

THE Freethinker

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

The Education Muddle.

IN the life of nations, as in that of individuals, there is a moment which, if seized firmly and used wisely, nothing but profit could accrue. But let that moment pass, and we may wait for years—perhaps for ever—for its recurrence; at any rate, we are committed by our lack of foresight or resolution to years of struggle and pain that might easily have been avoided. Over thirty years ago such an opportunity came to the people of this country in the matter of education. The conditions under which elementary education had been imparted were shown to be altogether inadequate, and the nation was called upon to deal with the most important of all questions that can demand attention. Sound statesmanship and reasonable foresight would have decreed that the most profitable manner would have been to deal with the whole question in a thorough-going spirit, and to have made our system of education national in the fullest sense of the word. Instead of this being done, the country, from various reasons, was content with a half-and-half measure, which, completely satisfying none, admirably paved the way for a constantly recurring series of squabbles and annoyances.

The truth is, perhaps, that the British public does not care, in any very real sense, about education. We were about the last European Power to deal with the question, and we have hardly ever taken it seriously. We may write about it, and talk about it, but we have a very strong disinclination to pay for it. Hardly any rate rouses so much discussion and opposition as a School Board rate—unless it be a Free Library rate, which is practically an educational one. Not that the average Englishman is at all disinclined to pay for anything which he conceives to be worth paying for, but in this case it is hard to convince him that it is something worth paying for. He is rather inclined to treat the whole matter as a luxury which people are perhaps better with, but are not much worse without—something which has by the persistence of a certain number of faddists got itself established, and which he pays for, as he pays for much else, because it is part of the established order. And so, while much interest may be roused, and huge sums of money may be spent with a lavish hand upon securing a superficial commercial supremacy, or such defences (?) as a larger Army and Navy, money is spent grudgingly, and little attention given to securing a real supremacy and a lasting defence in the shape of an educated and more intelligent people.

And, as usual, the indifference or apathy of the people has furnished a golden opportunity for the priests of all denominations. We have allowed the educational arena to become the cockpit in which theological champions may exhibit their powers, and the matter of training boys and girls, so that they may become useful and intelligent citizens, to become subordinate to training them for members of one or other of the various religious sects.

To the series of inconsistencies that mark the history of popular education in this country the Government has, by its new Education Bill, added one more. Technically, the measure has been rendered necessary by the recent decisions concerning the inability of School Boards to provide anything but the most elementary education, and it professes to deal with the whole question of education, primary and secondary. But, undoubtedly, the true motive for the introduction

of the measure springs from elementary education, and it is intended to give *religious* education greater financial assistance than it at present receives. As summarised by Mr. Balfour, the measure aims at creating a new education authority, "which will be the County Council in counties, and the Borough Council in county boroughs, each working through a committee or committees." These committees will be formed of members appointed by the councils and by *other bodies*.

That this measure means the gradual extinction of the present School Boards—provided, of course, that the various local bodies adopt the provisions of the measure—seems to me a matter of little importance. What is needed is a unification of our educational machinery and authorities, and, if that is effected, whether the governing body is called a School Board or a committee appointed by County or Borough Council for the purpose of administering education matters little. The vital flaw in the present measure is that it is by no means certain that it will secure this. As the adoption of the provisions of the measure is to be optional, it is extremely probable that, instead of there being a single authority supervising primary, secondary, and technical education, there will be a greater conflict of powers than ever, with the result that our educational system will be rendered more chaotic than it is even now.

One of Mr. Balfour's pleas in defence of his measure is that it will satisfy the Nonconformists, and so end the religious difficulty. The notion is glaringly absurd. Apart from the impossibility of satisfying any one religious body save by the destruction of all others, the immediate effect of the Bill would be to extend the area of its application. So long as religious instruction is given in schools that are supported, wholly or in part, by public money, the religious difficulty will be with us; and if educational authorities are appointed by local councils, instead of being directly elected, it merely means that the election of members because of their religious convictions will be transferred from School Board to Council elections. We should then have the Church party and Nonconformists fighting at council elections precisely as they now fight at School Board elections, and a candidate's opinions on drainage, lighting, etc., made subsidiary to his opinions on the Trinity or the divinity of Jesus. And this means not only a continuation of the religious quarrel, but an actual extension of the area of religious influence. And to all social reformers religious interference in social matters is already large enough and dangerous enough without our extending it farther.

But, of course, the real purpose of the measure is the relief of the so-called "Voluntary" schools. Under this measure these institutions, already receiving the much larger portion of their finances from the State, are to be further helped by rate aid. All that the Voluntary school managers are called upon to provide is the bare building; the whole of the cost of maintenance is to come out of the public purse, and the public are asked to surrender their right of complete control for the paltry bribe of having a building given them. Supporters of the measure are, however, careful to explain that the money given in this manner to the Voluntary schools is not given for the religious instruction imparted, but solely on account of the secular education. It is a distinction without a difference. Mr. Balfour is fond of very fine and subtle distinctions; but it would puzzle him, or anyone else, to discriminate between the two in this case. A man who subscribes to a trade union's funds subscribes to *all* the purposes of the society. He may say, if he likes, "I gave

because of a particular strike or lock-out," and either of these objects may furnish the occasion of his giving; but, nevertheless, his subscription necessarily supports the work of the union as a whole. And, in exactly the same manner, money given to a school which teaches religion, while the secular instruction may furnish the occasion for the giving, supports the religious along with the secular instruction.

The *Christian World*, in a leading article on the Bill, is of opinion that "any attempt to permanently settle the education question should regard it as an axiom that distinctive religious teaching should have no place in a national system." Quite so; only one seriously questions if the *Christian World* or the Nonconformists generally mean what they say. What they really mean by an absence of distinctive religious teaching is a religious teaching that is not distinctive of any one Christian sect, but one in which they all believe. That is, they believe in Christians generally helping themselves to the funds supplied by all classes of the community, and only quarrel when one of the rest gets a larger share of the plunder than others. None of them will face the simple fact that Christianity itself is a *distinctive religious teaching*, and that any principle that warrants the teaching of religion in the schools would also warrant the favoring of one form of religion at the expense of other forms.

Why the Nonconformists oppose the measure is because they believe that it will favor Anglicans more than themselves. Their opposition to the Bill is not based upon principle, but upon an estimate as to which sect will reap the greatest profit from the measure. Dr. Clifford says that "Free Churchmen seek nothing from the State for their opinions, beliefs, or churches; they ask for the justice in which all may share, and refuse to ask anything from the State which any citizen may not have on the same terms." As this was said to an interviewer, we may put it down as pious bunkum, prepared for popular consumption. Free Churchmen ask from the State just as much support as they think they are likely to get, and, in the matter of education, show as much concern for the rights of others as Churchmen display for the rights of Nonconformists. What is called undenominational religious instruction is very largely—sometimes entirely—Nonconformist Christianity. Nonconformists consequently hold to this method because it favors them more than their opponents, and Churchmen oppose it on exactly the same principle. But how much concern do Nonconformists show for the rights of the non-Christian section of the community? Is it not plain that for the State to select Christianity, and teach that religion at the public expense, is as much a violation of the principle of neutrality as it is to select the Thirty-nine Articles and teach them? If Atheists and Agnostics were foolish and unjust enough to advocate that Atheism and Agnosticism should be taught in State schools, does anyone imagine that Nonconformists would argue that, as Christians have Christianity taught therein, Atheistical parents should enjoy the same privilege? And, if not, what becomes of the twaddle about Nonconformists asking from the State only such favors as they concede to others? It is all so much empty verbiage, used to disguise the real object and the real struggle—a struggle between the sects for sectarian supremacy in the public schools, with the object of training up clients for their respective churches.

And, when one comes to look at the matter closely, the whole of the education difficulty is centred here. There is a fairly general and workable agreement as to the value of education, and we are beginning to realise that an educated people is one of the essential prerequisites for even "commercial supremacy." What really stands in the way of our educational system being placed upon the same level as that of France or Germany is that we have the religious question always with us; we have the Voluntary schools supported by the State, and yet in open competition with the State schools; and elect upon our School Boards men who are there with the avowed object of preventing their improvement by every means in their power.

And all the efforts of real educationalists must be largely futile so long as this anomalous condition of things exists. So long as religion is in the public schools it will continue to excite sectarian interests,

and all history and all experience prove that when religious sectarianism is involved all other interests and all other considerations are counted as nought. And it is equally true that, while we continue to support the Voluntary schools out of the public funds, there will always be an active party fighting against improvement in the State schools as a condition of keeping down the expenditure on their own institutions.

Let the public and the Government face this matter in the right spirit and temper, and our educational system would soon undergo a rapid and permanent improvement. Let us have a genuine system of national education by making our School Boards really universal. We should then get rid of the absurdity of maintaining two sets of schools, one at open rivalry with the other. And let us also make the schools national in the higher sense by eliminating sectarian beliefs, and concentrating attention upon those common elements and opinions that are believed in by all and are equally important to all. By this means we shall eliminate all non-essential and extraneous interests, and have cleared the way for a concentration of attention upon really vital educational questions.

C. COHEN.

Goethe.

More light."—*Goethe's Dying Words*.

"I sit as God, holding no form of creed,
But contemplating all."—TENNYSON.

AMONG the countless tributes paid to the great Goethe there is none which perhaps can compare in striking force with the compliment bestowed upon him by Napoleon. It must not be forgotten who the two interlocutors were.

Napoleon, the most practical of men, hated phrase-makers. Goethe, who in 1808 was in his sixtieth year, had hardly left Weimar since he first reached it in 1775. Yet an hour's interview wrung from the mighty soldier the ejaculation, *Voilà un homme!* as Goethe left the room. Its four walls probably encompassed at that moment the two vastest, subtlest, and most comprehensive intellects of the nineteenth century. With a sympathy born of their common genius, the two giants looked at, spoke with, and recognised each other for what they were. The whirligig of time brings in its revenge. Napoleon is buried deeper every year in the dust of discredit; the poet and philosopher gains every year fresh disciples.

Small are the germs that fructify genius, and for Goethe the narrowest atmosphere, the most ordinary environment, were sufficient. He lived in a small town, in a petty and defeated state. Yet he escaped the limitations of provincialism. He was, in reality, a citizen of the world.

It was to England that he turned for his most cherished authors—to Shakespeare, to Byron, and to Scott. His genius crossed all frontiers. His *Faust* is philosophy incarnate, and its admirers simply number the men of light and leading in every nation pretending to civilisation.

Goethe's versatility was simply marvellous. He was Argus-eyed; he saw at every pore. He achieved distinction as scientist, philosopher, dramatist, poet, critic, and novelist. He was an evolutionist before Darwin.

Goethe, like George Sand, made his books the vehicles of great ideas. His novel, *Elective Affinities*, has aroused many storms. In Germany and England critics are never tired of moralising upon it. It is alternately pronounced immoral and profoundly ethical. One school rails at it and declares that it saps the foundation of society, and another enthusiastically declares that it is eminently moral, because it sets the sacredness of marriage in so clear a light. Doubtless a moral can be drawn from every work of art, but the moral depends upon him who draws it. Both the interpretation against marriage and the conclusion in favor of the nuptial-tie may be drawn from the novel. Yet neither conclusion may be correct, except as the private interpretation of the reader. Goethe was an artist, not a mere advocate. He painted a picture, and, because he painted it truly, he necessarily presented it in a form which would permit men to draw from it those opposite conclusions which might be drawn from

the reality itself. Goethe's own views on the marriage question may be read in his private life and not in his novels. His relations with Frederika von Stein and Christiane Vulpius speak more eloquently than any words.

Carlyle was never tired of acknowledging the enormous debt of gratitude he owed to the author of *Wilhelm Meister*, the translation of which obtained for him a recognition of sterling literary work, and, later, the warm friendship of Goethe. The correspondence between these two Titans, with its high intellectuality and affectionate intimacy, is remarkable—the more so because the authors never met.

It is universally admitted that the ablest book written about Goethe is that of George Henry Lewes. Next to it critical judges will prefer the essay upon Goethe in *Representative Men*; but even Emerson is a long way behind Lewes. As regards German criticism, the subtle analysis of *Wilhelm Meister* by Gervinus is worthy of attention; but, in preference to reading books about Goethe, it is to be recommended that the Master himself be read. If any reader, unacquainted with German, should care to ascertain what a mine of wealth there is in the great Teuton's works, let him possess himself of Professor Blackie's *The Wisdom of Goethe*, and he may steep himself in the light of philosophy until he is well-nigh as luminous as the great Wolfgang himself.

It is seventy years since the great Goethe went down to the dreamless dust. The generations which look back see him towering head and shoulders above his contemporaries. One man, and one only, in his century stands beside him—the great Napoleon. Goethe's fame endures beyond death, with the greatness of Plato the Wise and large-browed Verulam. Though it is easy enough to say what Goethe is, it is nowise so simple to discover how he is what he is. Who shall tell that he has plucked out the heart of that mystery? There are words which come fluently enough; but they give little help. Genius, which seems to explain everything, only begs the question. In Goethe there is knowledge, the perfection of method, the absolute of means and end; and Goethe is one of the kings of art—

Lord over nature, Lord of the visible earth,
Lord of the senses five.

MIMNERMUS.

The Educational Problem.

THE educational problem is one of paramount importance to the Secular party, inasmuch as upon the proper training of the rising generation depends the welfare of posterity. In times not very remote the instruction given to children was under the absolute control of theological teachers, and what was the result? The vast majority of the young never entered school. In 1820 only six per cent. of the population were receiving even the poor education which was then imparted. The amount of educational destitution existing in England in 1870 may be roughly gathered from the following statistics. From the Census of 1851 it appeared that about one-fourth of the population of England were of an age to go to school—that is to say, were between the ages of three to thirteen, or four to fourteen. In 1870 the population of England was twenty-one millions, so that about five millions and a half of children would be of what is technically called the school age. Of these, twenty-three per cent. had to be allowed for as absent from school from allowable causes, such as sickness; half a million were at schools for the upper or middle classes; and rather less than two millions and a half of the remaining three and a half millions were actually at school. There remained about one million one hundred thousand children who were not at school at all. Nor did this represent by any means the whole extent of the deficiency. Of the two and a half millions represented as actually at school, only a very small proportion, indeed, could possibly derive real benefit from the education offered there, because, as was abundantly proved by statistics, by far the greater number of children were removed from school before their twelfth year—that is to say, before the age when the average child, much more the child of poor and uneducated parents,

becomes capable of anything like lasting and profitable learning. This evil of short-lived and irregular attendance had been increasing during the years preceding 1870 rather than diminishing, and it was admitted on all hands to form one of the most serious elements of the educational difficulty.

Now, Secularism enjoins that we should work not merely for our own individual advancement, but also for that of the general community. The educational struggle in this country has always been accompanied by two serious drawbacks—namely, the substitution of indifferent instruction for real education, and the formidable obstacles which were continually thrown in the way of a sound secular education by the clerical party. The true object of all education should be to cultivate the faculties and to develop the sympathies that belong to most members of the human family; to make them intelligent and humane; and to fit them to play their part in daily life so as to harmonise with the good of all. In our opinion, the only means by which this desirable object can be secured is by the acquirement of secular knowledge, and the study and application of the sciences, for these create the very conditions of existence that produce the greatest possible amount of social happiness. Nothing can be more detrimental to the education of children than to hamper elementary instruction with the perplexities of theology. From the very inception of such a mistaken policy the child's nature becomes altered, and so, indeed, does the whole face of universal nature become, as it were, metamorphosed with it. The child loses much of his proper egoity, or self-hood, and becomes, even to himself, a dual being, a living monstrosity, partly human, partly superhuman. His future becomes an abnormal existence, because he grows into manhood under the belief that he is ever living "in the great taskmaster's eye"—in other words, that it is always subject to the watchful superintendence of what the Commandment describes as "a jealous God."

Were this theological belief only taught as an hypothesis, as a possibility, or even as a probability, it would be quite another thing in its effects; but, unfortunately, this is not the case. Though the progress of knowledge—especially during the last century—the discoveries and generalisations of physical science, the improvement of criticism, and the unrestricted exercise of the reasoning faculties have (to say the very least) induced the wisest and most learned persons to entertain grave doubts with regard to the Bible, its revelation, inspiration, and authority; though all this is now well known to those who can pretend to be acquainted with the world of man and its modern characteristics, nevertheless among the mass of the people the old system of imparting religious instruction to the young is rigidly adhered to, and doctrines of creation and dogmas of theology are often inculcated precisely as though they had never been called into question. The influence of the parent is here supplemented by that of the priest or minister; from the mother's knee the child goes to church and to Sunday-school, there to have the originally-imparted doctrines driven home and rivetted by means of sermons, prayers, creeds, catechisms, and texts. Such theological teachings as these are really burdensome to the youthful mind. Children are not interested in creeds or catechisms; to them life should be a pleasure, and they should be carefully preserved from everything of a saddening or melancholy nature. No sane person will, we think, pretend that theology is a cheerful study; it is rather the reverse, and hence we think that the young can derive no possible satisfaction from the story of man's alleged original fall from righteousness, his alleged perversity, his sins against Deity, and that Deity's acts of vengeance for those offences. Instead of having such absurdities inculcated, children should be taught what duties are likely to devolve upon them in after years, and what conduct will best fit them for the task of properly performing them. Above all, they should be impressed with the fact that self-reliance is not merely a passive duty, but that it must be practically carried out, or life will be barren of some of its noblest results.

The other drawback in the educational struggle to which we refer is the persistent opposition upon the part of the clergy to all education which does not include the inculcation of Christian doctrines. When in

1839 the Government proposed a grant of £30,000 for educational purposes, the clergy formed an organisation to oppose it. In 1843 the Dissenters resisted, and threw out the Government Factory and Education Bill. And to-day the Church is doing its best to destroy the Board-schools and to re-establish clerical domination. In the face of the present organised crusade of the clerical party against our national system of education, it is the duty of all Secularists and Freethinkers to protest against the machinations of the Church in trying to impede the progress of secular education. It should not be overlooked that under the voluntary Christian system thousands of children grew up without any sort of education. The theological party, of all sects, failed to prepare the young for good citizenship, therefore the State took the matter in hand, and taxed all alike for the common good; for, if those who in the future will control the destinies of the nation are efficiently educated, it must be an advantage not to one class only of society, but to the whole of the community. Intellect will, henceforth, more than ever rule the world, and the more that intellect is cultivated the better it will be for all sections of the commonwealth. Sanctions for moral actions are not dependent upon religious teachings. Children should be taught that honesty is right, not because they are told in the Bible not to steal, but for the reason that stealing is an infringement upon the rights of others; that telling the truth is right, not because lying would offend any God, but for the reason that falsehood tends to undermine that confidence which is necessary to the stability of society; that honor is due to parents, not because children may live long, but for the reason that they are indebted to their parents for life and training. These are secular sanctions which are based upon natural grounds, apart altogether from theological considerations. As Secularists, we must not shrink from our duty to protect the young, who are unable to protect themselves, and who cannot remove the snares placed in their path. We must be determined to shield them from the allurements and the dangerous policy of those theologians who would sacrifice the secular welfare of the rising generation with the aid of a theology that has during centuries proved itself to be the deadliest foe to all ennobling aspirations.

This reference to the educational problem has been suggested by a consideration of the Government Education Bill recently introduced into the House of Commons by Mr. Balfour. Our readers, no doubt, have acquainted themselves with its nature and scope, and it is not necessary here to go into details. Briefly, it may be pronounced as a cleverly-devised plan to perpetuate the clerical influence, and to destroy, to a large extent, the usefulness of the Board schools; and, as such, it should meet with a firm opposition from all Freethinkers. It is a priestly attempt to abolish popularly-elected authorities; to replace School Boards by authorities not really representative or responsible to the general community; to levy rates more firmly for sectarian schools, making teachers subject to sectarian tests and duties; and to promote the monopoly of education in the hands of one church, whilst it facilitates in every way the multiplication of sectarian schools. In fact, it is a cunning attempt to place the training of children under the control of the parson, and to render the attainment of secular education more difficult than ever. As the *Westminster Gazette* pointed out: "The one-authority idea which it is supposed to embody, and which to so many people who live by phrases connotes order, simplicity, progress, is a manifest imposture. Instead of unity and simplification we have a positive multiplication of authorities, with powers and duties so complex and conflicting that administrative chaos is the first and most probable result." It is little more than a barefaced and hypocritical compliance with the resolutions passed by both Houses of Convocation in July last. The real effect of the Bill, if the people are apathetic enough to allow it to become law, will be to paralyse the elementary system of education, and to make it subordinate to the Church. The representative element is to be destroyed, for not even the majority of the Committee is necessarily to consist of elected councillors. They are only to be "selected and appointed" by the Councils. As for the minority, it will doubtless

be thrust on to the Committee by active bodies like the Voluntary Associations. It is to be appointed by the Council "on the nomination of other bodies," and it is to include "persons of experience in education, and persons acquainted with the needs of various kinds of schools." We well know those "persons of experience in education." They are the local clergy.

Certain it is that the proposed Bill will in no way contribute to the settlement of the religious difficulty. Even the *Daily Telegraph*, which professes to favor the Bill, practically admits this, for it says: "The militant Nonconformists declare themselves outraged if they have to support sectarian schools out of their rates. The Denominationalists, on the other hand, profess to have a grievance in being constrained to maintain their own schools out of their own pockets, while at the same time they are rated for seminaries of which they disapprove." And we may add that there are thousands who do not belong to either of the above sections of the Church who object to pay for religious teachings in any form, and who are opposed to having the minds of the young, who are incapable of judging of the truth or otherwise of the theological teachings forced upon them, moulded in the orthodox fashion. The only sound solution of the educational problem is that our National system of education should be thoroughly secular, and under the absolute control of ratepayers. This would be justice combined with true democracy.

CHARLES WATTS.

Should Happiness be Our Aim?—VI.

V.—UTILITY AND INTUITION (*continued*).

ANOTHER concession may be made. While people, like children, so lack prudential foresight and intellectual balancing or judging power that the immediate physical pleasure or pain of the moment outweighs all the anticipative pleasures and pains that can, and should, be aroused by the thoughts of the pleasures and pains of a lifetime, or where the social or sympathetic instincts are so poorly evolved or so badly trained that men care little or nothing for the interests and opinions of others, it may be useless, or even extremely mischievous, to ask or teach such foolish or selfish persons to make the "greatest happiness principle" their guide, just as it will equally be useless or mischievous to appeal to love of virtue in persons in whom virtuous tendencies or capacities are conspicuous by their absence, or whose ideas of right and wrong are grossly perverted. So long as absurd or ignoble notions of pleasure or happiness prevail, even the best of people cannot be trusted to apply the principles of Utilitarianism, any more than people who hold silly or fanatical ideas of virtue can be asked to obey virtue without first correcting their idea of virtue, which, for instance, may include the persecution of heretics, the smashing of liquor-bars, the enforcement of a dreary Sabbatarianism on all members of the community, non-resistance of evil, celibacy of priests and nuns, indiscriminate alms-giving, asceticism, absurd kinds of self-sacrifice, the wholesale massacre of witches, or other forms of religious or social tyranny or folly. Without adequate intelligence and enlightenment, people will scarcely be capable of applying *any* advanced principle, but only of abusing it. They will be like children trusted with the sharp tools which prove so useful and so indispensable in the hands of the intelligent workman.

To many people, especially the young and inexperienced, the idea of pleasure or happiness is like the too attractive lighthouse-lantern against which the dazzled bird dashes itself with disastrous consequences—the beacon which might have served as a guiding-light being thus converted into a source of misery or death. While pleasure is often like the intoxicating cup that lures the drunkard to his fate, or the dazzling flame into which the foolish moth plunges, it is natural that warnings against "pleasure" should be the order of the day. The Utilitarian, like other moralists, must obviously do his best to restrain the passions within proper limits by firmly associating powerful ideas and feelings of danger, disgust, horror, contempt, etc., with disastrous kinds or forms of pleasure, so that the painful or repellent side of the question is thus called

up simultaneously with the attractive idea or feeling of pleasure, whereby the balance of pleasure and pain should favor or compel a moral and prudential decision. The subjugation and control of the appetites and passions by these and other means is, of course, an absolutely essential condition of the solution of the "greatest happiness" problem.

The safest plan—and, indeed, the only practical plan of procedure—is undoubtedly the direct inculcation of virtues or good habits, such as honesty, veracity, justice, industry, kindness, and so forth. These should be taught as admirable and imperative in themselves, just as we teach young children to love and obey their parents without confusing their minds with any formula about the greatest happiness of the greatest number. But when children and adults are sufficiently intelligent, they may well be shown that there is a great principle or explanation or reason behind all these rules of conduct—namely, the promotion of the general welfare or happiness. They may be led to observe that this Utilitarian principle is upheld by the common interests of the community and by the sympathies, affections, conscience, and other developments of the social instincts evolved in mankind during the long ages of the past; and that Utilitarianism supports all reasonable rules or genuine virtues, and completes their binding authority, while at the same time affording a test which will help us to distinguish true virtues from counterfeits whenever we become old enough and bold and intelligent enough to undertake the responsibility and danger of correcting or reforming the customary ideals or rules of conduct.

Instead of speaking of "pleasure" or "happiness," we shall often find it safer, and therefore better, to speak of the "good" of mankind, or the welfare of mankind, as the object or aim of our efforts. This escapes the misunderstanding and misrepresentation to which such words as "pleasure" and "happiness" are so generally liable; and it also avoids the danger of directing the attention to seductive and intoxicating enticements, which often lead ill-regulated minds into permanent miseries. By the "good" of mankind, or the "welfare" of mankind, we almost universally mean health, prosperity, successful rearing of offspring, physical and intellectual and moral efficiency, and so forth; and these are the main essentials of the happiness for which the Utilitarian strives. It is better to fix our attention on the diligent cultivation of life's fruit trees rather than on the actual devouring of the fruit, although this latter pleasure may after all be the *ultimate* object or *final* pleasure to which our hopeful and pleasurable efforts will be directed. We must find a large part of our happiness, or satisfaction, in the cheerful and intelligent interest we take in our various duties or occupations. So far as we cannot feel such interest in the tasks before us we are unfortunate or unfit. Most of us, however, are not thus unfit. As a rule, we are happier when occupied than when indulging in continual or habitual laziness. The exercise of our energies and faculties, and the mixture of pleasurable and painful sensations involved, make life pass more pleasantly than if it were wasted in idleness and vacuity.

The most important half of practical Hedonism or Utilitarianism—the half, at least, that needs our most thorough attention and *perpetual* caution—is not the positive pursuit of pleasure, but the *negative* pursuit—namely, the avoidance of the pain which is the warning of destruction, and thereby the all-essential means of the self-preservation of the individual and the race. On the whole, pain is a more powerful stimulant than pleasure, as befits the imperative importance of its unwelcome, but not unbeneficent, task. The waging of incessant war, defensive and watchful as well as offensive and energetic, against the ever-threatening forces of misery and destruction, is really the chief part of the Hedonistic campaign; and, in thinking and speaking of Hedonism or Utilitarianism, we ought never to forget this aspect of the case.

Life has to be spent mainly in "work." Starvation and innumerable other evils can only be prevented by sustained effort and habitual self-control. The sterner virtues are demanded of us under penalty of terrible punishments. If the man at the wheel, seduced by the idea of pleasure or comfort, quits his painful post during the cutting blizzard for a pipe and game of cards in the warmth below, the ship will soon be on her

beam-ends and at the mercy of the infuriated waves, or will be dashed to pieces on the cruel rocks. (He has *not* deserved the happiness principle, as he may have thought he did; he has *thrown away* the happiness and the lives of many, his own included.) We are all men at the wheel, with our own interests and the interests of others dependent on our continual prudence, our constant fidelity to duty, our firm loyalty or honesty towards each other, our habitual observance of rules or virtues usually (though wrongly) dissociated from the idea of pleasure, or even regarded as the opposite of pleasure. Very few people recognise the fact that we have to call in and cultivate *serious* and *manly* kinds of *pleasure* based on many elements of human nature, such as an indomitable or immovable pride or self-satisfaction in doing our duty and maintaining an honorable and satisfactory position in life for ourselves and those dearest to us, the sometimes absorbing pleasure of exercising our faculties in performing our work skilfully and properly, the pleasures of success, of safety, of ambition, the pleasure of being respected or admired or liked or loved, the pleasure attending the exercise of power in the management of affairs, the pleasure of triumphing over difficulties as if they were conquered foes, and so forth. The game of life will thus yield interest and excitement quite as pleasurable, and usually more lastingly satisfactory, than are derived from sports and amusements admittedly pursued solely as pleasures.

W. P. BALL.

(To be concluded.)

We Apologise.

WE apologise for having misled some of our readers. The fact is that we were misled ourselves. We published the story of a persecuted Hackney newsagent named Kelsey, and offered to hand over to him any subscriptions that might be sent us on his behalf. We acknowledged the receipt of £2 10s. in the *Freethinker*, and this amount we gave to Miss Vance to convey to Mr. Kelsey. She paid him the amount and took his receipt; but when he heard that she had received a letter questioning his good faith he insisted on handing the money back until that point was settled, and Miss Vance took it back, giving *him* a receipt. That looked like the action of an honest man. We regret to say, however, that Miss Vance's inquiries have proved that Mr. Kelsey's story was a pure (or impure) concoction. He was never ordered not to sell the *Freethinker*, his landlord was not a clergyman at Ramsgate, and the Bishop of Stepney never sent him £5. Miss Vance has his lordship's letter disclaiming all knowledge of the persecuted newsagent, and positively denying having sent him a cheque. We therefore unsay all we said to the Bishop's credit, as we unsay all we said about Mr. Kelsey's afflictions. We were simply taken in by the elaborate and circumstantial story he left at our office. Names, addresses, and incidents were apparently all invented. Mr. Kelsey should have used his imaginative gifts more profitably; as a religious novelist he might have earned fame and fortune. As it is he has made nothing and has been found out. So much for *him*. For our own part, we may plead that this is the first time, in twenty years, that we have been "had" in this way, and the first time we have misled our readers in such a matter. Fortunately the money is still in hand, and can be returned to the subscribers, if they will kindly send us their addresses. The affair will then be cleared up, and the romantic newsagent may be forgotten.

The whole history of the spirit of religion is merely that of the fallibility and uncertainty of the human mind, which, placed in a world it does not comprehend, is yet desirous of solving the enigma; and which, an astonished spectator of this mysterious and visible prodigy, invents causes, supposes ends, builds systems; then, finding one defective, abandons it for another not less vicious; hates the error that it has renounced, is ignorant of the new one that it adopts; rejects the truth of which it is in pursuit, invents chimeras of heterogeneous and contradictory beings, and, ever dreaming of wisdom and happiness, loses itself in a labyrinth of torments and illusions.—*Volney's "Ruins."*

Acid Drops.

WE are often asked by believers to admire the wisdom displayed by Providence in the construction of the world. A recent paper read by Professor Ray Lankester before the Royal Society describes the various transformations passed through by the Malaria Parasite, and we have no doubt it will fill the Theistic mind with fresh material for worship. The following is a summary of the Professor's account of the genealogy of this parasite: "First, there are little needle-shaped organisms, which pass into the human system through the proboscis of a mosquito. Each of these needles makes for a red corpuscle and gets inside. Then it passes into its second phase and becomes more or less a shapeless mass, which grows within its red corpuscle until the dwelling is destroyed and the inhabitant breaks up into a crowd of spores, and so changes into 'number three.' These spores enter fresh red corpuscles, changing as the others did, on taking up residence, and breaking up like them after a period of growth. This is repeated for several generations, until the occupant of the red corpuscle from some unknown cause develops on a new line and assumes a crescent shape. In this fourth phase it floats—male and female for the first time—through the blood, to be swallowed by the malarial mosquito that preys on man. Having duly passed into the insect, the sexes become spherical as a fifth stage; but their children, in the sixth transformation, are pear-shaped, and grow larger than any of their ancestors or descendants. This creature pushes its way through the wall of the mosquito's stomach and changes into No. 7, a steadily-growing ball, which eventually increases to twenty times its original diameter. This ball becomes more and more complex. Within it appears a colony of cells packed closely together—the eighth metamorphosis—and in time these pour forth a crop of the needle-like organisms with which we started. They find their way into the blood of the mosquito, thence into the fluid which the insect apparently pours into the wound it makes in its human victim, and so start once more on their marvellous round."

And all this trouble is taken in order to secure the grand result—malaria! It really looks very much like a bad case of misdirected ingenuity.

"Rusticus," in *To-Day*, has the following remarks, which bear upon the same subject:—"The hoodie crows on the farm seemed odious enough when they attacked two little lambs, tore out their eyes, and killed them; but I think that we saw the bird in almost a worse light the other afternoon. While we were cycling along a quiet Norfolk road, a hoodie suddenly loomed over the hedge with something heavy, which looked like a rat, in its beak. Surprised at the sight of the bicycles below, it dropped its load, but immediately swooped to the ground to recover it. A shout drove the bird off, however, and, alighting at the spot, we discovered a tiny baby rabbit, with just enough life left in it to move its forepaws feebly. One could not help shuddering to think of the meal which our chance arrival upon the scene had prevented, for the hoodie crow takes no pains to kill its victims, provided that they are helpless, before it begins to feed upon their tenderest parts. A thrush will sometimes feast upon the newly-hatched young of smaller birds, but it always kills them by knocking them against the ground beforehand; and I have seen a domestic fowl treat young robins in the same way. The crow tribe, on the other hand, do not seem to care whether their dinner be alive or dead."

"One of the most heart-breaking sights of the East," says the same writer, "is, I think, that of a dying cow by the roadside in India, feebly tossing a sightless head from which the crows—grey and black, like the hoodies—have extracted the eyeballs. And why does it toss its head? Because the ghoulish birds, having exhausted the eye-sockets, are plucking at whatever else seems unprotected by hide. Coming upon such a scene, the Englishman may end the tragedy with a merciful bullet in the cow's brain; but what a fractional percentage of these deaths by slow agony are thus obviated! And when one looks back over the long procession of past centuries, it is awful to think of the tale of anguish which is summed up in the fact that the crow's favorite food consists of anything which is living, but helpless."

Facts like these, says "Rusticus," form for some minds a great stumbling-block to belief in the design of creation. Some minds! One would think that if people who believe in a God realised all that their belief implies, all minds would revolt against the worship of an Almighty Being who could, in cold forethought, deliberately design such cruelty and suffering as the animal world displays. Apologising for, or excusing, such suffering is a mere display of self-hypnotisation when it is not something worse.

The church at Ploezal, near Guingamp, in the West of France, collapsed on the last Sunday in March. Fortunately

no one was in the building at the time—not even God. It was a narrow escape.

At Shelbyville, Kentucky, Henry M. Lyle, one of the most prominent citizens of Shelby County, dropped dead in the Assembly Presbyterian Church. He was superintendent of the Sunday-school, and had just finished teaching the Bible-class.

In the recent storms in America the roof was loosened from the Methodist church at Wellsboro, Virginia, and fell down among the congregation, killing two people. The pastor and many of the persons were seriously injured.

A similar accident occurred in Knoxville, Pennsylvania, the roof of a church falling in and injuring some fifty people. "Indeed," says a newspaper account, "the storms seem to have exercised a selective action on churches."

Providence pays special attention to "sacred" places and "Holy" cities. There were nearly a thousand deaths from cholera at Mecca in less than a week.

There is likely to be another boom in the religious drama. At Drury Lane *Ben-Hur* is before the public, and we may prepare ourselves for the usual amount of idiotic gush from the pulpit and a certain section of the press. The opening of the play shows the audience the Wise Men journeying through the desert, guided by the remarkable star which obligingly stopped dead over the chimney pots of the alleged birth-place of Jesus; and later on in the performance the healing of the lepers is witnessed. Pious minds will doubtless find confirmation of the truth of these absurd stories from seeing them presented in dramatic form, and both manager and parson will thus reap profit from the show.

Some pious people were frightened at the idea that Christ would be included among the characters in the melodrama of *Ben Hur*. They may reassure themselves now they know that Our Beloved Savior is represented by the lime-light man.

In America Mr. Oscar Hammerstien is about to bring out a version of the Passion Play, and informed an interviewer that he intends first to submit the drama to the bishops of the United States and other clerical dignitaries for their approval. Now, there is something enterprising about this idea, and it might well be adopted this side the Atlantic. Dr. Parker might be asked to express an opinion upon the pantomimic portions of the plays that are to be produced, while for the more solemn kind of buffonery we would suggest the Bishop of London or Dr. Horton.

So Birmingham still wants a bishop. As if it had not Bishop Knox, who is surely enough and to spare in the bishop line, being the "Blackguard Bishop" who compared the local Secularists to burglars.

A sum of at least £70,000 would have to be found before Birmingham could have a bishopric. It can't be done for less, according to high ecclesiastical authorities. And then there would be no cathedral, and the bishop—poor man!—would have no "palace." Some time ago £30,000 was promised for the project, but the guarantors have since been released from their promises because the balance was not forthcoming.

The *Midland Express* appears to think that the time is now ripe for organised action. Is it, indeed? One seems to recollect some terrible pictures of the slums and squalid homes in this once much-belauded city. The revelations were of recent date, and the state of things is so scandalous still that the City Council have been moved to discuss the subject. But the *Midland Express* is a recent importation from London, and doesn't yet quite understand its local surroundings. When the staff have had time to look about them, they may see a better way of spending an odd £200,000 or so than in establishing a bishop with a cathedral and a palace in a city where the crying question is the housing of the poor.

"What is the dear old Church coming to?" was the plaintive question recently addressed by Father Ignatius to Mr. Raymond Blathwayt, who interviewed him. "The Church," says Father Ignatius, "is far too much impregnated with the spirit of the day. The Church of England, I mean. In my young days there were very few infidels, and they were all outside the Church; now they are right inside the pulpit. Now here is a shocking instance. There was a certain church near London which, though it was heavily in debt, the Archbishop consecrated. The vicar, to help clear the debt, got up an entertainment, which took place on the vicarage lawn, and he asked down a young lady—an actress celebrated for her high kicking—to give a display of her limbs, which she accordingly did. Can you imagine that—

God's Church and His Eternal Love exploited by a female high-kicker!"

Very soon a terrible outcry will be raised by the higher dignitaries of the Anglican Church. A Bill is to be introduced for the purpose of cutting down episcopal incomes and the incomes attaching to deaneries and canonries and to the wealthier parochial preferments. It is estimated that a saving can be effected of £150,000 per annum. This sum is proposed to distribute amongst the less-handsomely paid clergy.

The proposal is equitable enough, but is it at all likely to be carried? The Bench of Bishops will see to that. If the House of Commons should pass the Bill, the Lords would reject it with contumely and scorn. Except with the object of drawing general attention to a scandalous ecclesiastical anomaly, and a glaring piece of Christian inconsistency, there would be no use introducing such a measure.

Still, it would be amusing to see the way in which the bishops would battle for the loaves and fishes and the meat which perisheth, and the stern refusal they would give to any proposed division with such of the clergy as are said to be existing in a state of genteel poverty.

The *Church Times* has a leader on "Clerical Poverty," in which some very wholesome observations are made. The *C. T.* does not object to some organisation designed to adjust the burden of maintaining the clergy. It objects only "to the pitiful talk of poverty," which it describes as "misleading" and "raising a false issue." The *C. T.* points out that a circular issued by the Queen Victoria Clergy Fund "tells of 1,491 benefices having a net annual value of less than £100. The Bishop of London is reported in our present issue as identifying exactly the same number with an average value of £67."

But, whatever the precise figures may be, the *Church Times* objects to "an appeal for relief of an imaginary poverty." It says: "There are poor men among the clergy. They are poor for the same reasons that men of other professions are poor—because of providence, because of sickness or unforeseen losses, because of liabilities foolishly undertaken. Let these be relieved as poor, not as clergymen." The *C. T.* calls for common sense to be exercised here, and says: "Let us rigidly distinguish between the duty of the faithful to make an adequate provision for the clergy, and the duty of the charitable to relieve those of the clergy who happen to be poor."

In the latter duty the over-paid bishops, deans, and canons have a golden opportunity for self-sacrifice, of which they had not yet availed themselves to any appreciable extent. Nor are they likely to do so, in spite of all the pious benevolence which they profess.

Monsignor Parkinson, rector of Oscott Roman Catholic College, is jubilant over the new Education Bill. Religious teaching, he said, was at last to be legally recognised. "They were to have denominational schools—schools teaching the religion which they in their consciences wished—recognised by the State, and were to receive all the aids which the State granted to any school whatsoever."

This may be a very pleasing prospect to Monsignor Parkinson and his co-religionists, but what right has the State to apply money, extracted from Protestants, Jews, Rationalists, and others, to the support of "schools teaching the religion which they [Roman Catholics] in their consciences wished"? Are not the consciences and pockets of Protestants, Jews, Rationalists, and others, to be respected? And how is that possible with Roman Catholic teaching supported by the State?

Sir Edward Clarke, in a recent address at Kensington, said that "the great strength of the Church is to be found in the schools." Precisely so. Christians are manufactured articles. Children are the raw material. Religion gets hold of them in the docile age, and works them up into the regulation pattern. They are stamped with a brand which most of them carry right on to the grave.

The clergy are always telling us that stories first heard at a mother's knee are never wholly forgotten. Quite so! But rules of conduct first enforced at the same place leave a far more vivid impression.

The death of Mr. Cecil Rhodes, and the publication of the chief points in his will, have set the "inspired penmen" of the newspapers and reviews in an unusual ferment. It is a pity, however, that these gentlemen cannot use the English language with tolerable precision. It is also a pity that they cannot write honestly. One critic, much opposed to Mr. Rhodes, calls him a *materialist*—using that term as though it were the exact opposite of *idealist*, whereas it is nothing of the kind. This will not need demonstration to anyone who

has the slightest acquaintance with metaphysics and moral philosophy. Another critic, one of the *Daily Mail* young lions, declares that Mr. Rhodes's will is a display of the principles of the "Christianity in which he lived and died"—whereas it was always an open secret, made *very* open by Mr. Stead in the *Review of Reviews*, that Mr. Rhodes was an Agnostic. There was rather more subtlety about the man of God who delivered the address over Mr. Rhodes's dead body in Capetown Cathedral. The deceased great man, he said, was not much of a church-goer, but he was none the less deeply religious. In other words, he was distinguished enough to be worth claiming.

The Christian Church cannot afford nowadays to let a millionaire slip quite through its fingers. It must catch hold of them somewhere, if only by the part that the mother of Achilles held when she plunged him in the Styx. Even a more ignoble part would serve the turn. It must get something out of him somehow. And the same applies to distinguished men who are not millionaires. Influence counts as well as money. Accordingly the Church tries to make out, when a distinguished man dies, or has been some time dead, that he was some sort of a Christian. If he never darkened a church door, it is impossible to call him a *pillar* of the church, for a pillar is *inside*; but it is possible to claim him as a *buttress*. This distinction was first clearly drawn by the famous Lord Eldon. Somebody called him a pillar of the Church. "No," he grunted, "I'm not a pillar, I never go under the roof; I'm a buttress of the Church, I shove it up from outside."

The late Sir Walter Besant was always claimed as an orthodox Christian when he became famous. We used to point out that he could not be anything of the kind, judging by his critical studies on Rabelais and the French Humanists. And it now appears that we were quite correct. Sir Walter Besant's *Autobiography* sets the point at rest for ever. So much so, indeed, that the *Academy* is rather annoyed. "He states his own religious creed," that journal says, "with an outspokenness and a completeness which somehow do not altogether charm us. Dogmatic Christianity he rejects absolutely. He believes in an intelligent mind which, however, seems merged in those laws of Nature which 'are due to the Mind.' He believes in a moral and spiritual order. He willingly calls Jesus the Son of God, because we are all sons of God, Jesus being the greatest. The Atonement is a wide-spread superstition, and 'the blood of Jesus' a 'mere survival in words of an exploded belief.' The slavery imposed by the priest, the slavery imposed by the Prayer Book, are anathema to him; and 'can anyone not corrupted by the ecclesiastical rubbish believe that the Lord is pleased by creating a stink in a church?'.....The whole of the ecclesiastical system is foolish, baseless, and 'to the highest degree mischievous.'"

There is a strong flavor of Ingersoll about the following expression of opinion by the Rev. Minot J. Savage, of Boston, U.S.A.: "I wish to touch, in passing, the ecclesiastical dogma that there is something peculiarly sacred about virginity and celibacy. I do not for one instant believe it; I care not what councils, bishops, churches, popes, may have enunciated the dogma. Let me say it reverently and without being misunderstood. I cannot have any reverence whatever, even for the far-famed and eternally exalted virginity of Mary. To place virginity and celibacy above the consecration and noble service of fatherhood and motherhood seems to me to cast a slur upon the father or the mother, and to impugn the wisdom and the goodness of God, who has ordained the fact that this distinction of sex runs through the universe from the highest to the lowest, and has made it the means of all the power, glory, and beauty that are."

Mr. Savage evidently thinks that he is attacking Roman Catholicism only in speaking thus. The truth is that the attack is equally valid against *all* forms of Christianity. All genuine forms of Christianity must be based upon the immaculate conception, and the underlying theological conception here is that there is something essentially unclean and impure about the relation of the sexes and the act of parentage. The only distinction is that the Roman Church carried out the conception more logically than Protestants dared to do.

The conclusion of the above quotation reminds one very strongly of the curate who urged, as a proof of design in nature, that great rivers were made to run by large towns.

There is a haunted house in Hercules-road, Lambeth. But the spirits inside were not strong enough to deter two young men from stealing all the lead gutters from the roof. Ghosts generally frighten the wrong people.

The *Globe* points out that "Kissing the Book" remains the general practice, even in those courts in which witnesses are informed by a printed notice that they are at liberty to swear in the Scottish fashion with uplifted hand. This is perfectly true, and is accounted for by the fact that witnesses

are mostly too timid or too indifferent to the formality to ask for any departure from the established method.

The printed notice informs witnesses that the following form of oath may be used: "I swear by Almighty God that I will speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." The Oaths Act, 1888, provides that any witness who desires to swear with uplifted hand must do so "in the form and manner in which the oath is usually administered in Scotland." Now the formula of the Scottish oath is as follows: "I swear by Almighty God, *and as I shall answer to God at the Great Day of Judgment*, that I will speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

Why are the words we have italicised omitted? Is it with the commendable desire of minimising the theological part of the oath? Or was there some doubt in the minds of the framers of the printed notice whether witnesses will indeed have to "answer to God at the Great Day of Judgment"?

The late Medical Officer of Health for the City of London used to swear himself in the Scottish fashion with great pomp and solemnity. The effect was somewhat spoiled by seeing the venerable gentleman raise his hand like a boy in school able to answer a teacher's question. But Dr. Saunders had seen too much of the sort of people who often "kissed the book" to endanger himself with the Court copy of God's Holy Word, which apparently he declined to credit with the virtue of self-disinfection.

Charity covers many sins, and the *Jewish World* tells how a provincial co-religionist made it cover the sin of desecrating the Sabbath. Mr. Isaacs kept his clothing-store open on the Sabbath. One Sabbath morning a local Christian clergyman, who was friendly with many members of the community, remonstrated with Mr. Isaacs when passing his establishment. "I am really surprised, Mr. Isaacs," said the cleric genially, "that a right good Jew such as you should do business on the Sabbath." "And do you call this business?" replied Mr. Isaacs, pointing to a ready-made suit on one of the dummies in the doorway marked 17s.; "why, this is charity."

Poor fishermen! Or rather poor fishers of men! Over £40,000 has already been spent on Cardinal Vaughan's "Archbishop's House," and it is still unfinished. How the case is altered since the Son of Man had not where to lay his head! Then, as now, the "foxes" had holes. Some of these cost over £40,000.

Albert and Kate Greene have been fined £20 at Grimsby for fortune-telling. But are not all the paid preachers of Kingdom-come in the very same line of business? It is reported that the Greenes "read" a policeman's hand differently on two separate occasions. But do not the sky-pilots tell us a hundred different ways to heaven? We submit that all impostors should be treated alike.

Albert Matthias Stone, 29, a shop assistant, and John Alfred Pursall, 23, a clerk—probably two of Johnnie Kensit's underlings—were charged the other day at Clerkenwell police-court with acting in a manner in the Essex-road whereby a breach of the peace might have been occasioned. Police-constable Ham, 652 N, who ran them in, had a delightfully simple view of his duty. "They were preaching against Roman Catholicism," he said, "and as there were a number of Irish people in the neighborhood, I thought a riot might follow." Apparently this worthy guardian of the peace has never heard of Irish Protestants. He should visit Belfast. He would soon hear of them there—on the first Catholic festival. Meanwhile we may observe that it seems a very odd thing to run a preacher in because somebody may differ from him. That is why he preaches. It seems very odd, too, that the magistrate should so far agree with the constable as to bind over the preachers in this case "not to repeat the offence." At one time anyone could insult Roman Catholics with impunity; now it appears to be a crime to criticise their beliefs. This is coddling them with a vengeance. We doubt whether it is really the law of England, but, if it is, the sooner the law is brought level with common-sense the better.

The Rev. W. A. Parsons was charged at the Marylebone Police-court with being drunk and begging in Gloucester-terrace, Hyde Park. He explained that he begged at various houses for drink, because he suffered with insomnia and had lost his wife. His explanation lacked force, owing to his having been already in an inebriates' home in Croydon, and was under summons to appear at Colchester on a charge of drunkenness. He was finally remanded for inquiries.

We read that the Wesleyan Missionary Society, in common with similar associations, is "feeling the stress of the times in a greatly diminished income." This is what the *Daily Telegraph* says in an "inspired" paragraph. The annual report will show a deficit of £6,000. Expenditure has exceeded the estimates by some £5,000, whilst the income is

about £1,200 below the amount expected. We fear this is too good to last.

Canon Scott Holland told a Tunbridge Wells audience that the "State had reached its last card. It had done all it possibly could for the workers." The beautiful moral was that the Great Lying Church alone could do anything for the people. Bah! The Church has never perceived any social problems, and always sides with the forces of reaction.

Rev. Dr. Wright has been lecturing at Balham in reply to a discourse by Father Grosch on "Authority." After the lecture the following written question was handed up: "How does the lecturer explain the fact that intelligent people who sincerely seek the truth will, after a most careful study of the Bible, be led to the most opposite conclusions concerning the fundamental truths of Christianity; some will become Catholics, others Protestants, others will give up all belief in Christianity, and others, finally, will become sincere Agnostics or even Atheists. Does not this prove the absurdity of the theory of private interpretation of Scripture?"

The answer, of course, is, No. What it *does* prove is the absurdity of the theory that such a book is a Divine revelation. That, however, was not the reply given by the Rev. Dr. Wright. He said that "many 'intelligent people' came to the Scripture with preconceived opinions—Agnostics and Atheists with a determination not to admit anything miraculous." But Agnostics and Atheists do not come to the Scriptures with any such determination. In the majority of cases they have examined the Bible and decided upon its claims long before they become Agnostics or Atheists, and they have done so without any preconceived opinions which would deprive the examination of any utility and value. Rev. Dr. Wright had better try again.

Although Mrs. Grundy bids fair to become the "Fourth Person of the Trinity" in the eyes of Christians, the perusal of Holy Writ guarantees that the language of the stable shall not be forgotten in all decent households.

Many popular books have profane titles. In a library catalogue we noticed the following: *God's Fool, If I were God, The Wheel of God, God's Outcast, In the Image of God, God and the Ant, God's Gentlemen.*

It appears that F. C. Burnand, the editor of *Punch*, was educated as a priest. The secret is out at last. We have often wondered why the humor of our contemporary was so deadly dull.

There is an unexpected opening for the unemployed in the City of London. Many of the City parishes, such as St. Ethelburga's Bishopsgate, St. Vedast's Foster Lane, and St. Margaret Pattens, are faced with a scarcity of churchwardens. One rector earnestly appeals for parishioners who will undertake the "statutory duties" pertaining to the office.

The whale referred to in the following yarn evidently belonged to the same variety as the one with which the prophet Jonah had such an unpleasant experience. It is taken from a newspaper of 1804, and relates to the dietary table of a whale which was found stranded with a bad attack of indigestion on the Yorkshire coast. The unvarnished chronicler of the event writes: "An enormous whale is said to have been stranded off Flamborough Head in the year 1259, in a state of dreadful exhaustion, with a church steeple sticking out of his mouth. On cutting up the sacrilegious monster, which could not be performed so quickly as to prevent his convulsions from setting all the bells a-ringing, the whole congregation was found in the body of the church, enclosed in the stomach of the leviathan, in the very act of singing psalms, and the parson in the vestry, taking a glass of wine before the sermon." Religious papers, please copy.

A Mrs. Grace Kersey was walking down the aisle of a church at Norwich when she fell dead. And this in spite of the prescribed supplication against "sudden death" offered from time to time in the "sacred" edifice. Query: Is a God worth his salt who cannot or will not preserve his worshippers in his own sanctuary?

We are informed that there is no truth in the rumor that Price Hughes intends to change the title of the *Methodist Times* to that of the *Methodist Story Teller*.

A minister was called in to see a man who was ill. After finishing his visit, as he was leaving the house, he said to the man's wife: "My good woman, do you not go to any church at all?" "Oh, yes, sir; we gang to the Barony Kirk." "Then why in the world did you send for me? Why didn't you send for Dr. Macleod?" "Na, na, sir; deed no; we wadna risk him. Do ye no ken it's a dangerous case o' typhus?"

IMPORTANT NOTICE.

The business of the Freethought Publishing Company, including the publication of the *FREETHINKER*, is now carried on at No. 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, London, E.C., situated between Ludgate Circus and Holborn Viaduct, and rather nearer the latter. The new premises are in every way more suitable and commodious, and will furnish the opportunity for much-needed developments on the literary side of our propaganda.

To Correspondents.

CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—April 13, Bradford; 20, Glasgow; 27, morning, Stanley Hall, London, N.—Address, 24 Carminia-road, Balham, London, S.W.

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—April 13, Manchester; 20, Birmingham Labor Church; 27, afternoon, Victoria Park; evening, Stepney.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.

C. PEGG.—Your lecture notice was sent to our printer's exactly as we received it. We regret that there should have been an error, but are you certain the mistake was not at your end?

J. YOUNG.—Poem received, with thanks. Regret, however, that we are unable to use it at present.

G. WILLIAMS.—See Sugar Plums. We do not think that the matter needs supplementing by anything further than can be done by local effort. Such complaints are a testimony to the success of your work, and should inspire to further efforts.

THE attention of Branch secretaries and others is called to the fact that Mr. F. A. Davies has removed to 30 Cambole-road, Broadway, Tooting.

JOHN HINDLE.—Certainly it is better late than never. Thanks also for your good wishes.

E. CHAPMAN.—Acknowledged as requested. Thanks.

G. W. B.—Thanks for cuttings. We cannot deal with your long letter in this column, though discussion, as you say, is a good thing.

THE **FOOTE CONVALESCENT FUND.**—Subscriptions to this Fund are all gifts to Mrs. Foote, to be expended by her at her absolute discretion in the restoration of her husband's health, and in defraying various expenses caused by his illness. The following (sixth list) have been received:—J. Gompertz, 5s.; John Hindle, 10s.

D. FRANKEL.—Please send all lecture notices on separate slip of paper. It will save time and ensure accuracy.

S. GRAHAM.—No apology is needed. We are always pleased to hear from our readers, provided the communication is not too lengthy. When it is—well, we leave the rest to your imagination.

G. EDWARDS.—Thanks for cheery letter. We are hoping to see very important developments in both the literary and business portions of our propaganda in the near future. Our new premises are larger and in every way more commodious, and will afford the opportunity, if circumstances permit, to do much that at present remains undone.

THE National Secular Society's office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, 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 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Freethought Publishing Company, Limited, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, 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.

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It is wrong, always, everywhere, and for anyone, to believe anything upon insufficient evidence. If a man, holding a belief which he was taught in childhood, or persuaded of afterwards, keeps down and pushes away any doubts which arise about it in his mind, purposely avoids the reading of books and the company of men that call in question or discuss it, and regards as impious those questions which cannot easily be asked without disturbing it—the life of that man is one long sin against mankind.—*W. K. Clifford.*

Personal.

UNFORTUNATELY I find, on returning to London and resuming work, that I am not quite as strong as I thought. I have suffered a partial relapse. It is nothing alarming, I believe, and I expect to pull through it in a day or two. But I have to abandon the idea of lecturing at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening (April 13).

I have had to ask Miss Vance at the eleventh hour to make other arrangements for the meeting, and to have them notified in the *Freethinker*, which Mr. Cohen is again seeing through the press.

I have received a certain communication from Mr. G. J. Holyoake for insertion in the *Freethinker*. In the present circumstances, I think the matter may well be deferred for another week. I do not feel called upon to act entirely on my own responsibility. I think the letter, which is a circular one, should be first laid before the N. S. S. Executive with a view to eliciting its opinion and intention. No harm can accrue in this case from a week's delay.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

WE regret to have to announce that Mr. Foote is unable to fulfil his engagement at the Athenæum Hall this evening (April 13). He contracted a fresh cold on the journey home on Saturday last, April 5, and is, at the time of going to press, once more confined to his room. Under the circumstances, Mr. Heaford will occupy the platform of the Athenæum Hall in his stead; subject, "The Consolations of Religion."

Mr. C. Cohen lectures three times in the Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Manchester, to-day (April 13). For many reasons we hope there will be good audiences on these occasions. The Manchester Branch has been experiencing rather adverse fortune of late, and good meetings not only add zest to the lectures themselves, but give fresh encouragement to those who are responsible for the meetings.

Last Sunday Mr. Charles Watts gave two excellent lectures in Sheffield; the one in the evening, "His Forty Years' Reminiscences," was particularly interesting, and called forth much applause from a large audience. A considerable amount of literature was also sold.

Mr. Charles Watts visits Bradford again to-day (April 13), and delivers two lectures at the Bradlaugh Club. No doubt he will have good audiences.

It was a pleasing sign of the wearing down of Sabbath stiffness when, last Sunday evening, an eager crowd besieged the gate of the Leicester Secular Hall in order to witness the Sunday-school children's annual cantata. About forty boys and girls in costume recited, sang, and danced on a green lawn, overshadowed by arcades of real ivy and laurel. The performance was very successful, and the only thing to regret was that so many persons were unable to obtain admittance.

The International Federation of Freethought Societies holds its annual Congress this year at Geneva, from September 14 to 17. A varied and extensive program has been drawn up by the general secretaries, embracing such subjects as "The Relation of Freethought to Positivism," the best method of enlisting the service of women in Freethought propaganda, the relation of evolution to religion, international action against religious corporations, and other questions of interest to those engaged in a Rationalistic propaganda. It is hoped that there will be a representative gathering of Freethinkers from all countries, and English Freethinkers who feel inclined to combine a pleasant holiday with useful employment may obtain all necessary information of M. Charles Fulpius, 47 Boulevard du Pont d'Arve, Geneva, to whom all communications should be addressed.

The Freethought meetings held at Walthamstow under the auspices of the East London Branch have been very

successful," and have met with a good measure of local support. A number of names and addresses of local residents have been taken with the object of forming a Branch of the Society in that locality, and a meeting will be held in the course of a week or so to put the matter into a practical form. All those desiring to assist will please communicate with Mr. B. Frankel, 25 Osborne-street, Whitechapel, E.

Mr. Cohen's recent lectures in South Wales have seriously disturbed at least one resident in the Principality. A writer, who signs himself "Aberdarian," sends to the *Merthyr Express* a letter expressing his sorrow and indignation at the manner in which Mr. Cohen's lectures were received by the audiences. Instead of stoning the speaker, they applauded, which forces "Aberdarian" to conclude that they "were incapable of thinking for themselves, and were led away by the speaker's eloquence and wit." "It is a matter for serious thought," he says, "for the Christians of Aberdare and Merthyr that Atheism is greatly on the increase," and he thinks that "if one of our ministers, either in Aberdare or Merthyr, were to engage this man in debate they could easily floor him." Well, if the minister, "either of Aberdare or Merthyr," can be brought to the sticking point we have no doubt that Mr. Cohen would be quite willing to play his part in the performance.

The writer is also much perplexed over another experience of his—namely, "the alarming increase of the sale of Free-thought and Atheistic literature." Passing through Aberdare Market, he saw on a bookstall "literature of this class, alongside of the Bible and Gladstone's *Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture*." Evidently the bookseller has a more catholic mind than "Aberdarian." But, worse than all, while he stood he noticed several people buying, and they purchased "almost invariably books or pamphlets written by Free-thinkers." Probably these were the books they found most worth reading, and, in view of the pleasing nature of the complaint, we can pass over without comment the writer's expression of sorrow that such a state of things should exist in "Christian Wales."

Under the head of "Sunday Trading" an admirable letter appears in the *Yarmouth Mercury* from the pen of Mr. J. W. de Caux. Incidentally the writer refers at some length to the "dark" blasphemy laws which were vindictively revived in Mr. Foote's trial before Mr. Justice North, which resulted in a sentence of twelve months' imprisonment. Mr. de Caux appeals for the total abolition of such laws as these.

Sermons in—Leaders.

OF what eccentricity will the *Daily News* be guilty next? Since its memorable surrender, two years ago, to the high priests of Artificiality, it has gone from one absurdity to another, until one is inclined to ask if the paper is published with any serious design beyond the airing of the pet views of the faddist who may be in possession for the time being. Horse-racing, and all information pertaining thereto, is rigorously banned by its susceptible proprietors, which may or may not be to the taste of its readers. On this point we make no complaint, whatever we may think of the wisdom of the step. What we do complain of and resent is the turning of the "editorial" into a veritable Exeter Hall sermon, in which we are seriously asked to believe that "Sunday cycling," under certain conditions, "is prejudicial to the morals of the nation," or that "the groups of young wheelmen lounging outside and inside the more popular inns (on Sunday) tell a story that is deplorable." An admirable argument this, forsooth, for the Sunday closing of the "more popular inns," which we commend to teetotal witnesses before future Licensing Commissions. How "clubmen" must have blessed the *Daily News* for a journalistic frump when that unco' pious old lady solemnly declared they (clubmen) "but looked upon Sunday as a weekly holiday to be enjoyed in their favorite pastime." Now that distinguished comedians are given to editing the daily press, is it possible that the chairman of the Lord's Day Observance Society has been getting his hand in on the Bouverie-street organ?

—*The Umpire.*

We are a company of ignorant beings feeling our way through mists and darkness, learning only by incessantly-repeated blunders, obtaining a glimmering of truth by falling into every conceivable error, dimly discerning light enough for our daily needs, but hopelessly differing whenever we attempt to describe the ultimate origin or end of our paths; and yet, when one of us ventures to declare that we do not know the map of the universe as well as the map of our infinitesimal parish, he is hooted, reviled, and perhaps told that he will be damned to all eternity for his faithlessness.—*Leslie Stephen.*

Thomas Paine.

(Concluded.)

In the next place, Paine was not only by principle, but by passion, devoted to peace. He was laboring night and day to bring about reconciliation with England, before the battle of Lexington, with such earnestness that he was suspected of being a British spy. He labored to prevent a collision, but when it broke out he raised the flag of independence, because he believed peace could never exist without it. After war began he considered it his duty to go out with his musket, and he repeatedly went where shot and shell were falling; but, so far as I can ascertain, he never fired the musket; he found that by carrying messages to and from General Washington for the legislature of Pennsylvania, which so employed him, he could perform the kind of service that belonged to him. His ideas of revolution were entirely peaceful. The word "revolution" has now a connotation of bloodshed, but that was acquired in America. Revolution meant a fundamental change of government or succession. Paine, when he got to England, warned that country that they could choose between bloody and mournful revolution such as that in America, or a peaceful revolution like that in France—for up to that time there had been no serious bloodshed in France, and Paine apprehended none. His ideal was a revolution involving no violence. The change would be like one season passing into another without noise or fury. And after the wars were past Paine sat him down to write something that he had to consult Franklin about—namely, an international compact by which neutral commerce should be protected by all nations, in time of war. He devised an international flag: simply a rainbow with all its colors, that should float from the mast of every peaceful ship and secure it from interference. That was Paine's dream. When he looked on France he saw its opening revolution in beautiful hues, spanned by the rainbow of peace.

Early in 1792 the London Constitutional Society and the Manchester branch society sent a message of joy and congratulation to the leaders of the ideal French Revolution—that is, the great men who were murdered when the Revolution became a frenzy. The bearers of the message were John Watt, son of the inventor of the steam engine, and Dr. Thomas Cooper, who came to this country afterwards—a man of science and friend of Jefferson, who suffered by the wrath of John Adams. These two—Thomas Cooper, of Manchester, who ordered the portrait of Paine painted by Romney, and John Watt—bore to France a communication written by Thomas Paine. This fact was unknown until recently, and the message to France has never been published in this country. It was found by my friend, Dr. Clair Grece, in an old shop in London; every word is in Paine's handwriting, and on it is written: "Given to R. F. by Clio Rickman." I will now read the letter. You will see with what hope these men were looking forward to the uprising in France:—

BROTHERS AND FELLOW CITIZENS OF THE WORLD,—The cordial and affectionate reception with which you have honored our worthy countrymen, Mr. Thomas Cooper and Mr. John Watt, members of the Society of Manchester and united with our Society, has been communicated to us by the correspondence of those gentlemen, and received with that glow of happiness that spontaneously flows from the heart.

In offering you our congratulations on the glorious revolution your nation has accomplished we speak a language which only sincerity can dictate. The formality of courts, dull in everything but mischief and intrigue, affords no example to us. To do our thoughts justice, we give to the heart the liberty it delights in and hail you as brothers.

It is not among the least of revolutions which time is unfolding to an astonished world that two nations, nursed by some wretched craft in reciprocal hatred, should so suddenly break their common chain and rush into amity. The principle that can produce such effects is not the offspring of any earthly Court, and, whilst it exhibits to us the expensive iniquity of former politics, it enables us with felicity to say we have done with them.

In contemplating the political condition of nations we can scarcely conceive a more diabolical system of government than has been generally established over the world. To feed the avarice and gratify the wickedness of ambition the brotherhood of the human race has been destroyed as if the several nations of the earth had been created by rival gods. Man knew not man as the work of one creator,

The political institutions under which he has lived have been counter to whatever religion he professed. Instead of that universal benevolence which the morality of every known religion declares, he has been politically bred to consider his species as his natural enemy, and to define virtues and crimes by a geographical chart.

The declaration of principles we now make are not peculiar to the Society that addresses you. They are spreading themselves with accumulating force through every part of our country, and derive strength from an union of causes which no other principles can produce. The religious friend of man of every denomination records them as his own, they animate the lover of rational liberty, and they cherish the heart of the poor now groaning under an oppression of taxes, by a prospect of relief.

It would have given an additional triumph to our congratulations if the equal rights of man (which is the foundation of your Declaration of Rights) had been recognised by the Governments around you and tranquilly established in all. But if despotism be reserved to exhibit, by something tremendous in its fall, a warning to future ages, that power that disposes of events best knows the means. We have beheld your peaceable principles insulted by despotic ignorance. We have seen the right hand of fellowship you held out to the world rejected by those who riot upon its plunder. We now behold you as a nation provoked into defence, and we can see no mode of defence equal to that of establishing the general freedom of Europe.

In this best of causes we wish you success—our hearts go with you, and in saying this we speak with the voice of thousands.

That was the ascending dawn that gladdened the eyes of all great-hearted men who gathered around Paine, who inspired every great heart of that epoch. The greatest publicist of our early history, the first attorney-general of the United States, and our second secretary of State, the only fine scholar in the first Government, Edmund Randolph, said of Paine that the tremendous impression he made was largely due to a style of writing previously unknown in this country, the peculiarity of the style being that it entered equally into the minds of the learned and unlearned. It fascinated both equally. The greatest critic in London about sixty-five years ago, W. J. Fox, in an article on Cobbett and Paine, spoke of the former's style as clear, vigorous English; but of Paine he said it would take long thought and study before Englishmen could appreciate the rare quality of Paine's writing. I think the style is indescribable. There is no attempt in Paine to be rhetorical. Without any attempt at display, there flow out passages of exquisite beauty, as where he answered Burke's outburst about the imprisoned queen in France, which he described as mourning over the plumage without a sigh for the dying bird. Then he passes on without any consciousness of the poem contained in such a similitude.

But, ladies and gentlemen, I wish very much along with you to listen to these other speakers here, so I will hasten to a close.

How is it that this man, far away in the eighteenth century, is here to-night? It is because of his great heart. Criticisms pass away; the best philosophies perish. Our little systems have their day, and crumble in the further light of thought. But the throb of a mighty heart never perishes. If you will examine all of Paine's systems, you will find that he measures things unconsciously by the deep heart of him, and that his style is fine, his thought far-reaching, because out of the heart are issues of life. Deep calls unto deep.

In the matter of religion, I do not know anything in the history of the various religions more striking than the fact that, while Paine's Theism is not in form the Theism of any one of us, yet, whatever our view, we somehow feel that beneath his expression the heart and spirit of our conviction is beating. In his statement is a fire that steadily burned away his limitations and created new forms. For instance, he rejected the Bible, not primarily because of its miracles, but because of its cruelties and atrocities, and because it portrayed a heartless God.

This Biblical phantasm, instigating all manner of evil, was no deity at all. And so he goes through the *Age of Reason* and detaches from his ideas of God all those fables; then he deifies the human heart that inspires his protest against all such evil, and projects his negation into the universe as a positive conception. Then he is challenged by the Bishop of Llandaff; he is challenged in the court. They tell him that the atrocities

in the Bible are to be found equally in nature, that the God of nature uses the most atrocious means to bring about his ends. But this was not Paine's deity at all. Paine had his own god—a good god—and could not find any deity of his kind except the Parsi God. Those old Persians left the realm of natural evil to the powers of evil, and worshipped only personified goodness.

And now, ladies and gentlemen, I have given you at some length my impression of Paine. You will find here, if you choose to come and examine it, a remarkably vigorous portrait, painted in Paine's time. Of course, when it was obtained by me I got all of its history, but I cannot go into that now. I never accept anything pertaining to Paine without a good deal of inquiry to ascertain and verify the facts.

Pasted inside of this glass case, containing a very small portion of the material Paine, is a certificate by Benjamin Tilly. When shown at our exhibition about ten years ago in London, it was owned by a minister. In the course of my researches in the history of Paine I have pursued his skeleton through the houses of the great and in the homes of the humble; now in a tailor-shop and then in a mansion, and my adventures in that hunt I shall some day give to the world.

By the way, this bit of brain went through the hands of two clergymen, and they both subsequently and mysteriously became heretics.

—*Truthseeker* (New York).

M. D. CONWAY.

Animism.—V.

(Conclusion.)

IN the stories of Abraham and Iphegenia, and the similar tale in the Aitareya Brahmana of the substitute of a horse for a man, an ass for a horse, a sheep for an ox, a goat for a sheep, and rice for a goat, we see a transition from human to animal sacrifice. Plutarch says: "On the occasion of a plague at Falerii an oracle required that a virgin should be sacrificed to Juno. When Valeria Luperca had been chosen by lot for the sacrifice, and the sword was already drawn to slay her, an eagle came down from heaven and carried it away and laid it upon the head of a young heifer which was feeding near the temple, and which was sacrificed in her stead." According to Plutarch (Is. et Os., xxxi.), Egyptian animal victims were marked with a seal bearing the image of a man bound and with a sword at his throat. Conversely there is some evidence of fathers sacrificing their children, saying they are not children, but beeves. In Micah vi. 6 we read: "Shall I come before Him with beast offerings, with calves of a year old?" The Hebrew reads "sons of a year." (See "The Passover" in my *Bible Studies*.) In China paper figures are substituted and burnt at burials. The priests soon put forth a theory that in the sacrifice of animals the spirit only was to be given to the gods, the flesh being for themselves. The Ostyaks, when they kill an animal, rub some blood on the mouths of their idols. Blood, in some cases, has been replaced by red paint. Leading a horse in the funeral procession of a soldier is a survival of an earlier custom, which required the horse to be killed and buried with his master (which was done as late as 1781 at Trèves). This slaying of the horse was itself a survival from still earlier times, when it was believed that by this means the animal would be made available for his master in the next world.

Animism is not only responsible for sacrifices, but for all the superstitions connected with sorcery, witchcraft, and demonology—superstitions which have resulted in the slaughter of millions, and which has been a bane and blight on countless myriads of lives. In my pamphlet on *Satan, Witchcraft, and the Bible* I have shown how deeply engrained these superstitions are in the volume which is still regarded as a fetish book by so many. Christians yet believe that Jesus was tempted by a personal evil spirit, who carried him to a pinnacle of a temple, and to the top of an exceeding high mountain, from which could be seen all kingdoms of the world; and that Jesus cast out devils, sending some of them into the bodies of over two thousand pigs. This

power he is said to have delegated to his disciples. Forms for exorcism still exist in the Canons of the Church of England, as well as in the Church of Rome. The latter Church has a special form of ordination for exorcists, and exorcisms are used over all candidates for baptism, as well as over the holy water itself—a very ancient survival of savagery. Bourne says of the Church of England clergy of his day that the vulgar think them no conjurers, and say none can lay spirits but Popish priests. We still speak of a man being "possessed" and "not himself." The word "epilepsy" means *seizure*, and takes us back to the time when convulsions were supposed to be caused by a demon seizing the patient. Within the civilised world the old philosophy which accounts for disease by the intrusion of a malignant spirit still remains, and accounts for such open superstitions as the belief in drastic pills and purges. White men, especially children, even practise the old religious rite of exsufflating it, or blowing it away—a rite which remains in both the Greek and Roman Churches.

The doctrine of the Trinity may trace descent from Animism. The gods, as has been noted from Xenophanes to Feuerbach, have always been fashioned after man's image. There was a time, preserved among some Indian races, when man conceived himself as three-souled. There was the life of the son on earth, identified with the ancestral father above, and the returning ghost; and these three were one. Perhaps the idea displayed in the ideograph of the triangle survived in the Roman *manes*, *anima*, and *umbra*. Mr. Gerald Massey thinks the mother, child, and virile male was the first trinity in unity, and certainly this is earlier. But the subject of the evolution of the doctrine might fill a volume.

Animism passes into positive science through metaphysics. In this stage it is chiefly found now, and people talk of spiritual principles where formerly they spoke of the operation of spirits. It survives, however, in the imperfect theories of childhood and of the uneducated classes, and is preserved in the metaphors of the most cultured.

Hobbes declared that religion was superstition in fashion, superstition religion out of fashion. Researches into the genesis of religious beliefs confirm this, for therein may be discerned the elements of the most enlightened religion. A few years ago five hundred devotees visited and prayed round the tomb of Edward the Confessor in Westminster Abbey, and in their zeal even chipped away portions of the shrine as relics. Necromancy is still a religion. The medium at the present day occupies the position of the Red Indian medicine man or the Highland ghost seer, and the highest in the realm visit his drawing room to consult the spirits without the disguise that Saul used when resorting to the witch at Endor. Modern spiritism is a direct revival of ancient philosophy. Dr. E. B. Tylor says: "It is pure and simple savagery, both in its theory and the tricks by which it is supported." A savage witch-finder scarcely mixes up his subjectivity with the evidence of his senses in more hopeless confusion than the mystical-minded individuals who attribute to spirits the writing on slates at dark *séances*.

Savage and modern alike worship they know not what. God is only a bigger ghost, "a magnified, non-natural man," removed to the nebulosity of an Unknowable, with a big "U." When ghosts and goblins have utterly vanished, gods will follow suit. So far from universality of belief in spiritual existences being an argument in its favor, it is the reverse. The same argument could be used for the existence of witches. The genesis of the animistic theory is bad. The history of opinion shows it to have been conceived in ignorance and born of fear. It still holds its place for those provinces of phenomena which have not been satisfactorily explored, and is a sort of protecting genius of dark places from the desecrating light of accurate knowledge. Even when the cruder "spirit" is abandoned, it is frequently only refined and modified into some occult "principle" or "essence," theories of "physic force," "subliminal consciousness," "telepathy," etc. Metaphysics is decaying animism offering us "the meat roasting power" of the jack as an explanation of its rotation. The doctrine of evolution provides us with a sure key, and a study of the genesis of faiths enables

us to understand customs and beliefs, which, however once adapted to our mental development, now only impose upon us by virtue, not of inherent truth, but of inherited prepossessions. To civilised man, as Dr. Tylor says, "no indwelling deity now regulates the life of the burning sun, no guardian angels drive the stars across the arching firmament: the divine Ganges is water flowing down into the sea, to evaporate into cloud, and descend again in rain. No deity simmers in the boiling pot, no presiding spirits dwell in the volcanoes, no imprisoned demon shrieks from the mouth of the howling lunatic. There was a period of human thought when the whole universe seemed actuated by spiritual life. For our knowledge of our own history, it is deeply interesting that there should remain rude races yet living under the philosophy which we have so far passed from since physics, chemistry, biology, have seized whole provinces of ancient Animism, setting force for life, and law for will."

(THE LATE) J. M. WHEELER.

Book Chat.

THERE have been numerous and varied anthologies of prose and verse, but we do not remember coming across one on quite the same lines as the interesting and instructive volume compiled by Mr. Edward Carpenter, and just published by Messrs. Swan Sonnenschein, under the title *Iolaus: An Anthology of Friendship*. Although the book is, as its title implies, made up of selections from different authors, ancient and modern, the arrangement and editing make it in some sense a contribution to the science of anthropology, and just a little more editing might have made it quite so. But as it is we have a volume daintily got up, pleasing to the eye, informing to the mind, and one which a reader may either dip into to pass a spare moment or peruse with a more serious object in view.

* * *

When one looks at all the instances of passionate friendship gathered together by Mr. Carpenter, and supports these by other instances derived from one's experience or reading, it is evident that there is in this subject material for an essay of the length and detail beloved by the typical German professor. From the Greeks down to *In Memoriam*, it is surprising what a large part of the world's literature has been inspired by the love of man for man or woman for woman. True, there may often have been an erotic reason for this; but, when all allowance has been made for this factor, friendship (*i.e.*, the attachment of a person for a member of the same sex, as distinguished from the love of a person for a member of the opposite sex) manifests itself as a frequent and powerful force in literature and in life.

* * *

Although, as Mr. Carpenter's collection shows, friendship customs were tolerably common among savage races, where the method of cementing them opens up a number of interesting inquiries that bear directly on religious beliefs, it was among the Greeks that this form of attachment received its highest and purest form of idealisation. The stories of Orestes and Pylades, or of Damon and Pythias, may belong to legend rather than to literal history; but, at all events, they enshrine an ideal and convey a lesson. And this ideal is one of the prominent features in Greek literature. Says Thirlwall: "One of the noblest and most amiable sides of the Greek character is the readiness with which it lent itself to construct intimate and durable friendships; and this is a feature no less prominent in the earliest than in the latest times. It was, indeed, connected with the comparatively low estimation in which female society was held; but the devotedness and constancy with which these attachments were maintained was not the less admirable and engaging." The *Iliad* turns upon the love of Achilles for Patroclus; several of the Platonic dialogues are concerned with discussing the nature of friendship; and, indeed, nearly all the Greek and Latin writers deal with what was to them one of the most important relationships of life.

* * *

Many circumstances—inter-tribal warfare, the exigencies of military life, or of a common pursuit—may combine to cement friendship; but unquestionably it was the *human* view of life taken by both the Greeks and Romans that gave it its place in their life and thought. And, probably unconsciously, the author's pages bear strong witness to the dehumanising influence of Christian beliefs on society, in the paucity of the references in Christian literature to this subject. Life became completely overshadowed by supernaturalism, and an expression of devotion towards a man was but little better than an expression of love towards a woman, and that was only to be tolerated as a concession to the weakness of human nature. Both were there, of course, and both found expression; but, as Mr. Carpenter says, it ceased to be regarded as a thing of deep feeling and an important social institution.

Men's literary energies were dissipated in morbid expressions of devotion towards God and the saints; and, by a species of reaction, the expressions encouraged, or even created, the feelings they were intended to portray. In this respect the decline of friendship as an ideal was on all-fours with the decline of the interest felt in all other human aspects of life.

* * *

The Renaissance, which was frankly Pagan in origin and spirit, gave a fresh birth to the literature of friendship. Montaigne's deep and undying affection for his friend, Stephen de la Boétie, is well known. "In good earnest," said he, after his friend's death, "from the day that I lost him I have only led a sorrowful and languishing life; and the very pleasures that present themselves to me, instead of administering anything of consolation, double my affliction for his loss. We were halves throughout, and to that degree that, methinks, by outliving him, I defraud him of his part." And, if we put on one side the disputed question of Shakespeare's sonnets, which are technically, at least, addressed to a male friend, friendship plays a large part in the poems of Sidney, Barnfield, and other poets of the Elizabethan and post-Elizabethan period.

I have space only for one or two further specimens from Mr. Carpenter's collection. The first is from Richard Wagner, writing on Greek comradeship. "This love of man to man, in its primitive purity, proclaims itself as the least selfish utterance of man's sense of beauty, for it teaches man to sink and merge his entire self in the object of his affection.....This love, which had its basis in the noblest pleasures of both eye and soul, was the Spartan's only tutoress of youth, the never-aging instructress of boy and man, the ordainer of common feasts and valiant enterprises, the inspiring helpmeet on the battlefield." The second is from Emerson: "The only way to have a friend is to be one.....In the last analysis love is only the reflection of a man's own worthiness from other men."

* * *

One is strongly tempted to keep on quoting from Mr. Carpenter's volume, but consideration of space forbids. The author has produced a most readable and instructive book, and has drawn attention to a phase of human evolution that has hardly received the attention it deserves. One of the elements of strength in the Greek civilisation was its recognition of the human value of such relationships, and one of its elements of weakness was the practical exclusion from comradeship of members of the opposite sex. We may hope, therefore, with Mr. Carpenter, that it will "be the great triumph of modern love (when it becomes more of a true comradeship between man and woman than it yet is) to give both to society and to the individual the grandest inspirations, and, perhaps in conjunction with the other attachment, to lift the modern nations to a higher level of political and artistic advancement than ever the Greeks attained."

* * *

Messrs. Swan Sonnenschein have also published the first volume of "The Ethical Fellowship Series," a series dealing with political and other problems in a brief and popular manner. The volume is on *British India and England's Responsibilities*, by J. Clarke, M.A. Mr. Clarke presents in a very small compass an instructive epitome of England's relation with India in the past, and calls attention to many much-needed reforms in the present. Undoubtedly the average Englishman is slow to realise our responsibilities to our great dependency, and it is to be hoped that Mr. Clarke's volume may do something towards quickening interest in this direction. The price of the volume is one shilling. C.

Correspondence.

AN ETHICAL DISCLAIMER.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Mr. McCabe kindly warns modest innocence from associating Mr. Dooley's descriptions with the *actual* Ethical movement, or the *corporeal* McCabe; because the words attributed to the ghostly father were really a translation from that fine humorist, Professor Haeckel; and Mr. McCabe says he "politely but emphatically dissented from them." His dissent was expressed thusly:—

(*Ethics*, January 11, 1902.) "I have translated the passage literally, much as one is tempted to modify it at times. Yet it would be unjust and misleading to present it without adding that Professor Haeckel has really an æsthetic aim where he seems to be narrowly intellectual."

So that Mr. McCabe was only a dissenter so far as he thought Haeckel's cathedral too "intellectual." Mr. Dooley was dwelling on the peculiar hankering of Ethical Societies for the terms and forms of ecclesiasticism; and the puzzling inversions of the meanings of words which this hankering led to. Haeckel's Ethical cathedral was too good an illustration to be missed; and as Mr. McCabe introduced this wonderful building to the notice of English Ethicists, it was

surely quite justifiable to quote it from him, instead of from the German Professor. Mr. McCabe called it "Another Ethical Anticipation," and Mr. Dooley's readers would have participated more largely in this anticipation if the whole article could have been quoted, to show the sacramental surroundings of the new "monistic religion" (whatever that may be).

I have always considered Dr. Haeckel as one of the most original humorists of modern times; and his picture of a Kew-Palm-House cathedral, with an orrery for its altar, is the most droll conception we have had since Dr. Ingram's description of a Bishop of London who wished to sell his horses and carriages to ride in a County Council tramcar; to sell his palace and reside in an East-end slum; and to discharge his cooks to dine at Pearce and Plenty's.

Mr. Dooley's remarks upon Ethical Societies betray a deep and devout study of the *Ethical World-Democracy-Ethics*; and his bewilderment is, perhaps, excusable at finding (as Mr. McCabe puts it) that the chief feature of the Ethical movement is its "independence of ethics," although such a statement looks very like that Hibernian phenomenon, an Irish bull. If the Ethical movement were only independent of Matthew Arnoldism and ecclesiology, it would be much less funny. But this is a dull, sad world, and we can ill spare anything that tends to make us laugh.

Meanwhile, although Secularism is also independent of ethics, Mr. Cohen and Mr. Ball are giving valuable studies of ethical speculations in the *Freethinker*, and not wasting time by discussing whether a Society is a Church, or a penny-in-the-slot machine a music-hall. C. EGAN.

CONSCIENCE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In answer to Mr. Hopkins I may refer him to the account of the origin and development of the moral sense given by Darwin in his *Descent of Man*.

"Our knowledge of right and wrong" is the outcome of the moral and intellectual powers evolved in us by Natural Selection, etc. These powers may be said to embody the experience of the race. In the ordinary sense of the word, experience is not so much the authority as the guide. Emotional desires (for human welfare, etc.) supply the motive power and the main part of the authority. Experience and reason supply the guidance without which the authority is incomplete.

Conscience is not a primary or elementary faculty. It is made up of various feelings and thoughts. "The roots of moral power" are the various social instincts or emotions. Intellect adds a moral standard and self-criticism, leading to self-condemnation or self-approval.

Mr. Hopkins would do well to get rid of a certain amount of inconsistency and unreality in his ideas and descriptions. Without giving any actual example, which might be difficult, he supposes an action to be "fully sanctioned by exact knowledge," but at the same time plainly condemned by "internal or self knowledge." "Knowledge" can hardly be the correct term in both of these cases. Mr. Hopkins sees this to some extent, for, although he at first describes what he terms the "inner conscience" as "internal or self knowledge," he later on speaks of it more correctly as an "inner feeling" which may be "opposed to the dictates of knowledge." All that can correctly be meant is that the moral feeling or thought of an individual sometimes rebels against the course sanctioned by custom or experience.

That justice is "eternal" is mere rhetoric. Justice cannot exist without living beings, and as there was apparently a time when no life existed, so there will probably be a time when all life will cease. How, then, can justice be eternal? W. P. BALL.

The Pious Woman.

As a general rule, the development of the heart and fancy has hitherto been cultivated in woman to an altogether disproportionate extent; the development of her reasoning faculties, on the other hand, has been checked or grossly neglected. She consequently suffers literally from an hypertrophy of feeling, and is therefore generally accessible to every kind of superstition and fraud; she is a fruitful soil for all forms of religious and other charlatanisms, and a willing tool in the hands of every reactionary party.—*August Bebel*.

One method the Church took to benefit woman and show its respect for her was this: any married man was prohibited from being a priest. Women were so unholy, so unclean, and so inferior, that to have one as a wife degraded a man to such an extent that he was unfit to be a minister or to touch holy things. The Catholic Church still prohibits either party who is so unholy as to marry from profaning its pulpit; but the Protestant Churches divide up, giving women the disabilities and men the offices. The unselfishness of such a course is quite touching. It says to women: "You support us, and we will damn you; there is nothing mean about us."—*Helen H. Gardener*, in "Men, Women, and Gods."

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.

LONDON.

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

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, W. Heaford, "The Consolations of Religion."

NORTH CAMBERWELL HALL (61 New Church-road): 7, Conversazione.

EAST LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Stanley Temperance Bar, 7 High-street, Stepney): 7, A. B. Moss, "The Philosophy of John Stuart Mill."

LIMEHOUSE (outside Eastern Hotel): 11.30, E. Pack, "Atheism."

MILE END WASTE (junction of East India Dock and Commercial-road): 11.30, E. White.

WALTHAMSTOW (Mission Grove, High-street): April 12, at 6.30, A. B. Moss, "Christianity and the Bible."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. ("The Victory," Newnham-street, Edgware-road): April 17, at 8.30, Monthly Committee Meeting.

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Bromley Vestry Hall, Bow-road): 7, W. Sanders, "Hall Caine's *Eternal City*."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall): 7, Stanton Coit, "Literature and Life."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall, ante-room, first floor): 11.15, Miss Enid Stacey, B.A., "Character and Environment."

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey.

COUNTRY.

BRADFORD (Bradlaugh Club and Institute, 17 Little Horton-lane): C. Watts—3, "Ethics and Religion"; 7, "Forty Years of Christian Study." April 14, at 7, Tea and Entertainment.

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, W. B. Thompson, "The New Education Bill: Will it Benefit Popular Education?"

GLASGOW (110 Brunswick-street): H. Percy Ward—11.30, "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?"; 2.30, "Secularism: Its Principles and Objects"; 6.30, "If a Man Die Shall he Live Again?"

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): John M. Robertson—3, "The War and the Settlement"; 7, "The Clergy and Unbelief." Tea provided.

MANCHESTER (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road): C. Cohen—11, "Social Evolution and the Struggle for Existence"; 3, "Free-thought: its Meaning, History, and Prospects"; 6.30, "The Twilight of the Gods." Tea at 5.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Mr. Berrisford, "Bible Absurdities."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Capt. Duncan's Navigation Schools, Market-place): 7, "Our Schools, and What Should be Taught in Them."

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