the protection which his thick hide affords against the cruel usage of man. Sterne, in his *Sentimental Journey*, has a chapter entitled "The Dead Ass," wherein the animal is lifted into the sphere of pathos; and, lastly, Coleridge has some very pious musings on an ass, wherein the animal is lifted into the sphere of religion.

Now, dear reader, you begin to see the drift of this long exordium, although my purpose was indeed twofold. First, I wished, after the example of my betters in literature, to give you a slight glimpse of the immense extent of my learning. Secondly, I wished to lead you through the various stages of literary treatment of the ass, from the comic to the pathetic, and finally to the religious, in order that you might approach in a proper frame of mind the consideration of Balaam's ass, who is the most remarkable of all the four-legged asses mentioned in the Bible. There were others. Asses were being sought by Saul, the son of Kish, when he found a kingdom of subjects instead. Jesus rode into Jerusalem on an ass, and also apparently on a colt, having probably one leg over each. With the jawbone of an ass Samson slew a thousand Philistines; and if the rest of the animal accorded with that particular bone, he must have been a tough ass indeed. But all these are of little interest or importance beside the wonderful ass of the prophet Balaam, whose history is contained, with that of his master, in the twenty-second, twenty-third, and twenty-fourth chapters of the Book of Numbers.

—From "*Bible Romances*" (*Balaam's Ass*), by G. W. FOOTE.

Correspondence.

ROBERT OWEN.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Allow me to say that I am extremely glad of the tribute paid to my fellow-countryman, Robert Owen, in the *Freethinker*, and also of the present movement to honor this illustrious man. Oft I have stood by his neglected grave in my native soil, wondering how on earth sectarian Wales—the school of dogmatic theology and the hotbed of religious bigotry—produced such a genuine Secularist. A similar step was proposed by outsiders some years ago, but the Nonconformist conscience in Newtown was aroused, and the leading townsmen were petitioned, and warned not to recognise a "rank infidel." And even now, in view of the present movement, a Calvinistic preacher protested with all the energy of his holy soul against such unholy work. His words were, "Let his memory rot like his body in the old churchyard." The Welsh Press is priest-ridden, and monopolised by orthodoxy. Many a time have I been denied the paltry privilege of repelling the libellous attacks made upon scepticism and sceptics in its columns. This is especially true in the instance of that Welsh literary genius, Charles Ashton, who was an avowed Atheist and Materialist. No sooner were his eyes closed in death than he became the choice prey of orthodox harriers. Still there is hope, even for ultra-Puritan Wales. At least, in South Wales, the *Freethinker* and the N. S. S. have had a firm footing, and Secularism bids well for the future.

WILLIAM PUGH.

The Church and Truth.

THE Church has always—unconsciously perhaps—offered rewards for falsehood. It was founded upon the supernatural, the miraculous, and it welcomed all statements calculated to support the foundation. It rewarded the traveller who found evidences of the miraculous, who had seen the pillar of salt into which the wife of Lot had been changed, and the tracks of Pharaoh's chariots on the sands of the Red Sea. It heaped honors on the historian who filled his pages with the absurd and the impossible. It had geologists and astronomers of its own, who constructed the earth and the constellations in accordance with the Bible. With sword and flame it destroyed the brave and thoughtful men who told the truth. It was the enemy of investigation and reason. Faith and fiction were in partnership. To-day the intelligence of the world denies the miraculous. Ignorance is the soil of the supernatural. The foundation of Christianity has crumbled, has disappeared, and the entire fabric must fall. The natural is true. The miraculous is false.—*Ingersoll*.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): Closed during the summer.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CLERKENWELL GREEN: No lecture—N. S. S. Excursion.
FINSBURY PARK: No lecture—N. S. S. Excursion.
MILE END WASTE: No lecture—N. S. S. Excursion. July 4, at 8.15, R. P. Edwards.
WEST HAM BRANCH (Stratford Grove): 7.30, S. E. Easton, "Some Real Saviors of the World."
HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, F. A. Davies. Lectures every Tuesday and Thursday at 8 p.m.

COUNTRY.

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): Closed during the months of June, July, and August.
BIRMINGHAM BRANCH.—Annual Pic-nic to Coach and Horses, Stratford-on-Avon. Start at 8.30 from outside Victoria Hotel, John Bright-street. Tea at 4; return at 6.
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE; C. Cohen—11, at Sandhill, Quayside; 7, Moor Edge, near Recreation Ground.
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): R. Law, F.G.S.—3, "How the Rocks which Contain Coal were Formed"; 7, "Cave-hunting." Tea at 5. Particulars will also be given of members' and friends' excursion on July 8.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton.—July 1, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.—July 1, N. S. S. Excursion. 15, m., Camberwell; a., Brockwell Park. 22, Northampton.

H. PERCY WARD, 2 Leamington-place, George-street, Balsall Heath, Birmingham.—July 1, Birmingham. 15, Northampton. 22, Birmingham. August 19, Northampton.

F. A. DAVIES, 65 Lion-street, S.E.—July 1, m., Hyde Park; e., Kilburn. 8, e., Hammersmith. 15, m., Battersea; e., Stratford. 29, m., Station-road; a., Peckham Rye.

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