

THE
Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXII.—No. 23.

SUNDAY, JUNE 8, 1902.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

Men fear death as children fear to go in the dark: and as that natural fear in children is increased with tales, so is the other.—BACON.

Catching Us Up.

ONCE or twice I tried to say a word in favor of peace in South Africa. I wrote as a humanitarian, not as a politician. But I found I had made a mistake. Few people will listen to you in such matters unless you take sides. Your words are of no avail unless you wear a party livery. So I crept back into my shell again, and smiled quietly at the ways of this mad-headed world.

One of my offences was suggesting that Lord Kitchener might prove to be a good friend of peace. To use the rather silly old catchwords for once, the "Jingoes" said that he was out there simply to smash up the enemy, and the "Pro-Boers" that he was only a butcher. For my part, I thought they were both wrong; and it is only human that I should rejoice at my opinion being confirmed by recent events.

"We would rather see the fate of South Africa," I wrote last November, "in the hands of Lord Kitchener than in those of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain. The old Romans, who possessed the genius of empire, would have had no hesitation on this point." In the following month I had occasion to praise Lord Kitchener for something more than soldiership. There was statesmanship, I said, in his obtaining £100,000 from the British public to celebrate the victory of Omdurman by establishing a Gordon College in the Soudan; and still higher statesmanship in his refusal to admit the missionaries, or even Christianity, into that institution. Incidentally, I referred to Lord Kitchener's treatment of Captain Marchand and his handful of French soldiers at Fashoda. While the London and Paris journals were fanning the war-fever with all their might, it was the "butcher" who was promoting peace by the most delicate chivalry.

I incurred some severe reproofs by these "indiscretions." One gentleman wrote to me in a towering rage. He forgot that I was doing my humble best for peace. He could only recollect that I had not painted Lord Kitchener in the darkest colors. And he declared that my poor well-meant effort was the most Jingo article he had ever read.

Well now, peace has come, and even the London *Star* prints a portrait of Lord Kitchener as "The Hero of the Hour." "It is one of life's greater ironies," the *Star* said, "that our 'man of blood and iron' should prove to be a conciliator and a pacificator." But why should it be so? Is there any contradiction between strength and sympathy or courage and generosity?

The *Star* was reckoned the evening "Pro-Boer" organ. The morning "Pro-Boer" organ was the *Daily News*. And what does it say? Here is an extract from Tuesday's leading article:—

"This year Lord Kitchener has been left unhampered to arrange the proceedings, to entertain the delegates, to fix with them not as an 'ultimatum,' but on terms of friendly agreement, the time-limit of the discussions—in a word, to exhibit again all those capacities for dealing with fellow-soldiers which he showed when he met Captain Marchand in the marshes at Fashoda. It is the victory of a single man who, though a soldier by trade, has outshone the politicians in their own sphere.

Lord Kitchener stands out in this South African business as the 'still strong man,' far above all the garrulous gentlemen who have from time to time played the parts of British Generals or British statesmen."

There you are. The *Daily News* says, virtually, that this is Lord Kitchener's peace. And in saying so it not only praises his character and statesmanship, but lays particular stress on the fine qualities he displayed in dealing with Captain Marchand at Fashoda.

I was a Jingo for saying something like this eight months ago. I suppose I may pass as a respectable person now it is said by the *Star* and the *Daily News*. But it is not I that have shifted. These papers have caught me up. That is all.

My own respect for Lord Kitchener began when I first saw his portrait. He has not the beefy bulldog look that makes General Buller the idol of the mob. But his mouth shows a higher kind of tenacity. And what a pair of eyes he has! Men say those eyes look through them. They certainly seem incapable of quailing. And yet I think I was most of all struck by their honesty. They look as honest as daylight. And it is this honesty of mind, even more than intellectual penetration, that enables a man to grasp a situation and see the essential facts of a case. Lord Kitchener would hardly have made the blunder of saying the war was over after the fall of Pretoria. Lord Roberts is no doubt a very able man, but there is a dash of the histrion in his composition, which is absent from that of Lord Kitchener. And the difference is all to be read in their portraits. Still, it was not Lord Kitchener's portrait that was the sole ground of my judgment. I was profoundly moved by his splendid bearing over the Fashoda incident. I saw real greatness of nature in his idea of a College for the young natives of the Soudan. How few soldiers ever think of celebrating a victory in that way! I saw fine statesmanship in his withstanding all the Christian pressure put upon him, and insisting that no proselytising should go on in that College. And I was not astonished when I heard that his own leanings were not at all to the side of orthodoxy. I do not speak with any authority on this point; I merely state what I heard, and let it pass for what it is worth.

This peace is in a large sense Lord Kitchener's peace. He would have made peace more than a year ago if he had not been interfered with by Mr. Chamberlain. This is admitted by the *Daily News*. The terms of the present settlement are substantially those that Lord Kitchener offered to General Botha. He was checked and called "preposterous." But it is Mr. Chamberlain who has to eat his words, not the laconic soldier who went on with his work and never played to the gallery. Indeed, in some respects, the present settlement is more favorable to the Boers than were the former proposals.

But it is not my object to discuss the peace in a paragraph of a brief article. I rather wanted to remind some of my friends that I knew what I was talking about, and was far from playing the fool, when I hoped that the great soldier, rather than the great politician, would play the predominant part in the South African settlement. I also wanted to point out that party passion is very blinding, even to the best of men; that one who stands apart often gets a clearer view of the game; and that a Freethinker may be a devoted friend of peace without shouting senseless shibboleths or championing impossible solutions.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Agapemone, or Abode of Love.

THERE is often a great deal of lasciviousness about religious profession, or a great deal of religious profession about lasciviousness, whichever way you choose to regard it. That they are often associated practically, whatever be said about the connection theoretically, is beyond dispute. History and present-day facts prove it. The Agapemone, or Abode of Love, in Somersetshire, of which I wrote in the *Freethinker* some time ago, is a case in point.

I revive it because something new has happened in connection with it. Or, rather, not so much with the "Abode of Love," which, I believe, has been abandoned—though its history, and the principles on which it was established, remain cherished in the hearts of a number of the faithful—but with the London offshoot, which has since become the centre, and now seems in a fair way to be closed.

It may be remembered by many that, about thirty years ago, a great sensation was caused by the eccentric conduct of a clergyman named Prince. He was a man of education, of refinement, and of luxurious tastes. He had no intellectual force—never wrote anything worth reading, never preached anything worth listening to. Still, he had some minor accomplishments, some magnetic power and personal attractiveness, which recommended him to the hearts of religious cranks, and especially of those who were of the feminine sex. The latter, in particular, clung about him and hung upon him, looked into his eyes for the ineffable wisdom which they thought shone from them—for, indeed, there was a soft and tender light in them. And his lady adherents listened to his pious prattle with more than the usual rapture, for he had a mellifluous voice which sounded as music to their ears, and breathed love into their "souls."

Alas! Brother Prince is dead; many of his wealthy female admirers and supporters have ceased to exist; his name is but a memory; his Somerset Agapemone, or Abode of Love, has got the shutters up, if it is not absolutely abandoned; and his Agapemone Church near Clapton Common, styled the Church of the Ark of the Covenant, is announced this week as being closed to the public.

It is rather a handsome edifice, having been erected at a cost of some £15,000. But Prince cared only for wealthy supporters, and all their wealth could bring. The fact that the public are now shut out of his church would never disturb him, even if he were existent. He never cared for the common and ordinary public. None of them could gain admission to his Somerset Abode of Love. It is said that he had great mastiffs to guard its portals; it is known that he surrounded it with high walls, and that he had selected its location with a view to seclusion.

The Abode was far removed from the busy haunts of men. Buried in a lonely hollow in the Quantock Hills, it was lost to the world, and was the ideal home for a pious recluse who desired to surround himself with a number of female devotees and one or two male followers who were harmlessly imbecile. Immense sums were expended in fitting it up and furnishing it after a style of Oriental magnificence, though the windows were of stained glass with Scriptural subjects, and, structurally, the principal hall had the appearance of a church. But the church had lounges and ottomans, and one could loll and luxuriate in it without feeling the cold from a stone floor, because the stone floor was covered with beautiful Turkish carpets, and there were ornamental stoves about and warm-glowing pictures by recognised artists, and many valuable curios and bijoux spread about which served to fill the place and keep out the draughts.

How cold and lonely by comparison must be the Clapton Common Agapemone in these latter days! Since the beginning of this year it has been closed for no reason that can be ascertained by any of the public. The pastor, Mr. Piggott, also formerly a curate in the Church of England, is absent from London, and, though the building is said to be open for private services enjoyed by the members, outsiders are no longer admitted.

Well, outsiders were never wanted—that is to say,

in the "Abode of Love." They were tolerated in the Clapton Church, where the Agapemonites under Mr. Piggott, no doubt, had nothing to conceal. But it was not thus in the early days of this curious sect. There were so-called religious rites and ceremonies carried on in this Somerset seclusion which were not intended for the knowledge of the vulgar and the un-elect.

Hepworth Dixon described them in his *Spiritual Wives*. Somehow he got to know the facts when he made a visit there and managed to evade those terrible guardian mastiffs. His statements were not disputed by the Princeites, but they created a great public sensation at the time. There is no need to reproduce them after what was said in these columns concerning them about two years ago when Brother Prince died. Poor Hepworth Dixon fell in for no end of obloquy. He was accused of obscenity, of pandering to a vile, morbid, immoral taste; his book was said to reek with filthiness (he described other and similar religious sects in it); the pulpit and the pious press denounced it; the prevailing opinion was that Hepworth Dixon had spoiled his reputation by writing it; possibly he thought himself that he had made a mistake, however cautious he had endeavored to be. All the time, the British and Foreign Bible Society was turning out thousands, even millions, of Bibles in which (in the Old Testament chiefly) may be found bald, undisguised descriptions of similar things. And the religious press and the pulpit censors and all the sanctimonious, goody-goody folk up and down the country were urging the dissemination of the Scriptures (as they do now) and pushing them into the hands of the young and impressionable.

Besides, the very act in which Brother Prince and a devout lady deliberately and of forethought engaged, in the presence of a converted clergyman and a number of sisters, was based upon, if it were not suggested by, the story of the Immaculate Conception. Neither of the actors in this drawing-room performance, nor the invited and acquiescent spectators of both sexes, can be accused of mere ordinary immorality. They were, as they thought, performing or attending a religious function with a religious object, in open daylight and after prayerful consideration, and under a direct impulse from on High. Brother Prince disavowed any other motive than that which Divine influence had implanted in him. The happy Sister, as she described herself, thought only that she was the Bride of Christ. The spectators, in approving, were actuated only by deep religious motives.

All this shows how thin is the line between strong religious emotion and ecstasy and the sexual passions which arise in mankind, rebelling against the restraints of reason, though often fostered by the facilities afforded by faith. The wealthy women who surrounded Prince firmly believed that he was the incarnation of the Holy Spirit. Probably he thought so himself. The views of the Agapemonites are extremely millennial, and are even more fantastic than those of the American Millerites and English Jezreelites. The Agapemonites consider that they belong to the 144,000 who will be safe during the approaching day of wrath. This is a pleasing prospect for the followers of Brother Prince, if they can divest themselves of any regard for the rest of the inhabitants of the world. The last thing that enters their heads is the casual idea that possibly they are mistaken. When they get to heaven they hope to find another Agapemone, or Abode of Love.

FRANCIS NEALE.

A Famous Witch Trial.

"A TRYAL OF WITCHES."

"At the Assizes and general gaol delivery, held at Bury St. Edmunds for the County of Suffolk, the Tenth day of March, in the Sixteenth Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord King, Charles II., before Mathew Hale, Knight, Lord Chief Baron of His Majesties Court of Exchequer; Rose Cullender and Amy Duny, Widows, both of Leystoff in the County aforesaid, were severally indicted for bewitching Elizabeth and Anne Durent, Jane Bocking, Susan Chandler, William Durent, Elizabeth and Deborah Tacey; and the said Cullender and Duny, being arraigned upon the same indictments, pleaded Not Guilty; and afterwards, upon a long evidence, were found Guilty, and thereupon had judgment to dye for the same."

SUCH is the heading to a little tract of some sixty pages, picked up during one of my book hunts, printed "For

William Shrewsbury at the Bible in Duch Lane," dated 1682, and forming as veritable a human document as one could wish to possess. This is also one of the most famous witch trials of the seventeenth century. It took place, in the quaint words of the preface, "before a judge, whom for his integrity, learning, and law hardly any age, either before or since, could parallel; who not only took a great deal of paines, and spent much time in this tryal himself, but had the assistance and opinions of several other very eminent and learned persons."

Both the women accused of witchcraft were, as was usual at a time when "many prayed that they might die young," old. The charges against them were as follows: The mother of the infant William Durent, sworn and examined in open court, deposed that about the tenth of March, having special occasion to go from home, left her child in the care of Amy Duny, giving her special occasion not to give the child the breast. Nevertheless, Amy Durent did acquaint the mother on her return that she had given the child the breast, and on being reprimanded, "used many high expressions and threatening speeches towards her; telling her that she had as good to have done otherwise than to have found fault with her.....And that very night her son fell into strange fits of swoounding.....and so continued for divers weeks."

Much troubled, the mother consulted a certain Dr. Jacob, of Yarmouth, who advised her to hang up the child's blanket in the chimney-corner all day, and at night, when she put the child to bed, to put the child into the blanket, and if she found anything in the blanket to throw it into the fire. These instructions were followed; and at night a great toad was found in the blanket, which, being thrown into the fire, "made a great and horrible noise, and after a space there was a flashing in the fire like gunpowder.....and thereupon the toad was no more seen nor heard."

More wonderful still, "The next day there came a young woman.....and told this deponent that her aunt (meaning the said Amy) was in a most lamentable condition, having her face all scorched with fire," and on the mother going and asking Amy how this came about, Amy replied, "she might thank her for it, for that she was the cause thereof, but that she should live to see some of her children dead, or she upon crutches." It was further alleged, "That not long after.....this deponent was taken with lameness in both her leggs, from the knees downwards, and that she was fain to go upon crutches.....and so continued till the time of the Assizes, that the Witch came to be tried."

At this stage the reporter interrupts his account of the trial to record the remarkable occurrence that, although this witness had gone upon crutches for three years, "upon the juries bringing in their verdict, by which the said Amy Duny was found guilty, to the great admiration of all persons, the said Dorothy Durent was restored to the use of her limbs, and went home without use of her crutches."

Concerning the bewitching of Elizabeth and Deborah Tacey, aged eleven and nine years respectively, their father, Samuel Tacey, declared that his daughter Deborah was suddenly taken with lameness in her "legges." One day, while the girl was resting outside the house, "Amy Duny came to this deponent's house to buy some herrings; but, being denied, she went away discontented.....and grumbling, but what she said was not perfectly understood. But, at the very same instant of time, the said child was taken with most violent fits, feeling extreme pain in her stomach, like the pricking of pins, and shrieking out in a dreadful manner, like unto a whelp." As the result of this and other ailments affecting the child, the father accused Amy Duny of being a witch, and she was placed in the stocks. While the poor old woman was there, two other people asked her what was the cause of the child's distemper. She replied: "Mr. Tacey keeps a great stir about his child, but let him stay until he hath done as much by his children as I have done by mine." And, being further examined what she had done to her children, she answered that she had been fain to open her child's mouth with a tap to give it victuals."

The woman's prognostication of the course of the disease was further proof of guilt, for "within two days.....the eldest daughter Elizabeth fell into extreme

fits, insomuch that they could not open her mouth to give her breath, to preserve her life without the aid of a tap, which they were enforced to use; and the younger child was in the like manner afflicted, so that they used the same also for her release." Not only were the children afflicted with fits, but, upon recovery, "would cough extremely, and bring up much phlegm and crooked pins, and one time a twopenny nail, with a very broad head; which pins (amounting to forty or more), together with the twopenny nail, were produced in court, with the affirmation of the said deponent that he was present when the said nail was vomited up, and also most of the pins.....In this manner the said children continued for the space of two months, during which time, in their intervals, this deponent would cause them to read some chapters from the New Testament. Whereupon he observed that they would read till they came to the name of Lord or Jesus or Christ, and then, before they could pronounce either of the said words, they would suddenly fall into their fits. But, when they came to the name of Satan or Devil, they would clap their fingers upon the book, crying out, 'This bites, but makes me speak right well!'"

The children were taken from their father's house to that of their aunt, but the same things occurred. Pins were vomited in a manner that quite puts Madame Blavatsky's manufacturing of gold rings out of the air into the shade. In addition, "the children (only) would see things run up and down the house in the form of mice, and one of them suddenly snapt one with the tongs and threw it into the fire, and it screeched out like a rat.....And at other times the elder child declared unto this deponent that, during the time of her 'fits,' she saw flies come unto her, and bring with them in their mouthes crooked pins; and, after the child had thus declared the same, she fell again into violent fits, and afterwards raised several pins."

There is a wonderful sameness in all these alleged cases of witchcraft, as will be seen from the next case—that of Jane Bocking. Jane was too ill to appear in court herself, but her mother said that, on the first of February, "she was taken with great pains in her stomach, like pricking with pins, and afterwards fell into swooning fits.....daily vomiting crooked pins..... And, while her fits were upon her, she would spread forth her arms, with her hands open, and use postures as if she catched at something, and would instantly close them again, which, being immediately forced open, they found several pins diversely crooked..... In her fits she would frequently complain of Rose Cullender and Amy Duny.....At last she was stricken dumb, and could not speak one word for some days..... At last her speech came to her again, and she desired her mother to get her some meat; and, being demanded the reason why she could not speak in so long a time, she answered that Amy Duny would not suffer her to speak. The nails and divers of the pins were produced in court."

Details of a too indelicate nature for reproduction here were given of the searching on the bodies of the two women for devils' marks; and, with further repetitions of the same class of evidence as that described above, the evidence against the two old women came to an end.

There were present in the court a number of eminent men, amongst whom was the celebrated Sir Thomas Browne, author of *Religio Medici*. The latter being "desired to give his opinion, what he did conceive of them; was clearly of opinion that the persons were bewitched, and said that in Denmark there had been lately a great discovery of witches, who used the very same way of afflicting persons, by conveying pins into them, and crooked as these pins were, with needles and nails. And his opinion was that the devil in such cases did work upon the bodies of men and women, upon a natural foundation to stir up and excite such humors super-abounding in their bodies to a great excess, whereby he did in an extraordinary manner afflict them with such distempers as their bodies were most subject to, as particularly appeared in these children." An explanation with an air of rationalism about it.

Other people in the court seemed to be very sceptical concerning the whole affair, and these suggested that the children's throwing themselves into various

contortions, when either of the supposed witches touched them, might be pure counterfeit. "Wherefore to avoid this scruple it was privately desired by the judge, that the Lord Cornwallis, Sir Edmund Bacon, and Mr. Serjeant Keeling" to take one of the afflicted persons to a remote part of the hall, send for one of the accused persons, and then see what would happen. This was done. The girl was blindfolded, and, one of the gentlemen touching her hand, the same effect was produced as had been produced by the touch of Amy Duny in the court. "Whereupon the gentlemen returned, openly protesting that they did believe the whole transaction of this business was a mere imposture." This objection was overcome, apparently, by the father suggesting that the suspicion that the witch *had* touched would produce the same effect as real contact, and this curious substitution of a restatement of the occurrence seemed to act as a sufficient explanation to judge and jury.

"This," says the reporter, "was the substance of the whole evidence given against the prisoners at the bar, who, being demanded what they had to say for themselves, they replied nothing material to anything that was proved against them." On this, the judge, Sir Mathew Hale, one of the greatest lawyers in England, "in giving his direction to the jury, told them that he would not repeat the evidence unto them, least by so doing he should wrong the evidence on the one side or on the other. Only this acquainted them, First, whether or no these children were bewitched? Secondly, whether the prisoners at the bar were guilty of it? That there were such creatures as witches he made no doubt at all. For, first, the Scriptures had affirmed so much. Secondly, the wisdom of all nations had provided laws against such persons, which is an argument of their confidence of such a crime. And such had been the judgment of this kingdom, as appears by that Act of Parliament which had provided punishments proportionable to the quality of the offence. And desired them strictly to observe their evidence, and desired the great God of Heaven to direct their hearts in this weighty thing they had in hand; for to condemn the innocent and let the guilty go free were both an abomination to the Lord."

"With this short direction the jury departed from the Bar, and within the space of half an hour returned, and brought them in both guilty upon the several indictments, which were thirteen in number, whereupon they stood indicted. This was upon Thursday afternoon, March 13, 1662."

The next day the two women were again brought into court. "The Judge and all the court were fully satisfied with the verdict, and thereupon gave judgement against the witches that they were to be hanged. They were much urged to confess, but would not.....And they were executed on Monday, the seventeenth day March following, but they confessed nothing."

So ended this famous trial—a trial which brought a testimony in favor of the reality of witchcraft from a famous man of letters and a famous judge, and also a trial which serves as a good commentary upon the stupid plea that Christianity has exerted a benign influence upon human history.

I must confess that this little tract, nearly two centuries and a-half old, with its obsolete orthography and quaint lettering, brought the reality, the human interest, of these trials before me in a manner that a modern book altogether fails to do. It was almost as though one had walked backwards to the seventeenth century, and were conversing with an eye-witness of the trial. It put one back, too, in the days when Christianity was really alive, with its dogmas still powerful, its teaching still unmodified by scientific influence, and with still strength enough to murder those who questioned its pretensions. Those who talk of how much Christianity has done to civilise the world would do well to bear in mind the picture of those two poor old women swinging on the gallows on March 17, 1662, their deaths due to the influence of a stupid Christian superstition.

We live in happier times. Christians have grown ashamed of one portion of their religion, and fail to practise the other. But while they could they clung to it, fought for it, and tortured and murdered brave men and women who questioned its truth or its utility. That the Christianity of to-day wears a more civilised and a more humane aspect is not due to any intrinsic merit it

possesses, but to the gradual secularising of life, which is steadily bringing all beliefs to the test of science and common sense, rather than to that of superstitious customs and traditions. The belief in witchcraft was, in short, only a part, although an important part, of the whole structure of Christianity, and the fate that has overtaken that is but a prophetic indication of the fate that will one day overtake the whole.

C. COHEN.

Christianity and Mohammedanism.—II.

(Conclusion.)

As a rule, Christian writers seldom refer to Mohammedanism except to depreciate or misrepresent it. This is unfair, for in all the great religions of the world there are features that are commendable. Personally, I have no faith in Christianity as an adequate rule of life. Still, I readily admit that it contains some admonitions which its professed followers would do well to heed. It is not my present purpose to exalt Mohammed as a perfect model for human conduct, but simply to point out that, as a reformer, he was not in any way inferior to Jesus. Moreover, I deem it only fair to the Arabian prophet to show that he does not deserve the reckless imputations which Christians generally urge against him. It is an old proverb that "people who live in glass houses should not throw stones." Now, whatever defects may pertain to Mohammedanism, the same can be ascribed to Christianity.

Charles Wesley, filled with orthodox fanaticism, or something equally bad, wrote a hymn in which, referring to Mohammed, he thus invoked his Deity:—

The smoke of the infernal cave
Which half the Christian world o'erspread,
Disperse, thou heavenly light, and save
The souls by that impostor led—
That Arab thief, as Satan bold,
Who quite destroyed thy Asian fold.
Oh may thy blood once sprinkled cry
For those who spurn thy sprinkled blood;
Assert thy glorious Deity,
Stretch out thine arm, thou triune God!
The Unitarian fiend expel,
And chase his doctrine back to hell.

Passing from this illustration of the theological bigotry, the recent reference to Mohammed, by Dr. A. W. Fairbairn, M.A., the Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford, deserves notice. In a sermon preached in London on the 30th of April last the Doctor said:—

"I argue that no religion is created by a single person, or has a single founder. There are three religions in the world—and only three—that can be really traced back into a single historical person. These are—the religion of Buddha, the religion of Mahomet, and the religion of Christ. Now, the religion of Buddha grows out of Hindooism; it is simply a gathering together of theories in the Hindoo schools.....Mahomet would never have been the power he is to-day apart from his Arab men! But, mark you, that religion of his never could become universal.....Christ alone stands as the great Interpreter, the whole sum-total of religion being in Himself."

Now, if the Doctor's object were to exalt the character of Christ above that of Buddha and Mohammed, he has egregiously failed. If, as the Doctor asserts, "no religion is created by a single person, or has a single founder," then Jesus is not the founder of Christianity. Again, if the religion of Buddha grew out of Hindooism, so did the religion of Christ grow out of Judaism and the Pagan faiths. As to the Doctor's statement, "that religion of his [Mohammed's] never could become universal," the same can be said of Christianity. Where, then, is the force of the Doctor's remark that "Christ alone stands as the great Interpreter, the whole sum-total of religion being in Himself"? It may be true that the sum-total of his religion was in himself, for but little of it is seen in the world to-day. The orthodox Church is composed (with few exceptions) of hypocritical professors. The Doctor argues that Christianity is the only possible universal religion, but he gives no evidence that his contention is based upon facts. The Christian author of *The Conquests of the Cross* admits that, while there are in the world 415,000,000 of professed Christians, there are 1,047,000,000 non-

Christians. Besides, the fact should not be overlooked that, as the human mind is at present constituted, no one religion could possibly become universal. Our physical diversity, our difference in mental training, and the varied climatic influences to which man is exposed, preclude the possibility of universal belief in any theological faith.

Returning to the relative influence of Christianity and Mohammedanism, the alleged toleration of the Christian Church to-day makes but a sorry figure when compared with that of the Saracens. We read that every division of the Mohammedan world possessed its educational establishments, the major portion of which were richly endowed by their patrons. Gibbon informs us:—

“The vizier of a sultan consecrated a sum of two hundred thousand pieces of gold to the foundation of a college at Bagdad, which he endowed with an annual revenue of fifteen thousand dinars. The fruits of instruction were communicated.....to six thousand disciples of every degree, from the son of the noble to that of the mechanic; a sufficient allowance was provided for the indigent scholars, and the merit or industry of the professors was repaid by adequate stipends.”

The boasted university establishments of Christianity have not yet succeeded in generally opening their doors to the son of the mechanic. The Mohammedans allowed no “religious difficulty” to interfere in matters of education. They never attempted to train the youth of one sect differently from that of another. They never permitted their priests to superintend and revise the class-books of their students, as do the Roman Catholics of to-day. On the contrary, they allowed the principals of their institutes to hold any or no religion. It is to be deplored that bigotry has so long rendered the Christian portion of the world oblivious of the great debt due to the Arabian intellect. Ages have rolled on, the Saracen has been supplanted by the barbarous Turk, Christianity has partially recovered from the great blow administered by the soldiers of the successors of Mohammed, but the modern world has only just begun to imitate the example of liberty of speech and thought which was set centuries ago by the Arabians. Mohammedanism has favored toleration for all religious beliefs, liberty of thought, freedom of speech, and the improvement of the people. Christianity, on the other hand, as understood in the Dark Ages, was synonymous with the antitheses of these. It meant the establishment of the cruel and inhuman power of the Papacy, the encouragement of the horrible iniquities of the feudal tyrants, and the suppression and servitude of the unhappy peasantry. Its one great object was to establish an absolute despotism in Rome.

No writer of any authority will question the unique progress of the Mohammedan faith. Mr. R. Bosworth Smith, in his admirable work, *Mohammed and Mohammedanism*, writes thus:—

“Glance for one moment at its marvellous history. Think how one great truth, working in the brain of a shepherd of Mecca, gradually produced conviction in a select band of personal adherents; how, when the prophet was exiled to Medina, the faith gathered there fresh strength, brought him back in triumph to his native place, and secured to him for his lifetime the submission of all Arabia;.....how it crumbled up the Roman Empire on one side and the Persian on the other, driving Christianity before it on the west and north, and Fire-Worship on the east and south; how it spread over two continents, and how it settled in a third; and how, the tide of invasion carrying it headlong onward through Spain into France, it at one time almost overwhelmed the whole;.....how, throughout these vast conquests, after a short time, to intolerance succeeded toleration, to ignorance knowledge, to barbarism civilisation; how the indivisible empire, the representative on earth of the Theocracy in heaven, became many empires;.....how horde after horde of barbarians of the great Turkish or Tartar stock were precipitated on the dominions of the faithful, only to be conquered by the faith of those whose arms they overthrew;.....how, when the news came that the very birth-place of the Christian faith had fallen into their hands, ‘a nerve was touched,’ as Gibbon says, ‘of exquisite feeling, and the sensation vibrated to the heart of Europe’; how Christendom itself thus became for two hundred years half Mohammedanised, and tried to meet fanaticism by counter-fanaticism—the sword, the Bible, and the Cross against the scimitar, the Koran, and the Crescent;

how, lastly, when the tide of aggression had been checked, it once more burst its barriers, and, seating itself on the throne of the Cæsars of the East, threatened more than once the very centre of Christendom.”

When to this brilliant *résumé* of its progress we add that wherever Islam was extended it brought to all its newly-acquired subjects peace, security to life and property, and emancipation from sacerdotal and political usurpations; when we remember that it revived ancient philosophy, encouraged and extended commerce and industry; that it impressed upon the European mind the necessity of knowledge and the certainty that ignorance was not synonymous with happiness; that it first taught our fathers that prayers and sacrifices were not the best remedies for physical affections; that it gave us—despite the opposition of Christian universities, colleges, Inquisitions, and monks—astronomy, chemistry, and literature—we cannot avoid concluding that the religion of the “camel-driver of Mecca” has been a more potent factor in effecting the reformation of the world than has the religion of Jesus of Nazareth.

The moral influence of the faith of Mohammed in the East was also far greater than that of Christ. Mr. Talboys Wheeler, in the preface to his *History of India*, says: “To all appearance, the people of India are drifting slowly but surely into the religion of the prophet of Arabia, rather than towards that Christianity which is freely offered to them, but which they will not accept.” How different from this were the results of Mohammedan propagandism. Its faith was eagerly accepted upon every hand, and its acceptance was followed by the decline of polytheism, sorcery, and human sacrifice, with all their attendant evils, prostitution and drunkenness. Sir William Muir, in his work, *The Corân*, writes:—

“In a purely Mohammedan country, however low may be the general level of moral feeling, the still lower depths of fallen humanity are comparatively unknown. The ‘social evil’ and intemperance prevalent in Christian lands are the strongest weapons in the armory of *Islâm*.”

It is sometimes urged that the Mohammedan faith was spread principally by the sword, while the religion of Christ advanced purely by moral means. History, however, is against the truth of this contention. No doubt the sword has played an important part in the propagation of both religions; but the followers of Mohammed are no more guilty in this respect than were the adherents of Christ. In a work by Mr. T. W. Arnold, entitled *The Preaching of Islam: A History of the Propagation of the Muslim Faith*, some very interesting facts are given which disprove much of the extravagance indulged in against the Arabian prophet by Christians. Mr. R. Bosworth Smith also writes that the Mohammedan faith “was propagated by missionaries who cared very much for the souls they could win, and nothing for the plunder they could carry off.....It is spread not by the sword, but by earnest and simple-minded Arab missionaries.” He adds that “Mohammedanism was introduced into Sierra Leone, not many years ago, by three zealous missionaries who came from a great distance.The Mussulman missionaries exhibit a forbearance, a sympathy, and a respect for native customs and prejudices, and even for the more harmless beliefs, which is no doubt one reason of their success, and which our own missionaries and schoolmasters would do well to imitate.”

It can be said of Mohammedanism (but the same cannot with truth be urged on behalf of Christianity) that civilisation is largely indebted to it for its promotion of the arts and sciences, for its careful cultivation and diffusion of literature, and for its example in ameliorating the condition of the laboring population. It owes to Saracens the cultivation of medicine and the revival of astronomical studies; above all, it stands indebted for the invention of the experimental method by which the knowledge of the human race has been so much extended. Bigotry alone has hitherto prevented the world from acknowledging this debt, and even now Christians are more than reluctant to confess that Mohammedanism has been of service to the world. Freethinkers, however, have many reasons to hold in grateful remembrance a race of men who first prepared the way for the advance of European Freethought.

CHARLES WATTS,

Acid Drops.

THE most impudent people on earth are priests. By "priests" we mean the men of God of all denominations—from the Pope of Rome down to the lowest soul-saver who has the effrontery to pose as the representative of Omniscience. The insolence of these know-all persons is enough to make a plain honest man sick. They are the parasites of human society, yet they affect to run the whole show by virtue of their special intercourse with the Almighty. Last Sunday evening, for instance, the Bishop of Stepney mounted the pulpit and said, "I desire to announce to the congregation that God has been pleased to answer our prayer, and to give us the blessings of peace." God has been pleased to answer *our* prayer! What colossal conceit! Or what miserable humbug! The Bishop of Stepney and the congregation at St. Paul's have had as much to do with the peace negotiations as the proverbial fly had to do with the progress of the wheel it stood on. "What a speed we are making!" said the fly. "What a peace we have brought about!" says the Bishop of Stepney.

We want to ask the Bishop of Stepney a question. If God has given us the blessings of peace, who gave us the curse of war? And here is another question. Why did God wait until both sides were nearly exhausted? Why didn't he send along the "blessings of peace" a couple of years ago? Did he have to wait until the Bishop of Stepney gave him the tip?

Mr. Pierpont Morgan, the American gentleman who is buying up the globe, has paid the cost, amounting to £10,000, of installing the electric light in St. Paul's Cathedral. It does not say much for the devotion of London Churchmen that they should leave such a job to the generosity of a Yankee millionaire. However, light is light, wherever it comes from; though there will never be light enough in St. Paul's, we fear, to show up the crudities of the religion taught within its walls.

The Bishop of London (poor man!) has been explaining how pinched he is on £10,000 a year. His money flows away like water in all sorts of ways. Why, it costs £700 a year to keep up his palace gardens. And the expense cannot very well be cut down, for he has to give garden-parties to the clergy of his diocese, and they don't want to see a ragged display of cheap horticulture while they are eating the strawberries and cream.

Really the income of the Bishop of London ought to be doubled. He would be cheap at any price, for he is a genius. The other day he preached from the text "Behold, I show you a mystery," and his sermon dealt with the terrible destruction of St. Pierre. People wondered why God had allowed thirty thousand people to perish in burning lava, but the disaster was "no doubt a design of the great God to let them learn his laws." Such a calamity caused a deeper study of the action of volcanoes, and "the loss of thirty thousand lives by this volcanic eruption might, for anything they knew, have been the means of saving many thousands of others." There now! It is plain at last! God wanted men to give more attention to the volcano question. "Go to," he said, "I'll kill thirty thousand of them; that'll make the rest sit up." So Mount Pelée vomited forth hell fire, the town of St. Pierre was wiped out in the twinkling of an eye, and all the world is now talking about volcanoes. Such is God's method of educating the human race. It is magnificent—and so merciful. Yes, the Bishop of London *is* a genius. Any fool can see that.

We suppose it is on the same wise plan that God sends insects and microbes to destroy the fruits of man's industry. This keeps him active and sharpens his wits. America spends £600,000 a year, and employs a large staff of experts, to combat the insect maladies that used to involve a loss of forty to sixty millions annually. Quite £90,000,000 damage is done in India every year. All this, if we understand Bishop Ingram, is God's fatherly way of pushing his children along in school. What a pity it is we don't imitate the divine example in our own schools. Perhaps we shall some day—when the parsons get the control of elementary education.

The prolonged drought has inflicted great losses in Australia. Good! The Bishop of London ought to be delighted. God is simply drawing attention to the problem of irrigation. He doesn't teach you anything, but he just knocks you about till you learn it yourself.

Not satisfied with his excursion into the theology of volcanic eruptions, the Bishop of London has made another into the theology of marriage. Presiding at the Diocesan Conference, he assisted in passing a resolution against altering the law so as to allow of marriage with a deceased wife's sister. Bishop Ingram would find it very difficult to justify this resolution from the Bible. There was only one

man in the Bible (besides Jesus Christ) whom God "loved," and that was Jacob. Well now, Jacob did not marry his deceased wife's sister. Oh dear no! But he did something a great deal worse. He married his living wife's sister. Perhaps the Bishop of London would like us to imitate Jacob in this respect, and "take on" our wives' sisters without waiting for a funeral.

Jabez Balfour, in spite of everything, is still posing as a pious person. He is an inmate of Parkhurst Prison, where, it is said, he is a "member of the chapel choir, a regular communicant, and very devoutly disposed"!

The unusual sight was witnessed on Whit-Monday morning of the rector of the parish of Corby, near Kettering, being placed in the public stocks. The rector was not alone in his ignominy, as the churchwarden and the chairman of the parish council and other parishioners underwent the same experience. This undignified ceremony is a relic of an ancient custom dating from Queen Elizabeth's time, by virtue of which the residents of the parish are free from market tolls and jury service. But why should a parson, to say nothing of his parishioners, purchase immunity from civil obligations at such a price?

The Rector of Tooting, Alderman the Rev. J. H. Anderson, made a remarkable contribution to the debate in the Wandsworth Borough Council as to the supply of beer to the poor at the King's dinner. A bishop, he remarked, once said he would rather see England free than sober, and he himself would rather see Wandsworth free than sober. No ale was kept at his rectory, but, lunching in the City the other day, he said to the waiter: "Will you bring me as nearly as possible three-quarters of a pint of ale?" as he wanted to speak from experience. He had formed a very high opinion of that ale, and a very different opinion of those who tried to stand between the King and the King's ale.

This may be mere flunkeyism, or it may be a recognition by the Rector of Tooting of various passages in Holy Writ which are not at all favorable to Christian teetotal views.

The venerable head of the City Temple has a great deal of the maudlin sentimentality and irresponsibility of old age. He thinks himself entitled at one time to damn the Sultan, at another to bless the Primate. "God bless the Archbishop," he exclaimed the other day. "And God save the King." Neither the blessings nor the curses have much effect, but they may be pardoned as the privilege of age. Not all Dissenters, however, will be particularly pleased with Dr. Parker's effusiveness in regard to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

A witness hesitated the other week about "kissing the Book." He was, he said, in a rapid consumption, and did not desire to communicate that fell complaint to others. All the same, he was required to "kiss the Book," and it is about a million to one that the volume has not since been changed or disinfected. Why doesn't our dear old friend, the *Lancet*, which so loves to frighten us, start a strong crusade against this dangerous practice, which hitherto it has only incidentally deprecated?

What *are* "acts of God" is an inquiry which is once more troubling insurance circles. A large proportion of the white population of Martinique have been insured in the Jamaica Mutual and French Companies. Lightning and earthquakes have been ruled "acts of God," and so it is believed that the companies involved in the Guatemalan disaster are safe. But with the islands of Martinique and St. Vincent the case is different, there being no provision for mountains in eruption. It is almost certain, however, that the insurance companies will treat the destruction of property as an "act of God," though they will be unable to do so in the case of loss of life.

A curious example of the blind, persistent superstition of people is the fact that, after all that has happened in the island of St. Vincent, "special prayers are being offered for rain!" Of what use is it praying for the small benefit of rain to a God who does not hesitate to suddenly take away the lives of his creatures by the thousand in a perfect holocaust?

There is something of irony in the fact that the people of Martinique who suffered so terribly from the recent volcanic disturbance have always been extremely devout. All over the roads of the island are, or at least were, to be seen little wayside shrines containing a rudely-carved figure, and before these the traveller up the hot mountainous paths was wont to pause for a moment's prayer. In one of the suburbs of St. Pierre a series of shrines had been set along the hillside to represent the steps of Jesus to Calvary. Upon the highest point stood the cross and tomb. All the mountains of Martinique, however lofty, bear upon the summit this adopted emblem of Christianity. Even upon the volcano, Mount Pelée, which has wrought the havoc, a cross has been

planted. The people of Martinique are mainly Roman Catholics, though there is a leaven of Freethinkers.

In his lecture entitled "Which Way?" Colonel Ingersoll spoke of the alleged bone of St. Ann which, with the sanction of Archbishop Corrigan, the priests of New York were obtaining thousands of dollars for exhibiting, and giving their credulous dupes the privilege of kissing it in the belief that it possessed curative properties. Colonel Ingersoll then said that if Archbishop Corrigan should be taken sick he would not touch the relic, but would send for a physician. The prediction was a true one. When Corrigan fell sick a few weeks ago, he summoned the best medical advisers to be had for money, but he never touched the bone which he permitted the good Catholics of the diocese to believe was the wrist of the grandmother of God, and endowed with invincible power to heal. He knew it was a fraud.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

A new religious sect has started up in South-west Russia. Its members believe in baptism by brandy instead of baptism by water. Of course, the sect is spreading rapidly. We believe it would be a big success in England.

The earthquakes in Guatemala seem to have been as destructive as the volcanic eruptions in the West Indies. Eight cities have been laid in ruins, and the number of the dead runs into thousands. A vast number of the survivors are homeless and starving. We suppose this is more "Providence."

More "Providence." The appalling drought in Australia continues, and immense areas are being denuded of stock. The Minister of Lands in New South Wales declares that the drought is the worst for sixty years. Experts estimate the loss at millions.

Although the famine over the greater part of Rajputana, Gujerat, and the Central Indian States is less widespread than hitherto, there will, nevertheless, be much suffering during the next few months, and 400,000 people are already on Government relief works. The rats have, to a large extent, disappeared, but have destroyed a considerable portion of the cotton crop. The inhabitants of Gujerat are convinced that the rats are reincarnations of their friends who died in the last famine, and it is for this reason that the British officials have found it impossible to get any assistance in destroying the pests.

In a recent article in the *Revue des Questions Sociales*, the Marquis de la Tour du Pin writes on the religious condition of France. He says there are whole regions now where the men never enter the Church, and the women no longer comply with their religious duties. Purely civil marriages and funerals are no longer uncommon, and nowadays excite neither surprise nor disapproval. The priest is without any influence on the population, and lives like a stranger among his flock by whom he is unfavored and kept apart from social life.

A little boy, the son of a Christian Scientist, had a toothache. "If you had my faith," the mother said, "you would have no toothache." "Yes," the boy replied, "and if you had my toothache, you wouldn't have your faith."

There are some logical points in a letter by "M.A. (Cantab)" to the *Rock* on the Kenosis theory. The Higher Critics advance this theory to explain Christ's quotations from the Old Testament, the theory being that a part of his sacrifice involved some ignorance as a man of what he knew as a God. It is a paltry expedient not worth the trouble. "M.A.," who is quite orthodox, argues that, if Jesus knew future events, he must have known past events which happened in the world, seeing that "without Him was not anything made that was made" (John i. 3). Therefore his humiliation did not imply ignorance on his part, and that he did not know whether he was quoting fiction or fact when he referred to the Old Testament.

Apropos of bogus American degrees of divinity, someone writes to the *Christian World*: "I know of one D.D. who could not translate the Latin on his diploma!"

A young woman of Fafe, in Spain, has been in a sort of trance for three months. She does not eat, drink, or speak, but appears to understand what is said to her, and to be in perfect health. The doctors call it a case of hysteria, but the peasants look on her as a woman "elected by heaven"—a kind of saint. Pilgrimages are made from neighboring provinces, and important offerings are made to the "New Saint."

The Greek community in Constantinople is excited over the performances of an image of the Virgin Mary in the church at Altı Mermer. An epileptic girl was cured by touching it. The image knocked her down and kept on striking her. After a second pummelling she had no more epilepsy.

Invalids and cripples now flock to that church daily, the Virgin is fully employed, and the priests are in clover.

A well-known minister, according to the *Christian*, gives it as his conviction that it is not the poor quality of preaching, nor any lack of up-to-dateness in the form of service, that keeps people away from public worship; but that a large portion of the population is "frankly pagan." That is a good and significant phrase.

Great is the power of prayer! Three thousand corpses were found on the site of the cathedral at St. Pierre.

St. Mark's Church, Marylebone-road, whose vicar is the well-known Hon. J. Adderly, has been in full work for thirty years, and has managed to secure only one male adult communicant.

Mr. Joseph McCabe, formerly Father Antony, is a thorough-going Atheist, though we suppose he would prefer to call himself an Agnostic. It is rather astonishing, therefore, to see him referred to in the *Daily News* as the Rev. Joseph McCabe. Evidently the editor of "The Religious World" department of that newspaper thinks he is a Protestant.

Mr. McCabe complains that seceders from the Catholic priesthood are the objects of unlimited slander. The general plan is to say something suggestive, but not directly libellous, about a woman. "This," Mr. McCabe says, "is one of the most brutal experiences the seceding priest has to face. He hears vague murmurs of the foulest suggestions circulating amongst his former friends, yet can never succeed in reaching an open and contestable accusation." This is a very old trick, and it is not confined to this particular quarter. It has been played by Christians of all denominations. Hinting that a heretic is a scoundrel is very much easier than meeting his objections; it is also much more agreeable to the feelings of a bigot; and bigot and religionist are only two words for one and the same thing.

During a fearful cyclone in Pennsylvania, Rev. J. M. Jamieson, while conducting service in his church, was terribly injured by the wall falling upon him.

At the funeral, in Cape Town, of Spinks, a well-known South African jockey, a clergyman denounced horse-racing. He said all those who took part in it were a "pack of wolves and dogs, seeking ill-gotten gains." As a piece of clerical extravagance, this will do, or at least the cleric thought it would do, but he finds it won't. He has had to withdraw all his words, and publicly apologise. Sober sense and clerical hysteria or hypocrisy are quite different things. The cleric might, if he turned it over in his mind, discover that there is a species of spiritual gambling on doubtful heavenly chances which is even worse than horse-racing. There is here, too, the pursuit of "ill-gotten gains," but there is also in connection with it pious humbug, which is simply nauseating.

Truth publishes the following example of religious bigotry which would really be hard to beat. The North Dublin Workhouse is divided into two parts, one for Catholics and the other for Protestants. There was recently no female inmate in the Protestant part capable of doing laundry work, and the matron therefore sent a Catholic woman there to wash some things for the Protestant nurses. Against this arrangement the Catholic chaplain has entered a solemn protest, and in deference to his opinion the Guardians have ordered that in future no Catholic pauper, male or female, shall be allowed to work in the Protestant section of the house. Comment is superfluous.

Kate Hills was a cook in the employ of Mr. R. W. Perks, M.P., who is a well-known religionist. Outside her work she was a Salvationist. She served the Lord by making a joyful noise at "Army" meetings. But, alas, she also practised the vanity of tight-lacing, by which her stomach was pressed downwards and contorted. Being a sufferer, too, from valvular disease of the heart, it is not astonishing that she fell down dead while joining in a hymn. A little less religion, and a little more common sense, might have added a good many years to her life. But perhaps she preferred to be with Jesus.

Mendiland, in West Africa, is one of the little-known places under British rule. The inhabitants are Pagans or Mohammedans, but they are "coming under Christian influence." So says the Rev. James Proudfoot, who has been giving information about Mendiland to a representative of the *Daily News*. "On the subject of immortality," this gentleman says, "the people of Mendi hold a belief that is often met with in uncivilised countries. The fact that people dream of the dead, and dream of them as still living, is deemed a proof of an after-existence." Yes, but they do not think they dream of the dead. We know that they do, but they, like all "savages," think that something has gone out of their bodies in sleep, and has seen something that had gone out of other bodies in death. Dreaming, however, is

the real original fact; and in Mendiland, as elsewhere, the belief in an after-life rests upon a misinterpretation of the phenomena of dreams. This is the best established truth of Animism. And it points to the further truth, that as all religion is at bottom Ghostology, all religion is mere dreaming.

Rev. Benjamin Waugh, secretary of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, receives a salary of £800 a year. What a satire it is that such a Society should be not only needed, but extremely busy, in what is boasted as the most Christian country in the world; and that a Christian minister had to be taken away from his religious duties in order to check the cruelty of his fellow-Christians! The "heathen," and even savages, would wonder at the necessity of such a Society, especially in a country which sends out missionaries to convert the less barbarous inhabitants of distant lands.

"Laicus," in a letter to the *Church Times*, boldly informs the clergy what a lot of frauds many of them are. He says: "Individual clergymen so often misbehave themselves that they disgust us with the whole body. I know in my own district instances where many of the clergy have actually applied for vacant benefices, and asked influential people to assist them in their candidature, not on the ground of the new parish affording opportunities of more work, or work for which the applicants deem themselves specially qualified, but because they want a larger income. If we find them thus treating their profession as a mere means of livelihood, and competing for its plums like hungry lawyers and grasping tradesmen, then the laity cannot be blamed if they close their purses, and look on in disgusted amazement."

But this is not all. The candid friend of the clergy says: "Nor can we be expected to assist men who have not the manners of gentlemen; whose personal habits are not over-clean; who neglect to care for their parish registers and other valuable records of which they are trustees; who neglect, or even destroy, the ancient altar-plate; and who are without education or culture, and generally unfitted for their office. I can put my hand on more than one man unfitted for his office by one or more of these sins and deficiencies. Some of these may seem small, but we laymen are very human, and do not willingly give our (often hardly earned) moneys to support men who appear to us unworthy, and whose personal failings deprive them of that influence for good which is one of the chief things which we expect from them."

Then "Laicus" says, what is absolutely true and beyond dispute: "It is impossible sometimes, when a clergyman complains of his small income, to avoid the reflection that he is getting more as a cleric than he would get in any walk of life where he had to compete with others. A lawyer who is a fool has to starve, a tradesman whose character is 'blown upon' loses his trade; but a clergyman once beneficed suffers nothing unless, and until, a serious charge is proved against him."

This is a nice little indictment of the clerics. If it were untrue or unjust the *Church Times* would not have inserted it. But the statements themselves carry conviction with any who are at all acquainted with the working of the Church of England Establishment.

In Shakespeare's *Richard II.*, Act III., scene 2, the lines appear:—

Not all the waters in the rough rude sea
Can wash the balm from an anointed king.

But in the coming ceremony the Archbishop is going to lay the "balm" on very lightly. The King will take it in such homœopathic doses that the "rough rude sea" needn't trouble itself in the slightest degree. It would probably find a difficulty in discovering the spots of holy oil or chrism. The average barber or hairdresser would regard it as a very paltry application.

"Consternation" is said to have been created amongst High Churchmen by an announcement that the Archbishops and Bishops will wear caps instead of mitres at the Coronation. Archbishop Temple asserts that mitres have never been worn since the coronation of Charles II., and that previously the Bishops, like the Barons, were always bare-headed. Edward VII. will probably smile at this squabble. It will be sufficient for him that *he* will wear the crown. The Archbishops and Bishops can bag their heads in what they please.

At a sale of work and jumble stall held in the National Schools, Nettleham, in connection with a religious body, Miss Bailey, says the *Lincoln Gazette*, "was very successful in the fortune-telling line, especially with the bachelors." The police, who persecute poor old fortune-tellers or palmists who don't pretend to be pious, were, of course, absent.

Lord Bacon tells a story of Sir Thomas More, whose wife had several daughters and kept praying for a boy. At last she had one, but when he grew up he "proved but simple," and Sir Thomas told his wife that she had prayed for a boy

so long that he would be a boy as long as he lived. We suppose the last part of the observation will apply to Jack Cooke, the boy preacher, who has been soul-saving for some months in East London, and is now returning to America. The "boy" is the catching part of his advertisement, and he will stick to it as long as possible. He will be able to work it for several years yet by the aid of close shaving and a little rice powder.

Carlyle said that the people of England were "mostly fools." Of course he might have said the same of any other country, but he happened to say it of this one. Still, it is true enough—here or elsewhere. That is why more than five thousand people flocked to hear Jack Cooke's farewell exhortation at Mile-end. Most of them were poor women, but one at least was of the other sex. He was one of the boy preacher's converts, and was announced as the "converted chimney sweep." We suppose this was on account of his professional color. Otherwise it is hard to see what there is peculiarly wicked or ungodly about gentlemen in that line of business. Why should there be a converted chimney sweep any more than a converted hairdresser?

The newspaper report we saw of Jack Cooke's farewell performance said that he had "an undoubted command of language and facility of speech," but his "thoughts were somewhat disconnected." Very likely. He doesn't take the trouble to prepare anything, but just says what comes into his head when he is on his legs—or, in the lingo of the tabernacle, what the Lord puts into his mouth. On these lines he will never show much development. Even the most "inspired" poet has to take a lot of pains with his compositions. Easy reading is hard writing.

The *Rambler* wants to know what right men like Dr. Parker and Mr. Price Hughes have to the title of "reverend." Surely a Nonconformist preacher may be as "reverend" as a Church of England parson or a Roman Catholic priest. Morally speaking, the word is ridiculously pretentious, for these men of God are really no better than their neighbors, and occasionally a bit worse. "Reverend" has simply a technical value. It applies to all professional soul-savers. And, for our part, we would as soon stick it in front of the name of Parker as in front of the name of Temple or the name of Vaughan.

"Verax," of the *Daily News*, is rather more subtle and discreet than Bishop Ingram. Writing on the text, "Break me in pieces with words," with reference to the West Indian horrors, this gentleman allows that it is useless to *reason* in justification of "Providence," as there is a sufficient answer to every argument that can be advanced in its behalf. When the question is put, "Why could not Infinite love and power have caused Nature to work in another way?" there is no possible reply. "The fact that there is no answer," this writer continues, "should not, however, lead to scepticism, and certainly not to atheism, but only to humility, to reverence, and to trust. We must simply go on our way till the end be. Knowledge we cannot have. Our solace and our stay is faith."

We fancy we recognise the twang of the pulpit in this conclusion. Substantially it reminds us of Dogberry's "God's a good man." It also reminds us of Queequeg's little black wooden god Yojo in Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*. "Queequeg," we read, "placed great confidence in Yojo's judgment and surprising forecast of things; and cherished Yojo with considerable esteem, as a rather good sort of god, who perhaps meant well enough upon the whole, but in all cases did not succeed in his benevolent designs." The Christian God is a big Yojo, and we must never distrust his benevolence. When he roasts us alive, we must remember that he always means well, if he does not always succeed.

A Cromer clergyman has the goodness to say that thousands of men, women, and children perished in Martinique because they had not listened to the Lord's warning. We suppose he meant that they ought to have cleared out of St. Pierre when Mount Pelée began rumbling. But how could they tell that such a shocking eruption was going to take place? And where could twenty or thirty thousand people flee in such an extremity? It is easy enough for this Cromer clergyman to talk. He is safe where he is. It would have been very different at St. Pierre. Moreover, he has got to face this difficulty. If the rumblings of Mount Pelée were the Lord's warnings, the Lord was working the volcano, and the eruption makes the Lord responsible for the slaughter of all those people. Some people have a fine sort of a God!

A wealthy Lisbon lady left all her money to a rooster. She believed in the transmigration of souls, and thought the soul of her dead husband had entered the body of chanticleer. But one of the lady's heirs, not sharing her superstition, twisted the cock's neck; and, as it was no crime to kill even a wealthy fowl, the lady's heirs are now in quiet possession of the profits of his extinction.

The business of the Freethought Publishing Company, including the publication of the **FREE-THINKER**, is now carried on at No. 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, London, E.C.

Mr. G. W. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, June 8, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, London, W.: 7.30, "The Peace of Man and the Peace of God."

To Correspondents.

CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—June 15, Hampstead Ethical Society.—Address, 24 Carminia-road, Balham, London, S.W.

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—June 8, m., Ridley-road; a., Victoria Park.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

J. R. WEBLEY.—We are obliged to you for drawing our attention to the Bishop of London's sermon, though we had already seen the report, and made it the subject of a criticism in "Acid Drops."

JOHN ROBERTS.—Mr. Andrew Lang's book to which you refer has not been reviewed in the *Freethinker*.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.—Miss Vance, secretary, acknowledges: Dr. T. R. Nichols (Ilford), £2.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss Vance, secretary, acknowledges: Dr. T. R. Nichols (Ilford), £1 1s.

CLAUDE EAYRS.—Cuttings are always welcome. Thanks.

LEWIS LEWIS.—(1) The pamphlet you refer to is published, we believe, by G. Standing, Finsbury-street, London, E.C., and sold by Heywood, of Manchester. (2) Yes, the George Anderson so fulsomely puffed in the paper you mention is the same George Anderson who was so *civil* to the N. S. S., so *kind* to its President, and so *honorable* to the Freethought Publishing Company.

JOHN JONES.—Pleased to hear from you, and glad to hear you are so well and happy at your great age. Mr. Foote will communicate with you by post very shortly.

F. R. T.—We can quite understand that the Freethinking local schoolmaster was easily able to make mincemeat of Mr. Waldron on Peckham Rye, especially in regard to the admissions of the so-called Higher Critics within the Church.

P. D. OLIVER.—The *Freethinker* advertisement does not say that the portrait of Thomas Paine is *inside* the sixpenny *Age of Reason*. The portrait was placed outside in order to attract attention, and to show those ignorant of the matter what sort of man the great sceptic was in personal appearance. Hereafter a portrait of Paine may be placed inside as well as outside, but such copies would have to be sold at a higher price than sixpence.

MISS VANCE, at our publishing office, is anxious to obtain another copy of Mr. Foote's out-of-print *Prisoner for Blasphemy*. Will anyone who can oblige with a copy communicate with her, and mention price?

W. C. G.—Places of religious worship are exempted from rates and taxes. To this extent both church and chapel are subventioned by the State. Glad to hear you derive "much pleasure and profit" from reading the *Freethinker*.

MR. CHARLES WATTS claims the right to a further statement in the *Freethinker*. He says he is too busy to prepare it for the present number, but he will send it in good time for the next. This is the substance of a "Preliminary Note" we have received from him. There is no need to print the adjectives and adverbs. If they are necessary they can form a part of the promised statement.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Truthseeker—Two Worlds—Public Opinion—Leicester Reasoner—Sydney Bulletin—Freidenker—Crescent—Progressive Thinker—Boston Investigator—Torch of Reason—Secular Thought.

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.

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

Sugar Plums.

THE Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, will be open again for Freethought lectures this evening (June 8). Mr. Foote will occupy the platform. His subject will be "The Peace of Man and the Peace of God." Reference will be made, incidentally, to the settlement in South Africa; which is another reason why Freethinkers should try to bring their liberal-minded friends to this lecture.

The Birmingham Branch of the National Secular Society has made a gallant stand against local bigotry. It was getting on famously with its Sunday meetings in the Bristol-street Board school—*too* famously for a number of intolerant Christians, who raised an outcry against it and begged the School Board to close its schoolrooms against "blasphemers." This outcry was worked for all it was worth by the Bishop of Coventry—the "Blackguard Bishop," as we called him at the time, for he made the most abominable charges against the Secularists, not one of which did he try to establish. His theory was that Secularism itself was immoral, and all Secularists, therefore, were immoral as far as they were Secularists. Well, the upshot was that the Branch was debarred from the use of the Board schools for a period of twelve months; just as though the Board was a tribunal, and the Branch a prisoner at the bar.

After a sufficient lapse of time, the Birmingham Branch applied again for the use of the Bristol-street Board school. A resolution was passed that the application should be granted on condition that the Branch sold no literature at its meetings. This was a special condition, not applicable to any other Society in Birmingham, and, consequently, insulting to the Branch. Accordingly, the Board's sinister concession was declined with all the thanks it merited.

Recently the Birmingham Branch made another application. The Sites and Buildings Committee recommended that the existing resolution *re* the Branch should be rescinded, and that "a reply should be sent to the present application stating that the Board is unable to let any of its schools to that Society." When the matter came before the Board for discussion, several members spoke against it as "inconsistent," and a few opposed it on general grounds as an act of sheer intolerance. The voting was six to six—which shows that there is still some hope for Birmingham. But the "Blackguard Bishop," being Chairman, used his opportunity to the full. After a lot of disgusting talk about "immorality" and "advocacy in the presence of boys and girls"—all of which proceeded from his own feculent imagination—he gave his casting vote against the Secularists.

The Birmingham Branch has naturally applied to Mr. Foote for help. On the first occasion he went down and addressed a big Demonstration in the Circus. He is now asked to attend an outdoor Demonstration in the Bull Ring and deliver two lectures afterwards, on the same day, in the Prince of Wales Assembly Room. Unfortunately, he is unable to comply with this request. Although fairly well at present, he is still sensitive, and is medically advised not to put any strain upon himself for some months. He will have to use the summer so as to prepare himself for the work of next winter. Indeed, it is doubtful whether he will ever deliver three lectures, or attend three public meetings, in one day again. It would, of course, be possible for Mr. Foote to address a Demonstration in Birmingham, although he would prefer not to visit the provinces for speaking purposes till the autumn. But such an arrangement would involve expense, and Mr. Foote, who has always been ready to disregard such considerations, is not in a position to disregard them now. Unfortunately, the Branch is poor, having been drained like veal by the disadvantageous conditions imposed upon it by the School Board. Is there any well-to-do Freethinker who could write out a cheque for the expenses of a Demonstration? The thing would be worth doing, if only to give the "Blackguard Bishop" another lesson.

Mr. Foote has suggested that the Birmingham Branch might have a statement of its grievance printed and widely circulated in the city. In this matter he would render all possible help. But this also would involve considerable expense. Altogether this is a case in which the prompt assistance of a well-to-do Freethinker is very badly needed.

Mr. F. J. Gould, secretary and organiser of the Leicester Secular Society, and member of the Leicester School Board, has addressed the following manly letter to the Mayor:—"May 29, 1902. Dear Sir,—I beg to be excused from attendance at the Reception of Elementary Teachers, June 23, and all other local functions connected with the Coronation, on the following grounds:—The system of government by monarchy, however limited, is unsuited to the democratic requirements of the times. It tends to preserve the lamentable distinctions between social classes, and to foster a spirit of snobbishness at home and of blatant Imperialism abroad.

If it should be said that I am grudging the people their Coronation pleasures, I reply that I should be glad to see the masses of the people secure more leisure and enjoyment than they do. But let the enjoyment be connected with festivals of art, industry, and nature, and not with Royal events, which are necessarily irregular in occurrence. By thus dissociating myself from the Coronation festivities, I am taking the simplest way open to me of declaring my preference for a Republican form of government—a form of government which would better meet the needs of the people in regard to morality, education, industrial prosperity, and international peace. I shall forward a copy of this letter to the King, with the assurance that abstention from the festivities implies no personal disrespect to his Majesty.—Believe me, Sir, yours faithfully, F. J. GOULD."

The *Boston Investigator* is the oldest Freethought paper in America. When it reproduces "Mr. Dooley Upon Ethical Societies" from the oldest Freethought paper in England it ought not to omit the word "*Freethinker*." Acknowledgment costs nothing, and is the civility that one journal owes another.

Sabbatarianism seems to be scotched at present at Great Yarmouth, thanks very largely to the bold and consistent action of Mr. J. W. de Caux. Mr. J. I. Popp, of High Wycombe, is making a grand anti-Sabbatarian fight of it in that town. We hope he will emerge as triumphant as he deserves to be.

Menelik and the Missionary.

A GOOD story of King Menelik is told by the *Neu Metaphysische Rundschau*. A Swedish missionary, dispatched by his society to carry the Gospel to the Abyssinians, arrived one day at the frontier of the Abyssinian empire.

He was arrested on the frontier, and, after spending two days in prison, was sent to the capital and brought before the King, who sat in the midst of the great dignitaries and bodyguard, with his drawn sword in his hand.

In a stern voice his Majesty asked: "Stranger, from what country do you come?"

"From Scandinavia," replied the missionary.

"Why have you come here?"

"To convert the Abyssinian Jews to Christianity." (This is the only pretext under which missionaries are allowed to enter Abyssinia. Any attempt to convert orthodox Abyssinians is punished by decapitation.)

"Good," continued Menelik; "and what countries did you pass through on your way here?"

"Germany, Egypt, and the Soudan," returned the missionary.

"And did you find no Jews in Germany to convert?" asked his Majesty.

The missionary replied that his mission was not to them, and was obliged to give a similar answer when asked if he had met no Jews or heathens in Egypt and the Soudan.

"So you passed by all those Jews and heathens in order to convert the Jews in Abyssinia," said the dusky monarch; and, turning to his bodyguard, he gave the following order: "This stranger is to be escorted back over the frontier, so that he may first convert the Jews and heathens in the countries he must pass through before reaching us. Let my will be done."

The God Idea Lacking.

AN exploring expedition through Central Australia has recently been made by Professor Baldwin Spencer and Mr. Gillen, the object being to learn what is to be known of the aboriginal tribes. Both explorers have worked many years at the subject, and Mr. Gillen was regarded by some of the blacks as their "head man." Professor Spencer was asked by an interviewer what were the religious beliefs of the natives, and he answered: "They have nothing, so far as we could find out, which could be properly called a religious belief. Their own idea of causation is simply that of magic. They think they can control the forces of nature, make animals increase, cause rain to fall, and thunder and lightning to come by magic. There was no evidence that we could find of belief in a Supreme Being." This is important, as Mr. Andrew Lang, in a recent book, considers that there was a belief in a Supreme Being in the most primitive tribes. "We have not found it so with the natives of Central Australia. We were only able to confirm our previous impressions that they had no such belief. They believe in mischievous spirits, but not in anything comparable with the idea of the Devil."

—*Daily Telegraph*.

A Conversation about God.

A CLERGYMAN and I had a long conversation the other morning, and it has occurred to me that it might be of some interest if I threw the general course of the discussion into the form of a brief dialogue. The gentleman was fair-minded and logical, and, being philosophical in his tastes, I think he was pleased to exchange views with me as an exercise in dialectic rather than with the expectation of converting me. Of course, I cannot report the conversation *verbatim*, but give the gist only. The letter S represents the clergyman, and the letter G stands for me.

S.: May I ask how you describe yourself in respect to Theism?

G.: Usually as an Agnostic; but, in order to clear the issue before us, I describe myself as an Atheist, meaning that I totally exclude theology from my view of life.

S.: With Herbert Spencer, you would regard certain things as unknowable?

G.: Yes.

S.: In your opinion, is the Human Mind unknowable?

G.: I will say yes, if you will allow me to explain the way in which I accept the word "unknowable." Of the Human Mind we may know a great deal—we may know a great deal as to its modes of work. But since we cannot make a complete self-analysis, or understand the essential character of mind, I will agree to call it unknowable.

S.: And would you say the same of Matter?

G.: Yes, in the same general sense that I do not suppose we shall ever gauge the complete nature of what we call Matter?

S.: And so of Motion?

G.: Yes, and I will add to that, Force in general. I cannot, indeed, conceive the separation between Force and Matter; they are a whole, just as Walt Whitman speaks of Body and Soul as one:—

"Behold, the body includes, and is the meaning, the main concern, and includes, and is the soul."

S.: I have not read Whitman, but I note your statement that Force (Motion) is unknowable.* And will you say likewise of Time? You cannot conceive of infinite Time—*i.e.*, Eternity?

G.: No, I cannot.

S.: And so also of Space?

G.: Certainly.

S.: We agree, then, that, in the sense that you have referred to (of complete knowledge of the essence), we do not truly know these five things or entities—Space, Time, Motion (Force), Matter, and Mind?

G.: Yes.

S.: But you are sure of their existence—they are the great Realities to you?

G.: I demur to the use of the abstract word Reality. These five things are, for all practical purposes, very real to me. In that every-day sense, I will class them as Realities.

S.: So that the great Realities are the things which are also unknowable?

G.: Only in the sense already conceded—*viz.*, that, while they are the most real things to our experience, we are unable to completely comprehend their character.

S.: Therefore, God may be unknowable and still a great Reality?

G.: What do you mean by God?

S.: Without pretending to fulness of definition, let me, in the first instance, speak of God as the First Cause of all that exists. Now, you will admit that it is the aim of a scientific mind to seek for causes?

G.: Assuredly.

S.: If a man declared a certain phenomenon was causeless, he would be unscientific?

G.: He would.

S.: We want to find a cause for everything?

G.: We do.

S.: You hear the sound of hammering, and you expect to find a cause for the sound? And so on, for all the events in your experience?

G.: That is the case.

* It would have been bad manners to have smiled at my clerical friend, but I did smile in my sleeve at the perplexed look with which he received this quotation from the heretical Whitman.

S. : Then, if all things and events have causes, must there not be a Prime Cause for the whole of things—viz., the Universe? Surely logic requires that?

G. : You have introduced a new term—*Prime*. I only agreed that we feel the need of discovering causes. A cause is a Condition Precedent.

S. : Yes.

G. : But I cannot understand a Condition Precedent to the Whole of things. Having got to the Condition Precedent of a thing, I again look for the Condition Precedent of that, and so on, till the human mind gives up the search in helplessness.

S. : Is not the Will a cause in the sense that it initiates movements?

G. : Yes.

S. : Let me call this initiating power a Creative power, meaning that the Will can give new forms to the pre-existent.

G. : Very well.

S. : So far as we can tell, the Will is the *only* Creative power.

G. : I will allow that.

S. : Then I affirm that the Will of God was the power that caused or created the universe.

G. : Do you conceive God as acting from within, or from without, the Universe?

S. : Without.

G. : And the Universe is the All?

S. : Yes.

G. : How can the Universe be the All if God, the Prime Cause or Creative Will, is outside it?

S. : If he were within, he would not be greater than, or superior to, the Universe.

G. : Of course not.

S. : Therefore he must be without, or superior to, the Universe, which he creates.

G. : I cannot understand what you say. But, for the sake of argument, I will concede that there was a Divine Will which created the Universe. Pray proceed.

S. : Is not a Cause greater than its Effect?

G. : I cannot admit that. I should say their powers are equal. Ten units of Causation would produce ten units of Effect, not nine.

S. : But you will admit that the Cause is as great as the Effect?

G. : Yes.

S. : Then the Divine Will (which you have conceded for argument's sake) is as great as its created effects?

G. : Yes.

S. : And the effects will be all material phenomena, all intellect, all morality, and all beauty?

G. : I suppose so.

S. : Then, from these effects I reason back to the Cause of All, and I say God must be intellect, morality, and beauty.

G. : That follows from the premiss.

S. : But man commits wrong—

G. : Which is traceable to God's Will.

S. : No. God gave man a will: will implies choice; will implies power to choose right or wrong; and, by the very nature of the case, man may go wrong without the wrong being imputable to God.

G. : Is God all-powerful?

S. : Yes.

G. : And he could not prevent man from going wrong?

S. : Let me explain. Though God is all-powerful, he intentionally limits his power in giving man a free-will, and he permits man to defy his will.

G. : You no doubt agree that the essence of moral action is (as Kant says) in the Good Will: an act is good because it is done out of good will?

S. : Yes.

G. : With a good will, therefore, a man will live a good life?

S. : Yes.

G. : Then why did not God give man a good will?

At this point our conversation broke off. As I came away from the good clergyman's house, I looked at the people in the streets, and I looked at the churches which towered over the houses. Upon such a flimsy philosophy, thought I, these churches are founded; and the Churches think they have a right to govern the minds of these people because they have the support of such a theology. And the people seem willing!

F. J. GOULD.

Mr. Dooley on Teetotalism.

"THERE'S howp for the Ithicals in England yit," said Mr. Dooley, laying down his journal, and refreshing himself from the glass before him.

"How's that?" inquired Mr. Hennessey. "Is Pierpont Morgan formin' thim into a Thrust?"

"Will! No!" remarked Mr. Dooley. "Oi mane there's howp av thim bein' converted."

"The Howly Saints be praised!" ejaculated Mr. Hennessey, fervently. "An' are they convinced av their irrors, an' riddy to jine the Blissid Catholic Churruch?"

"Ye're a rale broth av a bhoyp for takin' things boi the wrang handle, Hinnissy," said Mr. Dooley, more in sorrow than in anger. "Oi said nothin' av their changin' their belafes. It's thrue the Ithicals are *roipenin'* to become Catholics. They have a great riverince for cirimonies, an' hymns, an' sarvices, an' things. They're hankerin' for churruches, an' they're anxious to convince other payple that they've got a riligion, though payple can't see any riligion in thim. Yis, Hinnissy, they'll come into the Papal fold boi an' boi. But it'll take toime, Hinnissy; it'll take toime. Howiver, Oi'm wanderin fram me subjict. Oi starruted to till ye that the Ithicals are loikely to be converted to frish opinions. Wan av thim has been thravellin' in Jarmany, an' he's made a great dishcovery."

"Indade! What is it?"

"Whoy! He's found out that the Jarmans dhrink beer, an' that they loike it."

"Ye don't say so!"

"Yis, Hinnissy," assured Mr. Dooley, "an' it's made such an imprission an him that he's written home a lang article all about it; an' ye can rade it in this journal."

"Who is this new Columbus?" inquired Mr. Hennessey.

"It isn't Mистер Laurence Cowen," explained Mr. Dooley; "it's Mистер Harry Snill."

"Niver hurrud av him," said Mr. Hennessey.

"Thin ye've missed the acquaintance av a foine man," rejoined Mr. Dooley. "Mистер Snill is known all over England as a politician an' a sowcial riformer an' a thoroughgoin' Sickillarist. He's as lurruned as Francis Bacon an' he's as jolly as Father O'Flynn; an' whin he lictures he bursts out with iliquence so full an' sthrong an' rich that he fairly bates Bob Ingersoll an' Cicero, an' sich. He's only got wan fault in him, an' that is he's a taytaller."

"But, if he's a Sickillarist, how can he be an Ithical?" asked Mr. Hennessey.

"Oi'll till ye," said Mr. Dooley. "Whin the Ithicals shtarted business in England, Mистер Snill saw that what they wanted chiefly wuz min av talent; so he jined thim. An' he's been in bad hilt the lasht yare or two, an' so he wint to Jarmany to take the thratement an' dhrink the wathers an' obsarve the country."

"Oi bigin to see," said Mr. Hennessey. "He wint to Jarmany to foind *wather*, an he dishcovered *beer*."

"Ye're gittin' funny in yer owld age, Hinnissy," remarked Mr. Dooley, patronisingly. "But, as Oi wuz a-tellin' av ye, Mистер Snill wint to Jarmany. An', before he wint, he wuz towld that the Jarmans had no dhrunkiniss an' no poverthy, an' the instant he got there he found that iverybody dhrinks beer whoile he's awake an' dhrames about beer whoile he's asleep, and dhrunken payple are jist as common in Jarmany as in England."

"It's whiskey that's the crather for me," said Mr. Hennessey, applying himself to the *potheen*; "but phwat opinion has Mr. Snill changed?"

"Whoy, whin he wuz in England he wuz av opinion that beer wuz the ownly curse av mankoind," explained Mr. Dooley; "but now he wroites to say that, in spite av this tirrible curse, the Jarmans don't seem wan pinny the worse; an' he adds that the Jarmans musn't be glorified because they love Waggner, nor condimned because they love beer. They think that there's good beer, an' bitter beer, but no bad beer; but Mистер Snill thinks the Jarman national biverige would be bitter if it were only sthronger; and the Jarman *bier-hallins* are far less distasteful than an English public-house. Oi've niver seen sich a rivolution av sintimint since Micky

Flannigan gave up proize-foightin' an took to ping-pong."

"Oi could niver undherstand this taytotillism," remarked Mr. Hennessey, "nor phwat it took its roise fram. Oi always thought it wuz Mahomit an' the false profits that were agin dhrinkin'."

"Ye've hit it, Hinnessy," cried Mr. Dooley; "it's riligion that's at the bottom av it all."

"How do ye make that out?" asked Mr. Hennessey, rather startled.

"Not the thru riligion av course," explained Mr. Dooley; "but these haythin an' hiritic riligions. Ye see in Injia the poor payple dare not ate beef, but support thimsilves an' vigitables an' wather, poor haythins. The unbelievin' Jews an' Mahomitans daren't ate pork; an' so on. Ye see all these riligions are continually dictatin' what payple shall ate an' dhrink. Riligion is always interferin' an' rigilatin', until ye git to a shtate like the poor Hindoos that daren't move hand or finger unliiss they're allowed to do it boi the haythin prieshts an' asthrologers. The Prothistints are ownly followin' the other haythins in raisin' an outcroy agin beer; an' whin they've stopped iverybody fram dhrinkin' beer, they'll go in for vigitarianism, an' privint iverybody fram atin' mate; an' so they'll go an makin' rigilations till the Europians are toied hand an' foot loike the poor haythins that bow down to wood an' shtone."

"An' phwat good'll they'll git fram it all?" inquired Mr. Hennessey.

"They pint out that if the British worrukin' man gives up dhrinkin' beer he need not be paid so much wages, an' the imployers will have so much more profits to spind in champagne; an' boy the importation av more champagne the thrade av the country will incrase. In Injia, where the natives have been waned fram intoxicints, the averige wages are twopence ha'pinny a day—that is, foive cints in Amirrican money."

"Begorra! if we got paid loike that in the Unoited Shtates, we shouldn't pathronise yer saloon, Mистер Dooley."

"Oi guiss not, Mистер Hinnessy, nor any other shore about here," responded Mr. Dooley; "a quarter doesn't take ye viry far these toimes, much liss a nickel. An', as Oi wuz a-tillin' av ye, the taytotillers argue that if the wurrugin' man gave up beer the country would be richer, an' bitter kipt. An', in proof, they p'int to Turkey an' Parsia an' Arabia, where the haythins niver see nor taste beer or woine because they belave in the false profit, an' where the land has gone out av cultivation, an' the payple are as poor an' as writchid as ye'll foind anywhere, an' where the ownly chance av livin' is to turn brigand an' rob somebody ilse. An' the taytotillers till ye that all the croimes are caused through dhrink, an' if payple ownly kipt sowber ye could abolish the prisins an' the police, an' save their wages; an', in proof, they p'int to the Greeks, that dhrink nothin' but wather, an' are accounted the biggist rascils in the Midityranean; an' the Oitalians, that are a sowber lot, an' so ill-tempered an' quarrilsome that the government won't lit a man carry a knoife more than two inches long, an' where, nivertheliss, there are more murders than in any other country in Europe."

"Has Mистер Snill thravilled in Greece an' Italy an' Thurkey an' Injia?" asked Mr. Hennessey.

"Not yit," replied Mr. Dooley, "but he's made a beginnin'. If his idication goes an, he'll be followin' the ixample av other labor laydhers, an' owpenin' a public-house in London; an', whin he does, Oi'll dhrink his hilth with him."

"An' Oi'll jine ye, Mистер Dooley," said Mr. Hennessey. "Oi'll jine ye." C. E.

The Oldest Science.

A dispute arose recently at a beer-table in Germany between a group of University men as to which science was the oldest. A representative of the law declared that it was jurisprudence, for this science must have been known in Paradise, seeing that Adam and Eve were evicted therefrom. "Why," said a graduate of medicine, "medicine is certainly of older date. Just think of the operation that Adam had to submit to in order that a rib should be obtained for Eve!" "No, no, gentlemen," retorted an electro-technician, "for before anything was created God said, 'Let there be light!'" Then came the theologian, who said: "I do not want to appear presumptuous, but I think that precedence belongs to theology, for before it was light it was—dark!"

The Rights of Animals.

(Concluded on page 349.)

It only remains to consider the progress of our own country in the treatment of animals. Much has been done since the days of cock-fights and bull-baiting, amusements which even polished gentlemen like Pepys were not ashamed to patronise. Shakespeare entered his protest against the degrading sports of his time in *King John* :—

And like a dog that is compelled to fight
Snatch at his master that doth tarre him on—

and it is pleasant to note that England was the first of European countries to take effective measures for the protection of the lower animals. It will always be creditable to Edward the Seventh that, with his accession to the throne, tame deer ceased to be "hunted" under royal auspices. But such improvements are all too few. We have still such abuses as the use of the bearing-rein in fashionable studs, and the inconsiderate decoration of ladies' hats by means of plumes torn from living birds. Nor should we forget that the recent revival of bull-fighting in the North of France found the bulk of its patronage among our own compatriots.

There is unquestionably a solid phalanx of reactionary opinion in England, not actively hostile, perhaps, to humane ideals, but callously indifferent or cynically satirical. "The dogs like it," said the apologetic fox-hunter, "the horses like it, and — the fox likes it too!" What a torrent of small witticisms was evoked by the establishment of a Home for Lost Cats! And it is the spirit that prompts such unthinking outbreaks which forms the greatest obstacle to the noble endeavors of organisations like the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. He who is hostile to reform may be convinced; he who is indifferent may be interested; but the man who *laughs* is generally hopeless.

Among the solid gains of the movement may be reckoned the Act regulating vivisection (1876), the supervision of slaughter-houses (1884), the abolition of barbed-wire fences (1893), and the further protection of wild birds and of animals in transit (1894).

The first practical measure in this country was that passed in 1849, entitled "An Act for the more effectual Prevention of Cruelty to Animals." Its scope was considerable, and its regulations were generally stringent; but, by a peculiar oversight, its operation was limited to *domestic* animals. The training of wild beasts in menageries and elsewhere could not be supervised, and much preventable cruelty was thus immune from prosecution. It was not, however, till a case was heard relating to the treatment of some lions at the Westminster Aquarium that the serious limitations of the Act became adequately recognised. The prosecutors quite naturally failed to demonstrate that lions were "domestic" animals, and the Court could not convict. A new Act was introduced by Lord Herschell in 1898, protecting "any quadruped, or quadruman, or bird of wild nature, which is deprived of its liberty, or is tamed." This measure has passed into law, and wild animals in confinement are no longer denied the protection of our legislature.

At the moment of writing the R. S. P. C. A. has succeeded in obtaining an important decision at the Marlborough-street Police Court, where a fishmonger was summoned for keeping about seven hundred live carp in a small tank containing insufficient water. Mr. Denman, after hearing the evidence, observed that "the prosecution was a most proper and important one, as drawing attention to the sufferings that were undergone by the humbler portions of creation." Defendant was fined forty shillings, and three guineas costs.

It is hardly possible to peruse the numerous and elaborate Acts of Parliament designed for the protection of animals without a sentiment of sadness. What an impeachment of human intelligence and sympathy they constitute! One might well imagine that the very helplessness of the poor creatures committed to man's care would be their best protection, that his most chivalrous instincts would be evoked by the responsibility of their keeping. The patient labor of the horse, the unselfish devotion of the dog, the unswerving attachment of the "harmless, necessary cat," are all manifestations of which humanity should be proud, and

which might well arouse a feeling of reciprocity. Is a man, after all, so much superior to a horse? Let him read *Gulliver's Voyage to the Houyhnhnms*, and see what the horse thinks about it.

The poet's dictum, "Evil is wrought by want of thought, As well as want of heart," would be more correct if the latter clause were dispensed with. Evil is *always* wrought by want of thought; the want of heart is its inevitable resultant. But it must be admitted that the tenderness manifested towards suffering is often purely egoistic. The lady who has not the "heart" to drown her kittens *in propria personâ* has generally sufficient to depute her servant maid for the task. The most humane method of destroying such small animals is to dash them violently to the ground. But how many care to adopt so expeditious a means? They prefer to spare their own feelings at the expense of their victims. It is so much easier, and it does not *seem* so barbarous, to drop the little creatures quietly into a pail of water, and to let them struggle out their lives unseen. Sometimes the water will be *warmed*—to make the drowning more agreeable! The executioner's intentions are more admirable; it is only the intelligence that is wanting.

In view of the common propensity for keeping pets among schoolboys, it would be well if School Boards gave occasional instruction regarding their proper care. How much unthinking cruelty has been engendered by rabbit hutches nicely adapted for the accumulation of filth, impossible pigeon coops, and barbarous bird cages!—with the attendant evils of overcrowding, wrong feeding, unskilful killing, and general neglect! It would also be well if municipal authorities had power to regulate the keeping of poultry, and thus to reduce the number of bedraggled fowls that daily suffer a wretched existence in small back yards. Petrarch could supply a text for a sermon of immediate and practical utility: "Coop them not up to fret and waste and scrape and litter in thy small enclosures and narrow courts!"

Following the proposition that the progress of civilization is marked by the destruction of barriers, it has been pointed out that the barrier between man and the rest of the animal world is an arbitrary and factitious one. Those who have attempted to prove the contrary have been driven to adopt the most fanciful distinctions, and the latest and most complete scientific research has demonstrated that no real disparity exists. Upon this fact must rest the rights of animals.

A brief historical and geographical survey has shown that these rights have been more or less adequately recognised among different races of mankind; but that such recognition has been stable and effective only so far as it rested upon reasoned conviction rather than emotional ideals.

In England the progress of humane ideas has increased with the spread of education, and the consequent incentive to general thoughtfulness. People have been cruel only because they have been thoughtless and ignorant. As Comte has wisely said: "To do what is right we must know what is true." Just as the best means of destroying jails is to build schools, so the furtherance of this, as of all other departments of ethics, will be best achieved by the growth of popular science.

If this conclusion were merely theoretical, it would perhaps be worthless. But it is justified by everyday experience. The costermonger who devotes additional care to his donkey with the object of gaining a prize at an annual show discovers in the process that such extra attention is profitable in itself, that the animal becomes more valuable in its increased willingness and capacity for work, and, better still, in the development of an unthought-of faculty for affection. In this way, such competitions are fraught with immense benefits, and the habits of gentleness and care, begun in the hope of extraneous reward, are continued in the assurance of intrinsic gain.

But so long as ignorance prevails cruelty will exist, and societies designed for its suppression will unhappily be necessary. We shall become more humane only as we become more enlightened, only so far as we realise

that it is better for ourselves as well as for those helpless creatures whose destinies we hold in keeping—

Never to blend our pleasure or our pride
With sorrow of the meanest thing that lives.

E. R. WOODWARD.

"Choose Ye this Day whom Ye will Serve."

THIS was the preacher's text. And, like ancient Joshua, he dilated on it, and, like him, showed how difficult and well-nigh impossible it was to make that service what it should be. Then came the terrors awaiting failure, the punishments for not coming up to the mark. And yet you were to choose—you *must* choose—between one who would smite you fearfully if you declined politely, and selected the creature known as "Mammon."

"Mammon" was represented as standing by, smiling and civil, to hear your decision. He was ready with everything attractive to tempt you—worldly pleasures and comforts, fame, joys, ease, abundance, wealth, a conscience elastic as india-rubber, few scruples and no compunction, a glittering array of felicities quite enough to tempt a saint, not to speak of the throng of young people who sat before the fervent preacher and heard all that they liked in their hearts, and wanted to enjoy, denounced as sinful, not to be chosen, and belonging to "Mammon." "Mammon"—*i.e.*, the wicked world—not being allowed to interpose one word in extenuation, the preacher thundered on, exhorting his hearers to give up everything worldly, to leave pleasant, flowery walks of earthly satisfaction, for the rugged, narrow, steep, and gravelly paths "leading unto life." These would convey you to holiness—somewhat painfully, to be sure, but all the better for a few knocks and bruises and spiritual contusions, because in the end you would (if you survived the ordeal) obtain perfect happiness and "everlasting life." Crowns, thrones, palms, harps, and all the accompaniments were to be yours if you chose this day the one the preacher wanted you to serve; and, if you didn't, the preacher said very plainly and loudly—too loud for such a naughty, such an awful, word—you would be sure to get—hell!

The great congregation soon broke up after singing that they were "Almost Persuaded," and gathered on the pavement. The young folks all flocked together very gaily, their elders discussed the weather and worldly affairs, and I did not see any who seemed concerned about "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve." In fact, the crowd was not so depressed and solemn as I had expected it to be, but rather lively and cheerful, after having been shaken over a certain very hot place a few minutes before. They seemed to enjoy the beautiful, peaceful evening, which no wrathful, woeful gloom enshrouded, and they strolled away for pleasant walks, chats, and, probably, flirtations. Later on they all went home to a good supper, doubtless, and even the preacher was not insensible to the excellent viands prepared for his delectation ere he retired to "sleep the sleep of the just."

But, as I once said, when I saw an eloquent preacher after service enjoying a delicious supper of roast chicken, following a fearful sermon on the torments of the lost, I did not see how one who represented so many souls as plunged for ever in hell could eat roast chicken so complacently, after such a sermon! But he did.

"This, and heaven, too?" said a pious canter to me, as he went over the beautiful home that was mine. "Yes, and heaven, too!" was my answer. "Heaven here and hereafter—if there is one!" As he gazed sorrowfully from some beautiful work of art at my cheerful if unregenerate face, I bade him cheer up, choose the bright side of life, enjoy himself while he had the chance, and make the best of everything.

And, notwithstanding all the sermons, scoldings, reproofs, lectures, admonitions, and diatribes on self-mortification, punishment, walking the thorny path of the forbidding, repellent Cross, or the adoption of self-crucifixions and self-inflicted miseries for the sake of "the kingdom," the world will not heed, the majority will not be affected, but go on in the ordinary way of common sense. People will take their pleasures

how and when they want them; they will seek to live as agreeably as they possibly can; they may be startled by denunciations, but not thoroughly frightened; and, after a vigorous, "awakening" discourse, they will not be affected by it after they get out into the pure, fresh air again, but will chat and laugh, or take their nice walk, or eat their good supper, which even the preacher will not disdain, albeit with all his eloquence he has bade the people: "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve!"

GERALD GREY.

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, G. W. Foote, "The Peace of Man and the Peace of God."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall, ante-room, first floor): 11.15, Stanton Coit, "The Senses of the Soul."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall): 7, Addresses by W. M. Salter and Stanton Coit.

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, A lecture.

STATION ROAD (Camberwell): 11.30, E. Pack.

BROCKWELL PARK: 3.15, E. Pack; 6.30, E. Pack.

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 11.30, C. Cohen.

STRATFORD (The Grove): 7, Mr. Davies.

CLERKENWELL GREEN (Finsbury Branch N. S. S.): 11.30, F. A. Davies.

HAMMERSMITH BROADWAY (West London Branch N.S.S.): 7.30, W. J. Ramsey.

HYDE PARK, near Marble Arch (West London Branch N. S. S.). Freethought literature on sale at all meetings. 11.30, W. J. Ramsey.

HYDE PARK FREETHOUGHT SOCIETY (near Marble Arch): 3, Messrs. Paperns, Rowney, and Howard; 7, E. White, "Science and the Bible." Thursday, June 12, Ivan Paperns, "Evolution of Man."

VICTORIA PARK (Bethnal Green Branch N. S. S.): 3.15, C. Cohen, "Evolution and Religion"; 6.15, Mr. Heaford.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, W. Heaford.

COUNTRY.

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school.

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): No lectures during June, July, and August.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): Members and friends meet at 2.15 near General Post Office for next Tramcar to Darnall, and to High Hazels Park and Museum, etc.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Capt. Duncan's Navigation Schools, Market-place): 7, Annual meeting, report, and election of officers.

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