

THE

Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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The Dear "Daily News."

WE have nothing to do with the politics of the *Daily News*. Begging the editor's pardon—but *has* it an editor now?—that is a matter for the proprietors. When certain people own a newspaper it goes one way; when certain other people own it the way is different; what remains unchanged is the name and the aim at a big circulation. In the case of the *Daily News* there is another stable element—its Nonconformity. It always represents what Mr. Matthew Arnold used to call the Dissidence of Dissent. Consequently it is bound to stand up for the Christian religion, which the Nonconformists are apt to think they monopolise; for the Church of England is unchristian in its very basis and traditions, and the Church of Rome is a nest or lair (or something worse) of flat idolatry. Now in standing up for the Christian religion the *Daily News* has been very active and vigilant of late. Once upon a time it used to keep religion in its proper place; at present it lets religion run "all over the shop." Eventually, unless things alter, it will be all "Among the Churches." It is only fair to say, though, that the recognition of the fact that a great number of Freethinkers are opposed to a Tory government under almost any circumstances, keeps the *Daily News* from being too savage or satirical at their expense. Prudence dictates a certain measure of self-restraint. But how pleasant to have a dig at some distant Freethinker! one whose vote will not count in the next general elections in Great Britain. Even "Colonel" Lynch is let off, on account of Galway and the Irish Party. But there is M. Urbain Gohier—a mere Frenchman. Have at him! True, he fought bravely and splendidly in the great Dreyfus battle. That, however, is ancient history now; so M. Gohier is fair game for the matadors and picadors of the *Daily News*. Fortunately for these gentlemen, they bait him at a convenient distance; were he to come to close quarters with them the air would be full of their remains.

This is what the *Daily News* had to say about M. Gohier on Tuesday. It was a leaderette under the heading of "A Postal Grievance":—

"Many of us have a grievance against the Post Office for letters delayed or parcels gone astray. But of all the queer complaints that have ever been made against Postal authorities, M. Urbain Gohier's quarrel with the postmen of Paris is the strangest. This is the time of year when the French facteur, like every other postman, is looking forward to a New Year's gift. As a gentle reminder of the fact he leaves a little calendar at the door. It is this New Year's calendar that has aroused M. Gohier's indignation, because it records the festivals of the Church. M. Gohier is a Freethinker, and it annoys him very much to open his calendar and discover such words as Epiphany and Quinquagesima. But, unfortunately for M. Gohier and his friends, it would require an Act of Parliament to upset the Gregorian calendar, which, although it was abolished for some years during the Revolution, was restored by the First Consul, and it is doubtful whether even an anti-clerical French Government would so far quarrel with tradition as to rid the State of the Gregorian calendar."

These darts at M. Gohier, across the Channel, are no doubt supposed to be delivered with an airy grace. The last of all is particularly dexterous and fatal. M. Gohier may consider himself annihilated. Fancy the silly impudence of a man who wants to upset the calendar! What is he fit for but an asylum? Yet if it should turn out that the *Daily News* men are playing

the fool—what then? Perhaps they (or the writer, though it looks like a combined effort of genius) will explain what Epiphany and Quinquagesima have to do with the Gregorian Calendar. All that Pope Gregory did, or had done, was the reformation of the old Julian Calendar. Owing to the inadequacy of the leap-year arrangement the "annum" was going wrong. In the course of time Christmas would have been celebrated in the dog days. Accordingly the leap-year arrangement was perfected, or nearly so, by certain omissions at intervals; and, in order to get a fair start, ten days were knocked off the existing reckoning. That was all that was done under Pope Gregory. It was a good and necessary work, but it had as much to do with Epiphany and Quinquagesima as with the holidays and festivals of the man in the moon. And the *Daily News* men might have learnt this if they had only consulted an Encyclopedia or something—or asked M. Gohier.

The Catholic world accepted the new Calendar by the authority of the Pope. For that very reason the Protestants rejected it. They even branded it as impious. England would have nothing to do with it for nearly two hundred years. When we read our old poets we have to make allowances for May (for instance) beginning eleven days later than it does now. Shakespeare's

Three lovely Apriils in three hot Junes burnt

carries us nearly into the middle of July. It was not until the first years of the reign of George III. that England adopted the Gregorian Calendar. Even then there were riots in the streets of London. More than one scientific man had to go into hiding. The Protestant mob cried out that they were being robbed of eleven days. They demanded their eleven days back. It is incredibly silly, but it happened. And the *Daily News* men, instead of talking pious nonsense about a French Freethinker, might chasten their spirits by reflecting on the obstinate folly of their co-religionists.

And now a few words with regard to that dreadful French Revolution. Does the *Daily News* really suppose that the Revolution abolished the reformed year of Pope Gregory? Does it imagine that starting a new era in any way affects his reformation of the Calendar? Does it suppose that the French Republicans recovered their lost old ten days? Does it fancy that calling the months by new poetical names abolished the months themselves? Auguste Comte went one better than the Revolution. He proposed that the years should consist of thirteen months of twenty-eight days each; the day over, and the extra day in leap-year, to be treated as exceptional. By this means the same day of the month would always fall on the same day of the week, which would certainly be an advantage, at least in calculation. But even Comte's proposal did not run counter to the essence of the Gregorian Calendar.

The dear *Daily News* has made a bad mistake. Its "smartness" is at its own expense. It has not scored off M. Gohier. If it must be religious—and it seems to be under that necessity—it should either let Freethinkers alone, or see that the critic who meddles with them is reasonably equipped for the task. Christians have always found it dangerous to tackle Freethinkers—except in one way. In the old days Freethinkers were murdered. That was at least effective. But now they have to be dealt with differently. They must be ostracised or answered. The latter plan is rather new to our contemporary. Hence, perhaps, the present abortion.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Reign of Hypocrisy.

MORE than two generations have come and gone since Emerson, in his essay on *Self-Reliance*, gave to the world a trumpet-tongued call for complete honesty of thought and speech. To many that call came as a welcome expression of their own unexpressed feelings, and from many it elicited the response that they at least would break the fetters of a cowardly conformity, and thus set the world an example of intellectual integrity—an example which never quite fails in producing some influence upon those around. We are all centres of either good or evil, and, even though it is not always possible to trace the effects of independent thought and honest speech, it is there nevertheless.

This is the bright side of the picture. But, unfortunately, there is another, and far less pleasing, side to contemplate. One here and there is influenced, but the majority seem to go on uninspired and unaffected, treading the old rounds, repeating the old shibboleths, re-echoing the old catchwords, and acting as a terrible drag upon the few who would hasten the development of the race. Against the individuality of the few is arrayed the coercive gregariousness of the many. "Society," as Emerson says, "is in conspiracy against the manhood of everyone of its members. Society is a joint-stock company, in which the members agree, for the better securing of his bread to each shareholder, to surrender the liberty and culture of the eater. The virtue in most request is conformity. Self-reliance is its aversion. It loves not realities and creators, but names and customs." It is this tacit conspiracy of society against its creative individualities that constitutes the really serious obstacle to reform. Against expressed dogmatism and avowed retrogression we may fight cheerfully and successfully; for in the act of expression dogmatism loses half its force, and arouses antagonism by its expression. It is the unexpressed dogmatism—the intolerance that veils itself in liberal phraseology, and finds its surest support in the apathy and indifference of the mass—that is to be feared. Against this the strongest often fights in vain. There is no mental strength to which an appeal may be successfully made, and no consciousness of mental independence that may be quickened into activity. There is only apathy and delusion—a delusion that is self-sustained by the constant reiteration of the same prejudices, and an apathy that is encouraged by the constantly contemplated satisfaction of the crowd.

Society at large cares little for independent thought, still less for independent speech. It reads and listens not for instruction, nor stimulation, nor for fresh suggestion, but to have its existing prejudices strengthened by the sight of them in print, or the hearing of them from the pulpit or platform. "I do not agree with his opinions, and will not listen," or "I do not agree with the writer, and will not read," are the current formulas in both precept and practice. And in this organisation and perpetuation of hypocrisy the thousands of clergymen and their assistants are ever to the front. Over sixty years since Emerson said:—

"If I know your sect, I anticipate your argument. I hear a preacher announce for his text and topic the expediency of one of the institutions of his Church. Do I not know beforehand that not possibly can he say a new and spontaneous word? Do I not know that, with all this ostentation of examining the grounds of the institution, he will do no such thing? Do I not know that he is pledged to himself not to look but at one side—the permitted side, not as a man but as a parish minister? He is a retained attorney, and these airs of the bench are the emptiest affectation."

This criticism is still more applicable to-day than it was sixty years ago. With comparative mythology and Biblical criticism still in its infancy, and with only the first lisping of evolution in the air, it was possible for a much larger measure of honest belief to exist than can exist to-day. Now it is impossible to mistake the note of insincerity, evasion, and subterfuge that runs through nearly the whole of current theology. It is impossible not to feel that those preachers who say so much do not know a great deal more, and yet refrain from speech, because it would mean the sacrifice of their positions. The ministry is entered as a profession, and

as a profession it is fought for and maintained. Chairs and lectureships are subsidised, and books written in its defence. The heretic may not find his heresy leading him to the stake or the prison to-day, but he finds it an obstacle to his progress in the good graces of "society"—a hindrance to his getting on in life, and a sure method of getting himself ignored by the world in general. "A shrewd man," says Hazlitt, "said of my father that he would not send a son of his to school to him on any account, for that, by teaching him to speak the truth, he would disqualify him from getting his living in the world!"

We have insincerity in the pulpit and hypocrisy in the pew, timidity with those who should speak out as the nation's leaders, and a deadly apathy with the people at large. It is this steady pressure of society in the direction of securing conformity that accounts for the silence of many leading men who might speak far differently to what they do were the social environment different to what it is. It is unnecessary to mention names: anyone can pick out the names of dozens of leading men undoubtedly Freethinkers, but who remain silent on the question of Freethought, or else damn it with faint praise. They, too, are tainted with the prevailing hypocrisy, and, while not openly supporting the current creed, yet give it covert support by remaining silent as to its defects. Their excuse is that the time is not ripe for a direct attack on the prevailing theology—a timid cry at best, and one that is positively cowardly under present conditions. The ripe time for anyone to call a lie a lie is when he discovers it to be such, not to wait until there are enough singers to make a respectable chorus. In strict truth, every man who sees a thing to be a lie, and continues acting as though he believed it were true, is doing what he can to perpetuate its existence. Among the mass there is little or no resistance to conformity, little or no insight into the real nature of things; and for this very reason there is a greater necessity for those of clearer vision to speak out.

Of course, it will be said that society itself is chiefly responsible for the prevailing hypocrisy; and this, so far as it goes, is correct. The average individual is not so passionately enamored of truth that he will go through fire and water in its behalf. If he can speak the truth without serious personal inconvenience, he will do so; but if to speak the truth means to be subject to innumerable petty annoyances, his sense of personal convenience will often enough triumph. In thus setting a premium upon falsehood and a tax upon truth society is to blame; but, after all, society is composed of individuals, and its reforms must start with individuals, or not at all. What is the use of complaining of the hypocrisy of society if we, by our own silence and timidity, are doing all we can to perpetuate it? Nothing can absolve each from doing all that lies in his power to secure the triumph of what he believes to be right. The higher we are in society, the greater our social standing, the more important our speech, the more extensive our influence, and the more imperative our duty. All reforms have commenced as private opinions; it is always the minority who move the world. The majority do not lead—they follow; and it is all the more important that the leadership should be in the right hands.

Let anyone sit down and seriously think over the extent of our national hypocrisy, and then say if there is not grave necessity for straightforward speech. We support a religion which preaches the nothingness of riches, while its value is summed up in terms of cash; the nation spends its best energies in the mad race for wealth, and our wars, destitute of even the empty baubles of military honor or national prestige, are but thinly-veiled covers for financial adventuring. We pour out our millions lavishly, even gleefully, upon war, and grudgingly devote a fifth part of the sum to education. We maintain a religion which teaches faith in Providence, in miracles, in prayer, and in the special inspiration of a particular set of books; and we ask vainly, Who believes in these things? Not the clergy, certainly. They are all the time evading them, telling us that they do not mean what they appear to mean, or that what they once meant they no longer mean, and that we must therefore accept them in an entirely new sense. And certainly not the laity. The average educated layman resents the plain meaning of these

doctrines as an insult to his intelligence, and assures us that we are misrepresenting or caricaturing his creed. There is much lip-homage to Christianity, but little or no sincere conviction. To meet this we have to leave the circles of the educated and the cultured, and descend to the level of the Salvation Army officer or the dissenting local preacher. On all sides we find ourselves surrounded by a huge organised hypocrisy. It penetrates our lives, and vitiates our whole national existence.

Why not, then, make a clean sweep of the whole, and, now that we have let go the substance, banish the name also? Why not say what is actually the case—that we do not, as modern educated men and women, believe in tying ourselves down to the social customs and cosmical beliefs of a number of Asiatic semi-savages? Why not admit frankly that we do not believe that miracles are worked, or that prayers are actually answered; that the last word was said, even on religion, two thousand years ago, and that all our after experience is to go for nothing? We feel all this, as our actions show, and yet we lack the power to express it. We prefer to go on befooling ourselves and others, thus perpetuating one of the greatest hypocrisies that the world has ever witnessed.

Fortunately, not all are satisfied to act thus. Here and there one speaks out. Here and there a man or woman determines to be themselves and to live themselves, heedless of threats and careless of consequences. Necessarily these are few; the gregarious instinct is too strong—perhaps too important—to be easily overcome, and it is only the exceptional member of the species that can stand really alone. Yet it is to those who are strong enough to do this that we owe whatever progress is made. Progress is made by the few and enjoyed by the many. It is not those who tread the wine-press that sit at the banquet, but more often those who have stood idly looking on. The lot of the thinker has always, and necessarily, been a lonely one, but at least, in the midst of all his loneliness, he has possessed the comfort that he has been true to himself, and has not shirked any of his responsibilities.

For all opinions bring responsibilities with them. No man can claim a vested or exclusive interest in his opinions. Behind every opinion stretches a long heredity, if we could only trace its many stages; the individual who expresses it is only the final term in the process. It took countless generations to create a Shakespeare, and, when he came, he belonged to the race—it was humanity seeing itself under one of its most favorable forms. Unbelief has thus its responsibilities no less than belief. If the believer holds that he is bound to express his opinions and secure assent, the unbeliever should also feel that his duty to himself and his beliefs is as great. There is no moral reason why unbelievers should go through life with their lips closed and their voices hushed, lest they should hurt the feelings of believers. There is nothing praiseworthy in believing a lie merely because it is ancient. Opinion is, after all, the most powerful cause in effecting development, and he is ultimately helping his kind most who fights most strenuously against all falsehoods and all shams, and, in purifying all that the past has given to the present, prepares the way for a wiser and nobler race in the future.

C. COHEN.

Delusions Concerning Immortality.—II.

BEFORE considering other prominent delusions concerning the theory of immortality, it may be useful to mention that it is not at all difficult to understand how the general belief in personal immortality originated. Professor Graham, in his *Creed of Science*, remarks:—

“A strange and extravagant fancy that arose one day in the breast of one more aspiring than the rest became soon afterwards a wish; the wish became a fixed idea that drew around itself vain and spurious arguments in its favor; and at length the fancy, the wish, the idea, was erected into an established doctrine of belief. Such, in sum, is the natural history of the famous dogma of a future life” (p. 160).

Haeckel, in his *Riddle of the Universe*, observes that the perpetuation of the belief among certain persons

may be accounted for “partly by their excess of imagination and defect of critical faculty, and partly by the powerful influence of dogmas which a religious education imprinted on the brain in early youth” (p. 313). No doubt there is some philosophy in the words of Pope: “Hope springs eternal in the human breast”; and it is this hope that induces so many of those members of the human race who exist amid the ills and inequalities of life to indulge the thought that there is another world where peace shall reign and the evils of our present existence shall be unknown. When, however, reason is brought to bear upon the question, it can be seen how weak is the foundation upon which the hope is resting, and that the structure which imagination has built at the bidding of hope has no substantial basis. We need not wonder at the direction that man's aspirations have taken on this subject, for they are largely the outcome of that selfishness which is so distinguishing a characteristic of perverted human nature, which will have no benefits but personal ones. This, we believe, is destined to pass away before an enlightened altruism which is already manifesting itself in many ways throughout human society. Possibly the time is not far distant when men will see that their conception of immortality had its origin in an erroneous interpretation of a natural sentiment—an interpretation largely the result of a desire for personal gratification.

It does not follow (as is frequently supposed) that, because a person forms a certain conception, there exists a corresponding reality. Take the illustration of the general conception of the dragon. We may be able to trace the idea to some extinct animal, but that does not prove the truth of the belief that such an animal ever existed. If an artist painted a picture of the Devil, it is perfectly certain that the “Prince of Darkness” never sat for the portrait. The conception which was formed as to the origin of the universe and man has been shown by modern researches to be absolutely groundless in reality. Many persons are induced to believe in a future life because men eminent in science and philosophy have favored the belief. But while, of course, eminent men's opinions are entitled to respect, they are also open to dispute, inasmuch as all men are fallible. Great men have entertained the most erroneous and childish ideas. Our estimate of great men should be based upon what they do or what they prove. When they defend the abominations of slavery and witchcraft, or when they give their support to miracles and orthodox doctrines because they are sanctioned by the Bible, we prefer to estimate the value of their opinions from the evidence they produce. Great men have held mistaken views about creation, the laws of motion, and the possible disappearance of all existing things, but that is no reason why the humblest of their fellow-men should endorse their mistakes. Professor Wallace's views on development may be accepted, if the facts he submits prove his case; but, in the opinion of many, his contentions in reference to a future life cannot be proved by candid investigation and sound reasoning.

Probably the strongest argument for a future life is derived from what are called the desires of mankind. The fallacy, however, of supposing that a thing must be because we desire it, should be apparent to the most superficial thinker. Men desire universal happiness, justice for all, and a fair distribution of wealth; but no such conditions exist. Still, it is said that this general desire for immortality should be accounted for, which we think can easily be done. No doubt there is some connection between desires and their realisation in reference to things that are attainable, for the very desire may be a factor in the sum of the causes that enable us to realise our ideal. But the mere fact of having the desire is no evidence that its realisation will follow. It appears to me that the instinctive love of life found in man explains, to a large extent, the desire for immortality. But in most cases the desire is not for another life, but rather for the continuation of the one we have. And even in this case the desire will depend upon our present condition. If we are physically healthy, having a fair share of comforts, and surrounded by those we love, there would be few, if any, who would wish to depart “to be no more seen.” If, on the other hand, our bodies are diseased, and misery and starvation exclude all sunshine from our lives, then complete

extinction would be to many "a consummation devoutly to be wished." Those who argue that without an endless future this life is not worth having must regard it as being exceedingly defective. Why, then, should its continuation be desired? Moreover, is it possible to long or desire for that of which we know nothing? I think not, and to do so would be to avoid facts, and to rely upon groundless imagination.

Where is the proof that in another world there will be a change for the better? It is an instance that the wish is father to the thought. It does not appear to be taken into consideration that no guarantee can be held that the future life, if there be one, will be an improvement upon this. It does not avail to say that injustice prevails in this world which will be remedied there. In what lies the remedy? Men who are unjust here may be unjust elsewhere, and the human selfishness of this world will but be transferred to another, if the same beings pass from one to the other. It is no assurance to say that a God of justice will see that right is done. The same God, it is assumed, will reign there as here, and most certainly he does not prevent injustice being done upon a very extensive scale in this world. Why, then, should his plan of government be altered in the next? The assumption that it will be is based upon no evidence whatever, and is even in direct opposition to the declaration so often made that God does not, and cannot, change. Besides, we know nothing whatever with respect to the conditions of a future life, and can, consequently, predicate nothing with regard to the state of society there. Great numbers of men who die pass away with the worst passions of human nature exercising supreme control over the rest of their faculties. How can these be expected to form, or even to take part in, a pure and unselfish society, where each man is supposed to love the others as well as himself? Endless existence and interminable motion may be the laws of thought which it is impossible to banish from our minds, although we are unable to conceive of an infinite past which is involved in the statement. But it is otherwise with the forms of existence that possess life; these can be conceived of as coming to an end. Intense heat or intense cold may terminate all living things in a brief space of time. The truth is that it is only dreamers who contend that any part of the compound being called man will

flourish in immortal youth,
Unhurt amidst the war of elements,
The wreck of matter, and the crush of worlds.

The alleged universality of the faith in a future life is not true. Ample evidence could be produced, even from the testimony of Christian missionaries, to prove that numerous tribes have been found where not the slightest belief in a soul or a future life existed. For instance, the Rev. Robert Moffat, who was for twenty years a missionary in South Africa, speaking of the natives, says:—

"During years of apparently fruitless labor I have often wished to find something by which I could lay hold of their minds—an altar to an unknown god, the faith of their ancestors, the immortality of the soul, or any religious association; but nothing of this kind ever floated in their minds" (*Missionary Labor in Southern Africa*; eighteenth edition).

Dr. T. Cromwell, in his work upon *The Soul and a Future Life*, having given a list of writers who acknowledged that in their travels they came in contact with various peoples where the belief in a soul and a future life was entirely absent, writes:—

"So the ordinary European idea of 'an immortal soul,' which, so many tell us, belongs to man as man, finds no place in a religion professed by a multitude of nations, whose aggregate population, at the lowest reckoning, has been estimated at three hundred and fifty millions" (p. 160).

But supposing the faith in a future life were universal, that would not prove its truth. Belief in all kinds of error has been general in all ages and in all nations. Because the multitude once believed in the moving sun, and that the earth was flat and stationary, is no evidence to us that their belief was correct. The notion that the stars were drawn by the gods, or guided by spirits, has had to give way before the discoveries of attraction and gravitation; and the creation story, as given in the

Bible, is refuted by the facts of evolution. Those who base their faith in a future life on the common beliefs are like the man who is said to have built his house upon the sand. The flood of science and the potency of increased general knowledge will sweep all such false notions away as surely as the morning sun disperses the vapors of the night.

CHARLES WATTS.

Free Will and Necessity.—II.

As we may rightly claim to be free agents in the reasonable sense of the phrase, so we may justly regard other men as free agents, able to choose for themselves. We may punish a culprit on the ground that he had the power of choice, and abused it—that he deliberately or recklessly chose the alternative which entailed moral condemnation and penalty. If, however, the offender is destitute of the power of responding to moral influences, including the blame or punishment that wrong-doing would involve, then we may fairly say that he cannot avoid wrong-doing, and that he should not be regarded as a morally free agent, but as an irresponsible person who cannot safely be trusted with the liberty which he cannot use rightly.

We may note that popular phraseology is not always logically accurate, and that it may easily mislead or puzzle us if we trust to it. We say that a man does a thing "against his will," or "not of his own will"—as if the action could take place without his volition. We speak of an "unwilling" agent, though, of course, the agent necessarily has to will the act which constitutes him an agent. The agent who is actually willing the act is thus regarded and described as "not willing"—which is a contradiction in terms, just as if we said a listening man was not listening. What is meant is, not that an unwilling man does not will an act when he wills it unwillingly, or against his will, but that his volition is unpleasant in some respect, as when he chooses an evil solely as a means of avoiding a still greater evil. He then considers that he wills unwillingly, or against his will—that is, under unpleasant influences, which he regards as compulsion. The corresponding adjectives "voluntary" and "involuntary" (which, like the word "volition," are from the Latin *volo*, I will) are similarly inaccurate and misleading. These and many other words and phrases form subtle traps in which ordinary people are often hopelessly ensnared when they begin to think on such subjects as Liberty and Necessity.

Necessitarians or Causationists are often told that their doctrine destroys moral responsibility.† It is alleged that we have no right to blame or punish the perpetrator of a crime, because he "could not help it." This argument, however, destroys itself, for it excuses the punishment as well as the crime. If a man cannot help committing murder, we equally cannot help hanging him for it.

That we have "no right" to "punish" those who "cannot help" committing a crime is a misleading form of statement. In the first place, the right to repress crime rests firmly on the great fundamental right of self-defence or self-preservation, and not in the least upon the moral and intellectual capacities of the wrong-doer. As we may shoot the tiger and trap the rat, whether they can "help" their depredations or not, so we have the right to protect society by executing the assassin and imprisoning the thief, whether they could "help it" or not. To let enemies of the race run free, on the ground that they cannot conquer their innate propensities, would be mere lunacy. If, moreover, the criminal "could not help it," it is obviously true that fear of punishment greatly helps him to "help it." It is therefore our duty to help him by such means. To abolish punishment would be to favor crime, and thereby to be a participator in it. And, while it is true, in a

* Or, as we sometimes say, "not of his own free will"—"will" and "free will" being here identical in meaning.

† This, of course, is the exact opposite of the truth. Without the connection between cause and effect, responsibility would cease; for all would be chaos in the moral and physical world alike.

sense, that every criminal "could not help it,"* it is also true, in a highly practical sense, that many, if not most, criminals *can* help it; as is shown by the number of cases where offenders avoid a second penalty, and by the effect of punishment in putting down lawlessness in general. The law holds men responsible—that is, punishable—for their crimes, when there is reasonable capacity for being influenced by fear of punishment; and we assume, in common phraseology, that such offenders "could help it," but did not. Such language may be partly in error, like the geocentric phraseology about the coming-up and going-down of the sun; but there is substantial justification for the usual mode of regarding and expressing the facts, whatever theory the Necessitarian may put forth concerning the inevitability of all our actions.

As a matter of fact, and as a matter of common sense and necessity, we do not accept the plea of "inevitability" as an indiscriminate excuse for all faults and failings. If the butcher says he cannot help selling bad meat, and the dilatory errand-boy pleads that he could not help staying to play marbles, we unhesitatingly tell them that they *can* help it, and that they will *have* to help it, or take the consequences. Mostly they *do* help it when we thus influence them with additional motives; and we feel sure that, when we declare our belief that they *can* help it, we are, in most cases, perfectly right in a highly practical sense, whatever argument theoretical philosophy might appear to offer to the contrary. If our attitude were inconsistent, we ought certainly to prefer such theoretical inconsistency to an absurd sort of consistency, which would involve us in infinitely worse inconsistencies, and (what is of real importance) in actual difficulties and sufferings of the very gravest kind. But I do not think that the Causationist need feel guilty of inconsistency when he uses ordinary phraseology in which he merely regards men as free to be influenced by additional motives, or by the strengthening of old motives, such as those drawn from reflection, experience, admonition, punishment, etc. If he says to the offender, "You *could* have helped it," he means, and would practically be understood to mean, "You could have avoided your fault if you had reflected seriously, and had brought the better part of your nature to bear"—which would not be altogether futile truism, since it would convey salutary condemnation and useful warning as to the conduct that would be expected and exacted of the culprit in the future. The reprover, however, would have been more strictly accurate, and therefore less open to philosophical criticism, if he had said: "I admit you could not avoid your fault under the actual circumstances, and in your frame of mind at the time; but the reproof or punishment which I administer or threaten, together with the appeal I make to your sympathies, your self-respect, and your conscience, will, I hope, so alter your frame of mind in the future as to enable you, or compel you, to overcome similar temptation on future occasions." I do not regard the two views as absolutely contradictory. I hold that we may legitimately use the language of either Liberty or of Necessity. Both views are human colorings, or ways of depicting or regarding things. I would not commit myself to a denial of either the freedom or the inevitability of our volitions, unless I were supplied with perfectly clear definitions or explanations of the senses in which the words were employed.

For reasons such as those I have given I do not entirely reject the idea of "free will." If asked whether I believe in free will or not, I should prefer to answer the questioner thus: "If you mean free will in a rational sense, I am prepared to admit the term. I agree, for instance, that we have the power of judging for ourselves, and of choosing or deciding or willing as we like. But, so far as you attach irrational meanings to the term, I reject them. Thus, if by free will you mean uncaused volition, I emphatically deny it. I hold the scientific belief that strict laws, or unbroken sequences

* This fact should moderate the revengefulness and cruelty of our reprisals, so far as we find ourselves able to substitute milder, but sufficiently effective, means of repressing crime. I hold that most criminals should be treated as irresponsible beings, unfit for liberty, and that one great object of the criminal law should be the prevention or diminution of future crime by the perpetual segregation of the hereditary criminal as part of a systematic policy directed towards the sterilisation of the unfit in general.

of causation, prevail in the mental as well as in the physical world."

This position corresponds, I think, with the general facts of the matter, and it has the distinct advantage of avoiding a denial which, to ordinary people, appears to be so utterly contradictory to a primary fact of universal consciousness that they have no patience to listen further to what seems to them perverse folly, akin to that put forward by certain metaphysical theorists who deny the reality of the universe until one longs to knock their heads against the nearest lamp-post, and ask them whether they are firmly convinced that the post and the knock were mere illusions.

But some Necessitarian may say to me: "Why hesitate to deny free will? You acknowledge that the sense of freedom is illusion. You know that freedom in the case of the will is usually understood to mean exemption from necessity or fate, or not being subject to natural laws of causation. You will agree that free will, in the proper recognised sense of the term, is an absurd impossibility. Why not take the bull by the horns, and say distinctly there is no such thing as free will?"

Well, it is not necessarily a wise thing to take a bull by the horns. In my younger days, indeed, a country boy once explained to me that it was much safer to take a bull by the tail, since he could not then put his horns through you, and he cannot kick backwards like a horse. In the present case I am afraid that the bull—which has a touch of the Hibernian breed or nature in him—would be too strong or too elusive for me. I could not hold him down if I wished; and I have no wish to seize either his horns or his tail. I prefer simply to explain him. I said that the sense of freedom (like the color-sense, etc.) is not *wholly* an illusion, since it corresponds to realities of a kind, and serves a highly useful purpose. And I deny that believers in free will invariably (or even usually) mean thereby that the will is totally exempt from the laws or sequences of natural causation. Immediately they begin to think, they have to acknowledge that the freedom of the will is only a "limited" freedom, and, therefore, is *not* freedom in any absolute or unlimited sense. They will usually feel compelled to admit that volition is influenced or determined by the laws of causation to a very considerable extent. Only the rashest of Libertarians will venture to affirm that volition is entirely uncaused or entirely uninfluenced by conditions. And in their practical application of their doctrine Libertarians show that they mean much the same thing as the Necessitarian; for they agree with him in employing reward and punishment to influence conduct, though they clothe their practical agreement in different language—regarding men as "free" to choose reward rather than penalty, while the Necessitarian regards him as "compelled" to be influenced by each motive in proportion to its degree of power. The one party thinks that a man *may* or *can* be thus influenced; the other, that he *must* be so influenced. The latter view must include the former. To me they are merely different ways of presenting the fact that conduct *is* influenced by reward and punishment.

W. P. BALL.

The Greatness of Mr. Smith.

"Down in our State," says a Georgian, "the name of Hoke Smith is held in veneration. A couple of 'crackers' were sitting on a fence talking politics when Hoke Smith was serving as Secretary of the Interior in Cleveland's Cabinet.

"'Hoke Smith's a great man, suh,' said one cracker.

"'Yaas, suh, he's a great man, but he ain't es great a man as Grover Cleveland,' said the other.

"'Yaas, suh, Hoke Smith's a greatah man than Grover Cleveland.'

"'Wall, ah reckon he ain't es great a man es Gen'l Robe't E. Lee.'

"'Yaas, suh, Hoke Smith's a greatah man than Robe't E. Lee.'

"'Ah reckon he ain't es great a man es Jeff'son Davis.'

"'Yaas, suh, Hoke Smith's a greatah man than Jeff'son Davis.'

"A long pause followed, and each chewed meditatively.

"'Hoke Smith ain't es great as God,' replied the doubting cracker.

"This argument seemed a clincher, but the other cracker proved equal to it. He spat copiously, and then drawled out: 'Mebbe not—mebbe not. Hoke Smith's a young man yit.'

—Philadelphia Record.

Czolgosz's Last Words.

It is reported by persons who witnessed the execution that, as the headgear of the electrical apparatus was adjusted, the forepart covering his face, the voice of Czolgosz was heard saying something construed to be: "I am sorry I did not see father." The regret was rather a strange one to be expressed under the circumstances, but the press accepted it as the only indication of natural feeling the murderer had shown. However, it is to be suspected that the father had in mind by the wretch was not his earthly parent, but his spiritual father, the Polish priest who visited him in his cell, and who, for some reason, was not present at the time. The man whom Czolgosz slew had passed away without ghostly counsel. There may have been a grim determination on the part of the prison officials that the murderer should have no advantage over his victim at the start on the long journey. One born and reared a Catholic would, in the presence of death, be more likely to think of his priest than of his family, and would inevitably refer to him as "the father."

These last inarticulate words should be understood in the light of probability. When Sir John Falstaff made what Mrs. Quickly declared to be "a finer end, and went away, an' it had been any christom child," the lady noted that he "babbled of green fields." From this it has been thought that Falstaff's mind was occupied with his childhood's happy home; but the Higher Criticism as applied to Shakespeare reaches the conclusion that Sir John, knowing he was a goner, essayed to repeat something that would be quoted to show he had died as a Christian should. "Nearer, my God, to Thee" was not then available, so he fell upon something he had learned from the psalter: "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters." The "green fields" Falstaff babbled of were the pastures of the prayer book. The father that Czolgosz babbled about was the priest.

—George Macdonald, in the "Truthseeker" (New York).

Our Railway Village.

THERE is a land of pure delight,
Where fustian stewards reign;
Who gas about the "angels bright"
To people dull and plain.

'Tis there from whence the "wheels of trade"
Are started, cleaned and greased,
By stewards honestly arrayed
In garments grim'd and creased.

Ten years lang syne a meadow green
Wore Nature's winning smile,
Where ne'er a thing of beauty's seen,
And there's a smell that's vile!

The fustian stewards who exude,
All week, rich oily smells,
On Sabbath days are clean and "good"—
A crew of oily swells.

In elongated hats and coats
A howling they do go,
And pour from out their lusty throats
The "ims" for joy or woe.

And brother Hodge gets up and stumps;
Then virtue is instilled,
'Twixt threatening wags and damns and thumps,
About the "sole" that's grilled.

They have seven chapels to one pub;
Of course they wanted none.
For once the stewards got a snub;
Once the ungodly won.

But oh, the pious beaming look
Of Hodge, in dickey starched,
Lurching along with gamp and book,
Might paralyse the parched.

The stewards sits on all the Boards;
They run the blooming place;
And neither kings, nor dukes, nor lords,
Could occupy such space!

But then the stewards are that "good,"
And never make too free,
Except to compromise the Blood
By mopping cups of tea.

Then mothers fat, and sisters thin,
With squints and nods relate
The story of Miss J., who's in
An interesting state.

The stewards hope the Lord will stop
All traffic some fine day;
And off his engine Hodge will hop,
And fly like clouds—away.

A. S. V.

An Incomplete Revelation.

WHILE Quaker folks were Quakers still, some fifty years ago,
When coats were drab and gowns were plain and speech was
staid and slow,
Before dame Fashion dared suggest a single friz or curl,
There dwelt, 'mid Penfield's peaceful shades, an old-time
Quaker girl.

Ruth Wilson's garb was of her sect. Devoid of furbelows,
She spoke rebuke to vanity, from bonnet to her toes;
Sweet red bird was she, all disguised in feathers of the dove,
With dainty foot and perfect form and eyes that dreamt of
love.

Sylvanus Moore, a bachelor of forty years or so,
A quaintly pious, weazened soul, with beard and hair of tow,
And queer, thin legs and shuffling walk and drawling, nasal
tone,

Was prompted by the Spirit to make this maid his own.

He knew it was the Spirit, for he felt it in his breast,
As oft before in meeting-time, and, sure of his request,
Procured the permit in due form. On Fourth-day of that
week

He let Ruth know the message true that he was moved to
speak.

"Ruth, it hath been revealed to me that thee and I shall wed;
I have spoken to the meeting and the members all have said
That our union seems a righteous one, which they will not
gainsay;

So, if convenient to thy views, I'll wed thee next Third-day."

The cool possession of herself by friend Sylvanus Moore
Aroused her hot resentment, which by effort she forbore
(She knew he was a goodly man of simple, child-like mind),
And checked the word "impertinence" and answered him in
kind:

"Sylvanus Moore, do thee go home, and wait until I see
The fact that I must be thy wife revealed unto me."

And thus she left him there alone, at will to ruminate,
Sore puzzled at the mysteries of Love, Free Will, and Fate.

—Richard A. Jackson, in the "Century."

The National Secular Society.

REPORT of monthly Executive meeting, held at the Society's
offices on Thursday, November 28; the President, Mr. G. W.
Foote, in the chair. There were also present:—Messrs. E.
Bater, C. Cohen, W. Heaford, W. Leat, J. Neate, E. Parker,
V. Roger, S. Samuels, F. Schaller, T. Thurlow, T. Wilmot,
C. Watts, F. Wood, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The Secretary presented the cash statement, including
receipts and expenditure for the outdoor lecture work, which
was adopted.

The President reported that the *Secular Almanack* for 1902
was now on sale.

An application for Freethought lectures was received from
the Progressive Club, Isle of Dogs, and it was decided to
send a lecturer.

The delegate from the West Ham Branch asked for
lectures to be arranged for his Branch, and was instructed
to put the local secretary in communication with head-
quarters.

It was resolved to ask the editor of the *Freethinker* to
publish a summary of the season's lecture-work.

The meeting learnt with much regret of the serious illness
of Mr. Francis Neale, and received the President's assurance
that he was being, and would be, attended to in the emer-
gency.

Several minor matters of business were dealt with, and the
meeting adjourned.

EDITH M. VANCE, Secretary.

On a Sailor.

Here lie the remains of Salvation Sam;
No more by his chums he'll be chipped;
He was washed in the gore of the son of a ram—
Vaccinated, and christened, and dipped.
Here's some of him waiting the last chy-yike
(The rest of him couldn't be found);
He sat on a powder-cask smoking his pipe
While the wind blew the ashes around!

G. GUARDIABOSCO.

Spoke Modestly of her Triumph.

"Have you had any stage experience?" asked the theatrical
manager. "Well," said the fair applicant, blushing modestly,
"I do not like to speak of my triumphs, but I was leading lady
in a Sunday-school cantata once, and my friends said I acted
beautifully."—*Boston Post*.

Acid Drops.

REV. JOHN DICKSON, of St. Ninian's Free Church, Leith, has been thundering (in his little way) against the attempted destruction of the religious character of the day of rest in Scotland. The proposed opening of the Museum on the Lord's Day drives him nearly frantic. He says that the people of Edinburgh would vote it down, if they had the chance, by an overwhelming majority. But even if they voted the other way the Museum ought not to be opened, for the majority have no right to offend the feelings of a minority, however small it may be. Which means of course, taken literally, that all Edinburgh has no right to open the Museum on Sunday as long as the Rev. John Dickson objects. Probably all Edinburgh would think that this would be attaching far too great importance to the Rev. John Dickson.

Another man of God, the Rev. Hunter Smith, of St. Stephen's United Free Church, Edinburgh, is also very naturally against the Sunday opening of the Museum. Laymen have already six days out of seven to themselves; cannot they let the Lord's representatives have, hold, and enjoy the odd day? Even ministers must live, ye ken. Besides, as the Rev. Hunter Smith points out, it is not wealth or culture that will save a nation from decay and ruin. Of course not. Not unless the clergy monopolise it. They always took as much culture as would keep them going, and grudged the rest to everybody else; and they always took as much wealth as they could get hold of. They take it still.

Edinburgh was startled by the apparition of Sunday tram-cars last Sabbath. When the first stare of astonishment had subsided, the godly demonstrated their Scotch blood by jumping in and riding to kirk. There is to be a big protest against this awful desecration, but the Tramway Company is £40,000 in arrears of rent to the Corporation, and feels bound to make up leeway somehow, at whatever risk of unpleasantness in the world to come.

The Tramway Company's employees have held a meeting to protest against the running of Sunday cars. The Rev. Mr. Jackson, who presided, affected an air of impartiality. His concern was all for the poor working men. He was pained to think that they might be made to work seven days a week. But why on earth, we ask, should they do anything of the kind? They are entitled to one day's rest per week, and it ought to be secured to them. It is perfectly clear, however, that universal rest on the same day is impossible. Even the clergy know that. Don't they open their gospel-shops on Sunday? And does not this necessitate the labor of scores of thousands?

Ex-Councillor Rose, who followed the reverend chairman, declared that Sunday cars were "an insult to Almighty God." Whereat there was great applause—in which it is not reported that Almighty God joined. On the whole, it would be best to let Almighty God speak for himself. There is no proof that he has appointed ex-Councillor Rose as his spokesman.

One reverend gentleman in Edinburgh suggests a week-day boycott of the Tramway Company. He believes that if all the godly inhabitants refused to ride in the cars from Monday to Saturday inclusive, the Company would find it advisable to drop the Sunday traffic. So do we. But will the godly inhabitants rise to this great occasion? It will be good for the boot trade if they do.

There are two priests in the French Chamber of Deputies. One of them, the Abbé Gayraud, took part in the recent China indemnity debate, in which the looting done by the missionaries came under discussion. He thought it was "better to throw a veil over the facts brought to light," or else to await a special inquiry—which he knew would never take place. M. Berteaux, a Socialist deputy, spoke very differently. "If," he said, "the French soldiers in China sometimes behaved badly, it was the fault of the scoundrels (the looting missionaries) who acted as their guides. I have a right to speak thus of men who went to China in the name of a God of mercy and peace and laid hands on gold and silver ingots belonging to the Chinese. I allude to the monks and the bishops." This evoked protests on the Right, but cheers on the Left.

General Voyron, the commander-in-chief of the French expeditionary force in China, sent home to the Minister of Marine some remarkably lively accounts of the looting done at Pekin by the Catholic missionaries. Not that they were worse than the Protestants, only they came more particularly under his notice. Here is a pretty sample from his budget: "The missionaries, doubtless well informed, came to Prince Li's palace on the morning of the 17th. They proceeded thither with forty carts, and with 200 to 300 native Christians, employed as coolies, and started on a methodical search.

They collected bars of silver amounting to a large sum. They got soldiers and sailors stationed at Pei-Tang, to whom they gave as 'tips' cheques for two thousand francs, payable by the sisters of Saint Vincent de Paul in France. But when they heard of their comrades' windfall, men who were not at Pei-Tang left their quarters and came in search of the silver bars on their own account. As they could not possibly use them they handed them over in a friendly way in exchange for cheques, to be paid by a Monsieur Chamot, a restaurant-keeper at Pekin, or by the superintendent of the mission. These exchanges, the importance of which it is very difficult to determine, were not effected, as would appear, without an extremely high rate of brokerage..... General Frey was in a peculiar position. This seizure had not been ordered, but had been carried out without his knowledge. To leave in the hands of these men the cheques which had been given to them by the mission or by Monsieur Chamot would have meant a veritable reward for marauding and plunder."

More "Providence"! The cyclone in India was succeeded by a tidal-wave six feet high, which did serious damage. The Asia Minor earthquake levelled a hundred houses, and killed many people, at Erzeroum.

The latest return of marriages in London is for 1898. The number of bachelors married in that year was 38,181; the number of spinsters 39,098; the number of widowers remarried was 3,862; and the number of widows remarried 2,945. Of these marriages no less than 73.9 per cent. took place in Established Churches, 15.6 per cent. at register offices, and 4.4 per cent. at Nonconformist chapels. It is to be noted, however, that the Church percentage is steadily decreasing. Probably, if the registrars did their work with more ceremony and dignity, in the midst of improved surroundings, there would be a more rapid increase in civil marriages.

Pity the poor clergy! Even the Bishops are objects of commiseration. Does not the Bishop of London tell us how inadequate that £10,000 a year really is to the expenses of his great office? Somehow or other, though, the right reverend fathers-in-God manage to save a bit. Dr. Westcott, the late Bishop of Durham, who died on July 27, has left estate valued at £54,640 gross, including personality of the net value of £51,811. Mrs. Westcott, who died on May 28, also left estate of the net value of £16,025.

The parish priest of Sainte Agathe, near Lyons, and his housekeeper, murdered the other day in their bed, were buried yesterday without any funeral rites. This was by order of the Archbishop of Lyons. The priest and his housekeeper lived together as man and wife. It may be said that their murderer did them double wrong. He killed them not only in the body, but also—from the Catholic standpoint—in the soul. Such liaisons between priests and their servants, though less common than in Spain or Brazil (where concubinage is the rule), are, nevertheless, frequent enough in France. The ecclesiastical authorities, acting on the principle so candidly confessed in the Chamber of Deputies to-day by the Abbé Gayraud, "throw a veil over these scandals." They could not open their eyes to them without having to acknowledge the drawbacks of enforced celibacy of priests.—*Daily News* (Paris Correspondent).

The Rev. William John Newton Vanstone, pastor of Catford Hill Baptist Church, is either a very unfortunate man or a very great scoundrel. The jury in the recent slander suit were unable to agree on a verdict, so it would be absurd for anyone to dogmatise as to the reverend gentleman's guilt or innocence. It is alleged against him that he took advantage of his ministerial position and influence to seduce Ellen Lewis, the young daughter of a member of his congregation. Of course it is conceivable, as Mr. Justice Darling pointed out, that the girl is romancing at Pastor Vanstone's expense. On the other hand, her story is very circumstantial, and there is a certain *vraisemblance* about a particular part of her evidence, in which she stated that the man of God quieted her scruples (in his own house) by telling her that she was the Hagar to his Abraham, his wife being the Sarah. If the invented that, she is certainly a very remarkable sinner.

Here is a pretty instance of how Christianity operates in India. A Parsee gentleman, Mr. Eudjee Pestonjee Cama, died on August 15. Up to his death he was believed to be a Zoroastrian. About ten minutes before he expired one of his sons, who had become a Christian, baptised him according to the Roman Catholic creed. The brother and sister of the deceased went to the house for the purpose of disposing of the body according to Zoroastrian rites. But the Christian son, declaring that his father died a Christian, refused to allow the body to be disposed of except under Roman Catholic auspices. Father Dalhoff, the Roman Catholic Archbishop, certified that the baptism by the son, in the absence of a priest, was perfectly valid; and the result was that a Parsee by life-

long profession was buried like a Christian, by order of one of the Presidency magistrates.

The Parsee community thereupon consulted Messrs. Craigie, Lynch, and Owen, a firm of solicitors at Bombay. They put the case in this way:—"Now, irrespective of the case of the deceased, Mr. Eduljee Pestonjee Cama, who may or may not be [have been?] a Christian at heart before his illness, there arises a question most important to the Parsee community. It is, whether a Parsee, who is believed to be a Zoroastrian all his life, who carries on his body the sacred shirt and thread, the symbols of Zoroastrianism, and in whose case there is nothing to show that he was a willing party to a change of faith, loses his right to the Zoroastrian method of the disposal of the body, if during his great illness and unconsciousness he is given baptism by somebody, or made to go through the ceremonies of being turned a Mohammedan, Jew, or Hindoo."

The solicitors' answer was not reassuring. Substantially it comes to this, that a man may die in any faith he pleases, and that the testimony on the point given by persons, especially relatives, who resided with him, would be very difficult to upset. Particularly (we should add) if the man changed (really or otherwise) from any other religion to Christianity.

Some time ago a volume of *Shakespeare Sermons*, edited and contributed to by the Rev. George Arbuthnot, of Stratford-on-Avon, was criticised rather adversely in our columns. A correspondent sends us a leaflet advertisement of this volume, which was placed for distribution in the reverend gentleman's church. Under the head of "Press Notices" there are extracts from notices by reviewers in various well-known journals, who probably did not read the volume as carefully as we did. In justice to Mr. Arbuthnot, however, it must be admitted that he gives the following selection from the *Freethinker* review: "There is a magic in the very name of Shakespeare, which should lift the heaviest soul, and quicken the steps of the dreariest plodder. But it fails to produce any such effect upon the clerical collaborators on this miserable abortion." No doubt this is a strong expression, but our recollection of the volume forbids contrition. We are most sincerely impenitent.

Marie Lloyd, the well-known music-hall artiste, would hardly be held up by the clergy as a pattern of Christian perfection. In their eyes she is a singer of "naughty" songs, and certainly she conveys more meaning with a wink than most parsons could convey with a thousand long sermons. Nevertheless we venture to say that she has "cut up" better than many white-chokered gentlemen would have done, in reference to a matter of considerable public interest. When "Dick" Burge was arrested in connection with the Liverpool Bank robbery it was reported that Mrs. Burge was Marie Lloyd's sister. This, however, the great Marie had occasion to deny. The result was something that caused Marie to write a special letter to the *Referee*. Here it is in full:—"SIR,—The public seem to have an impression that because I have disclaimed any relationship with Mr. and Mrs. Burge that I had forsaken them in their hour of trouble. I think it is only right to say, on behalf of Mr. and Mrs. Burge, that, as far as I am personally concerned, I feel as friendly disposed towards them as I have always done, because if Mrs. Burge ever needed a friend she needs one now, and she can rest assured that she has no truer friend than—Yours sincerely, MARIE LLOYD. 10 Streatham-hill, S.W., November 30, 1901." This letter does Marie Lloyd infinite credit. The grammar is a little shaky, but the meaning is all right; and what is grammar to a single generous beat of a woman's heart? "If Mrs. Burge ever needed a friend she needs one now." There you are—reverend and right reverend gentlemen, from the Archbishop of Canterbury and Cardinal Vaughan downwards—improve on that if you can. Hats off, for this once anyhow, to Marie Lloyd.

Sir Norman Lockyer and Mr. Penrose have calculated the age of Stonehenge on what looks like a satisfactory astronomical basis. They make out that it was erected about 3,581 years ago. This is youthful in comparison with the sun-temples in the Nile Valley, which Sir Norman Lockyer calculates were built from six to eight thousand years ago. That is some time before the creation of the world, according to the chronology of the Bible.

The *Daily Telegraph* thinks the extent to which the scientific spirit has pervaded society is overrated. For instance, there is a weekly publication, devoted mainly to proving that the British people are the lost ten tribes of Israel, which has more readers by far than all the scientific journals and serials put together. But is it not the Bible, after all, that is really responsible for such nonsense? The interest in the "lost tribes" theory depends upon the exaggerated importance given to the Jews in the "Grand Old Book," and consequently in the schools, churches, and chapels of this country.

It cannot be denied that some Englishmen give a certain color to the "lost tribes" theory. There is General Booth for a first sample. Look at his nose!

Under the title, "Christian Ideas About the Lower Animals," the *Rigugo Zasshi* lectures Christian pastors and missionaries in Japan who offend native sentiment by shooting game. That men who are the commissioned teachers of the gentle Jesus should, out of mere wanton sport, take the lives of harmless birds and animals is, according to the editor, a shocking crime against religion. The *Taiyo* approves this view, but cynically adds that Christians who slay hundreds of inoffensive Chinese men and women because they belong to an inferior race would naturally see no harm in killing birds. Neither Buddhists nor Christians, it says, have lifted a hand to prevent cruelty to animals. That work has been done by the secular government. The *Rigugo Zasshi* protests against the attempted establishment of a Mormon mission in Japan, just at the time when the nation is giving up the practice of concubinage. Mormonism it regards as the least desirable of all Christian sects, as it is founded on childish legends and runs counter to the trend of modern civilisation.—*Public Opinion* (New York).

Dr. Joseph Agar Beet, one of the gentlemen who drew up the Free Churches Catechism, has published a little work entitled *The Immortality of the Soul: A Protest*. He takes the same position as the new Bishop of Worcester—late Canon Gore—that the immortality of the soul is an arbitrary dogma. The righteous will go on living for ever, because God has promised they shall. The souls of "the lost" will probably be extinguished, but Dr. Beet is not sure on this point. No doubt the view he champions will gain ground. It helps to get rid of the old trouble over hell and damnation.

The discussion on "Jesus" goes on merrily in *Two Worlds*. Mr. W. E. Long, who dates from the Church of the Spirit, Camberwell, regrets "the insertion of a materialistic letter in a paper devoted to Spiritualism." He says it ought to have been sent to the *Freethinker*. Maybe, but it will do more good where it is.

The Freethought propaganda at Stratford has aroused at least one of the local clergy. The Rev. Tom Warren, of the Brickfields Congregational Church, is delivering a course of sermons against Secularism on the second Sunday in each month. Some of the Secularists attended the first two sermons, and it occurred to them that it would be well to invite the preacher to a public debate. They did so, and enclosed a stamped directed envelope for a reply. They received the envelope back, with a postcard inside, bearing a note as follows:—"Dear Friend. Romans xiv. 1. Faithfully yours, TOM WARREN."

Evidently the reverend gentleman assumes that Secularists have a pretty intimate acquaintance with the Bible. And this assumption is quite correct. That is why they are Secularists. Coleridge said he had seen too many ghosts to believe in them. Secularists, too, have seen too much of the Bible to believe in it.

"Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations." This is Mr. Warren's text—and his reply to the Secularists' invitation. Now we can quite understand his preference for *weaklings*, but why does he object to "disputations"? Are not his sermons against Secularism disputations? Perhaps he considers that the disputation is likely to be "doubtful" if both sides are heard together. Here, again, we agree with him. Honest disputation is always of very doubtful advantage to Christianity. That is why Freethought used to be persecuted, and why it is now burked.

Victor Charbonnel, the eloquent ex-priest, who is now an active Freethought orator and the Paris editor of *La Raison*, points out in that journal that the Catholic priest who baptises a child really plays the part of an exorcist. After breathing three times on the child's face, the priest says (in Latin): "Devilish spirit, quit this child, and cede the place to the Holy Paraclete." Of course the devilish spirit goes out every time the priest utters those words—for the usual consideration. As a matter of course, too, the Holy Ghost would stand no chance of entry unless the priest cleared out the other occupant. No wonder that the gentlemen who are able to decide matters between the Devil and the Holy Ghost wield such enormous power over the human race. Nor is it any wonder that their wealth is equal to their power.

"Deacon Passnip and Deacon Hayrake do not seem to be on speaking terms." "No; you see, Deacon Hayrake prayed for rain when Deacon Passnip's hay was down."

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, December 8, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, London, W.: 7.30, "The Beautiful Land Above."

December 15, Liverpool; 22 and 29, Athenæum Hall.

To Correspondents.

CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—December 8, 9, and 10, Newcastle-on-Tyne and District; 15, Glasgow; 22, North Camberwell.—Address, 24 Carminia-road, Balham, London, S.W.

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—December 8, Manchester; 15, Athenæum Hall, London.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.

A. G. LYE.—Many thanks. See paragraph.

J. H. LAMBERT.—Obituary inserted as desired. Kindly convey our sympathy to the mourners.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

T. R. ALMOND.—Miss Vance has handed us your letter. Many thanks. Let us know, please, when the newsagent agrees to display a *Freethinker* contents-sheet. We shall be happy to send him one weekly.

J. BARTRAM.—Thanks for the Tyneside Sunday Lecture Society's program. We presume you are the sender. Mr. J. M. Robertson's lecture has already been delivered, or we should have been glad to give it a paragraph.

G. W. B.—Legal penalties cannot be determined on the ground of what a culprit *deserves*. That is entirely a matter of sentiment, and is therefore of infinite variety. The only useful question is, What will protect society and deter from crime? And that question is to be answered by reason under the guidance of knowledge.

G. NAEWIGER.—Captain Monro must have been misled. There cannot be so many readers of the *Freethinker* in Hull. We wish there were.

S. BRAGASON.—Is it not the natural tendency of age to become more conservative? Mr. Swinburne only follows the general law of human development. But it is not true that he glories in infanticide in the case of the Boers. The language of his verses on the subject was sufficiently intemperate, but he has since explained (in prose) what he meant, and not even a political opponent is to be saddled with a meaning which he explicitly and indignantly disclaims. We do not care, however, at least in these columns, to discuss Mr. Swinburne's ever, and perhaps we allowed too much freedom in political views; and perhaps we valued a contributor. Mr. Swinburne is apparently as much a *Freethinker* as ever. Those who object to his use of the word "God" now should remember that he used the same word even in *Songs Before Sunrise*—

That supreme song which shook the channeled waters
And called thee skyward as God calls the sun.

This was in allusion to Shelley, who himself used the word "God." The fact is that a poet must be allowed a certain freedom of expression. There could be no poetry at all on the lines of an affidavit.

"TRUTH" says that the converted Atheist boasted of by the Rev. H. Moulson, of Leyton, is Mr. Andrew Beadle. This gentleman used to pose as an Atheist, but was always considered doubtful by those who knew him best. "Mr. Moulson's bumpological tale," our correspondent says, "was pure bunkum. A very severe illness, and a Christian wife assisted by Mr. Moulson while the patient was nearly at death's door, were the real factors. I know this to be the case, and challenge contradiction."

J. HERRINGTON.—A good idea, but an impracticable one. You underestimate the power of the religious bodies in this country, and particularly that of the Church of England. We agree with you that it would be a good thing to disestablish that Church and use its revenues for Old Age Pensions; indeed, we have often said so in our lectures. But we are not sanguine enough to fancy it is likely to be done in anything like the immediate future. Thanks, all the same, for your letter.

W. G. GILES.—See "Acid Drops." The Rev. Tom Warren may not be very brave, but he seems to have a good deal of discretion.

MR. FRANCIS NEALE, we are happy to state, is improving, and hopes to resume his contributions to the *Freethinker* very shortly.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Freidenker—Two Worlds—La Raison—Truthseeker (Bradford)—El Libre Pensamiento—International Book Finder—Torch of Reason—Huddersfield Examiner—Progressive Thinker—Literary Guide—Leicester Pioneer—Lucifer—Truthseeker (New York)—Newcastle Daily Leader—Blue Grass Blade—Mexborough Times—Secular Thought—Public Opinion (New York)—Boston Investigator—Liberator—Sydney Bulletin—Edinburgh Evening News.

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.

Sugar Plums.

A CAPITAL audience gathered at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "Tolstoy on Christianity, Sex, and Marriage." The lecture was followed with profound attention, and not the least so by the good sprinkling of ladies who were present. No formal discussion took place, but many questions were put to the lecturer. Mr. W. Heaford occupied the chair.

Mr. Foote lectures at the Athenæum Hall again this evening. His subject will be "The Beautiful Land Above." This ought to interest Christians who expect to go there. Perhaps our London readers will advertise the lecture amongst their more orthodox acquaintances.

Mr. Watts delivers three lectures to-day (Dec. 8) in the Co-operative Hall, Gateshead. We understand that he lectures in the district on Monday and Tuesday, but we are not in possession of particulars. Mr. Watts goes on from there to Glasgow, where he lectures on the following Sunday.

By the time this week's *Freethinker* is in the readers' hands we hope Mr. Cohen will be himself again. He has not been as well as he should be of late, and he was unable to keep his engagement at Sheffield on Sunday. We judge that he had caught a bad cold. And really the weather has been very changeable and trying during the last month or so.

Mr. F. J. Gould kindly sends us three press notices—all fair and even friendly—of Mr. Foote's recent lectures at Leicester. Unfortunately the name of the paper is only given in one case, that of the *Leicester Pioneer*. This paper also prints in full the beautiful address that Mr. Gould delivered at the funeral of Mr. Richard Freer, who died a little while ago at the great age of eighty-seven.

One of these Leicester papers, reproducing an epigram that Mr. Foote quoted from James Thomson ("B. V."), says that the "Rationalist poet" once lived at Kirby Muxloe. We should like to know when. We are not disputing the statement, but merely asking for information.

Mr. F. J. Gould has wisely published in pamphlet form, under the title of *Moral Instruction Without Theology*, the debate which took place recently on the Leicester School Board upon his motion in favor of rendering moral instruction in the schools more systematic, and of strengthening the moral element in the school training generally. This pamphlet can be obtained for one penny at the Co-operative Printing Society's office, Church-gate, Leicester.

Mr. Gould prefaces the report of the debate with the Circular Letter he sent to the members of the Board beforehand, containing a sketch of the kind of instruction that he thought should be given. It is an admirable sketch—from the Secular standpoint. But the Christian who accepted it would be particularly green. When all is said and done, a Christian's supreme interest does *not* lie in ethics. We take it that Mr. Gould knows this; and we also assume that every Christian realises it—especially the professional Christian—however reluctant he may be to say so.

Two speeches stand out in this debate—Mr. Gould's and Father Hawkins's. Mr. Gould doesn't really want the Bible kept in the Board schools, but while it is there he wants the reading of it done with a view to the promotion of Secular ethics. Father Hawkins doesn't really want the Bible kept in the Board schools either, but while it is kept there he takes every opportunity of exposing the muddle into which the blessed Compromise leads everybody. Mr. Gould wants systematic Secular moral teaching. Father Hawkins wants dogmatic Catholic religious teaching. Both are logical, in their way; all in between are wobblers or tricksters, according to the degrees of their stupidity. Just read this debate, and see what a poor figure is cut by all but the representatives of the two logical extremes. It is Secularism and Catholicism that will have to fight it out at the finish—and to a finish.

Humanity (organ of the Humanitarian League) for December contains a summary report of Mr. H. S. Salt's recent lecture on Shelley as a Pioneer of Progress. The lecture will be published in the January number of the

Humane Review, and will afterwards be reprinted as a pamphlet, Mr. Passmore Edwards having offered to present it in that form to the League. Amongst the other contents of *Humanity* is a scathing farewell to Mr. Justice Day—the flogging judge—on his retirement from the Bench. This modest but most useful periodical should be widely circulated. Its price is only one penny. —

A country subscriber, who has hitherto had the *Freethinker* direct from the publishing office, now writes that his newsagent will supply it in future. Previously the newsagent had refused to do so on religious grounds; but he has been reading the *Mistakes of Moses* and *Bible Romances*, and his views have changed. Evidently these are good propagandist volumes. We hope our friends will take the hint, and “pass them round.” —

The Hull Branch had a better meeting last Sunday in consequence of our paragraph, and we hope the improvement will be maintained. The question debated was what should be done in view of the very unfavorable local circumstances, particularly in regard to obtaining halls for special lectures. Perhaps the permanent hiring of suitable premises would meet the difficulty. Any of our Hull readers who have not yet associated themselves with the N. S. S. Branch are apprised that the secretary, Mr. G. E. C. Naewiger, would be pleased to hear from them. His address is—12 Sydney-terrace, Londersboro'-street. —

“Mr. Dooley on the Christian Evidence Society”—“C. E.’s” brilliant article in the *Freethinker* some time ago—has been reproduced in *Secular Thought* (Toronto), and must have added to the gaiety of some people in the Dominion of Canada. *Secular Thought* also reproduces Mr. Foote’s “Satan and Michael,” an imaginary conversation. —

Darwin and Religion.—V.

CREATION.

EVOLUTION and Creation are antagonistic ideas, nor can they be reconciled by the cheap device of assuming their co-operation “in the beginning.” When the theologians spoke of Creation, in the pre-Darwinian days, they meant exactly the same as ordinary people who employed the term; namely, that everything in nature was brought into existence by an express fiat of the will of God. The epithet “special” only hides the fate of Creation from the short-sighted. To say that the Deity produced the raw material of the universe, with all its properties, and then let it evolve into what we see, is simply to abandon the real idea of Creation and to take refuge in a metaphysical dogma.

Creation is only a pompous equivalent for “God did it.” Before the nebular hypothesis explained the origin, growth, and decay of the celestial bodies, the theologian used to inquire “Who made the world?” When that conundrum was solved he asked a fresh question, “Who made the plants and animals?” When that conundrum was solved he asked another question, “Who made man?” Now that conundrum is solved he asks, “Who created life?” And when the Evolutionists reply, “Wait a little; we shall see,” he puts his final poser, “Who made matter?”

All along the line he has been saying “God did it” to everything not understood; that is, he has turned ignorance into a dogma. Every explanation compels him to beat a retreat; nay more, it shows that “making” is inapplicable. Nature’s method is growth. Making is a term of art, and when applied to nature it is sheer anthropomorphism. The baby who prattles to her doll, and the theologian who prates of Creation, have a common philosophy.

When the *Origin of Species* was published, we have seen that Darwin firmly believed in a personal God. Unfortunately he allowed himself, in the last chapter, to use language not unnatural in a Deist, but still equivocal and misleading. He spoke, for instance, of “the laws impressed on matter by the Creator.” This is perhaps excusable, but there was a more unhappy sentence in which he spoke of life “having been originally breathed by the Creator into a few forms or into one.” A flavor of *Genesis* is in these words, and the clergy, with their usual unscrupulousness, have made the most of it; taking care not to read it, or let their hearers read it, in the light of Darwin’s later writings

In a letter to Sir J. D. Hooker, dated March 13, 1863, Darwin writes: “I had a most kind and delightfully candid letter from Lyell, who says he spoke out as far as he believes. I have no doubt his belief failed him as he wrote, for I feel sure that at times he *no more believed in Creation than you or I.*”^{*} Writing again to Hooker, in the same month, he said: “I have long regretted that I truckled to public opinion, and used the Pentateuchal term of creation, by which I really meant ‘appeared’ by some wholly unknown process.”[†]

“Truckling” is a strong word. I fancy Darwin was too severe in his self-reproach. I prefer to regard the unhappy sentences about Creation as the slipshod expressions of a man who was still a Deist, and who, possessing little literary tact, failed to guard himself against a misuse of popular language. The greatest misfortune was that the book was before the public, and the expressions could hardly be withdrawn or altered without a full explanation; from which I dare say he shrank, as out of place in a scientific treatise.

ORIGIN OF LIFE.

“Spontaneous generation” is a paradoxical phrase, and it has excited a great deal of unprofitable discussion. However the controversy rests between Bastian and Tyndall, the problem of the origin of life is entirely unaffected. Nor need we entertain Sir William Thomson’s fanciful conjecture that life may have been brought to this planet on a meteoric fragment, for this only puts the radical question upon the shelf. We may likewise dismiss the theory of Dr. Wallace, who holds that “complexity of chemical compounds” could “certainly not have produced *living* protoplasm.”[‡] “Could not,” in the existing state of knowledge, is simply dogmatism. Dr. Wallace has a spiritual hypothesis to maintain, and, like the crudest theologian, though in a superior style, he introduces his little theory, with a polite bow, to account for what is at present inexplicable. The thoroughgoing Evolutionist is perfectly satisfied to wait for information. So much has been explained already that it is folly to be impatient. The presumption, meanwhile, is in favor of continuity.

Argument without facts is a waste of time and temper. “It is mere rubbish,” Darwin said, “thinking at present of the origin of life; one might as well think of the origin of matter.”[§] This was written in 1863, in a letter to Hooker. Darwin could not help seeing, however, that the conditions favorable to the origination of life might only exist once in the history of a planet. A very suggestive passage is printed by Mr. Francis Darwin, as written by his father in 1871:—

“It is often said that all the conditions for the first production of a living organism are now present which could ever have been present. But if (and oh! what a big if!) we could conceive in some warm little pond, with all sorts of ammonia and phosphoric salts, light, heat, electricity, etc., present, that a proteine compound was chemically formed ready to undergo still more complex changes, at the present day such matter would be instantly devoured or absorbed, which would not have been the case before living creatures were formed.”^{||}

Darwin appears to have felt that life *must* have originated *naturally*. The interposition of an imaginary supernatural cause does not solve the problem. It cuts the Gordian knot, perhaps, but does not untie it. Nature is full of illustrations of the truth that “properties” exist in complex compounds which do not appear in the separate ingredients. Huxley rightly inquires what justification there is for “the assumption of the existence in the living matter of a something which has no representative, or correlative, in the not-living matter which gave rise to it.”[¶] There is no more mystery in the origin of life than in the formation of water by an electric spark which traverses a mixture of oxygen and hydrogen. Dr. Wallace appears to see this, and consequently he ascribes electricity, with gravitation, cohesion, and chemical force, to the “spiritual world!”^{**}

G. W. FOOTE.

* *Life and Letters*, vol. iii., p. 15. The italics are mine.

† *Ibid.*, vol. iii., p. 18. ‡ *Darwinism*, p. 474.

§ *Ibid.*, vol. iii., p. 18. ¶ *Ibid.*, vol. iii., p. 18, footnote.

¶ *Lay Sermons*, p. 137. ** *Darwinism*, p. 476.

How Freethinkers are Treated in Australia.

[Mr Charles Rose, an Australian Freethinker, whose writings are of a philosophical character, has had to answer a charge of profanity, on the information of a Police Inspector. The profanity simply consisted of plain, but by no means vulgar, speech about the Bible, with some illustrations consisting of Bible texts—though not the *blue* ones, that cannot be read publicly by a Freethinker any more than they can by a Christian. Mr. Rose was treated with great indignity, and we give our readers an account of his experiences in his own words, so that they may precisely how much real toleration there exists in the new Commonwealth, which is overrun with greedy, ambitious, and tyrannical men of God, with whom the politicians find it to be to their interest to keep friendly. We extract Mr. Rose's narrative from the *Liberator* (Melbourne), edited by our gallant friend, Mr. Joseph Symes.]

ON Friday, the 20th ultimo, I had to appear before the Carlton Bench to answer the information that had been laid against me by Inspector Hillard, charging me with having uttered profane language in a public place—to wit, the Carlton Gardens. The Court decided the case against me, and in compliance with the Inspector's request inflicted the maximum penalty, £10, or three months' imprisonment. Notice of appeal was given. I was then handed over to the police.

The freedom to converse together openly in public places upon religious topics, which was won for us by the struggles and blood of our forefathers, has been assailed in my person; in the city of Carlton, in the first year of the twentieth century—the first year of our Australian National Unity.

Unless this attack on free speech be signally defeated, it will, in all probability, be speedily followed by other attacks on human freedom. No man who thinks, and dares to give utterance to thoughts which are not in accord with the views of the great and influential majorities, religious and political, will be safe. Those who hold and teach the unity of the personality of the only one existing God will be in danger of being dealt with as was many a Unitarian prior to the nineteenth century, and as many Jews were in the last century and prior thereto.

To preserve the liberties which our forefathers bequeathed to us, and to be enabled to hand them down intact to our children and children's children, we must be up and doing, or they will be torn from us one by one; in place of them a vast system of religious and civil despotism will be erected, and the great mass of the people reduced to abject slavery. To prevent this dire calamity thinkers of different minorities, such as the Jewish, the Unitarian, the Freethinker, the Theosophist, and the Spiritualist should combine together to present a bold and firm front to the tools of religious and civil despotism; to defend at all costs the freedom of speech and the liberty of the press.

To fight the great battle of human freedom—the people's battle—in which I am now engaged, money is needed, needed to carry the case to the Supreme Court, and to rouse the people to a sense of the great danger to which the free expression of one's own speculative opinions is now exposed.

From the 26th October, 1820, till the 20th September, 1901, I had never been incarcerated for debt, forgery, embezzlement, disturbance, theft, or any other offence, as have been many priests, parsons, missionaries, Sunday-school teachers, deacons, church members and attendants, officers and members of the Young Men's and other Christian institutions, magistrates, and officers and privates of the police force. From my childhood I have always been, even as I am now, a peaceful and law-abiding citizen. Unlike the informer, who was urged by repeated defeats and accumulated hatred to move the police to take proceedings against me, I have ever been a loyal subject, a defender of the British Constitution, and of the Imperialistic policy in South Africa. When in England, in the early part of the ninth decade, I was almost the only prominent Secularist who denounced Gladstone's policy in South Africa. For many years I was an importer and wholesale and retail warehouseman in Adelaide, S.A. Also, previous to my leaving South Australia in December, 1897, a frequent contributor to the Adelaide daily newspapers. The appearance of some of my letters in those papers was a source of much surprise and gratification to my friend, Mr. Joseph Symes. It afforded him an experience of journalism unlike anything he had experienced in this pious city—Melbourne—in which street ruffians are encouraged by the remarkable leniency of magistrates, while the reformer who seeks to enlighten the people is made to suffer the highest penalty allowed by law.

There are many things concerning my prosecution and trial which, pending the appeal, it would be unwise for me to deal with.

MY IMPRISONMENT.

I draw entirely from my memory in making the following brief statements; in the main they are absolutely true, but may not be so as far as the order of events or the exact words that were used are concerned.

In spite of my having been permitted by the Court to remain in the watch-house pending the finding of a surety, I had scarcely any sooner entered it than I was taken from it

to the City gaol, although Mr. Symes told the police that he would hurry off to find a surety for me. On entering the latter I was shown no respect, but was treated as an old gaol "bird," ordered about in a rougher and sterner way than a decent man orders his dog, or than a police bully orders one standing on the pavement to "move on."

"Proceed to the gate at the end of the passage." When I had mounted the steps which led up to the gate, I was roughly ordered "Go down." Soon afterwards I was again bidden to go up; then I was taken through the gateway on to a cell which was about four and a-half feet wide by eight long; in it there was a form, a dipper about quarter-full of water, and an urinary vessel, but not a morsel to eat. On my way to the cell I could not help thinking that several persons, who stared in amazement at me, must have taken me to be some *strange* addition to the jail inmates. In that cell I remained about two hours, when the door was opened and the command uttered, "Come out." From thence I was led to a chamber where there were several gaol myrmidons; some appeared to me to be in convict dress. I was bidden to go up to a long table, in the front of the centre of which sat a young man, whom I soon afterwards found to be very pert, ignorant, and conceited; on his right hand at the end of the table stood an apparently decent fellow.

PERT YOUNG MAN: What's your name?

CHARLES ROSE: Charles Rose.

P. Y. M.: Your age?

C. R.: Eighty-one, 26th next month.

P. Y. M.: Where born?

C. R.: Bristol, England.

P. Y. M.: When did you arrive in the country?

C. R.: What country?

P. Y. M.: This country.

C. R.: Victoria?

P. Y. M.: There is but one country—Australasia.

C. R.: I arrived in South Australia in October, 1849.

P. Y. M.: By what vessel?

C. R.: The *Orator*.

P. Y. M.: Have you been in gaol before?

C. R.: No.

P. Y. M.: Of what religion are you?

C. R.: I should be sorry to be of any religion.

P. Y. M.: Here you will have to attend religious services.

C. R.: Then I shall have to be carried to them.

P. Y. M.: Are you an Atheist? If you say that you are, you need not attend them.

C. R.: I am a philosophic Materialist.

P. Y. M.: America is the home of philosophy and of Theosophy.

C. R.: Another form of superstition.

P. Y. M.: Which was the first—the egg or the bird?

C. R.: Why show your ignorance by putting that silly question to me? Go to school, and learn to go back a little farther than the egg and the bird that laid it.

P. Y. M. (*in high glee*): Ah! you are beaten! You cannot answer my simple question.

A powerfully-built, but, as he appeared to me to be, a gentle, convict mildly said: "Take off your coat; turn up your shirt-sleeves." No sooner done than he took hold of the fingers of my left hand, pulled my arm out to its full length, then carefully looked at the inward part of it, turned it, and carefully looked at the outer part; he subjected the other arm to a similar examination, and exhibited some signs of disappointment at not finding any tattoo or other artificial marks on either of them. He then bade me to step on the scales. After he had taken my weight, he said: "Take off your boots, stand on that board, draw your feet together, and stand upright." My height was then taken; after which I was taken to another room, up to a desk, on which laid an open book containing many entries, when I was commanded: "Hand over what valuables you have upon you, or they will be taken from you, and you will not get them again." To which I replied: "If I now give them up, will they be restored to me?" "Yes; they will be entered in this book. The entry you will have to sign." I then handed over a sovereign and 10s. 3d. in silver; after which I found I had a penny, which I also gave up for safe keeping. A searcher then, perceiving about a half of a halfpenny lead pencil in my left waistcoat pocket, took it out, and said: "Why did you not give this up?" I answered: "Do you call this bit of pencil a valuable article?" It was entered in the book. Then I took out of my left waistcoat pocket some buttons, one of which was off an ulster coat of mine, therefore of far more value to me than the bit of pencil; they were scornfully rejected with the remark: "It's no use your trying to be too smart with us." The searcher then found in one of my coat pockets a well-worn common pair of spectacles, and a cheap spectacle-case which was well-nigh done for, and requested me to say why I had not given them up. My reply was: "I had forgotten them." In another coat pocket he found a morocco leather card-case; he looked at it with a considerable degree of surprise and curiosity. "What's this?" he exclaimed. I quietly said: "A gentleman's card-case." He then pulled it open and looked at the cards; they also were entered. Then I was bidden to proceed to the opposite side of the room, where there was a strip of matting on the floor, and to strip. I inquired: "What for?" The answer came: "We are going

to give you a hot bath." On taking off my coat it was taken from me, the pockets ransacked, some paper taken from one of them, and thrown by itself on the floor, the coat being thrown on another spot, where also my waistcoat, trousers, drawers, shirt, etc., were thrown. With only my under-flannel shirt, belt, truss, and stockings on, I looked steadily at my two tormenting gaol menials, and said: "At your peril proceed." They exchanged glances; then one of them lifted up the lower part of my flannel shirt, and exclaimed: "He is cleaner than those who come here." After which he passed his hands over my two legs. Being satisfied that a hot bath was not necessary, one of them bade me to dress. When dressed, on stooping to pick up the paper, he forbade me to touch it. In replying, I observed that I might require it. He said, in response: "Plenty of paper will be given you." While being marched about from place to place I was addressed, first by one and then another, in some such style as this: "What brought you here?" "Have you ever been in prison before?" "What have you done to be brought here in your old age, with one foot nearly in the grave?" To these queries I, in gentle tones, but in a firm and manly manner, answered: "I have uttered words of pure reason, which I glory in having uttered; but they offended one whose mind had been rendered squeamish by superstition. This is the offence which brought me here; of it I have no need to be ashamed." I had not long been replaced in my cell before I heard the sound of an advancing footstep; it stopped, the door was opened, and a voice commanded, "Come out." Emerging, I stood face to face with an apparently superior official, who said: "Follow me!" He led the way to a room, over the door of which was the word "Surgery." He sat down on a chair in front of a small table facing the entrance, and then directed me to sit down on the top of two or three wooden steps that stood by the opposite side of the wall. He then put several questions to me. I asked him, "Do you think that my brain is injuriously affected?" He gave me to understand that he had been testing the state of my mind. If I understood him correctly, one of the questions which he put to me was a very cruel one, as it raised a hope which was doomed to be speedily disappointed. It was this: "Would you like to have a cup of tea?" He said he was going to take me to see a namesake of mine, an old man of seventy-five, whose ten years had nearly expired. He then rose, and ordered me to follow him. He took me to a room in which were some beds and some prisoners. Pointing to a bed that was near the entrance and close to us, he said: "That is your bed!" Pointing to an old prisoner who was sitting on the next bed, he said: "That is Rose; go and sit down along side of him and talk to him." I replied I declined to be placed with criminals. On leaving the room, he exclaimed: "What can I do? We have no separate accommodation for those who come here." To this I answered I was not to be put with old offenders. He seemed annoyed; told me that he thought of doing me a favor, as I was an old man, by giving me a bed to sleep on; but I should now have to lie on a board. He went on to say: "You have a long time to remain here." Looking him straight in the face, the words, "I think not," fell from my lips. To which he replied: "You will be here many days." My answer was: "I think not." In reply to someone who then spoke to him concerning me, he said: "He [referring to me] has plenty of nerve." Then I was handed over to an under-official, who, pointing to some bundles of rugs on the pavement, ordered me to pick up one. Another official said: "Take an under one." A bit of candle two inches long, in a small, rough, tin candlestick, was then given me, also one match, which I was bidden to take care of. I asked for something to eat. I was given this reply: "You will get nothing till to-morrow." I then told them that I had had nothing to eat since eight o'clock, and was again informed they could give me nothing to eat—that it was against the regulations. The door of the cell was then closed, and I thought that I was shut in for the night. However, soon after the door was again opened, and I was told to come out; that they were going to put me in another cell, which was lighter. One of my gaolers examined the stool; then left, and locked me in. For about an hour or so I walked up and down the narrow cell, which, like the former one, was about four and a-half feet wide by eight in length. Then I began to prepare for the night, shifted the stool, the dipper (which was about quarter-full of water), the candlestick, and the precious match to one side of the cell, looked for the paper which I had been told would be given me, but found, to my dismay, not so much as even one small scrap of paper. As I was about to take down the board, which was placed leaning against the wall at the end of the cell, I heard the sound of advancing footsteps, the door was opened, and I was asked: "Are you in bed?" I answered: "No!" Then it was said to me: "You can come out; your fine is paid." Being then under the impression that its payment would interfere with the notice of appeal which had been given, I said: "I hope not." "Hope not!" the warder exclaimed. My answer was: "I shall be very sorry if it has been paid."

Then he led me to a kind of desk, at which stood my friend, Mr. Joseph Symes, and another gentleman whom I knew not, but who, on learning from the warder that the payment of the fine would not affect the appeal, liberally paid it, being prompt to do it by his sympathy for an aged and outspoken

Freethinker, and by a desire to defend the liberties of the people, which were outraged in my person.

On signing my name in receipt of the things which had been taken from me, they were restored to me. We then left the gaol, where innocence and crime are huddled together, where the pure are corrupted, and where those who have fallen victims to temptation are made worse morally, not better. Outside this hotbed of crime—this criminal breeding establishment—stood my benefactress, the wife of my deliverer. On approaching her, she eagerly seized and warmly shook my hand, saying: "Dear Mr. Rose, had my husband been with me in court you should not have been sent to gaol." She had only seen me once before, when, in the Freethought Hall, I delivered my lecture on "Man and his Two Worlds." What a bright and noble contrast does this particular couple present to either of two other special couples which I need not name.

I hope this story of my imprisonment will tend to show the need for prison reform, and to rouse the people, who have some sense of justice and of the rights of man, to aid me in my struggle for the *inestimable cause*—HUMAN FREEDOM.

Book Chat.

Evolution, and its Bearings on Religion, by A. J. Dadson (Swan Sonnenschein & Co.), is not a mere reprint of the author's *Evolution and Religion*, which was published in 1893. That work has been re-written and considerably added to, and it is therefore claimed that the present is "substantially a new book." The purely scientific portion is carefully written, but makes no pretence to originality. It is the second—the historical and speculative portion—in which the author expresses his own views. Here he shows himself to be a thorough-going Freethinker. In the chapter on "The Soul" he admits that "Science and experience offer no warrant for a belief in a future state." He speaks with apparent respect of "emotional cravings," but does not inform us that they apply to himself, and we suspect they do not. In the chapter on "Jesus" he describes the alleged founder of Christianity as "a Socialist reformer," and says that he preached this, that, and the other; but he allows that we *know* little, if anything, about this personage, and adds that "It matters not to the world whether a man named Jesus, to whom is attributed the foundation of the Christian religion, ever lived or not. Jesus the man, or Jesus the myth, is all one to-day." The rapid sketches of "Pre-Christian Civilisation," the "Decadence of Rome," and the "Rise of Christianity" are excellently done, considering the brevity of their compass. Mr. Dadson is equally outspoken in the chapter on "Modern Christianity," pointing out the defects of Luther, and ridiculing the notion that the Protestant Reformers were the champions of religious liberty. It seems to be our author's opinion that the mediocre intelligence of the masses will always incline them (more or less) to superstition and reaction. For his own part, however, he makes no concealment of his practical Atheism. "Every explanation," he says, "which man formulates in precise terms of his relation to God will in time die; every god he makes he will in due course unmake; God is inconceivable. As we cannot transcend the finite, or penetrate to the substance of visible things, the Infinite is, and must ever be, beyond the power of human thought."

So far so good. But the shadow of Mr. Herbert Spencer's "Unknowable" falls upon Mr. Dadson at the finish. Religion in its best and highest sense, he says, will not die. Now what is this best and highest sense of religion? "The Infinite," our author writes, "will never fail to form the subject of his [man's] highest and most reverent thoughts and aspirations. The indefinite vastness of space and time; the awful majesty of the universe, with its unnumbered worlds; the impersonal character of all we see and know of nature; the solemn tragedy and mystery of life: these and like subjects will never cease to engage the highest faculties of the best and noblest minds for all time."

Is this playing to the gallery? Is it throwing up a last kiss to the gods? Anyhow, these wonderful "subjects" do not seem to have engaged the "highest faculties" of Mr. Dadson. He has thought and written on subjects more open to the human intelligence. But if he is, indeed, serious, we cannot help saying that he is acting rather curiously. Some people talk about keeping the kernel of religion and throwing away the husk. Mr. Dadson keeps the husk and throws away the kernel. The centre of all religion is a personal God; the rest is only metaphysical dressing.

But a word, not of fault-finding, in conclusion. Mr. Dadson's book, published through a "respectable" firm at a low price (2s. 6d.), should fall into the hands of a wide circle of general readers; and, if it does so, it will certainly be productive of much good; for the author is well-informed and thoroughly imbued with the ideas of evolution, in the

philosophical as well as in the physical sphere; moreover, he writes with perfect honesty and candor, yet with a constant eye to persuasiveness.

* * *

Dr. Robert Park, of Glasgow, whose name is known to most of our readers as that of an occasional contributor to the *Freethinker*, has reprinted his very interesting essay on "Heredity" from the *Scottish Medical and Surgical Journal*. As there is no price or publisher's name upon the brochure, we presume it is for private circulation only.

* * *

Mr. J. Allanson Picton, formerly M.P. for Leicester and a member of the first School Board for London, has published through Watts & Co. (rs.) a little volume on *The Bible in School*. Thirty years ago he voted for the exclusion of the Bible from the Board schools, on the ground that it is "not a proper subject for State patronage and control." But the majority accepted the compromise of "Old Morality," as *Punch* used to call the late Right Hon. W. H. Smith; and the Nonconformists now swear by that arrangement as if it were the last word of wisdom and honesty. Mr. Picton still thinks it is nothing of the sort, and he explains why in this admirably written essay, which we wish the orthodox people would read, though we very much fear they will not. Mr. Picton appeals to the honor of those Christians who understand what a change the Higher Criticism has wrought. He asks them not to confuse and distort the children's minds as they are now doing. He also points out that teaching from the Bible cannot possibly be unsectarian in the fullest sense of the word, and is therefore antagonistic to the principle of religious equality.

* * *

Incidentally, Mr. Picton observes (p. 18) that there are really no Atheists. So-called Atheists, he says, only deny this, that, or the other idea of God, but do not deny "eternal being." When a man steps forth to deny that there is anything eternal, Mr. Picton will allow him "the name of Atheist," without feeling bound to "respect his intellect." But does not this involve a misconception of Atheism as professed by Atheists? Atheism is not in itself a theory of the universe; though it may make room for one—for instance, Monism. It is simply a negation of the Theistic hypothesis, at least as hitherto presented, on the ground of its contradiction by universally admitted facts. We suggest that Mr. Picton should think this point over again. After all, a man has a right to call himself an Atheist without asking Mr. Picton's permission.

Correspondence.

"THE PASSING OF SWINBURNE."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I have often read with pleasure articles contributed to the *Freethinker* by Mr. Ryan, but the one under the above title in last week's issue has caused me profound regret. It appears to have been written without that proper regard for truth which should be, and generally is, associated with Freethought literature; and, in resenting Mr. Swinburne's wild extravagancies of expression, Mr. Ryan was, I think, just as extravagant in his criticism.

"No one with any regard for truth," says Mr. Ryan, "can hereafter say that war brings out the noble qualities of a people"—such as courage, self-sacrifice, chivalry. How about the nurses and doctors and ambulance-bearers who have sacrificed themselves in trying to save others? Have they not exhibited noble qualities? The recipients of the Victoria Cross—have they lacked courage, self-sacrifice, chivalry?

"The English generals, without, as is now evident, any real military necessity, burnt the Boer farmsteads, destroyed dams, and rendered desolate the country." To whom is this "evident"—the officials of the War Office? If so, they ought to be impeached, on the re-assembling of Parliament, for gross mismanagement and barbarity.

When "the Boers derail and fire on a train conveying military, who would be prepared the next minute to fire on these same Boers if they could, even Lord Kitchener talks of 'wanton murder.'" I have not a copy of Lord Kitchener's Despatch before me wherein he makes his charge of "wanton murder"; but my memory tells me that he referred to a train containing only civilians. Perhaps Mr. Ryan has an exclusive source of information.

"There is never a story of a British reverse but it is accompanied by some whine about 'Boer atrocities.'" Did Dr. Leyds convey this interesting item to Mr. Ryan, or was it culled from a Continental paper? I could quote many instances from the British Press wherein our reverses were frankly acknowledged to have been due to the superior tactics of the Boers, and where no charges of atrocities were made. Was Mr. Ryan anxious to prescribe a strong purgative to his readers as an antidote to Mr. Swinburne's exaggerations?

Sir, I will only trouble you with one other instance of what

I consider a gross travesty of fact. Referring to the Concentration Camps, Mr. Ryan says: "Short of absolute deliberate starvation, nothing that a fiendish ingenuity could devise to inflict suffering on these people [the wives and children who had been deserted and left to our tender mercies!] was left untried." Shame, that a Britisher, and he a Freethinker—a lover of truth—should descend to such a level of bigotry and blindness to the true facts of the case in expressing, generally, his hatred of warfare. No wonder that a body of 700 Protestant pastors in Germany signed a statement to the effect that the British Army in South Africa consisted of "craven hirelings" when one of our own countrymen makes such a statement as the above. Can Mr. Ryan point to any instance in modern warfare where the enemy's women and children have been so tenderly and mercifully—yes, tenderly and mercifully, Mr. Ryan—looked after as is the case in South Africa? Has Mr. Ryan forgotten that Mr. Kruger thought more of his Bible and gold-bags than of his wife? If I remember rightly, Mrs. Kruger was left to the tender mercy of a race who, according to the censor of Mr. Swinburne, exercised "fiendish ingenuity" in order "to inflict suffering on these people."

But enough of these gruesome hallucinations of one who, being a Freethinker, should be free from the cobwebs of bigoted imaginings.

F. H. WATTS.

BLAKE AND "MIMNERMUS."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I think it a pity, because a mistake, that "Mimnermus" should, at the end of his eulogy of Coleridge, describe Blake as mad; there was no doubt from first to last a childlike, unconventional frankness and impulsiveness about him that quite naturally might seem to so dull a Philistine and conventionalist as the "poet" Hayley little, if any, short of madness. But I believe that the only confirmatory instance alleged against Blake—the Adam and Eve incident—is almost purely apocryphal. To me he seems quite the sanest of all our great poets and painters both in his works and in his life.

That Blake chose to throw the reins on the neck of his imagination very frequently, and used at times, in a sense special to himself, words whose commonly-accepted meaning was often the reverse of his own, is surely no sign of madness. To those who care to be at the trouble to understand him, I do not think he is really obscure, and even if the charge of obscurity can in some instances be maintained, as many at least can be maintained against almost any great poet. Yet how few great poets have had such a noon-day clarity of vision as Blake in his magnificent *Proverbs of Hell*, his *Songs of Innocence*, and *Songs of Experience*? Then the beautiful sanity of his daily life for so full a term of years appears to me to stand out as a proof of the sanity of his life's work as a whole when examined from his own points of view, which were now mystic and anon daringly Atheistic.

As an example of the plainest living and the highest thinking, I place Blake at the head of the whole body of British artists and poets, approached, perhaps, only by Richard Wilson, as far as I know their lives. He was, all his life long, "contented wi' little, an' cantie wi' mair," though the "more" but seldom fell to his lot.

Of Clare I know nothing; but, as I appreciate "Mimnermus's" general fine judgment, I shall be glad to be referred to some work of Clare's.

SIRIUS.

Obituary.

WE have to record the death of Alfred Hillerby, of Mexborough, which occurred on November 24, after three weeks' painful illness. In his younger days he took an active part in the Freethought movement, and was never happier than when he was helping the cause along. During the later years of his life his activities in this direction were necessarily limited, but he always took two copies of the *Freethinker* every week. He leaves a wife and seven children—five sons and two daughters, the youngest twenty years of age—who find consolation in reflecting that he died as he had lived, a staunch Freethinker. A long and favorable obituary of the deceased appeared in the *Mexborough and Swinton Times*. "His familiar figure," it is said, "will be greatly missed." Reference is made also to his "considerable intellectual gifts." The funeral took place at Mexborough Cemetery. A large number of persons attended it, including the Chairman of the Urban District Council. Mr. Hillerby was fifty-eight years of age.

His One Chance to Talk.

"Goodness! I do hope our young minister won't marry that Miss Strongmind." "I didn't think you took so much interest in him as to care very much." "I'm thinking of myself, that's all. If he marries her, he'll never have a chance to talk except from the pulpit, and then we'll suffer."—*Philadelphia Press*.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.

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

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "The Beautiful Land Above."
NORTH CAMBERWELL HALL (61 New Church-road): 7.30, J. M. Robertson, "The Pride of Race."
EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (78 Libra-road, Old Ford, E.): 7, H. H. Quilter, "The Lord's Prayer."
EAST LONDON BRANCH (Stanley Temperance Bar, 7 High-street, Stepney, E.): 7, W. Heaford, "Methodism and Unbelief."
WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall, ante-room, first floor): 11.15, G. Spiller, "The Ethical Horizon."
SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall): 7, Professor Hudson, "The Tree of Knowledge."
WEST LONDON BRANCH (Hyde Park): Lectures every Thursday at 7.30 p.m.; Sundays at 11.30 a.m.
BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey.

COUNTRY.

BELFAST ETHICAL SOCIETY (York-street Lecture Hall): 3.45, W. Rice, "State Interference."
BIRMINGHAM BRANCH (Prince of Wales Assembly Rooms): 7, H. Thompson, "Readings from *Richard Jefferies*."
BRADFORD (Bradlaugh Club and Institute, 17 Little Horton-lane): C. A. Glyde—3, "Socialism and Religion"; 7, "Why I am an Atheist."
CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, W. Sanders.
GATESHEAD (Co-operative Hall, Whitehall-road): C. Watts—11, "Is Spiritualism a Delusion?" 3, "A Plea for Materialism"; 7, "Freethought: its Nature and Growth."
GLASGOW (110 Brunswick-street): H. Percy Ward—11.30, "A Rough Outline of Darwinism"; 2.30, "Christianity and the Slave Trade"; 6.30, "The Nightmare of Hell."
HULL (Friendly Societies' Hall, Room No. 2, Albion-street): 7, G. E. Conrad Næwiger, "Drink: Municipalisation or What?"
LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Humberstone-gate): 6.30, S. D. Shallard, "Sport and Politics."
LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, T. Pacey, "Ancient Civilisation."
MANCHESTER (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road): C. Cohen—11, "How to Deal with the Criminal"; 3, "What is Man's Chance of a Future Life?"; 6.30, "What Civilisation Owes to the Cross." Tea at 5.
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, G. Berrisford, "The Utility of Empire."

H. PERCY WARD, 1 Victoria-chambers, 17 Little Horton-lane, Bradford.—December 8, Glasgow; 9, Greenock; 15th, Fails-worth; 17 and 18, Debate at Bradford with Mr. G. H. Bibbings; 22, Birmingham.

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