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PRICE TWOPENCE.

Pious Poets.

"THE Conversion of the Poets" was the heading of an article by G. J. Chesterton in Tuesday's *Daily News*; a journal, by the way, which gives more attention than it used to do to churches and religious movements. The article in question was in part a review of a new volume of poems. With that aspect of it we have no concern. What we mean to deal with is the preliminary part, which is written up to the title. Mr. Chesterton sets out with a curious blunder in chronology. He refers to a certain school of poets "of the early part of the century," and places Mr. Swinburne "at their head." The twentieth century cannot be meant, for it has only just commenced. We are thrown back, then, upon the nineteenth century. But it was not in the "early part" of that century that Mr. Swinburne wrote and published poetry. His first volume saw the light, unless we are much mistaken, when the century was some sixty odd years old. Mr. Chesterton's blunder is, indeed, so flagrant—gross as a mountain, open, palpable—that we wonder it was not corrected by the *Daily News* editor or reader, or somebody responsible for keeping egregious mistakes out of the paper.

We are obliged, in the circumstances, to deduce Mr. Chesterton's meaning for ourselves. When he refers to "the more anarchic poets of the early part of the century" who "devoted themselves largely to the exhilarating task of attacking the supernatural wholesale," we presume he has in his mind such insufficient poets as Byron and Shelley. No doubt they showed a lack of sagacity in not foreseeing that, in the next century, they would come under condemnation in the great and famous daily organ of the Nonconformist Conscience. But if they had foreseen it they would probably have sung precisely as they did. A tremendous pressure would have been required to deflect the personality of Byron or to alter the convictions of Shelley. Nor can it truly be said they were "anarchic" except in the sense that they were iconoclastic. They attacked many an idol of both the classes and the masses. They fought like brave soldiers in the real war of the liberation of humanity. They paid the penalty, it is true; yes, it is clear that they are still unforgiven. But they never cried for mercy when they were alive, and no one need ask it for them now they are dead.

We also are in the iconoclastic line, but we are not so narrow as Mr. Chesterton. We can admire Byron and Shelley and Wordsworth too. And not merely on poetical grounds. We applaud the splendid service that the "anarchic" poets rendered to the cause of liberty, but we also recognise the value of their great contemporary's contribution to the conservative element of human life. To borrow Comte's classification, Order must have its poets as well as Progress; and the reader who has real catholicity of taste accepts both without invidious gratitude.

Recurring to Mr. Swinburne, the *Daily News* critic says that he set Paganism against Christianity; and, while he could not tolerate a single Deity, he seemed, for some singular reason, to get on very comfortably with a great many. This is probably meant to be smart writing, and we daresay many readers will take it as such. But it is at once both shallow and turbid. Mr. Swinburne did not set Paganism against Christianity. What he set against it was Naturalism—or, if you please, Atheism. That he sometimes spoke through

the lips of a Pagan was a poetical accident. He did it for the same reason that he employed "classic" imagery. The gods and goddesses of the Pagan pantheon figured in his verses, and not the persons of the Christian Trinity—or quaternion, or whatever it is—simply because Polytheism lends itself to poetry and Monotheism does not. Milton himself had to invoke the aid of a Pagan goddess in beginning his great Christian epic. No doubt he felt instinctively that, if religious inspiration came from one quarter, poetical inspiration came from quite another.

"The dominant note of Swinburnism," Mr. Chesterton says, "was the attack upon religion." He asserts that this is beyond all question. Of course it is. But why emphasize the obvious? What was sad and wailing, filled with infinite grace and melancholy, in the *Poems and Ballads*, became stern, fierce, and aggressive in the *Songs before Sunrise*, assuming its most vehement and audacious form in the magnificent "Hymn of Man." Mr. Swinburne has unsaid some things as he grew older; but one thing he has never unsaid—his scorn of gods and hatred of priests.

Mr. Chesterton sums up Mr. Swinburne's philosophy of religion as "the vast and incredible conception which has been swallowed by the Secularist school, that the religious sentiment, which stretches from one end of history to the other, is one vast hereditary malady and unbroken nightmare." This is working oneself into a temper at the expense of reason, grammar, and politeness. The Secularist school really does not swallow conceptions. Nor is there room for two "vast" in that one sentence. Nor is it a fact that there is a special "religious sentiment" any more than there is a special "religious music." All sentiments are human and natural in their origin, but they may gather, or be gathered, around false ideas and infantile misconceptions. We are thrilled, for instance, by a majestic sunset, and the theologian bids us see in it the hand of God. If we accept his doctrine, we are said to have a "religious sentiment." But the simple fact is that a spontaneous emotion has been associated with an arbitrary dogma.

It appears, however, that the poets are no longer anti-supernaturalists. According to Mr. Chesterton, they have been converted. The truth of science does not satisfy them; they are now, in most cases, fanatical upholders of the supernatural. In short, they have "got religion." Perhaps so. We are passing through a period of languor and reaction—not only in England, but all over Europe. And the voice of the minor poet is heard in all lands, lauding the old and ineffable, and singing the songs of decadence. But when a new period of hope and vitality begins, with the inevitable swing of the pendulum, great poets will arise again to sing its aspirations, and give noble articulate expression to its instinctive tendencies. Meanwhile we may observe that Mr. Swinburne is still amongst us, and is *not* converted. Nor have we heard of the conversion of another splendid poet of Naturalism—Mr. George Meredith. We believe, also, that Mr. Thomas Hardy has not been born again. On the whole, therefore, we can possess ourselves in patience though the minor poets have "got religion." They are really not of "vast" significance. The world does not tremble at their frown, nor rejoice at their smiles, nor look to them for inspiration. They are chiefly a question for themselves and the book-sellers.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Homes of the Poor.

THE unexpected death of Sir Walter Besant, who wrote several works describing the condition of the poor of the metropolis, recalls to our minds the character of the homes of these "children of God" in this so-called Christian country. That poverty is a virtue is a prominent teaching in the theology of the New Testament; and, although Christ is said to have proclaimed "Blessed be ye poor," it is only a very few of his professed followers who show the slightest desire to share in the promised "blessing." Instead of poverty being a blessing, there are thousands of poor creatures who wake every morning filled with anxiety as to how they are to obtain food throughout the day. To such persons poverty is a curse, blighting the noblest aspirations of their nature, and depriving them of the very necessary means for the comforts of existence.

It is impossible to disguise the fact that the homes of the poor in certain parts of London are a disgrace in a country calling itself civilised. On the 13th of the present month, speaking at a meeting of the Rochester Diocesan Society in London, Sir Edward Clarke said that "there were parts of South London which were in a deplorable condition of crowding and degradation of life, for which it was difficult to see any remedy. In an ordinary town population 30 to 40 per cent. would be described as poor; but there were portions of South London so terrible in their conditions, especially those parts between the Old Kent-road and the Walworth-road, that perhaps 80 per cent. in certain localities scarcely knew from day to day where the daily bread was to come from. It was an appalling problem..... This was a matter which cut at the heart, not only of their Christianity, but of their civilisation, and it was not right that it should be permitted by those who had the means of mitigating this terrible condition of things." Instead of boldly dealing with these lamentable evils, the Church has sacrificed the welfare of the body to what is termed the interest of the soul, and the clergy, with few exceptions, have preached the fatal doctrine that to prepare for "mansions in the skies" is of greater importance than the consideration of the condition of homes on earth. The result of this hypocritical and dangerous policy has been an unjust accumulation of wealth upon the one side, and the most abject poverty, with all its attendant miseries, upon the other. A writer in a recent issue of the *Nineteenth Century* stated this truth thus:—

"Of all the principal European cities, London is the one which makes the American ponder longest and wonder the most, not so much on account of the overwhelming multitude of its inhabitants as on account of its incredible extremes of opulence and pauperism; the vastness of the extent of ground which the residences of the wealthy cover astounds him even more than the vastness of the area which forms the polluted haunts of the poor. New York can offer no counterpart of that group of districts bounded, roughly speaking, on the east by Regent-street, on the west by Holland Park, and on the south and north by the line of the Underground Railway—a region which takes in Mayfair, Belgravia, Kensington, Bayswater, and the streets about Portman, Manchester, and Cavendish-squares. The wealth which these parts of London represent seems to a foreigner simply boundless. If the exploration of the West-end increases the American's sense of England's greatness, the exploration of a large part of the East-end seriously diminishes it. Prolonged familiarity with the pauperism of London only deepens the first impression of its abysmal degradation, misery, and hopelessness. Is this abject poverty the necessary evil of so great a city? Or is it the result of some terrible defect in the English social system, which has been growing for centuries? The mind of the American turns for a comparison to New York, second to London only in the number of its inhabitants; but he can recall no such pauperism in the mass in that city, in spite of its large foreign-born population, as that which stalks about, gaunt and threatening, in Whitechapel, and creeps along, cowering and fawning, in the most fashionable parks and streets of the metropolis."

Years ago Dickens recognised these evils, and, with his marvellous and almost unparalleled ability, he pleaded for the weak and poor against the strong, and refused to be a parasite of wealth and an apologist for the misdoings of the aristocracy. Since his time no

man has done more practical work in the same direction than Sir Walter Besant. His works—*All Sorts and Conditions of Men*, *The Children of Gibbon*, *The Orange Girl*, and *East London*—have doubtless done more good in exposing the squalor, poverty, and drudgery from which the people of East London have suffered than all the sermons of the combined Churches. In this particular Sir Walter Besant was a real secular reformer. His main object was to improve the domestic sphere of the poor, knowing full well that a healthy physical and moral State cannot obtain amidst privation, hunger, and imperfect sanitary conditions. He did not believe in the total depravity of man even in the City of Dreadful Monotony, as the East-end of London has been termed. Referring to the dens called homes, which served as shelters for a herd of people living lives obscure, monotonous, without ambition, without aims, without literature, art, or science, Sir Walter said:—

"Let me show you that it is a city full of human passions and emotions, human hopes and fears, love and the joys of love, bereavement and the sorrows of bereavement, as full of life as the stately city, the sister city, of the West.....presenting to one who reads thought and interprets action as interesting a study as any artist or æsthete, poet or painter."

This is the Secular view of human nature. In the most deprived and degraded conditions of existence, produced too frequently by bad training and demoralising environment, are to be found the nobler feelings, often only to be crushed by the weight of poverty and despair. The object of Secularism is to foster and bring into full play the bright and better features of humanity, and to suppress as much as possible whatever interferes with the cultivation of the highest qualities of the human family. General excellence is the outcome of personal merit, and experience proves that this is either promoted or retarded among the poor by the conditions of their homes.

If the soil of a garden is poor and choked with weeds, flowers and healthy plants will not grow. By the same rule we find that if the dwellings of the poor are cramped, dirty, badly constructed, and surrounded by imperfect sanitary arrangements, it is impossible to develop the physical, intellectual, and moral nature of mankind. The consequence is that with the poor home, which should be the abiding place of all that adds charm and dignity to life, is the abode of the worst passions of untrained humanity. Therein men and women become idle and dissolute, their minds are debased by corrupt influences, and their lives are wasted through indulging in drunkenness, indifference, and sensual gratification. In such dens of degradation children are born, and amidst such environment are they brought up only to be a curse to themselves and a lasting disgrace to those to whom they are indebted for their wretched existence. What has Christianity done to remove these evils? Let the millions who, after toiling ten hours a day, cannot earn enough for the bare necessities of life, the thousands of white-faced and sad-hearted children toiling in the factories, supply the answer. In the name of reason, justice, and humanity, are these things right? Must we forever go on saying that man is born to misery, as the sparks fly upwards? Are we always to have the poor with us in a land where there is enough for all under proper arrangements? Shall children continue to be so badly trained that they perpetuate the very evil conditions of which they are themselves the victims? For the sake of the welfare of our race and the happiness of future generations we hope not.

For centuries Christianity has been tried as a panacea for the wrongs, crimes, and inequalities which have robbed man of his true value, and has utterly failed; so much so that the State has to grapple with the evils that the Church has proved itself impotent to remove. It, therefore, behoves us, as Secularists, to apply a real remedy with a view of achieving what the religion of Christ has failed to accomplish. Next week we will indicate what, in our judgment, would lessen the evils to which we have referred. Candidly our hope for the regeneration of man rests upon the complete secularisation of the age. We know that, so far as improvement has taken place in the various sections of the community, it has been through the adoption of secular agencies. We have a freedom of speech unknown in former times. The press is more liberal

than it ever was. Science is free from theological restriction, education is becoming more secular every year, and orthodox persecution dare not manifest itself as it did in the past. Hell is shut up, and the devil is practically dead, while the Churches have left their old moorings and are seeking to adapt their teachings to the secular requirements of the age.

CHARLES WATTS.

The Problem of the Criminal.

(Continued from page 372.)

IN dealing with the broad question of the origin of the feeling of revenge associated with popular ideas of criminal treatment, Dr. Oldfield is beyond question on safe ground in tracing it back to the feeling of unreasonable resentment that is such a powerful factor in the mind of the primitive savage. To look with dislike on anything out of the ordinary is characteristic of savages and the lower orders of civilisation, who take an unusual form of dress, speech, or physique as a legitimate object of ridicule—or worse. With the primitive mind it is one of those instincts fostered by evolution, and upon which preservation to some extent depends. And to crush, if possible, the object that inflicts pain is only a development of the same feeling.

The criminology of the lower races is thus purely vindictive. Reformatory elements do not enter into it, and even among the "higher" races these are overshadowed by the conviction that punishment is inflicted to "avenge the majesty of outraged law," to "compensate the injured," or to "deter others by setting before them an example of the consequences of certain prohibited actions." This last is said by Sir Edmund Du Cane,* a Government Prisons official, to be the chief object of punishment; and he quotes with approval the remark of a judge in passing sentence on a horse thief: "You are sentenced to be hanged, not because you stole the horse, but in order to prevent others from stealing horses." On this ground there is no reason why any man might not be selected and strung up as an appropriate warning. The story of the Turk who made it a rule to tie every newly-purchased slave up by the heels, and inflict a sound bastinadoing, is only a logical comment upon Sir E. Du Cane's theory of punishment.

All such notions of the function of punishment proceed on the false and foolish assumption that crime is a manifestation of "innate cussedness"—the criminal could do better if he only would, and therefore the infliction of a given quantity of pain may furnish the necessary stimulus to better behavior in the future. Pretty much as the educational Dr. Squeers of a former generation imagined that they could quicken a child's intelligence by liberal doses of bullyings and beatings, so many of our responsible prison officials are apparently of opinion that the best way of correcting an individual's brutal instincts is by making it quite clear that society, if called upon, can outdo him in the very brutality for which he is condemned.

The result of such ideas is that, punishment being the main—and often the only—end aimed at, little or no attention is paid to the present character of offenders, or to their future behavior. Instead of our prisons being houses of correction, they are too often houses of corruption. Prisoners of all classes are slung together, or, if grouped at all, are arranged according to the nature of the offence rather than the character of the offender, with the result that in numerous instances an individual leaves prison with his evil tendencies more accentuated than when he entered it. Testimony on this head might be cited from all quarters; it will be enough to give that of the late Lord Chief Justice Coleridge, who is reported as saying that "There were few things more frequently borne in upon a judge's mind than the little good he could do the criminal by the sentence he imposed. These sentences often did nothing but unmixed harm." Clearly there is something radically wrong when our costly penal machinery serves as an introduction to increased criminality rather than to its diminution. And in this respect the

condition of things is no worse in Great Britain than in other countries.

Scarcely less absurd than the practice of allowing all classes of offenders to mix freely is that of solitary confinement, or isolation under whatever form it may be enforced. Even in the case of a man of education and of some refinement, whose offence might be due to some unusual pressure of circumstances, solitary confinement would be degrading enough. But with the hardened criminal, who has nothing to reflect upon but his own vicious thoughts and evil practices, what other result can we expect than that on his release he should be more hardened to crime, and less susceptible to the milder influences of life than on his incarceration? As a distinguished Continental criminologist rightly asks: "Can we teach a man sociability by taking away from him the very appearances of moral discipline; by regulating from morning till night the smallest details of his day, all his movements and all his thoughts? Is not this to place him outside the conditions of existence, and to unteach him that liberty for which we pretend he is being prepared?"*

What has to be recognised before much good can be accomplished is that, with the exception of that smaller class of offenders whose lapses are due to pressure of adverse circumstances, but who tend to become habitual offenders owing to our unscientific methods, the criminal class proper represents a morbid or degenerate type of being, and has to be treated upon exactly similar lines to those adopted with reference to nervous degeneracy in other directions. That there is a distinct criminal type admits of little doubt. Mr. Douglas Morrison, as the result of a wide survey of obtainable data conjoined with a long experience, concludes that both physically and mentally "juvenile offenders are distinctly more degenerate than the rest of the community."† And when it is remembered that nearly seventy-five per cent. of the habitual-offender class manifest their evil tendencies at an early age, the assumption that there is a criminal type becomes a tolerably safe one. Well might old Sir Thomas Browne exclaim: "Bless not thyself only that thou wert born in Athens; but among thy multiplied acknowledgments lift up one hand to heaven, that thou wert born of honest parents, that modesty, humility, and veracity lay in the same egg, and came into the world with thee."

As with children so with adults. Most Continental writers have pointed out, as the result of extensive research, that criminals furnish a far greater average of physical and mental abnormalities than are present with other people, while in their lack of susceptibility to moral and physical pain they approximate closely to the standard of the lower races. Dr. Maudesley also says of this class:—

"They are scrofulous, not seldom deformed, with badly-formed angular heads; are stupid, sullen, sluggish, deficient in vital energy, and sometimes afflicted with epilepsy.....In addition to the perversion or entire absence of moral sense, which experience of habitual criminals brings prominently out, other important facts disclosed by the investigation of their family histories are, that a considerable portion of them are weak-minded or epileptic or become insane, or that they spring from families in which insanity, epilepsy, or some other neurosis exists, and that the diseases from which they suffer and of which they die are chiefly tubercular diseases and diseases of the nervous system. Crime is a sort of outlet in which their unsound tendencies are discharged; they would go mad if they were not criminals, and they do not go mad because they are criminals."‡

Where there is so much agreement among writers the multiplication of evidence is unnecessary. The existence of a criminal type seems a fact, and this only serves to accentuate the waste and folly of much of our present method of treatment. I have only space enough at present to emphasize the necessity for one pressing reform—namely, the abolition of determinate sentences. All will agree that one of the principal objects of laying hands on the criminal is the protection of society. Society imprisons a man, and seeks to improve him, in the hope of converting a dangerous or useless citizen

* M. Prins, Director-General of Belgian Prisons. Quoted in Morrison's *Crime and its Causes*, p. 216.

† See chapters v. and vi. of his *Juvenile Offenders*.

‡ *Responsibility in Mental Diseases*, pp. 29, 32, and *Pathology of Mind*, p. 95.

into a harmless or useful one. But, this being so, the more one looks at the present method of giving an offender a set term of imprisonment, from a few days up to life confinement, the more absurd it appears. Given the case of an individual with unsound or anti-social tendencies, and there is every bit as much reason for keeping him in confinement at the end of a stated period as there was at its commencement. Society does not need protection from a criminal for three months or five years; it needs protection permanently. If one were to advocate that all homicidal maniacs should be set free at the end of, say, five years, cure or no cure, the absurdity of the advice would be apparent to all; yet it is exactly the policy pursued in relation to a class of people who are as certain to return to their old habits as an homicidal lunatic would be to commit murder at the earliest opportunity.

Nor is the analogy at all overdrawn. Every year we liberate from our prisons thousands of people of whom we are absolutely certain that they will continue at their evil practices until they are once more seized, then to pass through exactly the same round of capture, detention, and liberation. Over and over again one reads of people making their fiftieth, seventieth, or even their hundredth appearance before a criminal court. With whom lies the responsibility? Not with the criminal, but with society. The criminal was responsible for the first offence, but society, in turning him loose without effecting a cure, was surely responsible for his subsequent crimes; and not only for his crimes, but also for the propagation of his kind, brought about by our practice of "keeping criminals in pickle, and then turning them out at stated intervals warranted to commit crime." Let it be clearly realised by all concerned that, so long as a person's criminal tendencies are alive, it is an outrage on society to turn him loose; and that, as soon as these tendencies are destroyed, it is an injustice to both criminal and society to keep him confined, and the first great step will have been taken towards putting our prisons to a really rational use, and effecting some decrease in the number of our criminal population.

Neither in theory nor in practice is the principle of indefinite sentences new. It has been put into practice in several of the American States, and with marked success. What it can do, joined to more humane and enlightened methods of treatment, without which it can only restrain from actual offence, is seen in the case of the Elmira Reformatory, U.S.A., where seventy-five per cent. of those released lead honest, useful lives—an almost exact opposite to the results achieved by our own reformatories.*

The great weakness of all our criminal procedure is, that too much attention has been, and is, paid to the crime committed, and not enough attention to the character of the offender. And it cannot be too often emphasized that the particular offence that brings a person into the hands of the law does not, in the vast majority of cases, furnish any reliable indication as to the character that has to be dealt with. The nature of the crime is very largely a matter of local circumstances and special opportunities; it is the character that remains constant, and which should consequently be the object of our penal legislation. There are no crimes, says one writer, only criminals; a somewhat dark saying, and yet one that is pregnant with meaning. For the criminal does not come fortuitously; he is a social product, and, whether we view him as a case of arrested development, morbid degeneration, or reversion to a lower type of social being, our wisest and, in the end, most profitable course is to deal with him with a strict regard to his taking his legitimate place as a useful member of the social organism, or, if this be hopeless, at least protecting society from his future assaults.

C. COHEN.

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* For a full account of Elmira, see *The New York State Reformatory at Elmira*. (Sonnenschein.)

Christian Apologetics.

It seems rather an odd circumstance to a plain common-sense person that a Divine revelation, supposed to be sent for our enlightenment as to God's will, and the history of his chosen servants, should require so much elaborate elucidation. Was it beyond the power of the Almighty to convey his message with sufficient clearness to prevent all honest error, doubt, and disbelief? Or was he disinclined to take the trouble which devolves, or should devolve, on all writers who have anything of vital importance to say?

Probably, in regard to no book or collection of books the world has ever seen, has there been so much controversy and conflict as about the Bible—not merely in regard to minor portions of its contents, but about leading and fundamental features upon which scores of sectarian faiths have been built. Nature, of course, requires careful investigation and interpretation, and our views vary as our knowledge increases. But this book has been given to us professedly as a revelation which was to explain, if not all, at any rate a great deal, and yet it explains nothing. There seems to be scarcely anything in it that is absolutely clear, and upon which all its readers are agreed. What we want now is another revelation to explain the "revelation" we already have. If that is not speedily forthcoming, it seems very likely that the Bible will be relegated to the lumber-house in which are all the other sacred books of the world.

For myself, I do not feel the want of any explanation. I can see what the Bible is, easily enough—a collection of books of purely human origin, full of the fables and errors and fantasies which might naturally be expected to be there, having regard to the time and the people when and amongst whom the books were written. As I do not perceive in it any evidence of divine origin or inspiration, or as containing, even here and there, marks of supernatural authorship, I do not feel concerned to follow, on my own account, all the tortuous devices and shallow pretences of Christian apologetics whereby black is turned into white, and "Yes" is read as meaning "No."

For the godly, however, what a blessing it must be to have a whole army of professional expounders of the Bible—who will pronounce definitely what this passage means and what the other passage does not! This would make it delightfully easy for the faithful, if only the expounders were agreed. But, alas, they are not. Men of equal learning, ability, and piety are hopelessly at loggerheads on the most important points. Worse still, for those who would fain believe in these precious documents, there are leading lights in the Christian Church who, in these latter days, are mainly occupied in casting doubts upon the authenticity and reliability of many portions of this so-called "Word of God." The *Encyclopædia Biblica* is the latest outcome, but it has been preceded by a great deal of Christian criticism which has been equally destructive. Truly, the worst foes of the Bible are of its own household.

One would much like to enter into the thoughts of the saturnine Joker who is popularly supposed to sit somewhere aloft. Did he anticipate that his "revelation," instead of revealing anything, would prove to be so obscure that a huge body of men would have to set their lives apart, undergo a long and special training, and devote all their energies and acumen to the discovery of its meaning and the separation of the wheat from the chaff? Did he think what an apple of discord he was throwing to a section of mankind?—for the humorous part of the business is that, even after all these centuries, there are hundred of millions of his human creatures who are living and dying without the remotest idea that there is either such a Being as he is represented to be, or that he has revealed his will to mankind in a Bible. Apparently he doesn't care. The faithful, however, who are engaged in promoting missionary enterprise with enormous sums at their disposal, appear to be in a terrible sweat. But the Divine Author, to all appearance, cares nothing about his book—its critics or its circulation. He sits and vacantly smiles. Or, it is possible to conceive him as being very sad, or perhaps very angry, in either of which cases he may be very

properly told that he has no one to thank for it but himself.

Here is the new Bishop of London writing, when Bishop of Stepney, and republishing, a book on *Popular Objections to Christianity*, and another on *New Testament Difficulties*. Why should there be "popular objections" to Christianity, if it is of divine origin? I mean honest and well-informed objections, for even Dr. Ingram does not pretend that all objectors are wilful and ignorant. Why should earnest, anxious inquirers find difficulties—in insurmountable difficulties—in the New Testament if, in any sense, its records and teachings emanated from God? It is quite beside the mark to talk of the human element arising from the human media employed. We are told that, in our relation to the Supreme Being, we are but as clay in the potter's hand. Could he not have used this plastic material in such a way as to communicate a revelation which should have been beyond reproach, or which should at least have had the merit of being universally and unerringly understood?

Suppose we look at the question in another way. Is it not within the scope of human literary skill to take the Bible and divest it, by careful pruning and re-writing here and there, of many of these stumbling blocks—fatal stumbling blocks in numerous cases—to belief? That salutary process of revision might be successful, at any rate up to a point. It could never be completely successful while any considerable portion of the Bible remained, but it would remove the ground of many existing serious objections. If we, with our finite powers, could do so much in that direction, could he not have done more in the first instance? If he couldn't, mightn't he just as well have left the thing alone? It is said he "moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform." The way is certainly mysterious. The wonder performed may be realised by the fact that never was the Bible so discredited as it is to-day.

It is a fatal defect in this so-called revelation that it is open to so much emendation, and that, while we regard it as of divine origin, we are not at liberty to alter or diminish it without rightly incurring a charge of impiety. We can't pick and choose what we will believe without entirely abandoning its claims.

Dr. Ingram, in his *New Testament Difficulties*, quotes specimens of Freethought criticism—by the way, he selects those which are the least vital—"from a book which lies in front of us, but which we have no particular desire to advertise." This latter observation is rather mean. We have no hesitation in advertising his publications. We are not afraid of them. They may be obtained at a small price from any depôt of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. Anyone who wishes to see the amount of wriggling and quibbling and evasion which are necessary to overcome New Testament difficulties may be recommended to read these works. The explanation offered in them is always that there is a defect in translation; or that the accepted interpretation through all the centuries has been abandoned, and something entirely different is nowadays held; or that some particular text must be read in conjunction with another (which contradicts it); or, as in the case of the concluding verses of St. Mark's Gospel, the passage is of "doubtful authorship"; or that "a note meant to be explanation has crept into the text"; or that it is "probably an error of memory on the part of St. Matthew"; or that "it is a false and foolish idea which precludes such mistakes on the part of the inspired historians"; or the "Bible invariably speaks in popular language of phenomena" (for the simple reason that its writers knew no other, and never suspected its inaccuracy); and so on. Then, after much of this kind of explanation, Dr. Ingram complacently observes: "We have now seen in these papers the irrefragable ground on which the Christian revelation rests." Have we, indeed! One really must mention here a charming specimen of Dr. Ingram's reasoning. He devotes a chapter to proving the resurrection of Christ, and asks triumphantly: "Could a vision convince Thomas of its substantial reality?" But how do we know that the Thomas incident ever occurred? That is a part of the narrative which is in question. We do not accept the story at all, even so far as explaining Christ's alleged appearance as a vision. Then we are asked to account for the spread of Christianity, as if error—especially religious error—had any difficulty in spreading in super-

stitious ages, especially when supported by the secular power.

There is something amusing, and at the same time painful, in Christian apologetics. They demand so much ingenuity and tergiversation on the part of those who present them, and such dulness of critical perception on the part of those who favorably receive them, that it would be far better for Christianity if they fell into desuetude. The apologists might then preserve their self-respect as honest men, and those who now accept the apologetics would never miss them, because they are the kind of people who would believe just as well—perhaps better—without.

FRANCIS NEALE.

Jenkins, Christian.

*Jenkins, a gentleman oily of speech,
Stuck to his victims as close as a leech—
And Jenkins believed in Jesus.*

WHEN my hero was young, he decided that he
A follower of the Lord Jesus would be;
"Religion," he said, "may be useful to me."

In robbing the needy he passed half his days,
He netted their money in various ways,
And at night he would kneel and to God give the praise.

Sometimes, "as a favor," a trifle he lent
To someone whose very last shilling was spent,
And the interest he claimed was one hundred per cent.

His morals were shaky (when put to the test),
But whenever he sinned he with sorrow confessed
His sin to the Lord, and his spirit found rest.

The mother of Jenkins was eighty, and ill;
"If I send for a doctor I must pay the bill,"
Said Jenkins; "and—well, if she dies, 'tis *his* will."

At the funeral Jenkins remarked, with a sigh:
"In this sad bereavement one comfort have I—
That, please God, we shall meet in the sweet by-and-bye."

When pneumonia ended his brilliant career,
Though he'd been a thorough-paced scoundrel here,
He flew to the home of his Savior so dear.

Said the white-headed gatekeeper: "What have you done?
Have you succored some needy and sorrowing one?
Have you managed all vice and all meanness to slun?"
My hero replied: "*I believed in the Son.*"

So the Lord gave to Jenkins a place near the throne,
And also the rank of an angel (full-blown),
Not to mention a crown and a harp of his own.

*Jenkins in glory is basking all day;
He will be happy for ever and aye.
Jenkins's victims?.....In Hades are they.
Jenkins believed in Jesus.*

JOHN YOUNG.

English Morality.

HUMAN nature is very funny. If you talk, for example, to any intelligent woman, or to any collection of women, of existing "immorality," it is immediately assumed that there is only one immorality—that relating to the sexes; and the same assumption is made nowadays by every clergyman, every philanthropist, and almost every journalist. Few people appear to reflect that morality represents the whole of life—not merely a part of it. They would stare if I said that our religion, our political life, our social system, our immaculate literature, our cheap science, were all radically immoral; that Mr. Parnell was infinitely more moral than the late Lord Beaconsfield; that any given "Bishop Blougram" is far more immoral than M. Zola. Yet this is actually the case. The real enemy of human progress is not the man who errs in conduct or in judgment, but the man who lies and compromises. Englishmen, as a nation, temporise between expedience and Christianity. If the one great social ulcer of prostitution were eradicated, and if truer notions of the ethics of war were prevalent, they would be, morally, very excellent Mohammedans—Christians they are not, and never can be. It is because they assume to be Christians that Englishmen, as a nation, are immoral.—*The late Robert Buchanan, in the London "Echo."*

"Mamma, will heaven be as beautiful as they say in the books?" Mother: "Certainly, my dear; why do you ask?"
"Places we go to in the summer are never as nice as the circulars."

Acid Drops.

THE young King of Spain has been, and is, receiving a very careful Christian education. Of course, he is being brought up as a Roman Catholic. That is necessary in the classic land of the Inquisition. He is also being trained in the proper accomplishments of a Christian monarch. Last Sunday he was taken to his first bull-fight, and he enjoyed it immensely—to the great delight of the people who were present. We wonder what one of the great Roman emperors would think of this sort of thing. Or rather we do *not* wonder. It is easy enough to infer the opinion of a Trajan, a Vespasian, an Antoninus, or a Marcus Aurelius. Could one of those mighty dead revisit the glimpses of the moon, how he would smile at the boast of Christian apologists that their religion abolished the gladiatorial shows!

The new church of St. Columb, Notting Hill, is up-to-date in the matter of furniture. The chairs are described as "comfortable and convenient." They are furnished with accommodation for books and umbrellas, and there is a place beside each chair for a hat. Evidently the churches don't mean to be left behind by the theatres and music-halls.

Intellect doesn't seem to run high amongst the readers of the *Sunday Companion*. That publication has awarded the sum of five shillings for the following Prize Thought: "Invite Jesus to become your guest, and he will become your host." This is not very profound, but there is a good deal of the true spirit of Christianity in it. All religion is selfishness at bottom. It is based on a calculation of something to be got by the worshipper. In the present case the idea is that inviting Jesus is a good investment. He is expected to return the compliment with compound interest.

Another five shillings was awarded to this Prize Thought: "The Christian gardener has to dig deep to raise souls." The author of this epigram is a man of God, the Rev. M. H. Evans, of Bradford. We rather pity his congregation, if he is still in harness. His ideas appear to be confused. He seems to think that souls grow underground like potatoes.

The *British Medical Journal* is sarcastic at the expense of Archdeacon Wilberforce, with reference to his speech at the recent anti-vivisection meeting in London. After observing that his language was "more suited to theological than to scientific controversy," our contemporary hits out as follows: "A man who condemns vivisection on the ground of 'impious inquisitiveness' should really take Hamlet's wholesome advice to Polonius, and 'play the fool nowhere but in his own house.'"

So far as the "impious inquisitiveness" is concerned, we are at one with our medical contemporary. It is nonsense to condemn any inquisitiveness as "impious." It is quite possible, however, for inquisitiveness to be *inhuman*. That is the real objection to vivisection, and it is a pity that the anti-vivisection cause should suffer by the pulpit antics of a professional Christian, who feels bound to advertise his own business on every possible occasion. Knowledge is a good thing in itself, but it is not a good thing to the possessor unless he came by it honestly. A man may know what is in another person's private correspondence, and be a rogue for knowing it. He may know certain aspects of sexual excitement, and be a seducer or a debauchee for knowing them. He may know how a human being looks in the unexpected presence of a violent death, and be a murderer for knowing it. The fact is, you cannot justify the gaining of knowledge by any and every means. The morality of the means has to be considered. That is what the vivisectioner has to face.

Dr. Richter, at Blackpool the other day, at the close of a rehearsal of a particularly difficult number, is credited with having said: "Well, gentlemen, with the help of Providence and a great deal of attention, it will go very well. The attention is most important."

The Chesterfield Town Council have discussed the failure of their Sunday trading prosecutions. Councillor Whitlam said if the cost fell on the rates the sooner they stopped fooling away the ratepayers' money the better. Councillor Hopkins said, to be consistent, they must purchase a set of stocks, as in the last resort that was the punishment. He suggested they should also buy a ducking-stool. No resolution was moved, and the subject dropped.

Certain of the good folk of Chesterfield, who are hopelessly behind the times, have, says the *Umpire*, lately seen fit to object to the sale of Sunday papers in that town, and a batch of summonses were issued under the Lord's Day Observance Act, 1677, which forbids a man following his ordinary calling on Sundays. The result of the hearing cannot be very gratifying to the Chief Constable, inasmuch as the three cases were dismissed. In the last case a very ingenious additional defence was put forward—for the first time, we believe. It was that as on September 2, 1752, there was an

alteration of eleven days, by statute, under which arrangement the day next following September 2 was counted as the 14th, so May 26 of the present year was not Sunday at all, but Wednesday. This ought to be taken to heart by any other policeman who thinks of interfering with the rights of the subject.

A singular phase of the Sunday prosecutions is found in Swansea, says a writer in the *Sunday Chronicle*. It is, of course, as the law stands, illegal to open shops to sell anything on Sunday; it is, to my mind, equally illegal to pursue one's ordinary avocation of driving a tramcar, or plying for hire with a cab. But the authorities, as a rule, ignore the greater, and attack only the less. It is of their procedure in this respect that note should be made. A summons is served every week on traders who persist in keeping open; these traders seldom take the trouble to attend the court, but a fine of 5s. and 8s. 6d. costs is imposed. There is, I believe, power of distraint, and, failing a sufficiency of goods, power to commit the offender to prison. But the police do not proceed to this extremity. They make it a matter of account, and send a bill in to the trader periodically, as though the fine were a water rate.

The Sabbatarians, continues the *Sunday Chronicle* contributor, are profoundly concerned, they tell us, to avert the threatened establishment of the Continental Sunday. Nine out of ten of them have never been on the Continent, and do not know a Continental Sunday from rent day. But, in their ignorance, they are afraid of it. Well, I am not. I would welcome it. I would rather have the Continental Sunday than the English Sunday, and I am not ashamed to say it. What is more, I know that English people, who are very prim at home, enjoy the dread Continental Sunday hugely when they are abroad. They make no bones about it, and the most respectable go-to-meeting people seem to find pleasure in the very innocent wickedness of, say, a Paris Sunday. Then they come home, and take a joy in making themselves and other people miserable. That is English Sabbatarianism—all over.

A resolution deprecating the growing tendency to make the "Lord's Day" a day of mere pleasure and amusement has been passed at the annual meeting of the Central Council of Diocesan Conferences. The Lord ought now to feel assured that the day will be devoted entirely to his service—that is, if he thinks people are inclined to pay the slightest attention to the Central Council of Diocesan Conferences and its Sabbatarian resolutions.

The Bishop of Norwich, in his septennial visitation charge, deplored the growing secularisation of the Sabbath. Nowadays, he said, we heard of Sunday croquet and lawn tennis among the affluent classes. Sunday-schools and Bible classes were being emptied because hundreds of young people left the towns and villages on bicycles. He warned the clergy to point out the evil of this practice in sermons. There is something comically doleful about this episcopal wail. Where is the "evil" in young people indulging in a healthy exercise which is accompanied by a beneficial change of air and scene? Sunday is the most convenient—in some cases the only available—day, and common-sense people know perfectly well that little is lost by an absence from Sunday-schools or Bible classes, whatever the clergy may say to the contrary.

It seems difficult to realise that we are in the twentieth century when religious persecution of the following kind is possible, even in Russia:—Sixteen Stundist students have lately been arrested in Russia for holding a religious service in a private house. The police raided the place and found the owners engaged in prayer with an open Bible on the table. A priest, who gave evidence for the prosecution, said that there was no doubt that the prisoners were Stundists. The court found all the prisoners guilty, and sentenced them to varying terms of fine and imprisonment.

A scientist, after making a careful scrutiny of the works of the old masters, has announced that they invariably painted the wings of angels in the wrong place. Rubens, Raphael, Corregio, and Michael Angelo, he says, were ignorant of the elementary principles of science, and simply made their pictures foolish by painting angels' wings at the shoulder blades. Nature, says this critic, has placed the wings of all creatures that fly exactly at the centre of gravity. But an examination of the old masters shows that the centre of gravity in all of their figures is far below where the wings of the angels have been placed. The wings ought properly, he continues, to have been situated about the waist, otherwise they look absurd. To fly with wings from the shoulder, where the old masters placed them, is an impossibility.

A correspondent of the *Liverpool Post* writes: "I saw this morning, on a notice board outside a church, among the list of subjects of sermons:—

June 2.—Come and see

June 9.—The Devil at Church.

Was it intended that these two should read as one?"

"Blessed are the peacemakers" is a text which seems to have been momentarily forgotten by Rev. G. S. Hitchcock, Unitarian minister. He is a member of the Medway Board of Guardians, and at a recent meeting a heated discussion took place on the effects of the war in regard to pauperism. Instead of pouring oil on the troubled waters, the follower of the "meek and lowly one" seems to have been more violent than anybody else. For he struck Councillor Lamb—who, if there is anything in names, should have been quite inoffensive—a blow on the nose with his fist, causing blood to flow. Lamb applied a handkerchief to his nose, and, with amusing naivete, observed: "I did not expect a blow from a minister of religion."

Great amusement has been caused in Boston by the publication of a manifesto signed by Dr. Mallalieu, the Methodist bishop, and others, protesting against the public reception of the Y. M. C. A. delegates taking place at the Museum of Fine Arts, unless the nude classical statues are draped, and thus deprived of their contaminating influence.

Upon this the *Evening News* publishes some amusing lines:—

Come, Venus, this will hardly do,
Though godless people may admire you;
Before you meet the modest view
Of pious folk, we must attire you
In some chaste frock, that you may be
More suited to your company.
Diana must be draped as well,
And lovely Juno, proud and haughty,
Although their beauty, truth to tell,
Ne'er seemed to us so very naughty;
But then we are not so refined
As those who own a modest mind.
Nay, more, when these good people meet,
No man must make a "bare" assertion,
But state his facts in ways discreet,
While giving, still, a candid version;
For, in the interests of youth,
'Tis well to drape the naked truth.
Of course, we know that there have been
Men reckoned good whose views were wider;
But I, for one, won't intervene
To pose as modesty's derider;
Nor yet to make remarks unkind
About the purist's nasty mind.

In its obituary notice of Robert Buchanan, the *Christian World* says: "He wrote very bitterly against the Christianity of to-day." The *Examiner* points to him as an example of "how rudderless a man may become who discards his faith." But religious belief, or the absence of it, had nothing to do with any waywardness that might have been observed in Buchanan, who would have been a man of genius if he had aimed at greater concentration.

Buchanan, says the *Rock*, "in spite of great gifts, failed because he lacked the highest inspiration of all." This is a very cool assumption. What sort of inspiration could he have derived from such a bundle of rotten creeds and incongruities as Christianity?

Replying to Dr. Abbott, who thinks it possible to reject miracles and still retain faith in the honesty and general historical accuracy of the New Testament, the *British Weekly* says: "Let any reader try; let him take the Gospels, the Acts, and the Epistles, and erase from them as incredible everything that affirms miracle. He will find that the narrative of miracle is so welded with facts and words and inferences that to cut it out is to reduce the whole to a rag-heap. In the end of the day there are but two alternatives—either accept Christ and the miraculous, or reject Christ and the miraculous."

The new Bishop of Stepney—Dr. Cosmo Gordon Lang—does not seem to mince terms. In a recent sermon in St. Paul's Cathedral he spoke of the "spirit of confident and ignorant criticism." As he gave no instances, it is difficult to test the justness of his observation. But we know that there is, on the other hand, plenty of "confident and ignorant" belief. "There is," he continued, "a resentment of restraint, a want both of the outward and the inward spirit of deference; a spread, shall we say, in the strict sense of the word—a spread of impudence."

Impudence, indeed! Shown apparently by a want of deference, say, to a high and mighty person like the Bishop of Stepney and his cut-and-dried beliefs. Well, if there is impudence on the part of others, there is no very staggering display of dignity by the Bishop of Stepney.

A Spanish priest who brutally murdered his aged father will shortly suffer the extreme penalty of the law. It is said that "high ecclesiastical personages" have endeavored to get the death sentence commuted, but that the Queen, taking

into account the repugnant circumstances, declined to accede to the request.

Even Church-people are beginning to be ashamed of the Athanasian Creed. Nevertheless, the *Church Times* can speak of its "splendid anathemas." It must take a lively imagination to perceive anything "splendid" about that composition. However, the *Church Times* seems prepared to defend it, observing that "when it speaks of men perishing everlastingly, when it speaks of life everlasting, or of everlasting death, it calls to mind Divine promises that pass all understanding, and terrors of the Divine wrath which are purposely expressed in words vague, and but faintly shadowing the reality. The authors of the Creed did not invent these terms; they used them as they found them in Holy Scripture; and we are not interested, except historically, in the meaning which they read into them."

The *Rock*, in an obituary notice of Sir Walter Besant, mentions that, though the novelist was at one time intended for the Church, "there was, to say the least, very little theological or ecclesiastical in Sir Walter Besant's mental make-up. He discovered his mistake in time, and, as he was wont to say, he escaped 'the intolerable fetter of a white tie.' It has sometimes been complained of him that he was too ready to turn his satire—always of the mildest—on clerics of all sorts, and to give credit for effective benevolent effort only to those who laid no claim to any connection with a Church of any kind. Certainly, he soon found out that he was not cut out for a clergyman, and though he did for a time read theology, and, seemingly, with a fair measure of success, he eventually gave up all thought of a clerical career."

Mr. T. Stephens writes to the *Examiner* that the Congregational Churches of Walworth and Bermondsey are nearly empty every Sunday. "It is no use blinking that fact. I am not here seeking causes, but only stating the fact. I have totalled up the accommodation of certain churches as 6,000, and I have the best reason for saying that on no Sunday are there 1,000 persons present. Unless something is done they must be shut up and sold. York-road, with room for 1,000, is gone, and many others must go if things are allowed to drift on as they are doing at present."

"A Mere Layman" writes to the *St. James's Gazette* that "the Bishop of Norwich would be more likely to effect his object (namely, attendance at church) by telling the clergy to omit their sermons from the services. Sermons are the greatest cause of the emptiness of the churches, or at least of the absence of men therefrom. The present age is critical; in no walk is the untrained amateur tolerated. He exists in the pulpit because it is 'brawling' to answer him or to cry him down. In no other place would he hold forth for five minutes." These observations from the pew may be gall and wormwood to the pulpit, but who can regard them as uncalled for?

Some clergy, apparently driven by despair, are making almost superhuman efforts to fill their churches. All sorts of adventitious aids are resorted to. A rector reports that during the hot weather he has been doling out iced coffee. The refreshments are preceded at 1.15 by the Electrophote, which daily exhibits marvels of sacred art from all parts of the world to large congregations, whilst the Monsterphone pours forth an ever-changing variety of speech and orchestration. It is rather remarkable how the Christian Church now presses science into its service after doing its best in the earlier ages to suppress it. The Monsterphone must completely cut the preacher out.

The *Record* wishes the Bishop of Norwich to understand that the Church has to face virtual stagnation over a long period, and not, as the Right Rev. Father-in-God seems to think, a sudden arresting of healthy growth. The *Record* gives the confirmation totals from all dioceses from 1890 to 1900. They are:—197,421; 214,730; 219,671; 223,115; 214,484; 217,228; 228,348; 219,655; 217,045; 214,191; 197,569. So that the Church has gone back in this matter to its position in 1890, which must be very encouraging to those who look for progress.

The Christian Evidence Society recently held its annual meeting at Zion College. The *Record* laments that the Society has not of late received the much-needed aid. Then that Evangelical journal makes some observations which seem to suggest that it has been asleep, or, at any rate, not so observant as it might have been. It says: "There may, perhaps, be less heard of the popular attack on Christianity than there was in the days of Mr. Bradlaugh's activity." This is not in accordance with the fact. The popular attack on Christianity is now wider and stronger than ever it was. If the *Record* hears less of it, that is simply because of some auricular defect. The Evangelical organ, however, is fair enough to admit that, "although the attack may not be so conspicuous as it was some years ago, it is still in active progress." The *Record* is forced, it seems, to this conclusion

by the circumstance that "fewer young people are attending Bible-classes, and fewer parents are sending their children to Sunday-schools."

A great fuss is being made about the fact that during the absence of the vicar of St. Saviour's, Upper Chelsea, his assistant curate gave "the nuptial blessing" to a divorcee. This act is described as "scandalous." Why do people who are liable to be objected to by "churlish priests" trouble the Church at all? The best way to reduce the conceit of clerics is to leave them, in ceremonial matters, severely alone. Surely in such a case the registry office provides all that is needful.

A New York telegram says that a jury, in the case of a golf player who was charged with breaking the law by playing on Sunday, returned a verdict for the defendant. They recommended the repeal of the statutes, and that other laws should be changed so as not to interfere with innocent amusements. It is said that the verdict has pleased society greatly.

A tremendous question was raised by Mr. H. D. Greene the other evening in the House of Commons. Was the Government prepared to take steps to give the Bishop of Calcutta the style and precedence of an Archbishop? Lord George Hamilton replied that the Government could not act in a hurry, there being so many important considerations involved. A matter of this kind is enough to render a whole session illustrious.

The Bishop of Calcutta—who has returned from India just in time to be too late for the Sec of London—has been raising an absurd "bogey" to frighten people into supporting Christian missions in India. What he says will scarcely impose upon anyone who has given attention to Indian topics. He says that the British Government, in offering the natives purely secular instruction, has thereby alienated them from their native beliefs and from such morality as their own religions inculcated. This by no means follows. We have too many instances in our own country of highly educated people who still adhere with extraordinary persistency to the faith in which they are bred—as, for instance, Roman Catholics, with whom this Protestant Bishop may not be supposed to have very much doctrinal sympathy. Then he says: "We have not put anything in the room of the religious and moral ideas the secular instruction has displaced." We have first to be convinced that anything *has* been displaced. If religion, then that is no loss; if moral ideas, we fail to understand how secular education can be antagonistic to them in so far as they are really moral, or what harm can be done to the ethical instincts by wider knowledge.

Then Dr. Welldon says: "There are consequently two alternatives before the country, Christianity and Atheism. The native Atheist trained on European methods will soon be able to assert himself, and then the lives of the Christians in India will not be worth a very long purchase." This is all pure assumption, and of the most baseless kind. It is an atrocious insult to the higher class of Hindoos. The Atheism which, he says, follows from secular instruction on European methods is the last type of thought which could be imagined as contemplating useless revolt and massacre. Dr. Welldon had better try again, and on a different tack, if he wishes to secure support for Christian missions to India. Stupid slander won't do it.

The Dean of Durham, the very Rev. Dr. Kitchin, speaking at a School Board Conference at Newcastle-on-Tyne, said he had that day spent half an hour looking for the meeting place. He had got into the middle of "a procession of fools dressed up as such on bicycles. He did not know what they were doing, but he drove through them in his hansom." This "procession of fools" was, it seems, simply part of the local Saturday Lifeboat demonstration, in which local theatres provided tableaux, and numbers of gentlemen's, ladies', and juveniles' cycling clubs were represented. If the Dean of Durham would look a little nearer home, he would find plenty of real "processions of fools" in connection with his Church, many of which he has taken part in himself, probably with the result of looking the biggest fool of all.

Amongst many good stories in Sir Mountstuart Grant-Duff's recently-published *Notes from a Diary* is the following, in which Father Healy certainly scored off some Protestant tormentors. He had found himself in a tramcar sitting opposite two Protestant fanatics, who, seeing that he was a priest, devoted themselves to the most outspoken abuse of his religion. He remained quite silent till he was about to alight, when he remarked: "I observe, gentlemen, that you do not believe in purgatory." "No, indeed," they replied; "we think it is one of the many soul-destroying errors of your system." "In that case," observed the reverend gentleman, as he stepped out and took leave of his discourteous fellow-travellers, "you may go to hell."

One of the convicts who made a dash for liberty from Parkhurst Prison, in the Isle of Wight, was an ex-clergyman.

He was known in the profession as the Rev. Samuel Walton Kay.

Some curious evidence was given before Sir F. Jeune yesterday in support of the suit of Mrs. S. E. C. Thompson. It was stated that respondent was formerly a lieutenant in the Army, but, having been dismissed from the Service for being drunk on parade, went into the Church, and acted as curate successively at Gulval, near Penzance, and Beaulieu (Hampshire), afterwards obtaining the living of Fawley. His heart was peculiarly susceptible to infantile charms, and last November he was sentenced to twelve months' hard labor for an offence under the Criminal Law Amendment Act. A *decree nisi* was granted.—*Daily Telegraph*.

Mr. Harry Brown, a Gloucester publican, has a turn for piety. Writing to the wife of a friend, he declared that if he "could give her all the love of the angels in heaven it would not suffice." Mr Justice Barnes, in the Divorce Court, thought that nothing less than £750 would suffice as damages to the injured husband, and said it was a very shocking case.

Absent-minded beggars are not confined to the British Army. A New Southgate parson forgot to publish the banns in the bridegroom's parish, and the parson of the bride's parish was unable to tie the young couple up in the name of God. Of course it was very distressing, and enough to drive the lady wild. All the absent-minded parson could do was to procure a special license at his own expense.

In the borough of Sunderland foul language in the streets is an indictable offence. It is not so, however, in the Sunderland Rural District. People who want to let off steam, therefore, cross over from the borough to the district, which often comprise opposite sides of the same street. We suppose this practice would have to be resorted to by open-air preachers who quote too freely from the Bible.

Before leaving New Court Chapel, Highbury, to succeed Evangelist Moody at the College of Pastoral Theology in the United States, the Rev. G. Campbell Morgan opened his mouth a little wider than usual. He laughed—for it was safe to do so then—at some of the female members of his old flock. One of them had actually rebuked him in the Lord's name for enjoying a good novel. Did Moses (she asked) or Paul, or Shadrach, Meschach, and Abednego, ever read novels? Perhaps not. But novels were written about them. The lady forgot that. Or perhaps she didn't know it.

The recent Belfast riots were not without a touch of irony. The most grievous sufferer was a Protestant, whose co-religionists attacked him under the impression that he was a Roman Catholic.

Two Worlds, in an article on Freedom of Speech, mentions that "Recently at Birmingham the Secularist platform was stormed and the speaker mobbed by a crowd of followers of the teacher of humility and non-resistance; and at Liverpool the anti-ritualist crusader so well known in that city was attacked and assaulted, presumably by more disciples of him who said 'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.' Probably, finding the earth already in the hands of those who are not meek in the least degree, the Christians have lost faith in the maxim, and have determined upon trying the dodge which has been so successful in the case of the earth-grabbers.....Priestly intolerance, parsonic arrogance, and all the vile brood of horrors following in the trail of unlimited authority on the part of the priesthood, are only held in check by perfect liberty of speech. It has been the gloom-dispelling sunlight; it has been the keenest weapon of truth in all times."

According to a *Morning Leader* telegram from New York, Mrs. Eddy, the Christian Science leader, is unable to profit by her own prescriptions. She is eighty, and looks ninety, and is quite decrepit. She permits no one to see her except a liveried footman, in whose name she placed all her wealth and jewels prior to the Woodbury libel suit. Even at home she wears an impenetrable veil. She declares that she will go up bodily to heaven. Judge Clarkson, however, her most conspicuous follower, has deserted her, and now affirms that Christian Science is a mere school for separating fools from their money.

Another believer in faith-healing has been prosecuted for allowing his child to die without calling in medical aid. This time it is in New York. The defendant, J. Luther Pierson, of Valhalla, N.Y., said he was a member of the Christian Catholic Church of Chicago. He believed that disease could only be cured by following the fifth chapter of James and the upholding of the Holy Scriptures. He prayed for his child, which was suffering from pneumonia, and the fact that the child died he attributed to his own want of sufficient faith. He was fined 500 dollars, but elected to go to gaol in default of payment. He intends to appeal to the Supreme Court.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, June 23, Freethought Demonstration, Regent's Park, at 6.30 p.m.

To Correspondents.

ALL communications for Mr. Charles Watts in reference to lecturing engagements, etc., 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.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for your valued cuttings.

MALDON FREETHINKER.—Thanks for a copy of the butcher-poet's loyal effusion. We note your reference to the touching verses on the wife's memorial card. Gushing persons are always the soonest consoled.

JAMES BRODIE.—Thanks. We have made use of it.

M. ROGERS.—Thanks for papers. Address forwarded.

THE printer's devil, or some other demon, made a jumble of two sentences in the second paragraph of Mr. Watts's article last week. For the sake of those readers who noticed it, we print the sentences as they should have appeared: "Yet his article was a plea on behalf of the Christian faith. This may accord with the exigency of Christian advocacy, but it hardly agrees with the true spirit of free and honest inquiry."

J. G. STUART.—We have no personal knowledge on the matter, but we have seen it frequently stated in American papers that Mr. Carnegie is an Agnostic, and that he was a friend and warm admirer of the late Colonel Ingersoll. For the other matter see "Acid Drops." Thanks for the cuttings.

S. B. BERNARD.—You would make the best acquaintance with Schopenhauer, as you read only English, through the admirable translations by Mr. T. Bailey Saunders, published by Swan Sonnenschein and Co., in six half-crown volumes. Schopenhauer's principal work, *The World as Will and Idea*, is stiffer reading. There is an English translation by Haldane and Kemp in Trübner's "English and Foreign Philosophical Library." It is in three volumes at 3s.

JAMES NEATE.—See "Sugar Plums." We do not insert "Reports" in the ordinary newspaper way, but we are always glad to give a paragraph to anything exceptional.

A. B. MOSS.—We are aware of the good work which is done in London by the open-air lecturers. Your own share of the work is appreciated.

H. R. CLIFTON.—Thanks. We have dealt with the matter.

ANONYMOUS correspondents are once more warned that notice cannot be taken of their communications. Name and address should always be given, though not necessarily for publication.

H. PERCY WARD.—Mr. Foote is answering your letter by post.

R. H. SHEFFIELD (Paris).—Thanks for the paper.

GLASGOW READER.—We cannot pursue the matter in that direction.

M. ROGERS.—Address forwarded as requested. Thanks for the enclosures. See "Acid Drops."

D. SKERR.—We are much obliged to you for the cuttings from the Belfast papers, but we said what we had to say about the riots last week. They are too common in that city. No doubt we shall have to comment upon another before very long.

ESS JAY BEE writes: "You ought to have another twelve months at the seaside! I am glad you are having a few days, at any rate. Pleased to see our old friend, G. L. Mackenzie, having smoked the pipe of peace lately, is once more on the war-path."

A. MUNROE.—Sir Richard Davis Hanson was Chief Justice of South Australia. His two works on *The Apostle Paul* and *The Jesus of History* are able and suggestive. He was a sceptic, and he brought a legal intelligence to the criticism of the New Testament records. Judge Lumsden Strange was another good specimen of the forensic "infidel." It is well known, of course, that Jeremy Bentham, the father of English jurisprudence, was an out-and-out Atheist. One of the most damning criticisms of the value of religion was written from his notes by his disciple, the historian Grote, and published anonymously by Richard Carlile. It was entitled *The Influence of Natural Religion on the Temporal Happiness of Mankind*. It would be well worth reprinting.

CHARLES MOORE (Lexington).—Always pleased to receive your *Blue Grass Blade*. We note what you say about slang, but it doesn't convince us. We shall take your view, no doubt, when we appreciate beef and mustard in equal proportions. Still, we don't want to convert you. We merely answered, in the first place, something that you said (mistakenly) about our ignoring the existence of your journal.

YOUNG CONVERT.—Glad to hear that you derived so much good from reading Paine's *Age of Reason*, and that you are circulating the sixpenny Twentieth Century Edition as an act of gratitude.

J. W. DE CAUX (Yarmouth).—Thanks for your cheque for ten fully-paid-up Shares in the Freethought Publishing Company. We have handed it to the Secretary, who will send you a formal receipt, etc. She will also forward you the parcel of books you order. You say you are sorry you cannot do more at present. For our part, we wish all would do as much in proportion to their opportunities. The Company would then be quite sure of a successful career. Thanks also for your proffered hospitality. We have often thought of visiting Yarmouth, and your kind letter gives the idea a fresh impetus.

W. D. JAMESON.—The Athenæum Hall in Tottenham Court-road is closed on Sunday evenings at present. It is difficult to get Freethought audiences indoors during the summer. The Hall will be reopened for Sunday evening lectures when the evenings begin to draw in. Meanwhile you will see that Mr. Foote is busy with the Sunday Freethought Demonstrations.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Awakener of India—Glasgow Herald—Manchester Daily Dispatch—Huddersfield Examiner—Two Worlds—Sunday Inter-Ocean—Secular Thought (Toronto)—Free Society (Chicago)—Earthen Vessel and Gospel Herald—People's Newspaper (Queensland).

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.

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

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 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.

Special.

SOME applications for shares in the Freethought Publishing Company, Limited, have reached the Secretary in response to my appeal in last week's *Freethinker*, but not nearly as many as there should have been. I am aware, of course, that it is not always possible to take up shares on the spur of the moment, and that many persons require a good deal of time to make up their minds. I am also aware that times are not as good as they might be, and that the burden of increased taxation is beginning to weigh heavily upon all sorts and conditions of men. At the same time, I believe there are scores of Freethinkers who could co-operate in this enterprise without any serious inconvenience. If they do not care for the *Freethinker*, whether it succeeds or fails, or lives or dies; if they do not care for the cause it represents; if they do not care whether a publishing house, for the production and distribution of Freethought literature, exists or not; well, in that case there is no more to be said. Words would simply be wasted upon them. But I shall not come to that conclusion hastily. I am prepared to wait a little longer. And in the meantime I have to say that if any intending shareholder has mislaid the Application Form that was inserted in last week's issue of this journal, he (or she) can obtain another copy by sending a postcard to the Secretary at 1 Stationers' Hall Court, London, E.C.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

THE second of this summer's Freethought Demonstrations took place on Sunday evening at Stratford Grove, where the West Ham Branch's outdoor meetings are held. Mr. Wilson's brake served as the platform, and Mr. Thurlow acted as chairman, drawing special attention in his introductory speech to the new *Age of Reason*, which seemed to be enjoying a good sale afterwards amongst the audience. Mr. Cohen opened the list of speakers with a brief but excellent address, as full of good matter as an egg is full of meat. Mr. Watts followed with a longer speech in a lighter vein, and was heartily applauded. Mr. Foote's speech wound up the proceedings. He had a fine reception, and the crowd was then enormous; other meetings on the same ground looking small in comparison, and the Christian Evidence meeting perfectly infinitesimal. Miss Vance informs us that the collection also was in excess of last year's. The whole function was thoroughly successful, and there was no mistaking the heartiness of the cheers as the brake drove away.

When the speech-making was over a gentleman came up to the brake and wanted to see Mr. Foote. No doubt he was a Christian; anyhow, he was in a very bad temper. "Are

you aware," he asked, "that you are on private ground?" "No," replied Mr. Foote; "is it yours?" This pertinent question aggravated the gentleman's anger, and he began to splutter out some menaces. "Well," said Mr. Foote, "it isn't worth a lot of talk. If there has been any trespass, you have your remedy." We hear that the same Christian gentleman has aired his ill-temper on that spot before.

The third Freethought Demonstration will be held this evening (June 23) in Regent's Park, opposite Gloucester-gate and near the Park entrance to the Zoological Gardens. As the people in the Park are rung out at a quarter past eight, and it is supposed to be cleared by half-past, it has been decided to begin the Demonstration at half-past six. Messrs. Foote, Watts, and Cohen will be the speakers.

Mr. Foote spent a few days last week—four in all—at Margate, staying at the Terrace Hotel, kept by the amiable and facetious Mr. Munns, who is one of the institutions of the town. Mr. Munns is a veteran Freethinker who does not hide his opinions. He is now seventy years of age, and in Margate air he should be good for another ten years at least. Mr. Foote himself felt the benefit of that air during his brief stay. Unfortunately, he had to return to London and to work just as he was sensibly improving in the matter of sleep.

London Freethinkers are reminded that their Annual Excursion, under the auspices of the N. S. S. Executive, takes place on Sunday, July 7. A special train has been chartered to run to Dorking, starting at a convenient time in the morning (10 o'clock) from Victoria and London Bridge, and calling at Clapham Junction and New Cross. The return journey will be started from Dorking at 8 p.m., and the train will stop to pick up excursionists at Box Hill. The tickets are only 2s. each for adults, and 1s. each for children under twelve.

Those who are not acquainted with Dorking may be informed that it lies amidst some of the most beautiful scenery in England. It is a delightful walk over to Leith Hill, which rises nearly a thousand feet above the sea. Raunmore Common is two miles away, and Brockham Green two miles. Various other interesting places might be mentioned in the vicinity.

Fuller details of this excursion will be found on the hand-bills, including a list of refreshment houses. It has been arranged to have a general tea, at 1s. per head, in the largest room available. This will hold 150, and those who want to get in should make sure of their tickets. Mr. Foote will preside.

We repeat the announcement that the Newcastle-on-Tyne Branch has organised, as usual, a Freethought Demonstration on the occasion of "Race Sunday." Mr. H. Percy Ward is the speaker this year. He lectures this evening (June 23) on the Town Moor, near the Military Sports Stand, at 7; also on the following Sunday evening, at the same hour, near the Recreation Ground. On both mornings he will lecture at 11 on the Quayside. No doubt the local "saints" will do their utmost to render all four meetings successful.

Hull Branch members and friends are notified that the annual waggonette trip will take place on Sunday, July 7, starting at 9 a.m. The meeting-place is to be Story-street. The tickets are 1s. 6d. each; children half price; and the trip will be to Aldboro'. The secretary's address is—G. E. C. Naewiger, 12 Sydney-terrace, Londesboro'-road, Hull.

Mr. A. B. Moss addressed three large open-air meetings on Sunday. He reports that there were good collections and a brisk sale of literature.

Mr. Moss, who is a member of the Camberwell Council, stands up when occasion arises for the Secular view of things. We see by the *South London Press* that he has just been speaking against the privilege of churches and chapels in being exempt from local rates, and against the ridiculous Sabbatarian effort to prevent the dusty thoroughfares from being watered on Sundays. That effort was defeated.

Mr. E. B. Rose lectured in Victoria Park on Sunday. He had a good audience in the afternoon and a fine one in the evening, when his subject was "The Religion of the Boers." Mr. Rose has lately returned from South Africa, where he resided for many years, and was able to speak on this topic from personal knowledge. He was very warmly applauded, and could not help contrasting his reception then with what it was fourteen years ago, when he met in Victoria Park with kicks and insults.

The *Awakener of India*, a monthly philosophical journal devoted to the propagation of Monism and edited by N. K. Ramasami Aiyar, B.A.B.L., High Court, Vakil, Madras, and member of the N. S. S., London, makes an agreeable reference

to the *Freethinker*. In the course of an article on "The Origin of Evil" it gives several extracts from a contribution to our columns on that subject by Mr. Francis Neale. "Hinduism," it says, "tries to explain the origin of evil by the doctrine of Re-incarnation and Karma—i.e., that the individual man suffers in this life the consequences of his acts in the previous incarnation. But that does not sufficiently explain the difficulty, which is only removed by it a step further. We may admit that environment and heredity are not sufficient to explain the different temperaments and inclinations of the various minds, and that the resultant effects of our past action very greatly influence our present condition; but then the difficulty lies in explaining what gave these different tendencies to different minds or souls or reflections of the soul when they first started on the journey of life. Surely they must all have been equally circumstanced in the beginning..... The honest confession of the difficulty to answer the question made by *Awakened India* shows the reasonableness of the argument of the Western Freethinker with which we commenced this article."

Mr. J. M. Robertson's *Essays Towards a Critical Method* are announced elsewhere as "out of print." We beg to state that the Freethought Publishing Company still has a number of copies, which it will be happy to sell at the advertised price—namely, half-a-crown. Such a well-written work ought to find ready purchasers at that figure.

The Birmingham Branch has issued an "urgent" appeal, which we trust will elicit a hearty response. A deficit of £20 must be wiped out, and a fairly good balance must be placed in hand; otherwise the propagandist work of Mr. H. Percy Ward in the city will have to be discontinued. This would be a serious misfortune, and we hope it will be averted. Several members have promised to contribute small sums weekly to a special fund. But that will hardly be sufficient to meet the necessities of the case. What is immediately wanted is solid financial help from friends who can give something down—say from ten shillings up to five pounds.

Inquiries are constantly being made for the story of Mr. Foote's imprisonment for "blasphemy." The volume which contained it has for many years been out of print, and copies are very difficult to obtain now, either for love or money. Since 1883 a new generation has arisen. Children of twelve then are now men and women of thirty. Some of them have become Freethinkers, and they want to know the details of Mr. Foote's misadventure with the Christians. To meet their case a briefer, but satisfactory, account will be published shortly in a cheaper form; and in the meantime a summary account will appear in the *Freethinker*—perhaps next week.

The "Decline" of Atheism.

ACCORDING to the Rev. A. Pring, of St. Luke's, Deptford things are humming along merrily from his point of view in that district. Speaking at the twentieth annual meeting of the Rochester Diocesan Society, in the Mercers' Hall, he said: "Twelve years ago, when I went to Deptford, there was certainly a good deal of Atheism in the neighborhood. That is all as dead as a door-nail to-day. And I believe, too, that among the great masses of the people who are crowded there there is a desire and a feeling after religion—there is a desire and a feeling after God." The reverend gentleman is not sure of this feeling after God; he only believes it exists. In other words, he is drawing on his imagination. The wish was father to the thought. No doubt it suits his own "feelings" to think that the "decline" of Atheism in Deptford has been concurrent with his own ministry there. We suspect, however, that he knows just as much about the Atheism of that district as he does about its "laboring classes." Perhaps he will tell us how many more people go to church now than went twelve years ago. That is a much better test than any amount of unctuous self-congratulation.

Sheldon's Servant.

RECENTLY the Plymouth Church of Brooklyn, possessed with a desire to carry out the words of Christ which enjoin the feeding of the hungry, announced that on a given date food would be distributed to the needy. The result was that a great crowd of mendicants collected, and the managers of the church saved themselves from a mobbing by calling on the police. Preaching is one thing, practice another. The Rev. C. M. Sheldon, of Kansas, has written a story entitled *Born to Serve*, in which he declares that the servant girl should have equal privileges with members of the family. Mrs. Sheldon employed a servant, and when the first meal under the new servant's supervision was ready an extra plate was laid for her. Mrs. Sheldon objected, and the young woman called her attention to her husband's story. Mrs. Sheldon is said to have answered: "I can't help that; I didn't write the book"; and the servant left the Sheldon home.

—*Truthseeker* (New York).

What are we Here for?

(Concluded from page 380.)

AND then the people who advocate duty as the purpose of life seem to me to forget that the only persons in the world to-day who are living lives of real self-sacrifice are the people who have accepted the philosophy of happiness. The time was when the Christian Church afforded the world the most conspicuous example of suffering for others. The martyrs of the Church were conspicuous examples of what we call self-sacrifice. It was that, to a great degree, that gave the Church power over the world. To-day the Christian Church is not affording the world many examples of self-sacrifice. To-day the Church is living in comfort. The ministers are not suffering in order to get the gospel to the people; they are living in quiet, ease, and luxury. A very few of the missionaries are enduring suffering, but they have their salaries paid. They are safe about everywhere only in China, and there the Chinamen will sometimes fight. I do not know what kind of people the missionaries must be if they can induce a Chinaman to rise up and fight. The people who have rejected the Christian theology and the ordinary system of morality will tell you their only motives in life are in the seeking of their own happiness. Who are those people? They are the revolutionists of to-day. I have just been reading Prince Kropotkin's *Memoirs* and Tolstoi's *Resurrection*, and they show the kind of people in Russia to-day who are working for the good of the masses. There are men and women, some as young as fourteen and sixteen years, who are trying to benefit the poor peasant class. Some of these agitators are from the aristocratic class, as Kropotkin himself. These people are running into what they know is certain exile or torture or death. They know the cruelty of the Russian jailers and the keepers of those Russian prisons, but nothing stops them, and they go among the poor peasants knowing they will soon be arrested and subjected to miseries all the rest of their lives. Many such people kill themselves at once in the Siberian prisons rather than go through many years of such life. Every one of those people will tell you they are living just to make themselves and others happy. People who talk about duty forget the most conspicuous examples of self-sacrifice in the world to-day are the believers in the philosophy of happiness.

It is the same way with the people in this country. Let me mention the names of two people who have devoted themselves to the interest of the people. Who are they? John Most, who was sent to prison in this city because he was trying to benefit other people, and Emma Goldman. These are two names that shock the average American citizen as no other names do. Those two people have been brave enough to go to prison and suffer what people call the shame and disgrace of imprisonment, as well as to endure poverty, which they are not obliged to do with their abilities. Ask either of them, and they will tell you they are seeking happiness for themselves. Has your idea of duty ever led you into pain or personal sacrifice for the good of others? Has your duty transformed you into creators of new conditions in the world as these people I am talking about have been led by their sense of happiness? I say, if you will follow what I tell you it will lead you to poverty and prison and to death in your devotion to the interest of other people, and all the time you are seeking your own happiness.

People often say to me on the quiet: "Now, Mr. Pentecost, I do things all the time I do not want to do." They think they do. Suppose your own mother or relative is sick, and you stay home from the theatre to take care of her. Do you not do what you want to do? If you want to go to the theatre worse than you want to stay at home, you go. You know you will be happier the next morning by nursing than by going to the theatre. Nobody keeps you away by force. If a policeman takes you off down to the Tombs, I do not say you are doing what you want to do, because of superior force exerted upon you. You often think you are doing your duty, but still you are doing what gives you pleasure. This beautiful philosophy of life takes away all of that terrible sense of slavery that comes with thinking you must do your duty.

If we are here to be happy, and if we are always doing that which makes us happy, then everybody on the face of the earth is doing exactly what he is here for. I was born to be here doing just what I am doing, and you were born to be at this place just now listening to me. The king on the throne was born to sit on that throne. The tramp that begs through the country was born for that, and is here for that. The king and the tramp are both seeking their happiness. The President is in his place, and the workman at the loom is in his place. The criminal is in his place, and is doing what he was born to do. When the Queen of Austria was shot a year ago, I said the Queen was in her place and doing her proper work, and the man who killed her was doing his proper work. I said it with my pen at the time, and now say it from this platform. A man left this congregation because of that utterance, and never came back again. He wrote me a letter to tell me how much that pained him to have me say that. The reason why there are so many criminals in this world is for the same reason that there are so many judges and preachers and missionaries here. In working out their lives, each is doing what he can to get happiness for himself or herself.

The brother wrote me this postal card because he is unhappy. I come here because I am not happy. You come here like a lot of little birds with your mouths wide open, hoping to get something that will make you happy for a week. Of course, we are all unhappy. I do not mean to say we are dissatisfied. We eat all we can hold every day and are still hungry. Everything we can get does not satisfy our hungering and thirsting. We want peace and satisfaction. Why is that so? It is that in you that is urging you on to fulfil your destiny. You are here in this world for the purpose of filling that desire for happiness and trying to satisfy it.

I have discovered by my own experience, try as I will, I cannot get that peace, quiet, and happiness that I was born for by doing anything that begins and ends in myself. Just as sure as I think a train of thought that begins and ends in myself, or to do a thing that begins and ends in myself, I have that same unrest and same unhappiness. I can hardly think of an amusement that I could enjoy by myself. If I should go to the theatre and see a very interesting play, and knew that my wife was at home alone and I watching the play at the theatre, do you think I would enjoy it? It would be the most unpleasant evening I could possibly spend. If I had her with me, I would be all right. If you like to go off and enjoy pleasures without your wife, you do not know what I am talking about. There are those who might say my philosophy would lead people into sin and self-indulgence. I believe more and more every year in this philosophy, and it is more and more impossible for me to do anything that does not in some way contribute to my happiness. I even cannot enjoy the house I live in and the clothes I wear, because there are people who have not so much as I have. How I have tried to rub that feeling out! I have tried to blind myself to the fact that the world is full of poor people. If a man worth a million should give it all away, the poor would still remain. I cannot forget them. I see them all the time, think about them all the time, and I wish there was some way I could live, or die and wipe myself out, just for the sake of getting rid of all that poverty. I cannot be happy so long as there is a prison or electrocution chair or whipping-post. A man steals a watch, and is put in prison for five years. That is ten thousand times worse than the stealing of the watch. The watch can readily be replaced; but to take five years of liberty right out of that man's life, and make him drudge at work he does not want to do, and make it impossible for him to lead an honorable life when discharged from prison, is a philosophy which I cannot accept. If the plan were true, I could not be happy with that man in prison. To read about the soldiers being killed in South Africa and in the Philippines and hear the Churches shouting pæans of patriotism makes me unhappy so long as those things go on. You may say I am a crank, anyway, because some other people do not believe and feel that way. Do you know I believe the Czar of Russia to-day is worried and without happiness because of the wretched condition of the people of Russia? I believe the rich people of this city, who are all the time going to balls and theatres and seeking amusements, are constantly

thinking of the poor. I believe all of the Four Hundred have that little worm gnawing all the time in their breasts, and so they go and give a great charity ball and raise thousands of dollars for the poor. And even then they cannot enjoy themselves. Why do our rich and silken women go down slumming? It is because they cannot be happy as long as those poor people are there. The poor are too well satisfied with the places they live in. They do not know how to take care of good clothes, and if their houses are cleaned up for them they do not keep them clean.

Who are going to redeem the world from poverty? Not the poor, but the rich people who cannot rest until the curse of poverty is removed. Prince Kropotkin and others of that class cannot rest without doing something to help these poor people. The men in the prisons are the ones who are going to get rid of prisons.

It worries me to see people believing the superstitions they believe. Hundreds and hundreds of Catholics pour out of that Catholic church around the corner, and it worries me to see the people in there getting that superstition. Why should I love my neighbor as myself? That is absurd. But as I go on in life I find I cannot be happy unless I do unto the other man exactly as I want him to do unto me. We can love ourselves in our neighbors. We cannot treat the other fellow nicely for his sake, but for our own sakes. It is more blessed for me to give than to receive. That looks ridiculous, but it is true that I get more happiness by giving away than by receiving.

You are here to get all the happiness you can possibly get, and the only way you can get happiness is to give up your life as absolutely as you can to the service and happiness of others.

HUGH O. PENTECOST.

—*Truthseeker* (New York).

The "Christian Verity."

IN 1807 there was issued from the press *A New Theological Dictionary*, published in London, Edinburgh, and Perth. The editor, after declaring "the worship of God is the most unimportant subject that can agitate the human mind" (!), gives a kick at the "Infidels and scoffers," and then says: "The Christian knows that in the Scriptures of Truth he has an infallible standard, and that the innumerable winds of doctrine, by which the human mind has been tossed and driven, have all sprung from the GREAT ENEMY, whose unceasing work it is to corrupt the simplicity of the truth."

The editor, in penning that, appears to have had not the least suspicion that he was joking. The language is that of a century ago, before the time when Rationalism had performed its work, before the influence of Paine's *Age of Reason* and the Infidel and Atheistic propaganda had made itself wide-felt, before the clergy had been converted from the error of their ways and from their belief in the inspiration and the infallibility of the Bible—that ridiculous, absurd, and lying collection of Jewish and Gentile tracts and scraps. What would that editor say now could he resurrect and be set to prepare a new edition of this old and out-of-date dictionary? Could he be made sufficiently acquainted with the criticism, the new facts, new lights, new reasonings of the last fifty years, if he were a rational and candid man, he would cancel his preface; he would not mention the "great enemy," the Devil, at all, most likely, or, if he did, it would be in jest; or he might refer to him as defunct deity; and he would feel grave doubts as to whether the Devil's Creator still survived. Instead of speaking of the Bible as the "Scriptures of Truth," he would have to confess it to abound in falsehoods, blunders, illusions, forgeries, and nonsense; and, instead of ascribing the great diversities of Christian belief to the Devil, he would be compelled to confess that the Bible, and the facts and mysteries connected with its history, were entirely to blame for the Church's confusion. The Holy Ghost, the pianist, is absolutely out of tune, his performance is a bewildering jumble, and the dancers are mad, as the result of his mad playing.

The Christian knew all he cared to know a hundred

years ago; now he knows nothing so well as his own ignorance and bewilderment. He knew just what to believe then, each in his own sect, for he had been told, and was too docile to doubt or rebel. Now he knows not what to believe. Never was bewilderment so complete as that now seen in the Christian camps, laagers, and commandos. All the old standards and landmarks are washed away, or submerged in the sea of common sense, science, and criticism; and there are no materials for constructing others to replace them.

Moses is gone; the Bible is gone; Jesus is gone; the Holy Ghost went long ago; God the Father took refuge with the Unitarians, and no one knows where to find him. Heaven is *non est*, and Hell is quite gone out. Even the best friend the clergy ever had, the God that made their fortune, Satan, the Devil, Apollyon, the great enemy, the ever present bugbear—even HE fails them. And so the "Christian verity" resolves itself into a budget of lies and fudge, and the people know it. So long as they were kept in ignorance of the fact the clergy did not much care. But prosecution and abuse and persecution of Freethinkers have tended to enlighten the dupes of the clergy; and they now find that their wickedness is turning against themselves, and doing much to destroy their nefarious trade.

—*Liberator* (Melbourne).

JOS. SYMES.

Booth's Boasting.

GENERAL BOOTH has promptly recovered from his "alarming" illness, and on Monday last he addressed a crowded audience in the Congress Hall at Clapton. The boss of the Salvation Army was in fine form. He boasted of his vast conquests. His flag waved in 47 different countries. There were 7,200 separate societies, between 13,000 and 14,000 officers, 40,000 lay officers, and 17,000 bandsmen—including, we suppose, the big-drummers. Their 55 periodicals circulated nearly a million copies a week. In the Social Work they had 609 institutions, 1,700 officers, and shelter for 15,000 outcasts every night, who had a warm bath for a halfpenny, and were cleansed of their vermin. Also they had rescued 5,600 girls last year. Thus the Grand Old Showman went on talking like a Barnum prospectus. It did not occur to him that mere size and numbers form a very vulgar test of success. Judged by this standard, Jesus Christ was a conspicuous failure. He had only 12 officers, and one of them (the cashier) ratted, while the others ran away when he was arrested. William Booth has done much better than that. His business instincts have kept him a long way off the cross. Christ brought salvation, and Booth brought salvation soap.

A Happy Compromise.

COLONEL FAUCHIERE, of Louisiana, tells the following true story:—

Mrs. Blank, returning to Natchez after some years' absence, was welcomed by one of her old slaves.

"Well, Cynthia," she said, "what are you doing now? You look well and happy."

"Laws, Miss Lizzy, I'se peart!" Cynthia responded, dropping curtsies, with broad smiles widening her round, black face. "I done got married, Miss Lucy."

"Again?"

"Oh, this time it's foh keeps! I got married onto a Chinaman."

"You married a Chinaman! How could you fall in love with him?"

"Laws sakes, Miss Lizzy, 'twa'n't no love affair. 'Twas business. You know I'm a good washer. None betten in dis town. Ah Yan, he's a good ironer; so we goes into a laundry. Vehy comfohtable; got two chillun."

"But how about your religion?"

"Well, I'm a good, stirrin' Methodiss, an' goes to meetin', and Ah Yan's got his joss behin' de kitchen doh, and stays at home. So it suits so well it seems kind ob providential."

"Oh, I see. But the children?"

"De chillun? We fixed dat. We compromised on dem," said Cynthia, triumphantly. "We's goin' to make dem Jews!"

—*Youth's Companion*.

The recent additions to the Vatican at Rome bring the number of rooms in the Pope's residence ("prison" he calls it) up to twelve thousand.

Correspondence.

MORAL ATHEISTS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Mr. Ball makes a great mistake in stating that I deny, or expect him, or Mr. Watts, or anyone else who claims to be a Secularist, "to deny moral responsibility, on the ground that this involves free-will and a dual nature." I should no more think of asking him, or any of his colleagues, as Secularists, to deny moral responsibility, than I should think of asking them, as Atheists, to deny God. In reference to myself, Mr. Ball admits: "Whether Mr. Kingham is a genuine Atheist or a Christian enemy, I know not"; and yet he denies my statements concerning the alternative positions of the believer in the supernatural and the advocate of the natural. In view of the fact that Mr. Ball claims to be an Atheist, it would be interesting to learn what kind of Atheism that is which will not allow its professor to determine the contrast between his own opinions and opinions which he takes upon himself to repudiate.

Again, I certainly have not implied, nor did I attempt to show, that "the determinism of the Secularist" has any connection whatever with the paradox, "moral irresponsibility." In my criticism of Mr. Watts, I simply pointed out to him the inconsistency of trying to reconcile the secular postulate of man, as a part of natural sequence, with the postulate of moral responsibility. If Mr. Ball disagrees with the propositions there advanced, it is only fair that he should give some foundation for his assertions to the contrary, and so allow me the opportunity of removing that foundation. As it is, I shall be compelled to answer him by enlarging upon the arguments already laid down in my previous letter. He classes himself as one of those "who know themselves to be morally responsible to their fellow-beings and to their own consciences, quite independently of childish beliefs in uncaused volitions," etc.

Now, seeing that I have already pointed out that the postulate of man's moral responsibility to others must necessarily include moral responsibility to his own conscience, I may sum these two aspects up in the answer—I cannot conceive of a man being responsible to his own conscience without being responsible for it. Whatever Mr. Ball may say about "childish beliefs in uncaused volitions," to use the phrase "caused volitions" would be to perpetrate a paradox; for the application of the term "cause," in its scientific significance, would render it—involuntary volition. In the scientific acceptance, "cause" and "effect" are not two distinct, independent, or separable entities, but really two aspects of the same thing. For example, I take a flower in my hand and convey it to my nose or olfactory organ, and, as a result, I experience what we call a pleasant smell or perfume. The flower, it is supposed, is constantly giving out minute particles of its substance. These particles, floating in the air, are inhaled together with it into the nostrils, and, coming in contact with the fibrils of the olfactory nerve, send an irritation along that nerve which produces in the brain that excited condition which corresponds to the sensation of odor.

The recipient system, with its conditions, constituted one of the collaterals in the sum-total of collaterals necessary to cause that particular effect or sensation of odor. In stating the cause of that sensation we have stated all the factors necessary to produce that particular result; and the result could never come about unless preceded by such factors. The brain could no more create the sensation than the nerve could appropriate the excitement. We cannot separate the flower as presented from its representation in consciousness. According to science, the same principle obtains in all cases of cause and effect. An effect must invariably follow its cause; it has no choice in the matter. The cause is the effect in analysis; the effect is the cause in synthesis. If this be so, then the explanation for our actions may be summed up as follows: Our conditioning of past associations between pleasurable or painful states of consciousness, and particular objects, conditions, or the performance of particular actions, as summed up in the existing nervous structures, forms but one side of the collaterals—the reintroduction of the particular objects or necessary conditions being the other—which determine the nature of our actions. If, as Mr. Ball admits, "a man is not his own environment," he must be the creature of other environments. Indeed, according to evolution, to be one thing is to be nothing. Atoms, we are told, are changeable only in their relations through combinations with other atoms. Changes in matter are produced by differences of temperature, and differences of temperature are the concomitants of matter differentiations. The organism is a system in constant readjustment with its environment; that environment, the earth, is in similar relation to our solar system. Changes in plant and animal life have followed, and do follow, changes in the physical conditions of our earth's surface. We are told by evolutionists that the comparatively uniformly diffused responsiveness to the touch of external stimuli, manifested by certain of the lowest and organless protoplasmic structures, formed the general groundwork from which the complex and specialised nervous systems of the higher animals—including the brain of man with its nervous connections—have been built up by

the ceaseless action of environment. If these teachings are correct, then no two bodies can affect each other except by actual contact or by the touch of a transmitting medium; and Mr. Ball is wrong in stating that man "influences himself and other men by his internal thoughts and emotions." For, if we can only know a thing by its manifestations, we can only affect each other by our external characteristics. If, on the other hand, in admitting volition, we admit that man is his own environment—if we attribute spontaneity, freedom, or independence to our mental process, we exclude the possibility of their having natural causes or a place in natural law. For, in tracing the scientific applications of cause and effect, we define natural law. Such a law is a regular or an uninterrupted sequence of phenomena; a chain of relationships of which no one link exists or functions voluntarily. Man, as one of these links, has no more power to determine his actions, or to adjust those actions to their requirements, than a body has to electrify itself. As a morally responsible being, however, or as one who has in himself a power of initiative, he exists in nature, but not of it; for such a power, as I have shown, transcends those co-ordinations and correlations implied in the natural applications of the terms "cause" and "effect."

Whatever may be said to the contrary, morality stands or falls by the existence of a supernatural sanction. If science has failed to trace in nature any concern for human well-being, and if it has, in thus failing, struck at the existence of God, it has also struck at the existence of moral responsibility. If Darwin's illustrations of natural selection suggest anything, they suggest the indifference of nature to man as man. Natural selection teaches that those organisms which benefit in the struggle for existence are never benefited except by a corresponding injury to others. According to that theory, organic development is due to the survival of the fittest among innumerable variations from one or more parent stocks. We are told that the whole reasons for action are to be found in those laws of life to which all living beings must conform, and that natural selection, by a weeding-out process, secures an organic compliance which the individual (man included) is as utterly powerless to transcend as a plant is unable to develop without sustenance. In other words, we are assured that man's actions are of no more consequence, significance, or weight in the order of nature than the actions of any part of the animal, the plant, or the physical kingdoms; that he is the product of forces as unconscious in their operation as those which result in the formation of a nebula. According to evolution, we are dealing with an organism whether we deal with man or whether we deal with society. The life of society covers a longer span than that of the individual; but adaptation by environment is as much the condition for social existence as it is for the existence of the individual structure with its characteristics. If this view of human life be correct, individual characteristics which have required the gradual and continued operation of environment to evolve cannot be removed at one blow, but require the gradual changes in environment as the necessary factors of their disappearance. Religion says that morals have the power to change the characters of men; evolution that it is the conditions which entirely mould them. On the one hand we have those systems which hold that progress must necessarily come by the affirmation of right and the denial of wrong, while on the other we have those systems which hold that the intelligence of the individuals composing society is, at most, but a manifestation which varies according to the conditions of natural selection. If the latter view be correct, the appeal to reason, or the moral appeal, can by no means be regarded as a factor in progress. According to evolution, civilisation is not internal, but external; for it never comes about where the natural conditions are unfavorable. Whatever may be the form of society which we take into consideration, the general characteristics of the individuals composing it are exactly corresponding to the position of that society in the scale of evolution; and therefore manifestations which change as the social structure changes have no power of initiative in social reform. Since they can only reflect the *status quo*, they cannot possibly exist as moving factors in progress. If the former view be correct, then the claim for man as but a collateral, existing in common with innumerable other collaterals in an unbroken and endless chain of natural sequence, falls to the ground.

T. W. KINGHAM.

Something to Cry Over.

Down Egypt way, ages ago,
The tears that were shed
Were preserved in bottles;
A tangible proof of woe.

O sanctimonious Gyp, were those tears genuine?
If you'd happened to live in this Christian land
Just your bare assertion never would stand.
O simple Gippy, tell me, pray,
Were there no onions down Egypt way?

G. GUARDIABOSCO.

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 for the summer.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Masonic Hall, Camberwell-road): 7, John M. Robertson, "Philosophy from Kant to Bradley."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall, High-street): 11, Stanton Coit, "The Religion of Ethical Fellowship."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "The Riddle of the Universe."

BROCKWELL PARK (S. L. E. S.): 11.30, Mr. Swift, "Is the Ethical Movement Religious?"

BROCKWELL PARK: 3.15, F. A. Davies; 6.30, J. W. Cox, "A Christian in the Balance."

STATION-ROAD (Camberwell): 11.30, F. A. Davies.

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, C. Cohen, "Following Jesus."

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, W. J. Ramsey, "Some Tales from the Gospels."

FINSBURY PARK (near Band Stand): 3.30, C. Cohen, "Can Religion Live?"

HAMMERSMITH BROADWAY: 7.30, F. Davies, "Thomas Paine."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, R. P. Edwards, "Blasphemy"; 3.30, R. P. Edwards, "Atheism and Morality"; 7, E. White, "Did Jesus Perform Miracles?"

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Bible as a Book of Humor"; 7.15, C. Cohen, "This World and the Next."

June 26, at 8.15, C. Cohen.

PECKHAM RYE: 3.15 and 6.30, J. W. Cox, "What Must I do to be Saved?"

STRATFORD (The Grove): 7, S. E. Easton, "The Scheme of Christianity."

VICTORIA PARK: W. Heaford—3.15, "Religion: What and Why?"; 6.15, "The Gospel of Freethought."

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

REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester-gate): 6.30, Freethought Demonstration—Addresses by Messrs. G. W. Foote, C. Watts, and C. Cohen.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH: 11, Meeting in the Bull Ring.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Humberstone-gate): 6.30, F. J. Gould, "Aristotle."

NEWCASTLE: H. P. Ward—11 (Quayside, east of Boat Landing), "The Jokes of Jehovah"; 7 (Town Moor, near Military Sports Stand), "From Wesleyan Pulpit to Secular Platform."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, G. Berrisford, "Life and Mind."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Cap. Duncan's Navigation Schools, Market-place): 7, A Reading; 7.45, Lecture Arrangements.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 241 High-road, Leyton.—June 23, m., Clerkenwell; e., Mile End. 30, m., Hyde Park; a., Finsbury Park; e., Edmonton.

H. PERCY WARD, 2 Leamington-place, George-street, Balsall Heath, Birmingham.—June 23, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 30, Newcastle-on-Tyne. July 7, 14, 21, 28, Birmingham.

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